

"We..." E.P.G.S.A. Newsletter

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**From the
Current
Delegate:**
by Ken D,
Delegate,
Panel 69

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<https://area59aa.org/services-resources/>

Dear Fellow Member,

As I sit at my computer and type away to create this article for our July, 2020 edition of "We..." it's been a reflective kind of day. An important practice that has enriched my sobriety has been daily morning contemplation and writing in my personal gratitude journal. Acceptance was at the top of my mind today, closely followed by the courage to accept responsibility. I am grateful for these.

The ability to accept the situations of my sober life requires those three essential spiritual principles we find in Appendix II: "Spiritual Experience" in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, pages 567-8, "Willingness, honesty and open-mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable."

We have all had to accept much in order to change our personal decisions and actions and recover from alcoholism. And "change" is the operative word. It takes honesty to assess the facts of the situation; however, the willingness to take constructive action is an essential pre-cursor to change. And, I have come to understand that it takes "open-mindedness" to get a factual assessment.

What's Happening at GSO?

***2020 International Convention:
A Virtual Experience*** *Love and tolerance of others is our code*
<https://2020convention.aa.org/>

This virtual platform will be open for the whole month of July and offers a variety of experiences starting with a video welcome from the chair of A.A.'s General Service Board of Trustees. There are a wealth of speakers to listen to, archives to view and also a "Carry the Message Pavilion" concentrating on how we carry the A.A. message of recovery around the world.

Our 7th Tradition/COVID19- *our prudent reserve is down to 7 months... all of our Twelfth Step services need our financial support. Please take a moment and read a letter from our General Manager*
https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/en_VideoCommunicationonSupport-6-19-2020.pdf

Once a reasonable path of action is plotted, responsibility calls me to duty: "to suit up and show up." The key responsibility of the delegate's role to the Fellowship is to participate for two years in the General Service Conference process. Note that the duty is not like a governmentally elected official by representing their constituency for what they want. It is for the delegate to participate in large decisions of policy for all of A.A. – *to achieve what's best for all of A.A.!*

Reflecting on my duties as delegate, I am grateful that my sobriety has progressed to a level that allows for the acceptance of my service commitment to Panel 69 with "*willingness, honesty and open-mindedness.*" (I'm grateful that there is no requirement to always be agreeable. That would be impossible to meet! And probably counter to emotional sobriety.) But through the Conference process, I have learned to progress along spiritual lines with my interactions so I can usually disagree without those corroding resentments that once plagued my active alcoholism days.

I also reflected with gratitude about the wonderful service support we have in Eastern PA. We're not perfect! And, maybe (just maybe) we may not be "the best area in A.A.'s General Service, but for the most part, we are lovingly and responsibly active. We are blessed year-after-year to have many newcomers to General Service who step up to chair districts, area offices, area committees and special service positions. (It's not too early to think about your personal availability and qualifications for your next service commitment.) We are blessed with active inter-groups that carry the message in the mountains and in the cities to all who have a desire to stop drinking under any and all environmental circumstances. We are blessed with many Members and Home Groups that take acceptance and responsibility seriously and with good cheer!

It has been a joy to serve at the first-ever virtual General Service Conference. It was certainly a lot of things at once: tiring long days in front of a computer with headphones; disappointment at the cancelling of the International Convention; anxiety and concern for friends and loved-ones in

and view/share this video update from Leslie Backus, the Class A (nonalcoholic) treasurer of our General Service.

<https://vimeo.com/430834698>

[SALE!" The Big Book Special Summer Offer" is in effect through September 30th and offers all formats at 10% off at \[onlineliterature.aa.org\]\(http://onlineliterature.aa.org\)](#)

Flyer: [click here](#)

COVID-19 ravaged cities; joy at seeing familiar colleagues from a year ago; anger when I could not “get to the virtual mic” during the general debate sessions; inspiration during the morning Serenity meetings; and an honest and humble satisfaction that we delegates had done our best. Indeed! It was an amazing experience. I’ll be posting an anonymity-protected version of my report slides and other conference materials on our web site: www.area59aa.org for those who are interested.

On a final note, please know that your area officers and area committee members (and many others special servants) are working to plan alternatives for future Area 59 events. Our June Quarterly meeting was the first-ever Area 59 virtual event of its kind. We are planning all area events through Oct. 31st, 2020 to be a virtual event (watch out Robert’s Rules of Order!). I am also announcing the recent decision by the Convention Committee to host an on-line EPGSA Convention in 2020 in place of an in-person gathering. We want to enable all GSRs to participate in the election assembly for a new Panel of Area Officers in November. Those who have registered so far will be fully refunded. Our contract with the hotel will be rolled over to 2021 and we will incur no penalties. I am asking for your full support in Unity to make our 2020 EPGSA Convention a success. Please watch www.area59aa.org for updates and we will be communicating via all means in the coming weeks. If you have questions please contact me at delegate@area59aa.org or our Convention Chairperson, Paul M. at convention@area59aa.org.

So, for now, I wish you and your loved-ones the very best of recovery with safety and good health. It is an honor to serve you and accept the responsibilities of our Legacy of Service. In Fellowship and Service, Ken D.

Your Area 59 Archive Subcommittee: Working today to preserve our past for tomorrow!

By: Ken P.

An archive is a collection of historical documents or records providing information about a place, institution, or group of people. So, who are the archives subcommittee and what do they do? Well, I am going to tell you. The Area 59 Archives Subcommittee is comprised of an advisor (alternate delegate), a chairperson and members. The chairperson and committee members are all DCM’s within Area 59. Not part of the committee, but integral to our archives is an archivist and an assistant archivist. In the May 15, 2018 edition of the "We..." newsletter there is an article titled "Archives in Area 59," which was written by the Archives committee from the last panel. It explains the history, role, composition, and duties of the Archives Subcommittee. Our main goal is to preserve the items that exist in our archive and bring in current (DCM Reports, Area Minutes, etc.) and other items as they are discovered, such as historical documents or photos.

The Archives Subcommittee physically and digitally stores documents, records, photos, flyers, books, etc. from the history of Area 59. Some of the more notable pieces in our archive are: A nice framed photo of Lou R. (the first African American Delegate elected to the General Service Conference) with Bill W. taken in 1967; the list of members in Philadelphia with surrounding groups from 1943; the snapshot of Bill W. leaning against his car from 1969, his last Conference before he

died in 1970; records of early Area 59 meetings held at Chit - Chat Farms; programs from Area 59 conventions dating back to 1963; the photo of Bill, Lois, Jim B., and Bills' mother; along with organized group histories from all Districts; and there are many other stored records. The archives physically reside at Metro Storage in Lansdale, PA. Items in the archives may be checked out or brought to events to display. To do so, please contact Donald H., our archivist.

The current committee is focused this year on getting our archives organized so that we can more easily assist interested members in finding information on specific topics. This organization will also help us to more efficiently digitize the archive in the future. Obviously, original copies carry the most historical value, but the digitization will allow access to the information for members more readily.

In short, the Archives Subcommittee is helping to preserve our history to assist in building our future.

Embracing the Future Through Digital Communication

by: Pete B. Officer-At-Large Panel 69

Communication has long been at the heart of Alcoholics Anonymous. The message that an A.A. member communicates to the hopeless alcoholic can be the difference between life and death. Additionally, we have found that vital services rely on strong communication amongst ourselves as well. Recent months have displayed, more than ever, the powerful resources that are available to A.A. through technology and digital communication.

At the officer's pre-area meeting in February, we discussed exploring cloud-based systems. The purpose was simple. To test a small step into the age of technology and potentially increase productivity, efficiency and communication. Area 59 was approved for a Google for non-profits account. The account includes teleconferencing and communication services, collaborative/shareable documents, spreadsheets and calendars, as well as a cloud-based drive to store information and potentially improve continuity between panels. It was only a few weeks after the creation of this account that social distancing and teleconferencing swept the globe. With these new tools in hand, we were in a much better position to take action.

Our first project offered an online discussion forum for any member to share perspective on General Service Conference agenda items. The outcome was impressive. Over 150 members joined the forum and 212 posts were recorded. The goal was to replicate, as close as we could, the opportunity to share that is offered at our in-person Pre-Conference Sharing Session. In addition to this discussion forum, we held two virtual Pre-Conference Sharing Sessions. Attendees adapted quickly as we navigated the challenges of trying to recreate our normal session in a teleconference setting. As a result of prompt action, our Delegate was able to hear from the groups in Eastern Pennsylvania and bring Area 59's collective voice to the General Service Conference with him.

The applications included in the Google for non-profits account are now available to all of the Area 59 subcommittees. Members of the same subcommittee can all work on the same slide show, spreadsheet or document, in real time, from anywhere, on any device. The cloud-based drive creates a common place for all of their work to be saved and referenced quickly and easily. The drive is linked to each subcommittee chairperson's Area 59 service email and is passed on to the next panel, creating seamless transitions. This opens up significant opportunities for future panels and subcommittees to meet and work between quarterly meetings.

While I thoroughly enjoy the paper copy of Box 4-5-9 and physical copies of The Grapevine that I receive by mail, I must admit that most of my day to day A.A. information comes in digital form. Events, conferences and group anniversaries are available on the Area 59 website and private Facebook groups. When I want to find a new meeting, I turn to the meeting guide app on my cellphone. I keep pdfs of pamphlets and service literature on my phone to refer to at any given time, without carrying an extensive binder everywhere I go. Email and group chats keep me connected to my home group and committees that I serve on. I believe that we exist today because A.A. has a long-standing practice of looking forward and staying current. This is a practice that should be revisited, with respect to the digital age. I am grateful to have the opportunity of participating in Area 59's efforts to engage in new and effective ways of working and communicating.

There are many alcoholics who desperately want to stop drinking, but don't know there is a solution. The way that we, as A.A. members, can help to reach them is through the General Service Conference. The Conference may seem far removed from our meetings, but it needs an informed conscience of the groups to be of maximum service. Although we are but a small part of a great whole, everyone's participation is important. We participate through our G.S.R.s, District and Area.

"We..." is a newsletter for members of the Area 59 (E.P.G.S.A.) General Service Committee, Service Volunteers and interested Fellowship members. For information contact literature@area59aa.org

A Clear Vision for You 2020 GSC Theme

Graphic Formatting by Katherine D