

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

5/15/2021

Newsletter Edition 3, Volume 2

**From the
Current
Delegate:**
by Caroline
N.,
Delegate,
Panel 71

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resources/](https://area59aa.org/services-resources/)

Dear fellow members,

Greetings Area 59! Last month, I had the honor and privilege of experiencing the 71st General Service Conference. I attended the week-long series of meetings, presentations, reports, sharing sessions, workshops, elections, and fellowship as the representative from Eastern Pennsylvania. My heart is very full and I am grateful for everything that you, as members, groups, districts, and the Area did to prepare me.

I look forward to reporting back to you on the proceedings and outcomes at the upcoming Delegate's Conference Reports and Mini Assemblies on May 23 and June 12. Please plan to attend, as this was a historic Conference and I have much to share!

This year's Conference theme was "A.A. in a Time of Change," and I must say, I am so proud of the positive changes that are in store for Alcoholics Anonymous, thanks to the recommendations we passed in the spirit of unity and inclusion. The advisory actions coming out of the 71st Conference are progressive, and many, in my opinion, are long overdue.

Change often happens gradually in A.A., but the

What's Happening at GSO?

[Announcing our A.A.W.S. test pilot program: Reduced shipping charges](#)

As part of our ongoing efforts to make the lifesaving message of Alcoholics Anonymous easily accessible, from May 17 through October 18, 2021 A.A.W.S. is offering a 5-month test of reduced shipping charges on its entire catalog of books, pamphlets, audiovisual material, and more.

[Box 4-5-9 Spring 2021](#)

[American Sign Language Now Available on the A.A.W.S. YouTube Channel](#)

The Big Book and "Twelve and Twelve" in American Sign Language are live on the A.A.W.S. YouTube Channel!

[Sharing from Behind the Walls – Spring 2021](#)

Sharing from Behind the Walls is published quarterly by the Corrections assignment and contains excerpts from inmates' letters sent to G.S.O. The 2020 Winter issue is now available in PDF. Print copies will be available on a limited basis.

[The Regional Forums video is available](#)

Good news! The Regional Forums video is now available on our Regional Forums

COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how flexible and adaptive we as a fellowship can be. It seems to me as if the decisions made at the 71st Conference reflect this greater openness to change, while keeping our 36 principles at the fore.

Our A.A. Service Manual contains suggestions for the Delegate about what to report following the Conference. Chapter 6, "The Delegate," states that I should share "What I Saw and Heard and Felt." Chapter 7, "The Annual Conference Meeting," says "The most productive Conference sessions are of little value unless the Area committees and groups back home hear about them." Also, a previous Conference Inventory includes the following: "The Delegate is both a leader and a reporter -- one job is subjective and the other objective; reporting to the areas requires delegates to be both: sharing facts in a balanced way while reflecting thoughts, feelings, and emotions." So that is what I will endeavor to do when we convene.

As a brief recap: much of the first half of the week was spent in committee meetings, followed by the committee reports and discussion with the entire Conference body during the second half of the week, and floor actions on the last day. We gave the green light to a 5th edition of Alcoholics Anonymous and a 4th edition of Alcoholics *Anonimos*, as well as a plain language translation of the Big Book, we revised the preamble, removed offensive language from the 12x12, approved changes to pamphlets for Black alcoholics and for alcoholics who are also Indigenous People and a new pamphlet for Hispanic women, and so much more. And on a personal note, I was elected the chairperson of the Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions for a one-year term!

But it wasn't all business. We also had time for A.A. meetings, which were wonderfully interspersed throughout the week. At one of these, the speaker referred to a passage on page 163 of our Big Book, and I want to share it with you, because it reminded me to keep tapping into a Higher Power, even when I feel "jittery and alone" or intimidated and anxious, like I

Page and A.A.W.S. YouTube channel.

[Quarterly Report from G.S.O.](#)

Activities of the General Service Board including A.A. World Services, Inc., AA Grapevine, Inc.

[The World Service Meeting Final Report](#)

Since its inauguration in 1969, the World Service Meeting (WSM) has provided an ongoing international forum for shared experience and ideas on carrying the A.A. message of recovery from alcoholism. Held biennially, the event alternates between New York and other locations around the globe, and has convened in such diverse cities as Cartagena, Colombia; Auckland, New Zealand; Oviedo, Spain; Malahide, Ireland; Mexico City, Mexico; and Warsaw, Poland. Due to the pandemic, the 26th World Service Meeting was held virtually, in November 2020.

[Letter to the Fellowship from A.A.W.S.](#)

A communication from A.A. World Services, Inc. board chair Beau B.

[A.A.W.S., Inc. Announces Enhanced eBook and Audiobook Distribution](#)

As of January 14, 2021, A.A.W.S. ebooks and audiobooks are available for purchase across a combined 51 major platforms that serve libraries, educational institutions, professional portals, subscription services, the National Corrections Library, and many other popular distribution channels.

was leading up to the Conference.

The passage reads, *We know what you are thinking. You are saying to yourself: "I'm jittery and alone. I couldn't do that." But you can. You forget that you have just now tapped a source of power much greater than yourself. To duplicate, with such backing, what we have accomplished is only a matter of willingness, patience, and labor.* (Alcoholics Anonymous, page 163)

The Tuesday before the Conference, I was exhausted and anxious as I tearfully shared at one of my regular women's groups that I was filled with self-doubt and questioning the Area's decision. I was feeling "jittery and alone." I felt like I couldn't do it "perfectly" and had fears about forgetting something I wanted to bring up, or not remembering where to locate something in the background information, or being judged by other Conference members for something I'd say. I received an outpouring of support, and it was such a good reminder that I'm not alone and I am blessed with love and kindness from others. I will treasure this memory and refer back to this page in the Big Book often!

It was such an incredible experience to have the responsibility to serve you, my friends in Eastern Pennsylvania. And I was able to meet the many other people who are working hard in the best interest of A.A. as a whole: the other delegates, trustees, non-trustee directors, and General Service Office staff who were all so passionate, talented, and dedicated. AA is in such good hands! Thank you again for preparing me to serve.

Caroline N.

Area 59 Panel 71 Delegate

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Service is A Key

By: Marcia G.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF CONCEPTS I, II, AND III

When I was asked to write an article about A.A.'s Concepts I, II, and III, I thought "quite the challenge!" It would have been easy for me to write about our Twelve Steps, as they are part of my entire being: almost from the very beginning of my sobriety I learned that to stay sober, I needed to embrace and live by the 12 Steps. It also would have been easy for me to write about our Twelve Traditions, as I came to realize how necessary they are in ensuring that A.A. will continue to be there for me and for all who wish to get and stay sober.

The Concepts, on the other hand, are something else: the very word "Concept" means an abstract or generic idea generalized from particular instances. In A.A.'s case, those "particular instances" were both the challenges that our early A.A. groups faced, coupled with Bill W's and Dr. Bob's recognizing that there needed to be "checks and balances" governing major decisions affecting A.A. as a whole.

The Conference Charter states: "The Conference will act for A.A. in the perpetuation and guidance of its world services, and it will also be the vehicle by which the AA movement can express its views upon all matters of vital AA policy and all hazardous deviations from A.A. Tradition. Delegates should be free to vote as their conscience dictates; they should also be free to decide what questions should be taken to the group level, whether for information, discussion, or their own direct instruction."

Now, let's discuss the "practical application" of Concepts I, II, and III.

Concept I states: "Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship." Without this defined relationship, A.A. could be run by just one or a handful of power-grabbers who could refuse to hand over any authorities to others or to Groups.

Concept II states that the General Service Conference is the actual voice and the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship." Our leaders are but trusted servants: they do not govern.

And Concept III states that A.A. Groups, the A.A. Conference, and the General Service Board and its staffs and committees have the "Right of Decision:" every service entity, regardless of its level, has the right to decide which issues they can deal with themselves and which issues need to be referred to others for advice and action.

To discuss the "practical applications" of the first three Concepts, I could have written about how they work at the Group, District or Area level. Or I could have discussed what they don't mean (for example, Concept III, the "Right of Decision," does NOT mean that someone in service can make on their own a decision that affects other individuals or Groups). Instead, here are some of my thoughts about the first three Concepts and the General Service Conferences that I attended.

Area 59 blessed me with the opportunity to represent Eastern Pennsylvania at the General Service Conference back in 1991 and 1992, and I got to see how all three of these Concepts actually worked. Back then, I loved controversy, and what happened played right into my hands. In those days, Delegates did not receive information about Conference Agenda items ahead of time. This, in and of itself, was not in keeping with either Concept I or II, as it precluded the Groups from having any input

into issues the Conference was considering. But besides that major shortcoming, the issues themselves turned out to be highly controversial.

The first issue – one that came up during my first Conference -- was a footnote that was added to the A.A. Service Manual that stated that pay raises for GSO Staff members would be based on their performance. The principle of pay for performance was not new. But the footnote was controversial both because there had been no input from the Delegates and most other Conference members, and because it appeared that the Board had overstepped its authority by deciding that it had the power to unilaterally implement the pay for performance process. The Delegates and GSO Staff members were “up in arms” about the footnote and the way it was added to the Service Manual without any discussion or consensus. Needless to say, the footnote was subsequently removed, and the Delegates had been given a valuable lesson about Concepts I, II, and III.

For my second Conference, it appeared that the General Service Board (and other service entities) had also benefitted from the lesson of the previous Conference. This time, Delegates received some information about Conference Agenda items before the Conference. And an organizational change at our Headquarters was presented to the Conference as a proposal by the General Service Board. It appeared that the Board had determined that an organizational change was not within their purview to decide and that only the Conference itself, as the conscience of A.A., could make such a decision. Panel 41 Delegates were still a little skeptical, having participated in the previous Conference, but all seemed pleased to be given the opportunity to discuss the Board’s proposal. And what a discussion ensued! Boiled down, the proposal was to add a layer of supervision between the General Service Office Manager and the Board of Directors. All previous Managers had reported directly to the Board. A new Manager, who had served as a Delegate and later as the Pacific Regional Trustee, had been hired, and it appeared to many of us simply that the Board had doubts about the new Manager’s ability to run the General Service Office. Much to the Board’s surprise, the proposal was ultimately rejected. But I and my fellow Delegates left that year with the realization that our Concepts, in concert with our Twelve Traditions, really work, and that the future of A.A. was in good hands.

Every Conference and every year thereafter have reinforced that realization. The Internet, technology, service events such as NERAASA, Concept workgroups, and so many other communications innovations, continue to enhance A.A. members’ understanding of our service structure and how things get done in this wonderful Fellowship of ours.

Marcia G.

Past Delegate, Area 59, Panel 41

Treatment and Accessibilities Committee Spotlight

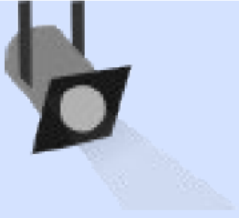
The Treatment and Accessibilities committee is made up of five District Committee Members from Area 59. At the beginning of Panel 71, we were given recommendations for our committee from the new Delegate. As a group, we decided to meet once or twice a month on zoom. During our monthly zoom meetings, we chose to focus on discussions regarding Bridging the Gap. When making decisions on how to further the efficiency of the Bridging the Gap program, committee members worked closely with the Corrections committee, Bridging the Gap coordinator, and our committee advisor the Alternate Delegate for Area 59.

Part of the work we have started, to achieve a more efficient program, involves contacting the DCMs of every district in Area 59 to make them aware of the first annual Bridging the Gap workshop

held on Zoom May 8th. In addition to making this presentation at the May 8th workshop, our committee is more than happy to make it available to anyone who would like the information. Please reach out to Ralph O (Bridging the Gap coordinator for Area 59) or myself, if you or your group would like a copy of the presentation.

Steve W, D45

TF Committee Chair

A graphic of a spotlight hanging from above, casting a beam of light downwards. The spotlight is black with a white circle in the center, and the beam is a light gray cone.

Spotlight on District 27

District 27 meets virtually on the fourth Thursday of every month. Meetings start with virtual Fellowship from 7 – 7:30 PM followed by introductions around the virtual room. This is followed by the Serenity Prayer and reading of the Tradition/Concept of the month (done sequentially throughout the year, i.e. January is Tradition One/Concept One). Our invited guest speaker (someone familiar with A.A.'s Traditions/Concepts, such as a past Delegate, current/past DCM, etc.) speaks to the Tradition/Concept as well as their personal experiences in A.A. service. Traditions/Concepts are followed by GSR reports (~20 GSRs per meeting is typical) where group information is passed on as well as any group issues. If a group issue arises, all attendees are encouraged to share their experience, strength, and hope on the topic. We next move on to reports from our Officer's/subcommittees. Being within the SEPIA zone, District 27 has Visitation, Grapevine, and Archives-Web Chair subcommittees only. Officers (all elected positions) include the DCM, ADCM, Secretary, and Treasurer. Unfinished/new business is next discussed, followed by the Responsibility Declaration.

So, you might ask, what is different in District 27 in the current COVID era versus the past? Besides seeing fellow A.A.'s in person, we miss our in-person Fellowship! The last panel, 7 – 7:30 PM was pizza/chocolate fellowship! (yes, some people put off that diet for one day...) Our Grapevine subcommittee would distribute copies (current and past) of our Grapevine/La Vina magazines to GSRs for groups/members in need. Grapevine/La Vina books would also sometimes be available, particularly as new books would come out (typically two per year). New literature published by A.A.W.S. was made available to attendees. Who can forget "Our Great Responsibility" published in 2019. Many GSRs the last panel found this book of selected Bill W.'s Conference talks insightful and inspiring, jazzing them up for A.A. service. Donations were accepted for Grapevine/La Vina – A.A.W.S. books but not required.

Although we currently don't meet in person, we hope to do so soon. For the time being, informal get-togethers still occur (ex. Visitation committee with fellow GSRs/AGSRs/Officers still goes to in-person meetings within our District). We have also made our own "GSR Kits" which the ADCM

will take to anyone interested in person. Kits include the A.A. Service Manual, the pamphlets G.S.R. General Service Representative, The A.A. Group (... where it all begins), The Twelve Traditions Illustrated, The Twelve Concepts Illustrated, and the bonus items "A Visual History of Alcoholics Anonymous, an archival Journey" (new book from A.A.W.S.), and a box of chocolate!

COVID has shown us that Alcoholics Anonymous is resilient, capable of adapting to any situations that arise. A.A. will come out of the pandemic as strong (or maybe even a little stronger) than before. As our Declaration of Unity states, "This we owe to A.A.'s future: To place our common welfare first, to keep our fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives and the lives of those to come".

Ted C

ADCM District 27

"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

AA in a Time of Change 2021 GSC Theme

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