

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

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

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Greetings, Area 59! I am grateful to each of you for helping guide Area 59 through a global pandemic. Who knew that when we said "Higher Power, show me how to be useful" that we would find ourselves here! Thankfully, we alcoholics are well-qualified to deal with chaos, and we will continue to survive and even thrive in the face of the adversity of COVID-19, as long as we prioritize our recovery, unity, and service, one day at a time.

As we approach the halfway point of Panel 71 (2021 and 2022), I have been reflecting on what we have accomplished together over the last year and all that remains to be done in our second year serving together during this panel. The Area Inventory we did together in October was a helpful reminder to continue the self-searching process that allows us to learn and grow, taking stock of things well done while also taking responsibility for the things we can do better. Our two-year term of service allows us to consider what went well the first time around and how to improve the second time around.

Communication, transparency, and timeliness are my top priorities for this next year. As we approach the 72nd General Service Conference (April 23-30, 2022), I am excited to begin the cycle again!

## What's Happening at GSO?

On 8/1/2021 The Hispanic Women in A.A. pamphlet was released. This pamphlet contains 15 stories sharing experience, strength, and hope about Hispanic women who have found sobriety and a new way of life through Alcoholics Anonymous.

[Hispanic Woman in A.A.](#)

Announcement of The AA Grapevine Half-Hour Variety Hour. Featuring AA members Don and Sam. The podcast started on 8/4/2021. The podcast relates a new episode every Monday. Each week Don and Sam will interview a different member about their experience, strength and hope.

[Grapevine Podcast](#)

The revised and reformatted General Service Conference-approved A.A. *Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service* is now available in PDF format in English, French and Spanish.

[Update A.A. Service Manual](#)

All-new audio recordings of the Big Book are now available on cd in both abridged and unabridged versions in English, French and Spanish.

[New Audio Big Book](#)

A new, separate post office box has been established for only Seventh Tradition contributions. This change will make processing contributions more efficient and minimize costs - allowing more investment in services to members and groups.

The main focus of the Delegate's role to the Fellowship is to participate for two years in the General Service Conference process. This entails sharing the Agenda Items and background information with you, listening to your feedback, developing our Area's conscience on these matters, attending the weeklong series of meetings and sharing sessions, participating in the many significant decisions of policy for all of A.A. – to achieve what's best for all of A.A. – and reporting back to you on the outcomes.

With all of the substantial changes that resulted from the 71st Conference in 2021, including the revised Preamble to the development of a plain language translation of the Big Book to the participation of online groups in our General Service Structure, and so much more, my hope is that the visibility and relevance of these decisions will encourage more members to get involved. Whether you agree or disagree with the changes we made, I hope your level of interest in and engagement with the process will increase this year!

The final list of Conference Agenda Items will be determined at the January Board Weekend (January 28-31, 2022). As soon as I receive this list and associated background information in English in February, I will create a Google Group for your input and feedback. Please be on the lookout for this link! The background information in Spanish is expected in March.

We will have an opportunity to review select agenda items at our March 19, 2022, Pre-Conference Sharing Session in District 44 (to be held at West Chester University) and I will be reporting back to you, post-Conference, at the Mini-Assemblies and Delegate's Conference Reports on May 22, 2022 and June 11, 2022. Please save all of these dates!

As a reminder, my Conference Committees are Policy/Admissions (my primary committee assignment; I was elected to serve as Chair from the end of the 71st to the end of the 72nd Conferences) and International Conventions & Regional Forums (some delegates serve on one of the two secondary committees and I'm one of them). The first half of the Conference week is spent in committee meetings and the second half is spent with the entire Conference body deliberating and voting on items that come out of committees and any floor actions.

The list of Preliminary Agenda Items includes 62 items that reflect ongoing work within the committees, or between the Trustees' Committees and Conference Committees. In addition, a total of 178 submissions were received by the September 15, 2021, deadline, and of those, the Trustees' Committees, A.A.W.S. Board, and Grapevine Board reviewed and discussed and agreed to forward 15 items to the 72nd General Service Conference. That represents a total of 77 total agenda items on the preliminary list.

More will be revealed, and I very much hope that you will be a part of the conversation! Warmest wishes for a joyful and grateful holiday season.

Caroline N.  
Area 59 Panel 71 Delegate  
[delegate@area59aa.org](mailto:delegate@area59aa.org)

## Service is a Key

By: Pat F.

It gives me great pleasure to be a part of our newsletter and have the opportunity to write a little about the importance of Concepts 4, 5 and 6.

Serving as your Delegate is one of the greatest gifts of my sobriety. In the past 35 years, I have been graced to experience an abundance of treasured moments in A.A. but none can compare to being Delegate.

A true gift is learning the Concepts in real time and representing two of the blocks in the A.A. service “upside down” triangle, both as a group member and then further down where it states Delegates to the General Service Conference.

I will be forever grateful to all of you in Area 59 for letting me humbly participate and experience the greatest service of my life.

Reading “A.A. Comes of Age” helped me understand the beginnings of our Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts and how they evolved. Our A.A. Service Manual helps explain all service at every level, and is the best tool we have in our A.A. tool box.

*4. At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional “**Right of Participation**,” allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.*

We cannot force anyone to participate actively in the decision-making process, but the right must be there or we fail to work together. This right of participation assumes that minority opinions are heard and considered, that a majority will not dictate decisions, and that voting blocks will be discouraged.

“It is vital,” Bill W, wrote, “to preserve the traditional ‘Right of Participation,’ in the face of every tendency to whittle it down.” Finally, there is a spiritual reason for the “Right of Participation.” All of us desire to belong. In A.A., no members are “second class.” The “Right of Participation” therefore reinforces Tradition Two, that no member is placed in “ultimate authority” over another. We perform our service tasks better “when we are sure we belong — when our ‘participation’ assures us we are truly the ‘trusted servants’ described in Tradition Two.”

Your voice is important and should be heard.

*5. Throughout our structure, a traditional “**Right of Appeal**” ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.*

And when all is said and done, the right of appeal, as described in Concept V, ought to prevail with personal grievances carefully considered.

Even after extensive debate on an issue, followed by a vote in which a “substantial unanimity” is reached, those opposed are polled individually to see if they wish to speak further to their minority view. In fact, numerous instances can be cited in which this minority view is so compelling the Conference has then reversed itself. This is A.A.’s “Right of Appeal” in action, and Bill says the same principle should apply to meetings of our area committees, trustee committees and boards. On an issue of grave importance, the

minority has the actual duty of presenting its views. This “Right of Appeal” recognizes that minorities frequently can be right; that even when they are in error, they still perform a most valuable service when they compel a thorough-going debate on important issues. The well-heard minority, therefore, is our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority. “Trusted servants,” according to Bill, “do for the groups what the groups cannot or should not do for themselves.”

At any level, we have the right to make an appeal. Minority opinion is vital to our decision-making process.

***6. The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.***

Concept VI describes the corporate structure and relationship amongst the Trustees, the General Service Board, and the General Service Conference, which should operate in such a way that the business of A.A. and the spirit-led work of our members inform one another at each step of any activity of our Society.

It is helpful if you are familiar with both the Conference Charter and the Bylaws of the General Service Board to understand this relationship and the freedom of action that the trustees must have. The trustees have the legal and practical responsibility for the operation of A.A. World Services, Inc. (which embraces A.A. publishing as well as the General Service Office) and of AA Grapevine, Inc. These entities have a combined cash flow of many millions of dollars annually. The trustees are also responsible for A.A.’s public information activities. They are the guardians of the Twelve Traditions. They are responsible for carrying the A.A. message to other countries around the world. They are A.A.’s “bankers,” overseeing the financial operations and investing A.A.’s substantial Reserve Fund. (Read the text of Concept XI for a more detailed account of their functions.) Bill makes the point that although “our objective is always a spiritual one,” nevertheless our world service is a “large business operation.” “Indeed,” he says, “our whole service structure resembles that of a large corporation. The A.A. groups are the stockholders, the delegates represent them, like proxy-holders, at the annual meeting; the General Service Board Trustees are actually the directors of a ‘holding company.’ And this holding company (the General Service Board) actually owns and controls the two ‘subsidiaries’ (A.A.W.S and A.A. Grapevine) which carry on the . . . services. “This very real analogy makes it . . . clear that, like any other board of directors, our trustees must be given large powers if they are to manage the . . . affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous.”

We operate on a committee system and please trust our trusted servants. The Concepts may read very formally and a legalese phraseology sometimes difficult to follow, putting them into practice, is our best teacher.

Please be sure to contact me at any time, I would love to hear from you.

With Love,

Pat F.

Past Delegate, Panel 65 (2015-2016)

## Gratitude Spotlight

### “Thank You For The Book”

By: Steve C. D 39 DCM

In January of 2017 I begrudgingly went to an AA meeting. I was twenty days sober, and this was my millionth and a half attempt at what I swore was impossible. I hid my face in the sleeve of my black hoodie as I sat down to try not to draw attention from this one particular man who was standing across the room. That man's name was Ian, and I had asked him to sponsor me at this very meeting the week before. He told me to give him a call, but at the time, calling him felt as impossible as biking the Tour de France in full blown withdrawals. My attempt to hide from Ian was futile. Not only did he see me, but he proceeded to find the seat next to me and announce upon introducing himself “Hi I'm Ian, I am an alcoholic, and I'm sitting next to Steve because he didn't call me last week!” I was mortified, but for some reason I was grateful. I was grateful that someone cared enough to call me out on my nonsense. Needless to say, I called Ian that very night. That Sunday, Ian came to my apartment and handed me a brand-new Big Book. Today, that book is riddled with highlights, creases and markings from every type of pen you could imagine. That moment in the meeting sparked my journey into the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, and inevitably saved my life.

My name is Steve, I am an alcoholic, the DCM of Area 59, District 39, and a member of the Finance Subcommittee. Gratitude month is an opportunity for us as members of A.A. to say thank you. Thank you for the gift of sobriety, and the opportunity to share a message of hope with the countless suffering alcoholics who depend on our constant thought of others. As a member of the Finance Subcommittee, I am blessed with the opportunity to see the inner workings of the Seventh Tradition. When I was newly sober, I scoffed at the thought of putting a dollar in the basket as it made its way around the meeting room. I can remember thinking to myself “Why would I pay to be here?” Leave it to an alcoholic to assume the Big Blue Book that he was handed for free didn't actually cost money. I am grateful to have been gifted an appreciation for our self-supporting program. To think that the contribution of one alcoholic will pass between dozens of hands, and eventually end up funding a corporation whose sole purpose is to help others like myself... that is a miracle... that is something to be grateful for.

On behalf of the Finance Subcommittee, thank you to each and every one of you for doing your part. Thank you for keeping your homegroups rent paid. Thank you for providing coffee to the newcomer. Thank you for the pamphlets you make possible at treatment centers and hospitals all over the world. Thank you for keeping our central office and intergroups up and running. Thank you for keeping Alcoholics Anonymous free of outside influences. Thank you for keeping us focused on our primary purpose. And on behalf of this once suffering alcoholic, thank you for the book.

## Our Principle Aim

By: Pete B.

Pandemic life has forever changed much about how our world operates. We in A.A. had to revisit the drawing board on holding our meetings so that alcoholics could find us and our program of action. For a society of people, who generally don't do so hot with change, we launched bravely into a new world of mute buttons and zoom bombers.

Some responded well and even thrived in the new environment. Many got to attend and speak at meetings all over the world. Sponsorship now crosses state lines more often than ever before. People got and stayed sober, having never been to an in-person meeting. We've opened up brilliant new avenues of connection, especially in regard to general service. Virtual workshops, forums and conferences have made widespread availability of information, shared experience and education on A.A.'s service structure. Through the screen, I have seen and heard from more members of G.S.O. staff and the General Service Board in the past year than I probably would have in a decade.

While the benefits for existing members are immense, it has crossed my mind that we are missing alcoholics. Who may have been left behind for lack of internet connection? Who was too intimidated or frustrated by technology? Who simply didn't feel any connection through a computer? Did probation officers, doctors and counselors have meeting ID's and Passwords to hand out to those having trouble with drinking? Was the hand A.A. available for anyone, anywhere?

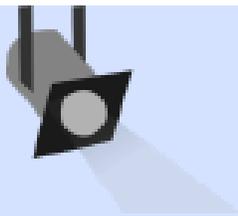
In addition to those currently in need, there exists another group of prospective members to consider. How will we use technology to reach an alcoholic 5 or 10 years from now? We have a history of forward thinking; our traditions, for example, began to take shape long before the fellowship was first exposed to them through the Grapevine and even longer before the groups formally accepted them. We can have conversations today that impact generations of alcoholics to come.

A.A. is still in a time of change. Prospective members may benefit from our thoughts and discussions. How can we continue to utilize technology without leaving anyone behind? Within the general service structure, trusted servants can play a key role in the future effectiveness of our Legacy of Service. A group's idea or experience, carried by their general service representative, has the power to create and place new tools in the hands of those performing 12<sup>th</sup> step work. In this time of change, let us move forward boldly with all alcoholics in mind.

"Out Twelfth Step - carrying the message - is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence." Pg. S1 The A.A. Service Manual

Pete B.

Alternate Delegate Panel 71



### **Spotlight: District 67**

District 67 is located in the Southeast region of Area 59. We are home to 25 groups. We have an average of 14-17 groups represented at our district meeting. Which is held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7pm. We had met on the zoom platform for the past year and a half, but in January we will be returning in person at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Birdsboro, PA. Thank you so much for everyone that helped with zoom, and kept our district running so smoothly.

Within the past year and a half, times have definitely changed within our prior meeting conversations. We inquire about each other's health, family and our community health related to Covid and their needs. Even in these times we've carried the message to the best of our abilities. We've had guest speakers including our Delegate Caroline N., Katie D., our Ad Hoc Literature Chairperson, and Jen H., who is our Reading Berks Intergroup Chairperson/Unity Chair, and Paul M. Past Delegate for Area 59 panel 67. On Saturday October 16<sup>th</sup> District 67 did a combined workshop with District 38. It was a hybrid workshop on the "ABC's of the Homegroup". Thank you to District 38 for all the hard work you put in to making this workshop happen. We recently updated our District 67 Structure Manual which was absolutely beautifully done. Thank you to everyone who put in all their time and hard work to make this happen. We also work very closely with our local Intergroup in carrying the message to all of those who seek the hand of A.A.

I want to thank each and every member in District 67. We're extremely grateful that we have each other on our journeys.

Blessings,

Rob C. ADCM District 67

"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](mailto:literature@area59aa.org)