

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

10/15/18

[Edition 1, Volume 9]

From the Current Delegate

by Paul M., Delegate

*HELLO TO THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS
ANONYMOUS!*

I can't believe it, but here we are two years later, and I'm asking myself, where has the time gone? Panel 67 will be coming to an end in December 2018, and what a magnificent group of Officers and DCMs I have had the pleasure to serve with over the past two years. They have carried out the responsibilities given to them in the form of Delegate's Recommendations at the beginning of the panel. What a privilege it has been to serve on Panel 67.

With that being said, this brings me to the primary purpose for this edition of my "We..." newsletter article. As most of you know, or for those of you who don't know, it's that time of the year for the election of new Officers and DCMs for Panel 69—our "Spirit of Rotation" in action. On Saturday, November 3, 2018 at the Eastern Pennsylvania General Service Assembly, held in Gettysburg, PA, the election of the new Officers for Panel 69 will take place. As a GSR for your home group, it is time for you to represent. On the front of the GSR pamphlet, it clearly states "Your group's link to A.A. as a whole". As a GSR, your most important responsibility to the home group is to be the voice of the home group and to attend the EPGSA. In "The A.A. Service Manual" on p. S25 it clearly outlines the definitions and responsibilities of a group and the GSR.

*What's Happening at
the GSO?*

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There are two new pamphlets available from the General Service Office of A.A.

"Women in A.A." based on the personal experience of 12 now-sober women, the pamphlet shares how these women suffered in active alcoholism and found recovery in A.A.

"LGBTQ Alcoholics in A.A." for those of us who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ), A.A. extends a helping hand, an open heart, and a life-saving and life-affirming program of recovery.

These pamphlets and many others focused on the diversity and the inclusivity of A.A. are available through A.A.'s website, www.aa.org.

Area 59 website.
www.area59aa.org

The Group and Its G.S.R.

For most A.A.s, membership in a home group is one of the keys to continuing sobriety. In a home group, they accept service responsibilities and learn to sustain friendships. The home group affords individual A.A.s the **privilege** of voting on issues that affect the Fellowship as a whole: it is the very basis of the service structure. While most A.A. members attend other groups regularly, the home group is where they participate in business meetings and cast their vote as part of the group conscience of the Fellowship as a whole. As with all group conscience matters, **each member has one vote**. The Long Form of Tradition Three and a section of the Warranty Six, Concept 12, aptly describe what an A.A. group is; please reference "The A.A Service Manual."

The General Service Representative (G.S.R.)

The general service representative has the job of linking his or her group with A.A. as a whole. The GSR represents the voice of the group conscience, reporting the group's thoughts to the district committee member and to the Delegate, who passes them on to the Conference. The communication is a two-way street, making the GSR responsible for bringing back to the groups Conference Actions that affect A.A Unity, health, and growth. **Only when a GSR keeps the group informed, and communicates the groups conscience, can the Conference truly act for A.A as a whole.**

I would like to say thank you so much to the members of A.A. in Eastern Pennsylvania for allowing me the past 14 years of having the privilege to serve in general service. On my journey in general service, I have gained a broader understanding of how "We" the members are responsible for not only our own recovery, but more importantly how we can carry the message to the Still Sick and Suffering Alcoholic who still suffers throughout the World. What A Journey!!! I am Blessed.

The Eastern PA General Service Assembly and A.A.'s Third Legacy Procedure.,

by Ken D., Alt-Delegate & Area Chairperson

As I write this article for our Area 59 newsletter, "We..." there are constant weather updates for the latest hurricane tracking toward the Eastern U.S. seaboard. It's "that" time of year and soon after comes the official Autumn season with full preparations underway by our Area 59 Convention Committee: Hugh H. Chairperson, Pat F., Treasurer; Marty S., Nancy K., Lowell L., Steve O. and Marcia G. Secretary. We do appreciate the yearlong preparation and service these Past Delegates and our current Delegate, Paul M. render to make our convention & assembly one of the best in the Fellowship. Please register and attend November 2 – 4 in Gettysburg, PA – see our web site for details. (www.area59aa.org) We want and need your support!

Every even-numbered year is an election year in Area 59 for area officers and potentially a Trustee At-Large nominee. So, being that we are in 2018, the Area Committee will hold an election assembly on Saturday, November 3rd at the Gettysburg (PA) Wyndham Hotel. The assembly is held in accordance to the guidance described in *The A.A. Service Manual Combined With Twelve Concepts for World Service*. Also, we follow the guidance established over many years of experience and written into the *Eastern*

Pennsylvania General Service Assembly Area Structure Manual.

The Group Conscience and established practice for Area 59 is that "all current officers (except the delegate) and DCMs are eligible for candidacy" for any area office they have not previously held. We subscribe to the principle of rotation. Those eligible to vote are the GSRs, DCMs, area officers and past delegates. Each has one vote and no proxies are allowed. Those voting need to be seated and accounted for before the final roll call. More can be found about the election procedure in our *Area 59 Structure Manual* on pages 22 – 24.

Bill W. wrote in the *A.A. Service Manual* that, "A.A.'s Third Legacy Procedure is a special type of electoral procedure, used primarily for the election of delegates and regional and at-large trustees. It is considered to be unique to A.A., and at first glance, appears to introduce a strong element of chance into a matter that should depend solely on the judgment of the majority. In practice, however, is has proved highly successful in eliminating the influence of factions or parties that seem to thrive on most political scenes." (Page S21 of the *A.A. Service Manual*.)

Our Area 59 Election Assembly works this way: 1) The Delegate recruits a member outside of Area 59 who has experience facilitating A.A. elections. This year Paul has invited Doug. G. from San Jose, CA to preside over our election. 2) The roll of eligible DCMs & area officers is called before each area officer position to be filled. Eligible members line up at microphones and either accept or decline the opportunity. No campaigning or statements are allowed. 3) Names of those who accept the opportunity to stand are posted on a screen for all to see. 4) Written ballots are made and collected and counted. 5) The first candidate to receive two-thirds of the total vote (abstentions do not count) is elected.

The procedure is a little more complicated than this. You can find a more detailed description in the *A.A. Service Manual* on page S22. After the second ballot candidates with less than 1/5th are dropped. After the third ballot, candidates with less than 1/3rd are dropped. After the fourth ballot if no candidate has reached 2/3rds, then a motion can be made to conduct a fifth ballot. If motion to conduct a 5th ballot is defeated (requires simple majority to pass) then the remaining candidates names are put into a hat and a winner is drawn. If a motion passes to go to the fifth ballot, it is conducted and then, if there is no clear 2/3rds winner, the names go into a hat to draw a winner.

The philosophy behind demanding such a high bar for election (2/3rds) is to drive our

Fellowship toward Unity in our decision/election processes. We see this principle applied to the Conference decision-making procedures where significant issues of policy require substantial unanimity (2/3rds majority) to be adopted. Area 59 uses the same process.

Yes, it does make for a longer election; however, we are blessed with the humility and respect that enfolds our organizational practices. I believe they reflect the same spiritual principles we are all called to practice in our personal recovery. Clearly this has achieved its purpose since 1950 when the procedure was originally designed and adopted by the General Service Conference.

Area 59 has held consistently true to these procedures and embraced the spiritual principles of all three of our Legacies: Recovery, Service and Unity. Please accept our invitation to get your GSR to come and vote and any member to come and witness the principles in action. It's an experience every Member should at least have. This is how the voice of Eastern Pennsylvania is structured. It is ultimately designed to best serve our members and Groups. For more information, contact your local DCM or any area officer or past delegate – or more importantly – our convention committee at convention@area59aa.org. Registrations are available at our web site: www.area59aa.org. Hope to see you there!

SELF SUPPORT: GRATITUDE IN ACTION

Finance Sub Committee

By Sharon C., DCM 64

When Thanksgiving rolls around each November, many take the time to reflect on what we are thankful for. And, in Area 59, we designate November as “gratitude month”.

When I reflected on this personally, I realized the list of things I am thankful for is *unlimited!* I cherish each day of sobriety. I can attend A.A. meetings, meet with my sponsor and enjoy the friendships given to me in our fellowship (unity). Through the 12 steps of recovery I have conscious contact with a Higher Power and a new way of thinking and living. I no longer live in constant fear, resentment, anxiety and depression. And I get to be of service in A.A. I am currently serving as DCM, helping on intergroup committees and sponsoring other women. As a result, my sense of self has been restored. And, that's just some of the stuff related to A.A. that I am grateful for.

But, several years ago, I didn't know I wanted or needed any of these things. For many years, I found myself desperately trying to stop drinking and could not. My life was in shambles. My self-worth was spiraling to new lows. I was hopeless. At a certain point, I was “required” to attend A.A. meetings as part of a treatment plan with a facility. And, once here, a miracle happened. I found hope.

What does all this have to do with the self-support of A.A.? I continue to learn and understand more as I seek and grow in my recovery.

First, self-support is about insuring there are no outside influences that could distract us from our primary purpose. When I came to A.A. meetings I was so grateful people were talking about two things... being an alcoholic and having a common solution. I needed to have only one thing to become a member... a desire to stop drinking. So simple. But, what if we stop taking care of and supporting our Fellowship? Who will? I was asked to consider: what if I started coming to meetings and was required to have specific political, theological or philosophical beliefs? Would I stay? Would you? Would the newcomer?

Next, self-support is about A.A. being here for the sick and suffering alcoholic who needs help. It is for the newcomer who walks through the door for their first meeting, searches online for an answer, or is currently incarcerated or in a treatment center. For the “oldtimer” who though sober a long time is feeling restless, irritable or discontent. For you and me. If A.A. is to continue to be here, it requires sacrifice.

It requires a sacrifice of time. There are many A. A. service positions... who will fill them? What happens if they are not filled? A.A. could have the money to carry the message, but what if no one is willing to give of their time to do so? I was asked to consider the amount of time I spent thinking about, recovering from and actively drinking. And, then to sacrifice and give a fraction of that time back to the fellowship which gave me a new life.

It, of course, also takes money to have meetings and support the many outreach services provided. Here I was asked to consider how much money I spent on my drinking? Would I have found loose change, worked extra hours, sold things... anything to have the money to get my booze? And, then to sacrifice a fraction of what I spent to give back to a fellowship who brought me back to financial and emotional stability. I was also asked to consider a few “deeper” things like would I be okay if the meeting(s) where I got sober were no longer there? And, would I be okay if A.A. started choosing what type of drunk to help? So, for example, if we don't have money to reach and help the blind, deaf, non-English speaking, or those who live in or are serving our country in a remote area where there are no meetings? And, if not, would I sacrifice a little more and perhaps not buy so many candy bars or go out to eat as often?

In summary, I was taught to show my gratitude, not by the words but by my actions. So, I challenge each of you to reflect on the life you now have and how it would feel to be part of helping someone else avert a life of pain and misery. Consider if you could give just a little more.

The Area 59 Finance subcommittee has many helpful tools related to self-support; including a flyer announcing that November is gratitude month in Area 59, 7th tradition packets and pamphlets. We are also available to present at any workshops or meetings.

Spotlight: District 44

by Pete B., DCM

Just under one hour west of Philadelphia, District 44 is located in West Chester, Pennsylvania. The borough is an extremely busy college town, as well as the county seat of Chester County. We are home to two clubhouses, The 307 Club and 5 Points Center. Majority of our 35 groups meet at one of these two clubhouses. The rest of the groups are just outside the borough, creating a rather small District geographically speaking. We split from our northern neighbor District 30 in 1981, and again in 1989 to create Districts 55 and 56. While membership naturally ranges in age and length of sobriety, we have a very large population of younger members.

On any given night one can find around 50 young, sober members of Alcoholics Anonymous at a meeting. Such large numbers have contributed to the formation of the West Chester Young People's meeting, as well as the Chester County Bid Committee who will be hosting the Pennsylvania State Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous next summer. I've been blessed to watch that committee grow and witness the impact they have had on A.A. in District 44. Several of our G.S.R.'s, in addition to our current Officer at Large and myself, found an interest and passion for General Service through serving on the young people's committee first.

Our District meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7pm in the 307 Clubhouse. To help the GSR's gain a solid foundation in service, we regularly invite Area officers, past DCM's and other experienced servants to present the Tradition and Concept of each month. We have worked recently to inform groups, who are not represented at the District, of the importance of General Service. The GSR's created two flyers. One to outline the connection a GSR makes between the group and A.A. as a whole, the other lists the time and place of our District business meeting. These materials, along with the GSR pamphlet and enthusiastic servants, will begin making their way to unrepresented groups in the near future. Planning for a District workshop on the 12 Traditions has begun and we hope to have details for everyone soon.

Keep up to date with General Service in Eastern PA by visiting our web site: www.area59aa.org

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

2019 GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE THEME
"OUR BIG BOOK- 80 YEARS, 71 LANGUAGES"