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Planning for NERAASA 2024: **What's Happened and How to Get Involved**

The 2024 NERAASA (NorthEast Regional A.A. Service Assembly) event is being hosted by Area 59, Eastern Pennsylvania, from February 22–25 2024, at the Hershey Lodge in Hershey, PA. Planning for the event began over a year and a half ago on May 7th 2022, with our initial meeting occurring at the Hershey Lodge.

1 The initial meeting was introductory in nature, where the initial planning subcommittees were introduced, as well as the subcommittee chairs and officers as appointed by Steve O, NERASSA 2024 Chairperson and Area 59 Past Delegate Panel 63, neraasa2024chair@area59aa.org. Some A.A.s in attendance got their first look at the Hershey Hotel lobby and meeting spaces, an impressive sight to see.

Since this initial meeting, all encompassing meetings have continued at a two to three month interval, where all planning subcommittees get together to give updates and discuss their progress. In addition to the all encompassing meetings, some subcommittees meet on a regular basis using virtual platforms, while other subcommittees use virtual chat rooms to keep subcommittee members up to date on a more frequent basis.

2 The second NERAASA 2024 planning meeting was held on September 24th 2022 at The 521 Club in Lancaster, PA. Since news had been spreading of our Area hosting NERAASA 2024, many new faces showed up that day. By this time, donations towards NERAASA 2024 Hospitality were already coming in (~\$200 at that time, keep those donations coming!), Outreach was making plans to contact the other 17 Areas in the Northeast Region, and Site planning had already begun for the various Hershey Lodge meeting spaces.

3 The third planning meeting occurred on January 14th 2023 at the 8744 Clubhouse in Levittown, PA. The initial pitch to buy NERAASA 2024 t-shirt was made by Outreach subcommittee. In doing so, an initial t-shirt order was placed so those attending NERAASA 2023 could receive their t-shirt in Albany, NY. What better way to show our Area 59 pride on hosting NERAASA 2024!

4 The fourth NERAASA 2024 planning meeting was a virtual format, occurring on March 19th 2023. The Registration subcommittee announced that 44 registrants had already been received, some of those coming from preregistrations taken at NERAASA 2023 in Albany. Printed registration forms were being finalized, and a push for continued Hospitality donations was made. An Orientation subcommittee was formed at this time, chaired by Paul M, Area 59 Past Delegate Panel 67, to plan for any activities related to making the NERAASA newcomers feel informed and welcomed. Historically, a special Orientation session is held the first day at any NERAASA towards fulfilling this goal.

5 The fifth planning meeting was held May 13th 2023 at the Tree of Life Church in Springfield, PA. By this time, Outreach had purchased or produced many t-shirts, postcards, and flyers containing the NERAASA 2024 logo, as designed by our Area Web Servant, Scott F. An event draft program was starting to take shape through the hard work of folks on the Program subcommittee. Greeters were making plans on their approach to cover such a large space as the Hershey Lodge, having multiple entrances.

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The NorthEast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly

NERAASA

How It Got Started



The origins of NERAASA can be traced back to March 1988 when John S. (NNJ/A44), Jimmy S. (SENY/A49) and Tom L. (NNJ/A44) went to the Pacific Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (PRAASA) to gain experience on hosting a similar event. In the fall of the following year, John S. invited Northeast past and present delegates to meet and discuss having a regional service assembly.

The first NERAASA planning meeting was held January 14th 1990 at the Area 44 Office in Northern NJ. Seven people were in attendance: Jimmy S. (P27/A49), John S. (P33/A44), Annemarie M. (P39/A30), Jake H. (P38/A28), Tom L. (P37/A44), Carol C. (P39/A44), John H. (A44). Jimmy S. was elected chair of the committee, with minutes taken by Annemarie. The committee's intent was for NERAASA to be a "low-key, working weekend", made affordable to all who wish to attend.

At the second planning meeting held in June 1990, twelve of the eighteen delegate areas were in attendance, which constituted a 2/3rd majority and substantial unanimity for the Northeast Region. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to hold the first NERAASA in Area 30, Eastern MA, with the second NERAASA tentatively to be held in Area 12, Delaware.

The NERAASA concept was presented and well received at the September 1990 Delaware Area Assembly and the October 1990 NorthEast Regional Convention (NERC) in Hagerstown, MD. The NERAASA Committee received seed money from some delegate areas that Fall.

At the third NERAASA planning meeting held on January 12th 1991, 25 people were in attendance. The committee voted to have NERAASA the end of February, to avoid any conflicts with the "Women in A.A. Convention" the second weekend of February, and PRAASA held the first weekend of March. The committee also confirmed the bid for the second NERAASA to be held in Delaware. The first NERAASA announcement flyers were distributed at the NorthEast Regional Delegates reunion (NERD) in Eastern PA.

A letter was sent by the NERAASA '92 Host Committee in April 1991 to Northeast Regional Panel 40/41 Delegates, Alt. Delegates, and Area Chairs clarifying the purpose of NERAASA, the need for seed money contributions. The first NERAASA Registration forms were made available at the 1991 NorthEast Regional Forum (NERF) in Bethesda, MD. Each area received 500 registration forms, with the registration fee set at \$12.00 for the first NERAASA.

A letter was sent in August 1991 by the NERAASA '92 Chairperson to Panel 40/41 Northeast Regional Delegates, Alt. Delegates and Area Chairs, passing on more information and requesting input on Conference topics. At that point in time, five Northeast delegate areas had forwarded voluntary seed money.

An informal meeting was held at NERC 1991 with conference attendees and the NERAASA '92 and '93 committees. Annemarie M. briefly recounted the historical high points of how the concept of NERAASA began while, bringing all up to date on how registrations were going for the first NERAASA.

The very first NERAASA was held February 14th through the 16th 1992 in Danvers, MA., Area 30. To everyone's delight, 385 people attended, of which 205 were General Service Representatives (GSRs), District Committee Members (DCMs), and alternates. The entire 1993 NERAASA Committee was there as well. Although not all 18 delegate areas had yet voted to participate officially, all 18 areas were represented by A.A. members. There were two Saturday Night speakers, Ruth J., immediate past Pacific Regional Trustee, and Michael Alexander, General Service Board Chair. At this time, the Northeast Region was the fifth of the eight U.S./Canadian regions to host an A.A. Regional Service Assembly.

The 1993 NERAASA Planning committee met with Annemarie on March 12th 1992 in Wilmington, DE, where it was shared that no overage from the first NERAASA was available, thus no immediate '93 seed money. A motor home containing \$1,000.00 of NERAASA '92 checks had been stolen. Although the motor home was recovered, the checks were never found. As the old saying goes, "some of us are sicker than others...."

The NERAASA '93 Chair informed the DE Area Assembly for the need of seed money in April 1992. Area 12 (Delaware) delegate, Doug T., suggested that advance registrations be taken. Almost \$700.00 was raised that day from those planning to attend NERAASA '93, ever showing us the Hand of A.A. is always there in times of need.

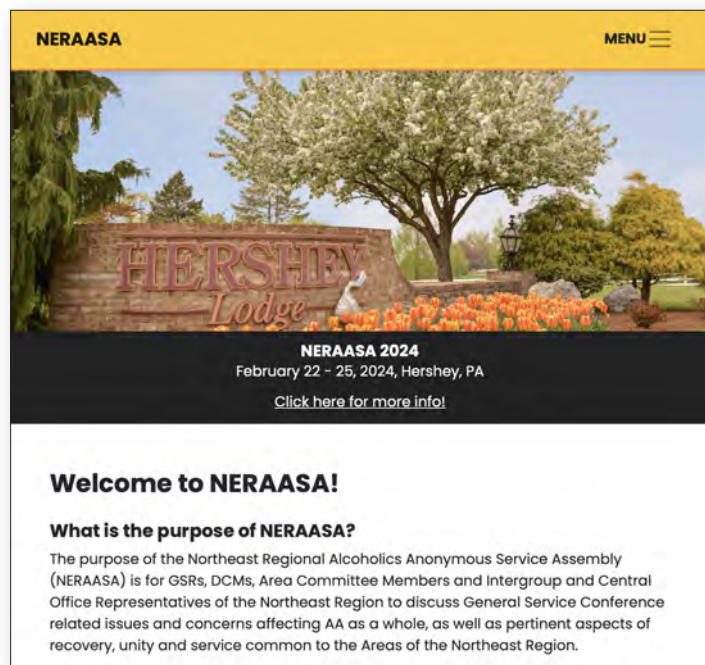
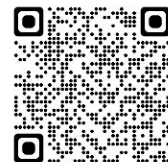
The second NERAASA was hosted by Area 12, Delaware, February 26th through 28th 1993 in Wilmington, Delaware. The event was chaired by Pat H., Panel 40 Past Delegate. Since the budgeted cost for the '93 event was less than expected, \$1,000.00 was sent as seed money to the NERAASA '94 committee. Also, the balance owed for NERAASA '92 and personal expenses incurred by the '92 Chairperson, were paid by a NERD decision made at the 1993 General Service Conference.

NERAASA has since been held annually in the following Areas/locations:

Year	Area (Location)
1992	30 Eastern Mass. (Danvers)
1993	12 Delaware (Wilmington)
1994	50 Western NY (Niagara Falls)
1995	28 Maine (Portland)
1996	45 Southern NJ (Cherry Hill)
1997	29 Maryland (Hagerstown)
1998	44 Northern NJ (Secaucus)
1999	59 Eastern PA (Carlisle)
2000	13 DC (Greenbelt)
2001	11 Connecticut (Hartford)
2002	60 Western PA (Pittsburgh)
2003	48 HMB (Albany)
2004	43 New Hampshire (Nashua)
2005	30 Eastern Mass. (Newton)
2006	70 Vermont (Burlington)
2007	29 Maryland (Hunt Valley)

For more information on the history of NERAASA, go to the NERAASA website at:

<https://www.neraasa.org/history/>



Year	Area (Location)
2008	45 Southern NJ (West Atlantic City)
2009	28 Maine (Portland)
2010	50 Western NY (Niagara Falls)
2011	49 Southeastern NY (Tarrytown)
2012	48 HMB (Albany)
2013	59 Eastern PA (Lancaster)
2014	61 Rhode Island (Warwick)
2015	44 Northern NJ (Somerset)
2016	31 Western Mass. (Springfield)
2017	30 Eastern Mass. (Framingham)
2018	11 Connecticut (Cromwell)
2019	29 Maryland (Hunt Valley)
2020	43 New Hampshire (Nashua)
2021	Virtual (Once Upon a Time...)
2022	60 Western PA (Pittsburgh)
2023	48 HMB (Albany)



(continued from page 1)

6 The sixth NERAASA 2024 planning meeting was virtual for the second time on July 23rd 2023. A new Volunteers subcommittee was formed at that time, to be chaired by David H. Volunteers is intended to be a “one-stop-shop” for individuals not having any preference of which subcommittee they want to join. Hospitality contributions were up to ~\$940 at this time, as reported by the NERAASA 2024 Treasurer, Michael S, neraasa2024treasurer@area59aa.org.

Due to a tropical storm in Southeastern Pennsylvania on September 23rd 2023, the seventh planning meeting, intended to be in-person, was changed to a virtual format. Outreach had completed a video presentation by this time, detailing what NERAASA is all about and why one should attend (video can be found on the Area 59 website). [HERE](#) The Accessibilities subcommittee had been coordinating with other Areas in the Northeast region to have enough translation equipment for NERAASA 2024 attendees. Hospitality announced a tentative theme for their suite, “Going to any lengths for sweet sobriety,” keeping in mind the hospitality location may be somewhat removed from the conference area.

8 The eighth EPGSA (Eastern Pennsylvania General Service Assembly, November 11th 2023 at the Wyndham Resort in Lancaster, PA) and ninth (December 9th 2023 at the Hershey Lodge in Hershey, PA) NERAASA 2024 planning meetings were most recently held. At the time of this article, we have already met all contractual requirements with the Hershey Lodge and stand at 542 registrants, 216 for Friday dinner, 231 for Saturday breakfast, 169 for Saturday lunch, 353 for Saturday banquet, and 187 for Sunday breakfast.

If you're not already involved with a NERAASA 2024 planning subcommittee, you should seriously consider joining in. A complete list of all subcommittees, brief description, and contact information is listed at right:

Accessibilities: This subcommittee focuses on members with special needs, such as a physical disability and need for English translation. Contact Vicki L, subcommittee chair, at: neraasa2024accessibilities@area59aa.org.

Digital Communications: This subcommittee focuses on digital planning needs, such as ebasts, event webapp tools, and event logos. Contact Claire B, subcommittee chair, at: neraasa2024DigitalComm@area59aa.org.

Forms: This subcommittee developed registration forms for the event, with all tangible functions already completed. For any questions about forms, contact Hugh H, subcommittee chair and Area 59 Past Delegate Panel 61, at: neraasa2024forms@area59aa.org.

Greeters: This subcommittee are the folks who do the meet and greet at NERAASA 2024, making all feel warm and welcomed in Hershey. Contact Neal M, subcommittee chair, at: neraasa2024greeter@area59aa.org.

Hospitality: This subcommittee plans and staffs the NERAASA hospitality suite. Contact Sunny O, subcommittee chair, at: neraasa2024hospitality@area59aa.org.

Orientation: This subcommittee focuses on making the NERAASA newbies feel warm and welcomed, as well as passing on information about what happens at NERAASA. Contact Paul M, subcommittee chair and Area 59 Past Delegate Panel 67, at: neraasa2024orientation@area59aa.org.

Outreach: This subcommittee spreads the word about NERAASA 2024. Contact Deb S, subcommittee chair, at: neraasa2024outreach@area59aa.org

Program: This subcommittee plans the panels/topics for NERAASA 2024 general sessions, with panels/topics generally based upon the General Service Conference (GSC) agenda items. Contact Caroline N, subcommittee chair and Area 59 Past Delegate Panel 71, at: neraasa2024program@area59aa.org

Registration: This subcommittee keeps track of registrations/meals for NERAASA and provides on-site registration services. Contact Fred S, subcommittee chair, at: neraasa2024registration@area59aa.org

Site/Hotel: This subcommittee is involved in site planning of meeting spaces and general hotel items, with many tangible functions already completed. For any site/hotel questions, contact Ryan T, Site subcommittee chair, or Suzanne C, Hotel chair, at: neraasa2024site@area59aa.org

Volunteers: Not sure on what subcommittee to join or willing to service where most help is needed, Volunteers is the place for you! Contact David H, subcommittee chair, at: neraasa2024volunteer@area59aa.org

It is with deep gratitude we thank all involved for their hard work in planning NERAASA 2024! If not already involved, it's time to join our team. Together, let's make NERAASA 2024 an event to remember!

More information on NERAASA 2024 can be found [HERE](#).

In Service,

Ted C.

NERAASA 2024 Planning Secretary

neraasa2024secretary@area59aa.org



A NEW YEAR AND A RENEWED SENSE OF FREEDOM



With the new year upon us, we can take time and reflect on the joys of life in our new life of sobriety.

A new life in sobriety is a transformative experience, bringing about a sense of freedom and hope. It is a time of self-discovery, growth, and healing. Sobriety provides us with the opportunity to rebuild relationships, pursue new interests, and rediscover our passions. It gives us time to reflect on past mistakes and learn from them, paving the way for a brighter future.

Our journey in sobriety can be a challenging one, but it is also a rewarding one. It requires a great deal of courage, determination, and support. For us, the first step towards sobriety is acknowledging we have a problem with alcohol. This can be a difficult and humbling experience, but it's the necessary first step towards a new life.

Once we acknowledge our alcoholism, we can begin the process of recovery. This process can take many forms, with many choosing the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) fellowship for their recovery journey. This choice is often made after a broken relationship, a run in with the law, after coming from a rehabilitation center, or individual therapy or counseling. Regardless how we get to AA, the goal of our recovery is to help ourselves and others to achieve and maintain sobriety.

One of the most important aspects of recovery is the development of a support system. This can include an AA homegroup and its' members, family, friends of AA, and other alcoholics who are committed to helping us achieve our goals. A strong support system provides with the

encouragement, guidance, and accountability they need to stay on track.

In addition to developing a support system, we must also learn to cope with the challenges of daily life without the use of alcohol. This can be a difficult adjustment, as many of us had relied upon booze to cope with stress, anxiety, and other challenges. However, with the help of our AA support system, we can learn new coping strategies and develop healthier habits.

As we progress in our recovery, we begin to experience a sense of freedom that was once lost. This newfound freedom can take many forms. For some, it may mean the ability to pursue new interests and hobbies that were once neglected. For others, it may mean the ability to rebuild relationships that were damaged by alcoholism. Whatever form it takes, this sense of freedom can be a powerful motivator to continue on the path of sobriety.

Our new life in sobriety is a transformative experience, bringing about a renewed sense of freedom, for the new year and beyond. A sober life requires great courage, strong determination, and the support of fellow AA members. Sobriety directs us towards a bright and promising future. By acknowledging our alcoholism, developing a support system, and learning new coping strategies, we can achieve and maintain sobriety. With time, we begin to experience a newfound sense of freedom that allows us to live life on life's terms, free from the constraints of alcoholism.

Area 59 Subcommittee Spotlight: *Grapevine/La Vinã*

Several of my favorite skits are from Saturday Night Live, where the game-show Jeopardy, hosted by Alex Trebek, was parodied. A particular skit that stands out is one where the category was “colors that end in urple”. Of course, none of the contestants are able, or perhaps willing, to give the correct answer. Hillary Swank was one of the contestants and responds “light urple.” As the match continues, Alex Trebek becomes increasingly more restless, irritable, and discontented. Even before the game ensued beyond that, while looking over his contestants that evening, Alex says “I stand before you a broken and miserable man.”

There’s something about that skit, the hopelessness of Alex Trebek, that resonates with me. And since this is a spotlight article on *Grapevine* Subcommittee, I thought something in a purple, or light urple tone, would be a fitting start.

The first time I read “it was a statistical fact that alcoholics almost never recovered on their own resources. And this had been true, apparently, ever since man had first crushed grapes.”, I felt crushed myself and defeated. However, each time I read from AA *Grapevine*, I felt fulfilled, nourished, and collectively part of something much greater than myself.

And as I sat with Jessica T. (District 56), the chair of *Grapevine* subcommittee at EPGSA (Eastern Pennsylvania General Service Assembly) for this interview, I was nourished with some grape NERDS that I was voluntold to consume to get in the purple spirit.

The subcommittee is comprised of:

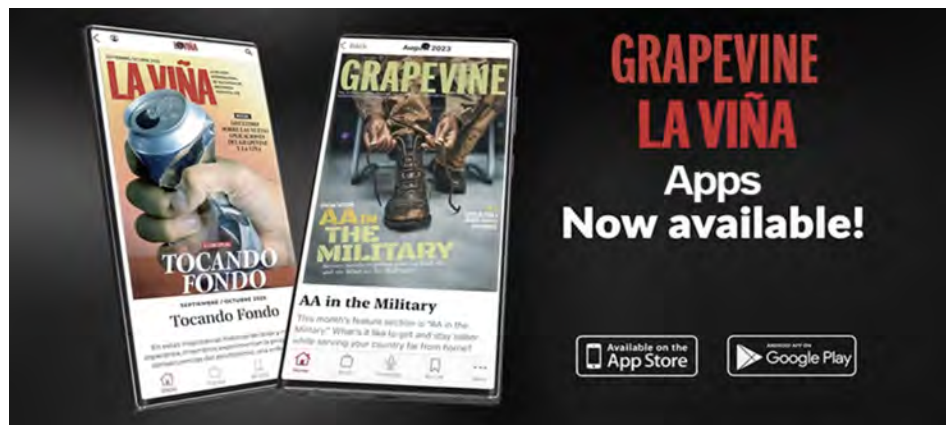
- Heidi T. (District 56)
- Mike D. (District 35)
- Katie Mc C. (District 26)
- Liz F. (District 48)
- Tara C., Area 59 Treasurer and *Grapevine/La Vinã* Subcommittee Advisor

It has certainly been a big year for AA *Grapevine*, and the subcommittee has been extremely hard at work on their Delegate’s recommendations. They’ve been present at many of District workshops and Area 59 events and have a phenomenal display. The subcommittee has been working

collaboratively with Greater Philadelphia *Grapevine* Committee and have established a contact list with all the Area 59 homegroup *Grapevine* Representatives (GVR). Additionally, monthly virtual meetings held via Zoom, Meeting ID 509 568 0294, passcode 628025, second Thursday of every month at 7 PM. As to their Statement of Purpose, “The *Grapevine* Committee holds a monthly meeting for the sole purpose of better communicating information about AA *Grapevine* magazine, through the *Grapevine* Representatives, to the Groups, to the Districts, and to the Members. We educate ourselves from the reading of the *Grapevine* workbook and the *Grapevine* magazine (with discussion) about the history, the publication, and the function of *Grapevine* Inc., within the AA structure.”

Books were ordered in preparation for EPGSA, November 10th-12th 2023, and will be preordered for NERAASA (NorthEast Regional A.A. Service Assembly) upcoming in Hershey February 22nd-25th 2024. Digital credit/debit card readers were purchased for use at events for electronic payments to be used (this is the first year).

The biggest news is AA *Grapevine/La Vinã* has gone mobile with an App that can be [downloaded](#). Some of the service is free, but to really get what AA *Grapevine* provides to many struggling and recovering alcoholics, there is a *Grapevine* Digital subscription (App plus website) which combines the *Grapevine* Complete online access to the website, archive and the App.



The cost is \$29.99 for one year and \$2.99 per month. A *Grapevine* complete subscription (print magazine and *Grapevine* online) is \$49.97 for one year and \$4.99 per month. *Grapevine* ePub allows for all-inclusive and unlimited access to archive at \$19.99 per year. And of course, you can still get print subscriptions for only \$28.97 for one year.

The first edition of AA *Grapevine* (originally the *Grapevine* but later changed to AA *Grapevine* due to Federal Government/FBI issue name/copyright issue of an already existing internal FBI publication.... of course, alcoholics would have run ins with the law), was in June of 1944. Service members overseas were grateful and eager to have AA *Grapevine* and the message it carried to them so many miles from home. “*Grapevine* is our meeting in print. It is an ideal solution for those on the road or in the air or who cannot attend regular meetings. The magazine can be read like a meeting, starting with the Preamble, then reading different stories, and ending with the Serenity Prayer. There is even a monthly discussion question!”

Things that you may not know about, but do now, is *Grapevine* has an Instagram account. AA *Grapevine* has a podcast called *The Half-Hour Variety Hour*. *Grapevine* has an audio project Listen and Record. Want to help another alcoholic? *Grapevine* has a 2023 Carry the Message Project. Two characters have appearances repeatedly in AA *Grapevine*... Victor E. and Claire T. Our *Grapevine* subcommittee chair Jessica T. was a history major at one time. She is passionate about what she does, as are all the members of the *Grapevine* subcommittee.

Thanks for your tireless service.

Jim K.

District 67 DCM
and member of the Ad Hoc
Digital Communications
Subcommittee

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Public Information.....	publicinfo@area59aa.org
Structure	structure@area59aa.org
Treatment/Accessibility.....	tf@area59aa.org
Ad Hoc Digital Communications	digitalcomm@area59aa.org

Your local Intergroup Office can provide service opportunities in your area.

ABE Intergroup (Allentown/Bethlehem/Easton)
www.aalv.org

Hanover Area Intergroup
www.hanoverintergroup.org

Harrisburg Area Intergroup
www.aaharrisburg.org

Lancaster Area Intergroup
www.lancasteraa.org

Lebanon County Intergroup
www.lebanonpaaa.org

Pocono Mountain Area Intergroup
www.poconointergroupaa.org

Reading Area Intergroup
www.readingberksintergroup.org

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, Northeastern PA Intergroup
www.aaintergroupnepa.org

Southeastern PA Intergroup
www.aasepia.org

York Area Intergroup
www.york-pa-aa.org

Area 59 Archives

Area 59 Archives Walking Tour

Introduction

Join Area Archivist Donald H. on an informative walk through the Area 59 Archives Display Room.

Check to see if your group has a history on file by emailing:

archivist@area59aa.org.

Area 59 Archives



In this first segment, we are introduced to the center of the room which contains (48) District binders that contain the Group histories, in alphabetical order, that have been submitted to our Archivist over the years.

Area 59 Calendar of Events

Calendar of Events



Get in Service!

Bridging the Gap



Our fellowship offers a program designed to assist new members after their release from treatment and correctional facilities, this program is called **Bridging the Gap**.

Visit our webpage for more information and to get involved!

Bridging the Gap

In this section of the Area 59 website you will find a comprehensive chronological list of events occurring within Area 59 and our larger A.A. fellowship.

We also show you how you can add your local A.A. event to Area 59's Calendar of Events.

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we newsletter is published by Area 59 to enhance Unity. Please let us know what you think. We welcome your suggestions for making this a more useful publication.

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Area 59

EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
GENERAL SERVICE ASSEMBLY
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we newsletter