



WAGE

newsletter

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E.P.G.S.A. Annual Convention & Assembly **Why Attend?**

Thinking back when I was a Group Service Representative (GSR) representing my homegroup, The Williamsport Group, in the 1990s, I attended my first annual Eastern Pennsylvania General Service Conventions & Assembly (E.P.G.S.A.). My homegroup had financially sponsored me to attend this weekend event. The E.P.G.S.A. Convention was being held at the Mount Airy Lodge in the Poconos. I remember that Saturday morning walking to the Convention Assembly with my District while being ushered to the section of the room where we; District 48, were assigned to sit. I found myself spending the next several hours listening to officer and subcommittee reports, sitting, waiting, snacking, fellowshiping, and wondering what was really going on. Then, I cast my vote for one of the Trusted Servants standing in front of the room for a position in Area 59 (Eastern Pennsylvania).

In District 48, the District Committee Member (DCM) and the seasoned GSRs had me feeling like they were holding me hostage for the day. If you wanted to step out of the room to take a break, you had better be back in your seat in a certain amount of

I got the “service bug” by attending these E.P.G.S.A. conventions, and I was eventually provided the opportunity to be one of those Trusted Servants.

time. However, after that weekend’s experiences, I found a renewed sense of purpose and energy as I carried A.A.’s message back to Williamsport to the suffering alcoholic. It was exciting when I found out that the GSR service position was an important part of the election process. All Area 59 Officers, Past Delegates, DCMs, and GSRs are eligible to cast a ballot and vote. My vote representing my homegroup did matter! That is why I needed to be there.

Although that particular year was a voting year, the next year I attended the E.P.G.S.A. Convention, it was a weekend full of informative, concurrent workshops, Assembly speakers from the General Service Board in New York and sharing sessions where members were allowed to go to the mic and speak their minds. I enjoyed the evening

ice cream socials, the dances and especially meeting new members from across the area.

Through the years as I continued to attend E.P.G.S.A. conventions, I have learned that the conventions have been a valuable experience for members involved in A.A. service. It offers you a chance to learn, grow, and connect with the broader Area 59 community. Most E.P.G.S.A. Conventions feature powerful keynote speakers who share their personal stories of recovery, offering hope and inspiration to all members.

I got the “service bug” by attending these E.P.G.S.A. conventions and I was eventually provided the opportunity to be one of those Trusted Servants. I also found out there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes. When I was DCM for District 48, I was appointed Finance Chair for Area 59. The next Panel year I stood for Area 59 Treasurer and was elected to serve. I went on to become the Area 59 Secretary and my current position in Panel 73 is Area 59 Chairperson. My service journey in Area 59 continues since that time, all due to attending my first E.P.G.S.A. assembly..

Yours in Service,

Susan M.

Area 59 Chairperson, Panel 73
Subcommittee Chair

2024

Is an election year
for your next
Area 59 Delegate

67th annual

Join us to elect a new panel
of officers to serve A.A. in
Eastern Pennsylvania

Eastern Pennsylvania General Service Assembly

November
8 thru 10

Wyndham Lancaster Resort & Convention Center
2300 Lincoln Highway East
Lancaster, PA 17602

Who attends the EPGSA Convention/Assembly?

All GSRs, ADCMs, DCMs, Area Officers, and Past Delegates, plus any and all interested A.A. members are welcome.

The Home Group should financially support its GSR in attending the Convention/Assembly.

What happens at the Convention/Assembly?

In even-numbered years, we have elections for the Delegate and Area Officers.

In odd-numbered years, we gather for an Assembly at which the Area Officers and Area Committees report on their work to the Assembly.

Each year, we have workshops, discussion panels and meetings where the voices of the entire area are shared, offering each of us a wider and varied experience of 12th step service work.

What can I get out of this experience?

A renewed sense of purpose and energy to carry A.A.'s message.

A greater understanding of the issues involved and solutions to the problems we face when we are trying to carry the message to alcoholics.

A sense of being a part of Area 59 and A.A. as a whole; sharing in the ongoing efforts to protect our Fellowship and carry our message.

What do I do afterwards?

GSRs should consider giving a report to their group.

Members can and should share their experience at meetings and among friends.

Why is it important?

This is the only time during the year when we gather, speak, and vote as an Area. The Delegate may take this opportunity to seek guidance from the Assembly on matters concerning the Area or the General Service Conference.

At these Area gatherings we have a rare opportunity to share our concerns and solutions to problems we face in carrying A.A.'s message with a diverse group who can inform us of their experience.



Scan for the
most current
event details.



Area 59

EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
GENERAL SERVICE ASSEMBLY
area59aa.org

The History of the EPGSA Convention

Area 59 Archives

What began with less than 100 people in 1958 has grown and attendance has fluctuated. In 1972 there were 600 people, 1978 had 268 voters with 686 present for the banquet. 1979 saw over 600 people in attendance and in 1980 there were 540 people with 288 eligible voters in attendance. Then, in 1984, 802 people attended and the election took 6 ½ hours! At the September 1988 Area meeting it was announced that 912 registrations had been received for the convention of that year. In 1990 there were 530 voting members and over 1,100 people in attendance. 1992 brought 624 voters to the elections. In 1998 there were 619 eligible voters at the elections, in 2002 the number was 549 and in 2004 there were 478 voters. In 2008 there were a total of 396 eligible voters.

Our election history is interesting in and of itself. Up until 1976 it was held on Sunday anywhere between 11:30 am and 2:00 pm. In 1976 the election took place @ 11:30 Sunday morning, in 1978 at 2:00 Saturday afternoon. In 1980 our election was held Saturday morning at 9:00 am and has remained around that time ever since.

The dates the convention is held varied widely in the beginning. In 1962 it was held the last weekend in September; in the late 60s and through the 70s, mid to late October. In 1980, the convention settled into early November and has been held on the first or second weekend of that month ever since.

The program for the weekend has undergone many changes. When first started it was meetings, meetings, and more meetings. In 1965 on Saturday @4:00 you had a choice: the movie "*Bill's Own Story*" or your first "Wet Meeting — Meet Mr. and Mrs. Booze in the Pool!"

A.A. and Al-Anon workshops were introduced in 1969 some with speakers and some without. The Saturday night meeting with both A.A. and Al-Anon speakers became a mainstay of the convention and continued until 1980 when the practice of having just one speaker became the norm.

Through the 60s, 70s, and 80s, Friday night had a dinner followed by an A.A. and Al-Anon speaker meeting, then films and an Alkathon. There was also a Young People's Meeting on Friday and a Young People's Sharing Session on Saturday.

Participation by service position has also varied over the years. Meetings, workshops and presentations have been chaired, and have involved both A.A. and non-A.A. participants. GSRs, ADCMs, Area officers, past Delegates; all have been involved at every level of participation. In 1981 Area Officers were given "jobs" at the convention, past Delegates chaired workshops and GSRs and ADCMs chaired meetings and were involved with presentations.

Our Structure Manual states that in 1958 past Delegate Dick C. organized the first convention. At that time it was called the "State Convention". Fewer than 100 people attended but interest was awakened.

In 1962, the gathering was called the "Annual Eastern Pennsylvania A.A. Conference" and was held at Galen Hall in Wernersville. Cost for the weekend package which included registration, lodging and meals for the entire weekend was \$35.00.

The Deauville Hotel in Atlantic City was the host of the 1965 convention. The program consisted of A.A. and Al-Anon meetings, a Saturday night open meeting with two speakers- one alcoholic and one non-alcoholic followed by a "Floor Show" of entertainment. Sunday was a full day with Catholic Mass and Protestant services in the morning with meetings and activities until adjournment at 4:30 in the afternoon.

Our convention was held at Pocono Manor in 1968 with golf, swimming and horseback riding available - at an extra cost.

The Eastern Pennsylvania General Service Convention was held in 1976 at the Sheraton Picasso Inn in White Haven Pa.

1977 brought a new location - the Tamiment Country Club in the Poconos.

In 1978 the name became the Eastern Pennsylvania General Service Assembly Convention and moved to the Downingtown Inn & Golf Tennis Resort. Elections were held Saturday afternoon at 2:00.

The convention remained at Downingtown until 1981 when it moved to the Pocono Hershey Resort which later became the Mountain Laurel Resort.

In 1990 we relocated to the Mount Airy Lodge, also in the Poconos, where it remained until 2000 when it was held at the Mountain Laurel Resort in Lake Harmony, Pa.

Split Rock Resort became home in 2001 until 2009 when the convention moved to the Lancaster Host Resort where it is currently held.

By Donald H., Area 59 Archivist

March 2014, Updated May 5, 2024

AREA DAY

Presented by Area 59

Come get to know your Area Officers,
the DCMs, and the Subcommittees,
and what it all means!

Saturday
October 12, 2024
10am – 2pm

Misericordia University
301 Lake St.
Dallas, PA 18612
Rooms: Insalaco 216-219

Doors Open at 9am,
program starts at 10am

[More Information](#)

What do the Area subcommittees do?

Who are the Area officers?

Where do our Area contributions go when we send them in?

Who is standing for the Area Committee in the fall?

These are questions often heard. One way the Area has worked on communication and collaboration is through Area Day. Area Day is now held the second year of each panel and provides all members of Area 59 to gather and share experience. The information received from Area 59 Archivist, Donald H., reveals that Area Day started in the first year of the panel; some panels held Area Day in both years; and some panels didn't have an Area Day event.

The first Area Day was held October 24, 1993. The intention of the symposium, as they called Area Day, was to share information and experience, to be informative to the Fellowship. As noted in the program from the first Area Day, *"Bill and Dr. Bob knew that in unity we find and have strength. The Group has the responsibility to cultivate and develop the leaders of the future. These leaders have the responsibility to inspire and invigorate other members."* The agenda included a presentation on the role and importance of Subcommittees within the Area Structure and a panel presentation from Past Delegates.

Since the first Area Day, most years' programs have the same theme and focus - sharing experience and information. Area Day provides the opportunity for members of the Area to gather together, to know how the Area functions and what the roles of Subcommittees and Officers are, and to strengthen the unity among its members.

**I invite every member of Area 59 to join us
in District 40, at Misericordia University,
on October 12, 2024 from 10 am – 2 pm**

To learn more about the Area Officers, the role of the Subcommittees, and most importantly, to share information and experience. Please reach out to me at treasurer@area59aa.org with any questions

I hope to see all of you there!

A big thank you to Donald for all the Archival Information!

Yours in Service,
Tara C.
Area 59 Treasurer

Understanding A.A.'s Fellowship Connection Database

Area 59 Eastern Pennsylvania has a robust service structure comprising 48 districts. We have 1,620 active, registered groups; 30 of which are virtual. Most A.A. groups in the United States and Canada choose to be linked to A.A. as a whole by listing their group with the General Service Office (GSO). This is only so that communication can flow between your group and the U.S./Canada Service structure. Groups listed with GSO have their General Service Representatives (GSRs) or “group contacts” act as channels for two-way communication and shared experience. Once a group is registered, they are issued a unique Group ID number and their history start date is recorded.

Fellowship Connection is the name of the database GSO uses for this record keeping. As your Area 59 Officer-at-Large, I serve as Registrar and have edit access to this database. One of my main responsibilities is to keep the information in Fellowship Connection as current as possible. Area Registrars can update records, view current information, search, filter and download custom and standard reports including Groups by District, Service Position and Contacts. The Delegate and District Committee Members (DCMs) are granted read-only access to this database. We can only view our groups here in Area 59, so we are not able to see information on other areas/provinces and vice versa.

There are forms on our Area 59 website where you can list a new group and update an existing group's information. These changes can also be submitted to GSO, but it is preferable to make them through your Area Registrar (that's me!) as we can relieve clerical burden on our special workers in New York and personally welcome our new GSRs to general service in Eastern Pennsylvania. Area 59 and GSO are using the same database so it is only necessary to submit changes to one or the other.

It is the practice of GSO to list groups and not meetings in the Fellowship Connection database. GSO is often asked, “Will filling out a new group form ensure my group appears in local

meetings lists and the Meeting Guide App?” The answer is no. GSO and Area 59 do not maintain their own list of meetings. The meeting lists maintained by intergroups and by districts not served by an intergroup are what feed into the Meeting Guide App, and also to the meeting list on the Area 59 website. So naturally there are many meetings appearing on the Meeting Guide App that are not registered as groups with a unique Group ID number.

The information in the Fellowship Connection database is only as good as what we put into it. So please help by submitting any changes through the “Group Change Form” on our website. (*See button provided below*)

When should I submit a change to Area 59?

- Starting a new group
- Registering an existing group
- Changing a group's name, meeting location, district, or format (*in-person or virtual*)
- There is a new GSR, Alternate GSR, or Mail Contact
- Order a “New GSR Kit” by mail or email
- A group becomes inactive, or an inactive group becomes active again

What if a group needs to make a change on the Meeting Guide App?

Submit the change to your local intergroup. If your group is not served by an intergroup, please contact a member of your district.

[Group Change Form](#)


Please let me help you! I am happy to answer any questions, provide information like Group ID numbers and history dates, assist you with the online forms, or visit your district or group.

Thank you so much for letting me be of service.

Claire B.

Officer-at-Large / Registrar
Area 59, Panel 73

Officer-at-Large@area59aa.org



Area 59 Subcommittee Spotlight: CPC/PI

Thanks to Zoom, I had the privilege of meeting for a virtual interview with the co-chairs of our newly conjoined Area 59 Cooperation with the Professional Community/Public Information (CPC/PI) Subcommittee. Alex B., the District 43 DCM, had been CPC Subcommittee Chair. Deb S., the District 30 DCM, was the PI Subcommittee Chair. I asked them both what the purposes of their initial subcommittees were. Deb explained, "PI was to assist the districts and the general public on how to spread the word about A.A." She followed-up that it also meant clarifying, "What A.A. is and what A.A. isn't." Alex posited that CPC was meant to reach out to professional communities and to hold and participate in CPC outreach events. Alex explained their task was to prepare GSRs at the district level to carry out CPC work.

As I learned a little more about Deb and Alex, it was apparent they were both very enthusiastic about service. Alex had formerly participated in his district's CPC Subcommittee (though he is unsure if our Delegate, Pete, knew that before asking him to chair the committee). Initially, Alex declined the opportunity to chair, thinking that he would not have enough time to do the job justice. However, Alex became more available, and a need developed for the position to be filled. Alex stated,

"I just assumed everybody around me would be full of energy for service." Alex jumped in ready to be overrun with enthusiastic support; however, it seemed that people had a lot less time to offer to CPC tasks than he expected. Alex said that the subcommittee started with six members but was now sitting at five.

Deb has certainly seen a fair share of service work herself. She chaired as a member of Area 59's Ad-hoc Literature Subcommittee on the previous panel. I can't forget the time I spent with her as she chaired the Outreach Committee for NERAASA 2024, the North East Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly! Deb certainly has a strong track record as a leader; however, according to Deb, P.I. only had 4 active DCMs. Two of her assigned districts were unrepresented from the start. This certainly limits the amount of work a subcommittee can accomplish... not that there aren't accomplishments to talk about. CPC, for example, created a business card for Area 59 that can be personalized.

PI created 3-ring Digital Binders of commonly used A.A. Literature and gave them out to intergroups. They also put on presentations and created a "More Info" tab for the Area 59 website. However, both subcommittees struggled to participate in outreach across all of Eastern Pennsylvania.

The idea to merge came from Alex N., the Structure Subcommittee Chair. "He didn't really have to sell it," Deb explained. "The idea sold itself." DCMs are a very limited resource. By combining, they would be able to cover an appropriate amount of ground! Alex said that he had experienced great effectiveness in combining some of the committees in his district as well.

I asked if we would see any collaborative projects from our new subcommittee this panel. They explained they will present together at E.P.G.S.A. on the topic of "Anonymity and Social Media." They also know that they will be creating recommendations for the next panel's displays. When asked if they saw other future benefits to combining PI with CPC, Deb said that she expects "more enthusiasm and consistency... and more people to cover workshops!" Alex was enthusiastic about the benefits of consolidating the goal so that more could get done.

Only a few A.A.s ever get the opportunity to be a DCM and even fewer get the opportunity to chair a subcommittee. What is exceptionally rare is chairing a subcommittee that gets combined with another subcommittee mid-panel to create two co-chairs for one subcommittee. I wanted to capitalize on their unique experience and ask what advice they would give to anyone that gets the opportunity to take a leadership position in A.A. Alex stressed, "Developing your own leadership style takes time." For him, it meant finding ways to give as many opportunities as possible to those around him. Alex also commented it takes a while to appreciate the differences in how different leaders think. Deb agreed. She learned the importance of communication. Deb also provided me with one of my favorite warnings ever, "You won't be able to hide from your character defects." "The solution," she said, "is learning to listen and trust as other peoples' ideas come out."

(Continued on next page)

Deb and Alex agreed it has been fantastic working with each other. Perhaps with the success and enthusiasm behind this new subcommittee, we might see more co-chairing situations in the future. Both would also be interested to see if we could find more opportunities for ADCMs to get involved in subcommittees. The Area 59 CPC/PI Subcommittee is available to present at districts, homegroups,

workshops, and other events. So don't hesitate to reach out. I would like to thank Alex and Deb for their time and for all the DCMs serving our CPC/PI subcommittee. It has been a pleasure getting to shed light on another Area 59 Subcommittee.

Yours in Service,
Tom W.
ADCM – D67



EPGSA Convention 2024



We NEED Volunteers!

Fill out a form online



Volunteer Form

or contact

Dan B., secretary@area59aa.org
Tara C., treasurer@area59aa.org



2025 VIRTUAL

Northeast Regional A.A. Service Assembly

HOSTED BY



FEBRUARY 21 - 22 - 23

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (NERAASA) is for GSRs, DCMs, Area Committee Members and Intergroup/Central Office Representatives of the Northeast Region to:

- discuss General Service Conference issues/concerns.
- address Recovery, Unity and Service in the NE Region.

PROGRAM

- **Panel Presentations** on current A.A. issues.
- **Floor Discussions:** including the Northeast Regional Trustee's report
- **Roundtable Sharing Sessions** Topics include:

Accessibilities /Remote Communities, Archives, Area Chairs / Alternate Area Chairs, Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) , Corrections, Area Delegates/Alternate Area Delegates, District Committee Members (DCMs) / Alternate DCMs/District Committee Member Chairs (DCMCs) / Alternate DCMCs, General Service Representatives (GSRs) / Alternate GSRs, Grapevine/La Viña, Intergroups/Central Offices, Literature, Public Information (PI), Registrars, Secretaries, Treasurers, Treatment, Websites/Technology, Young People, Español



\$35

**TO ATTEND BY
PHONE, TABLET
OR COMPUTER.**

Register Now



WWW.NERAASA.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



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.

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

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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