



WWE

newsletter

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Learning, Serving, and Growing in Fellowship:

In this issue, get a preview of the 68th Annual EPGSA Convention and Assembly, explore a first-timer's experience at the 2025 International Convention in Vancouver, read a former delegate's reflections on A.A. groups and service, and see how Districts 21 and 29 are carrying the message through connection and service.

EPGSA will be held November 14 through 16 at the Wyndham in Lancaster, PA. All necessary information to register for the Convention and book a hotel room is available at area59aa.org, or use the link below.

Event Details

Preview of the 68th Annual Eastern Pennsylvania General Service Convention and Assembly (EPGSA) from a former Delegate

The EPGSA (*Eastern Pennsylvania General Service Assembly*) Convention and Assembly weekend is open to all members of A.A. and is especially useful for the General Service Representatives in Area 59. There is something wonderful that happens when we gather in large numbers. We laugh, we make new lifelong friends, and we hear that special something that we needed to hear at precisely the right moment.

A vast collection of experience is shared from all over Eastern Pennsylvania, helping each of us grow on our respective journey towards helping others find the lifesaving message of Alcoholics Anonymous. The EPGSA Convention hosts workshops to help anyone in service expand their tool kit. Guests join

us from our General Service Board and General Service Office in New York to share the vital work of A.A. internationally. These guest speakers also share their A.A. stories for us to connect in recovery as well as in service. Reports are shared to update the fellowship on the activities of the Area Committee, including its Officers and Delegates. All the information that is available throughout the weekend is significant for the General Service Representative to share with their home group. Informing the home group is crucial for connecting the group to A.A. as a whole and promoting a solid service structure.

Many GSRs and members return home from EPGSA recharged with new enthusiasm for Alcoholics Anonymous and service.

There is so much more to A.A. than the home group, and there is so much more to A.A. than just not drinking. Take advantage of this unique opportunity to unite with Area 59.

See you in November!

Pete B., Panel 73, Former Delegate

*On September 13th, 2025,
my mother passed away with
38 years of continuous sobriety.*

*I know she is still with me
as I trudge this road,
one day at a time.*

Jacqueline B.
Home group:
The Only Requirement,
in Kennett Square, PA.

Read Jacqueline's story on Page 2

A First-Timer's Experience at the 2025 A.A. International Convention in Vancouver



This year, a little over two years sober, I had the privilege of attending my first-ever International AA Conference. I don't think God could have planned it at a more perfect time in my life. My mother, who had 38 years of sobriety, had been living with ALS since August 2022. Just one day before I was due to leave for Vancouver, she shared heartbreaking news with my family: she had begun making arrangements for the end of her life, and it was coming much sooner than we expected.

I was devastated—overflowing with grief and anger. Twenty-four hours and a million “AA” phone calls later, I boarded my plane. When I landed, my home group family was there to greet me with love and support.

By the time we walked from the train station to our hotel that first night, I began to feel the awesomeness of the International Conference. Everywhere I looked, there were lanyards and nametags. At the hotel, nearly every guest was “one of us.” The next morning, I went searching for a meeting on grief. I found one on the app, and it was exactly what I needed—I laughed, I cried, I met people going through the same thing, and some going through (what felt to me) even worse.

Later, as I walked to the main meeting, I realized that nearly every person I passed on the streets of Vancouver was a member of AA. Standing in line for the stadium meeting, the line stretched as far as I could see—thousands of alcoholics, all there together.

When I finally got inside, the feeling was unlike anything I'd ever experienced. When I first learned I was losing my mother, my world felt unbearably small, my life felt futile, and my heart was heavy. But with each call—to my partner, to my sponsor, to my friends—I felt my world expand just a little. With each meeting, my life felt a little more hopeful, and with each exchange of pins, my heart felt a little lighter.

My experience at the International Conference was less about the program and more about the spiritual experience of being among 30,000 alcoholics just like me. Each person in that stadium had been through so much, and yet here they were—still sober. That weekend, I felt more connected to AA, to people, and to life itself than ever before.

On September 13th, 2025, my mother passed away with 38 years of continuous sobriety. I know she is still with me as I trudge this road, one day at a time.

Jacqueline B.

Home group: *The Only Requirement* in Kennett Square, PA.

A.A. International Convention 2025 – By the Numbers

- 90th Anniversary of A.A.
- July 3–6, 2025
- Vancouver Convention Centre (West) & BC Place Stadium
- Hundreds of meetings & workshops, three “Big Meetings” (Flag Ceremony, Old Timers, Closing)
- Projected attendance: ~48,000 attendees
- During event estimates: ~35,000–40,000 participants
- Some outlets said up to 60,000 visitors including family & friends
- Countries represented: 80+
- Languages & access: Translation, ASL interpretation, and accessibility services

Reflections from a Former Delegate: *Democratic in Thought and Action?*

Over the past two or three decades, our understanding of what constitutes an A.A. group has shifted away from the definition in Tradition 3: “Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.”

For example, the pamphlet “The A.A. Group . . . Where It All Begins” (P-16) (view PDF, at right) distinguishes between a “group” and a “meeting,” starting on page 12. In a subsection titled “*Is there a difference between a meeting and a group?*” the distinction is explained:

Most A.A. members meet in A.A. groups as defined by the long form of our Third Tradition (see page 44). However, some A.A. members hold A.A. meetings that differ from the common understanding of a group. These members simply gather at a set time and place for a meeting, perhaps for convenience or other special situations. The main difference between meetings and groups is that A.A. groups generally continue to exist outside the prescribed meeting hours, ready to provide Twelfth Step help when needed.

Does this mean that the “common understanding of a group” takes precedence over the definition provided by Bill W. in our Third Tradition? When I first encountered this distinction, prior to the revision of “The A.A. Group” pamphlet, I viewed it as a difference lacking clear meaning or purpose.

The pamphlet further states:

A.A. groups are encouraged to get listed with G.S.O., as well as with their local offices: area, district, intergroup or central office. A.A. meetings can be listed in local meeting lists.

This suggests that so-called “meetings” are discouraged from registering with G.S.O. and from participating in our general service structure. Additionally, the G.S.O. New Group Listing Guidelines / Form (F-30) begins by explicitly stating the first part and implicitly addressing the second:

It is the practice of the G.S.O. to list groups, rather than meetings. Listing provides a broader opportunity for communication between your group, G.S.O., and the General Service Structure, which will help the alcoholic who still suffers.

Furthermore, shouldn't we encourage communication between all groups—in the broadest sense—with G.S.O. and the General Service Structure? If A.A. members only attend so-called “meetings,” or if they lack access to a “group” within a reasonable distance, are we not denying them their Right of Participation (Concept IV)? This right should extend beyond merely expressing the group conscience; it should include the right to hear and consider the consciences of other groups. How else can we reasonably expect to reach “the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship”?

A more striking perspective is to recognize that it can sometimes feel as though we have created two classes of groups: first-class “groups” that can use the terminology of “group,” and second-class groups that are relegated to the term “meetings.” I suggest that all groups, as defined in Tradition 3, are and must be recognized as equal.

Hugh H., Former Delegate



[View PDF](#)



Things are happening
in Area 59 Districts

District Spotlight

21 and 29

DISTRICT 21

Small but Mighty

Don't let the size fool you. District 21 is full of energy, connection, and real commitment to service. With about 14 to 18 GSRs showing up regularly, this close-knit group is all about sharing practical knowledge in a down-to-earth way.

Ellen G., the current DCM, makes it a point to highlight one topic at each meeting that GSRs may not be familiar with. One month, she had everyone pull out their phones and walked them through how to find the digital pamphlet page on the Area 59 website. Another time, she told the story of George S., the first AA member to get sober after reading about the program in *Liberty* magazine in 1939. That article led him to reach out to Edmund P. and Bayard B., which eventually brought Jimmy Burwell and Fitz Mayo down from New York to help carry the message.

Ellen also shared why the district uses a modified version of Robert's Rules and how it supports smoother, more respectful conversations. And on May 12, she reminded everyone of its historical importance. That was the day Bill met Dr. Bob for the first time, and the two ended up talking for more than six hours. Bill's goal was simple: stay sober by helping someone else.

And yes, there's pizza at every meeting. Because learning about AA service is always better with food.

District 21 is a great example of how a small group can have a big impact by staying curious, connected, and committed to carrying the message.

Alan A.

DISTRICT 29

Spreading the A.A. Message and the Value of Sponsorship

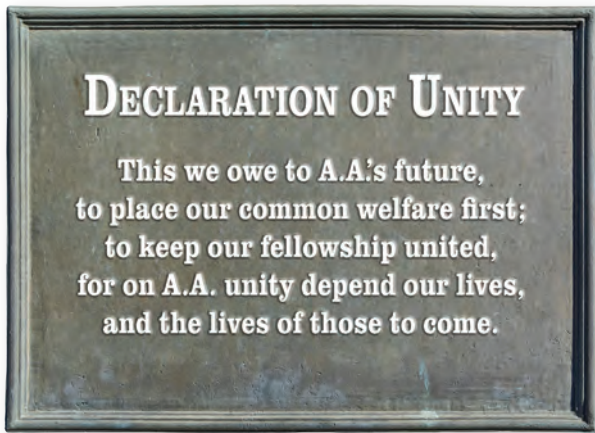
District 29 extends from Paoli to Rosemont and from King of Prussia to Newtown Square. The District has been active in carrying the message by providing Big Books to local libraries, middle and high schools, and colleges within our community. Recently, Plain Language Big Books have also been distributed to many of these same institutions, expanding accessibility for newcomers and younger members.

District 29 is also looking forward to a bus trip to the New York City GSO office once their renovations are completed—a special opportunity for members to connect with AA's service center firsthand. The District strives to host three workshops per panel and has recently held successful events, including the Mini-Assembly in King of Prussia, which saw an outstanding turnout.

A new meeting has also started in the District focusing on emotional sobriety. EmoSob meets on Wednesday nights at 7:00 PM at 489 Devon Park Drive, Suite 306, Wayne, PA 19087, and is listed on the Meeting Guide app.

District 29 continues to welcome and encourage new GSRs to get involved in service. These opportunities not only strengthen our fellowship but also help us grow individually in recovery.

Amy M.



DECLARATION OF UNITY

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.

Upcoming Workshop with Districts 29 & 31

We are excited to announce a joint workshop with Districts 29 and 31
on Saturday, October 25th
at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 132 E. Valley Forge Rd., King of Prussia, PA.

The Triangle in Action: Sponsorship, Unity & Service

Together, we'll explore sponsorship as a form of service and how we carry the message of AA.

WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

Speaker Panel

Members will share on different ways we carry the message, including perspectives from SEPIA, Unity, Bridging the Gap, and long-time sponsors.

Breakout Discussions & Sharing

Small-group conversations and reflections on sponsorship, unity, and service.

Fellowship & Food

Coffee, light breakfast, and lunch provided.

Saturday, October 25, 2025

Registration begins 9:30 am — Program runs 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 132 E. Valley Forge Rd., King of Prussia, PA

All are welcome — whether you're a newcomer or have years of sobriety.

**This workshop is a great way to connect with the fellowship,
grow in service, and strengthen sponsorship.**



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

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GENERAL SERVICE ASSEMBLY
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