Western Pennsylvania Area 60 Newsletter



SEEDS OF SERVICE



VOL. XXXIII, Issue 2 Spring 2023

Seeds of Service

The WPA Area 60 newsletter is published quarterly by the Area Committee. It is for AA members only. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors and not necessarily that of the Area Committee or Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

We hope Seeds of Service will be a useful reference for GSR reports.

Distribution

Paper copies are distributed to DCMs at each quarterly meeting for redistribution to AA groups through their GSRs. A PDF copy of the newsletter is available at <u>www.wpaarea60.org</u>. It can also be sent electronically to DCMs and GSRs, if the Area Registrar has a correct email address.

Write for SoS

The 2023 theme for the General Service Conference is "A.A.'s Three Legacies– Our Common Solution"

- Winter Topic: "General Service Our Mighty Purpose and Rhythm"
- Spring Topic: "Our Common Perils and Common Solution" (deadline 4/15/2022)
- Summer Topic: "Using A.A.'s Literature in Carrying the Message" (deadline 6/15/2022)
- Fall Topic: "Fostering a Thriving Three Legacy Culture"

(deadline 8/15/2022)

Submission Guidelines

Suggested text length is **150 to 300 words**. Artwork should be **b&w**, less than half a page (**3"x5"**), and **300 dpi**. Material should be generally relevant to the theme, and may be edited for clarity and length. All material submitted on time is reviewed, selected by topic, and may appear, based on available space. The newsletter does not publish song lyrics, tributes to individuals, prayers, plays, or anything unrelated to AA or that violates the principles of AA.

 $\label{eq:please} \ensuremath{\mathsf{Please}}\xspace$ include your first name and last initial, district, and home group.

Submissions may be emailed to:

"OUR COMMON PERILS AND COMMON SOLUTION"

"A Consistent Message?"

Anthony V., Bill W. Men's Group, GA

"Shut up. Don't drink. Go clean the bathrooms, kid". It was 1985 and those men were trying to hang on to me long enough so I could actually start listening. A gentleman approached me that very day and said, "You never have to drink again, kid, one day at a time" That is the first real message that hit me. This came directly from the mouth of a man who's personal story was published in our book, Alcoholics Anonymous. I believed him. I still do to this very day.

They gave me a bathroom commitment every Saturday at 2 pm. The most inopportune time. After the 1 pm meeting I was to clean the bathrooms inbetween for the 5 pm meeting that followed. I didn't see it then, but it gave me something to do. I hated it, but that didn't stop me from doing it.

Since then, I've grown up in AA. I've stayed sober a day at a time. I've worked steps, taken others through the steps, and have dedicated myself to service commitments over the years. I still do today. I choose not to recover on yesterday's actions.

What I see evolving in the Fellowship is that our message is getting convoluted. The message given to me was "Clean House, trust God, and help others." Always."

The message is outlined in the book—we have a fatal disease. An allergy to alcohol and a spiritual malady, as laid out in the Doctor's Opinion. The development of a relationship with a Higher Power was and still is the vital solution to a life without alcohol.

I stay true to and consistent to that message. A good dose of honesty, openmindedness and willingness, I try to be an example to others, new and seasoned, in the rooms of AA. Love and tolerance are my guide, especially when I am hearing a message that is not Alcoholics Anonymous.

You don't want my message, I will get someone drunk. The message is clear and I will continue to carry it!

"A Note From Your Editor"

Meagan C, Area 60 Newsletter Editor

Peril: Involving danger, exposure to the risk of being injured, destroyed, or lost. (*Little Big Book Dictionary*).

To every season, it's mood. Ours this month is serious. With PCAW feeding discussion about the common perils facing our Fellowship, such as safety in AA, working the steps with neurodivergent newcomers, (or long-timers), inclusivity, ways to uphold our great responsibility, and finding new ways of carrying the message, the theme goes deep. Taken together, it can seem like a lot for one issue, but we believe in using this platform as a way to spark discussion and draw attention to subjects that need our thoughts and focus. More openness to talk, not less. This is what makes AA special. (Check out Concept 5 for more reading on this topic).

With a word like "perils" in our theme, I am instantly transported back to my drinking days. Every 24 -hours was a Groundhog Day of "perils". My troubles had stacked up on me and "solution" wasn't an effective word in my vocabulary. I had a lot of "ideas" but no answers. I learned as a newcomer that if I have "ideas" I should probably discuss them with my sponsor. They usually weren't that great. The power of WE over ME.

As a Fellowship, we continue to seek and find solutions for the good of AA. As we head into Quarter Two of 2023 our Delegate, Jon C., has confirmed his safe return from the 73rd General Service Conference. He carried our Area 60 conscious regarding some of these hot topics. We invite you to join us at the Post-Conference Assembly on June 25th to hear his report. It's a thrill to be coming out of PCAW and serving with you all as we debate these issues and continue creating

a three-legacy thrive into the our beloved

Note to self: Help those who are struggling today with what you found your way out of yesterday. culture that will future evolution of Fellowship.

"I woke up this morning and tested positive for Alcoholism. *This was the most important part of my day."*

- Anonymous

• Step 5

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

(Integrity)

• Tradition 5

Each group has but one primary purpose— to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. (Purpose)

Concept 5

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

(Democracy)



"Bedevilments & Horsemen"

Chad U., Area 60 Registrar

When I think of our common perils as recovering alcoholics, I think of the Bedevilments and the Hideous Four Horsemen.

The Bedevilments are this list in Chapter 4 of the Big Book, "We Agnostics":

We were having trouble with personal relationships, we couldn't control our emotional natures, We were a prey to misery and depression, we couldn't make a living, we had a feeling of uselessness, we were full of fear, we were unhappy, we couldn't seem to be of real help to other people -- was not a basic solution of these bedevilments more important than whether we should see newsreels of lunar flight? Of course it was. (AA, page 52)

And we find the Hideous Four Horsemen in Chapter 11, & "A Vision for You":

As we became subjects of King Alcohol, shivering denizens of his mad realm, the chilling vapor that is loneliness settled down. It thickened, ever becoming blacker. Some of us sought out sordid places, hoping to find understanding companionship and approval. Momentarily we did - then would come oblivion and the awful awakening to face the hideous Four Horsemen - Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, Despair. Unhappy drinkers who read this page will understand! (AA, page 151)

All these things -- troubles, fear, negative feelings, misery, confusion -- beset all people. But for whatever reason, they seem to be even more dangerous to alcoholics like us. They can easily cause us to

THE BEDEVILMENTS (page 52)

do harm to others, to make bad decisions, or lead us back to a drink. How do we combat these perils?

HOW is exactly the start of fighting back against these perils! Our common solution includes our essential spiritual principles (Honesty, Open-mindedness, and Willingness) focused through our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service. These Legacies intertwine and support one another -- our step work (Recovery) helps us in becoming part of the AA fellowship (Unity) and carrying the message to the still sick and suffering alcoholic in a multitude of ways (Service).

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We were having trouble with personal relationships.	We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away.
We couldn't control our emotional natures.	We will comprehend the word serenity and we know peace.
We were a prey to misery and depression.	Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.
We couldn't make a living.	← Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.
We had a feeling of uselessness.	← That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.
We were full of fear.	We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.
We were unhappy.	We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.
We couldn't seem to be of real help to other people.	↔ No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how your experience can benefit others. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.
And, most of all,	We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

THE PROMISES (page 83)

When we are honest, open-minded, and

willing, we get placed into the right position to be open to

http://www.thejaywalker.com/

our Higher Power (whatever It may be). The Sunlight of the Spirit can empower us to trudge right through these Bedevilments and Horsemen, and become happy, joyous, and free.

Spring 2023





"Toolbox for Life"

Scott S., DCM, D28

I got sober after many years of hard drinking and decades longer of dealing with the issues that caused me to turn to the bottle in the first place. My story includes a 24-day stint in rehab followed by finding the rooms, a sponsor, a homegroup, and doing "180 in 90" because if 1 a day is good, 2 must be better, right? Obviously, my alcoholic thinking didn't stop in 24 days.

I conceptualize my time at rehab as my college education for a lifetime of work. It created a bottomless toolbox for me to fill with a lifetime of tools I accumulate as I continue to grow in recovery. I have seen people in the program use an incredible range of sources to enhance their journey. Sure, there's the classics like literature, prayer, meetings, service work, and daily reflection readings but as I keep an open mind a whole world of other tools becomes open to me.

It has been drilled into me by my sponsorship family that there's a million ways to do this program... the only wrong way is to pick up a drink. Making my bed has become a tool with personal meaning to me. Others use religion, non-conference approved literature, retreats, group text messages, and even memes.

I'm terrible at reading, I don't pray. I haven't opened my Big Book in ages. I appreciate those tools, but they don't work as well for me as the fundamental reason I came to AA. **To find people with a similar problem as me and talk to them.** It doesn't cost a thing and it requires no special skills. It keeps me connected to a phrase I learned in rehab. "If there's a term for it, somebody has already done it." You're not that unique, someone has already gone through what you're struggling with.

This program works for anyone who wants it.



"Fostering a Thriving Three-Legacy Culture"

Excerpts from presentation by Terry B. D40 DCM, PCAW

- * Be transparent, use "I" statements, make plans, but don't plan outcomes. Trust but verify.
- * Practice the program, in all your affairs, visibly. People may follow.
- * Show up. As George K. can be heard saying "You can pretend to care, but you can't pretend to show up!"

* Communicate, listen, and ask. We weren't always good at these things when we get here. Practice.

"Once we have placed the key of willingness in the lock and have the door ever -so-slightly open, we find that we can always open it some more."



"So... What is CPC/PI, Anyways?"

(Excerpt from CPC/PI Gathering Session, Tami D. & Jon A. Area 60 Coordinators)

Did you know that only 10% of alcoholics in the U.S. ever come into contact with a solution?!?!?!? That's a staggering statistic from the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. CPC/PI is here to help open the door of AA to more people who want to get free.

Have you ever wondered what CPC/ PI is?

Have you considered how you can help carry the message of recovery within your own community?

CPC/PI invites you to attend the next gathering session to learn more!

Pamphlets to get started:

Cooperation w. Professional Community Workbook

https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/m-41i_CPCWorkbook.pdf

How AA Members Cooperate with Professionals

https://www.aa.org/how-aa-members-cooperate-professionals

If You Are a Professional...

https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/assets/p46_ifyouareaprof essional.pdf

"A.A has always valued friends in all professional fields. These associations have been mutually beneficial and completely in keeping with the A.A. Traditions. A look at our history shows clearly that cooperation with the professionals has been an integral part of the Fellowship since our beginnings. A.A. might never have gotten off the ground, or progress would have been much slower, without the help of non-alcoholics such as Dr. Silkworth, Sister Ignatia and the Reverend Sam Shoemaker."

How **A.A.** Members Cooperate with Professionals



Resource for CPC/PI District Reps:

- Gather Sessions are happening! The first one on April 30 was well-attended and inspiring.
- Contact Area 60 CPC/PI Coordinator Tami D. or Alternate Jon A. <u>pi@wpaarea60.org</u> if you or anyone you know might be interested in performing this type of service.
 - Next "Gathering Session to be announced soon!

It takes a village to do this work and the more people we get involved with CPC/PI the more active our area will be in spreading the message of AA to alcoholics who are still suffering.

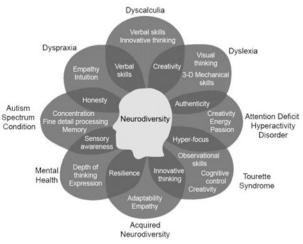
I Learned a New Word at PCAW!

Bob H., Area 60

(Inspired by Kathy G. PCAW Presentation-

Carrying the Message to Neurodiverse AAs)

Neurodivergence describes people whose brains and minds work differently. People with neurodivergence may think, learn, or behave differently than others. About 1 in 5 people in the world are neurodivergent. People with neurodivergence are almost twice as likely to use alcohol to cope with their challenges. Some of these challenges people are born with. Others can get them through illness, injury, and trauma. People that have these challenges also develop certain strengths. Alcoholism is an example, in overcoming our adversities we develop certain strengths.



During our recovery, we have <u>acquired</u> empathy as well as an ability to adapt. We will need those strengths if we

should choose to embark on a 12th-step journey with someone with any sort of learning disability. When we leave behind the chaos of an Alcoholic bottom, we pass through peace on the way to incorporating what we have learned.

We want to help someone join our group and productively rejoin the world. We should be kind and understanding when we talk to people who might have different ways of perceiving the world. For example, one person's serene surroundings can be another's chaos. Things that one person doesn't notice stand out when viewed from a different point of view. This is important because a person will resist change if they feel they must keep their guard up. Some people are born with impairments that affect their thinking, learning, or behavior. Needs vary depending on Diversity. Alcoholism can cause similar impairments in most cases.

- The environment we meet is important; its effects on the senses and emotions of people should be subtle. An ideal space for transformation is one where God might be experienced.
 - * Suggest a space that is different than where they spend most of their time.
 - * Different diversities may have specific sensory needs or sensitivities that affect their communication.
 - * Our favorite coffee shop may be too loud, or visually distracting, <u>but possibly, not</u> chaotic enough. *Even things like odors can create anxiety... or comfort.
 - * Go ahead and ask them for preferences or needs, stay flexible. It may take experimentation.
 - ◊ Watch out for confusion, anxiety, distress, or erratic behaviors.



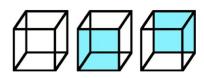


- When we talk to each other, it's important to use words that are easy to understand. The words we
 use are important because they can convey our meaning and intention clearly or confuse them.
 * Sometimes people use words that mean something different than what they sound like.
 - Our favorite metaphors and colloquialisms may be entertaining to us, but they can confuse others.
 - This can make it hard for us to be understood and convey what we mean, at least in the beginning.
- So, it's better to use words that are easy to understand and say what we mean.
 - For example, instead of saying "You're a star!" we can say "You did a great job."
 - Instead of saying "Don't beat around the bush," we can say "Please tell me directly what you want."
 - Some people understand things when they see them instead of hearing them.
 - So, we can use pictures, videos, or other things that we can see to help explain things. We can also use our facial expressions or body language to show how we feel or what we mean.
 - If we want to explain something that's hard to understand, we can draw a picture or show a video to help explain it.
 - Sometimes it takes longer for some to understand things or answer questions. The time we give them is important because they may need more time to process information or express themselves.
 - * We can help by being patient and giving them extra time.
 - * We can also repeat or rephrase our questions if needed and avoid interrupting or rushing them.
 - * We can also check in with them regularly to make sure they are following along and ask if they need added help.
 - Their preferences for communication are important because they reflect their individual needs and styles. These are some of the things to watch for when communicating with people who have neurodivergence.

This means asking them what works best for them and respecting their preferences. Some examples are:

- * Some may prefer written communication over verbal communication or the other way around.
- * Some may prefer direct communication over indirect communication or vice versa.
- * Some may prefer formal communication over informal communication or the reverse.
- If you have come this far you may have noticed Neurodivergence is all around us. It may seem challenging, but we can learn and grow. We can see our strengths and improve where needed. This is just the beginning. Let God guide us on new paths. Listen, understand, and be flexible and we can speak the language that builds trust in God and <u>ultimately our</u> fellowship.

References: <u>https://docs.google.com/document/d/126eIWVi-</u> <u>RIly9mtotpBbnpG7WgIBeo92OLEdPuOAWIY/edit?usp=sharing</u>



Spring 2023



"Melody of AA"

Heidi S. "Welcome Home Group," Grove City



When I walked through the doors of the home of Dr. Bob

and Anne Smith, I was transported into another time. It is an experience not measured by hours or days; it was an experience measured by an encounter with all those who had walked over the threshold of that house and into freedom. There is music in the air, but not one of sound. It is the music of hope echoed throughout the house. If you are still, you can feel the Presence of God, and it is as if you have stepped out of time and into His everlasting love.

Listening to the stories of the men and women who came to this last house on the block, I could hear the melody of their stories mixed with my own. As I sat and had coffee, I could imagine myself hearing the accounts of lives conceding their innermost selves of their alcoholism. The walk up the stairs could almost signify the willingness to believe in a power greater than oneself. In Sue's bedroom, as I knelt to ask God to remove the bondage of self, I felt as if my song was joining the song of others who have said that surrender prayer in the past and with those who will take it in the future.

The home became a beacon of light for many who had lost everything. When I looked at the pictures on the wall, I was reminded those who passed through the doors were family. Each life, like the photographs signified, snapshots of the stories of transformation; of lives full of failure and misery turn into ones of love and service. There is still space for many more pictures of those to come.



"When I am willing to do the right thing I am rewarded with an inner peace no amount of liquor could ever provide."

Bill W., Alcoholics Anonymous, pg. 317

"Spreading Joy!"

Did you know the Seeds of Service has readers all over the world, from the US to Canada and beyond. One of our readers expresses her thanks for all of you who help each month to carry the message!

Thank you to all who work to produce this newsletter. I look forward to receiving it and reading every word! I live in the northwest of British Columbia, Canada and appreciate all your news and views.

-In gratitude, Joy M.

GRAPEVINE Daily Quote

May 3, 2023

"In a garden we remove or control undesirable weeds; in my personal sobriety, I remove the things that have been blocking me; and in my homegroup; by means of inventory, I do something about the things that cause problems".

London Ontario, February 1992, "Freedom from Alcohol," Voices of Long-Term Sobriety





Send your questions to our **Virtual Ask-It Basket** at <u>newsletter@wpaarea60.org</u> or from the Area 60 website Newsletter page at <u>https://www.wpaarea60.org/newsletters/</u>.

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Page 9

Two Types of Area Meetings

Quarterly Meeting: Decides area business. DCMs, Area Officers and Coordinators, past Delegates vote.

 Area Assembly: Elects officers, provides pre-Conference group conscience, hears the Delegate's post-Conference report. GSRs, DCMs, Area Officers and Coordinators, past Delegates vote.

ALL members of the Fellowship are welcome at meetings and assemblies. GSRs are especially encouraged to attend even when they do not have a vote.

Every GSR is potentially a future DCM.

Rules of Order at Area 60 Meetings

- Items for consideration are put on the agenda.
- Items are posed to the meeting in the form of a motion.
- All motions require a second.
- Motions can be amended, tabled, or moved to a vote.
- A vote is taken and the **results** are announced. The **minority vote** is allowed to voice its opinion.
- If a member of the majority (those who "won") wishes to **change their vote**, a second vote is held on the motion.
- The result of the second vote stands and the meeting moves to the next item for consideration.

What's the "Point "of Order?

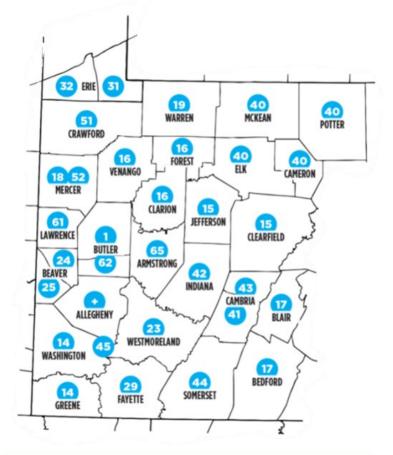
- To ensure that all voices that wish to be heard are heard.
- To ensure that no one voice dominates all others.
- To ensure that everyone gets to speak once before another speaks twice.
- To ensure that everyone understands the content of the vote.
- To ensure that it is clear what actions were taken.
- To ensure a thorough record of the actions taken.

Motions requiring substantial unanimity of the meeting require a twothird majority for approval. In some cases, the minority opinion (the people who "lost" the vote) may be larger than 50% of the vote.

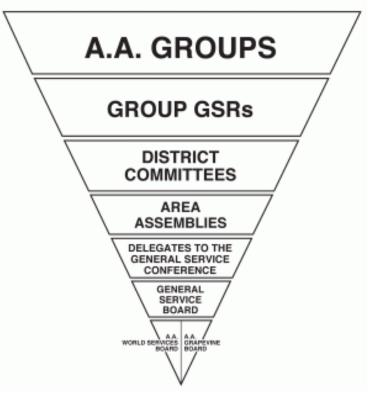
Area 60 Web Calendar

https://www.wpaarea60.org/calendar/

Our website has an updated online calendar, which lists service events (Pre-Conference Assembly Weekend, the General Service Conference, assemblies, etc.) in green; Area 60-sponsored events (quarterly meetings, Days of Sharing, etc.) in **blue**, and other events of interest to AAs (district-level events, recovery community events, etc.) in **red**.



STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE (U.S. and Canada)



2023 Calendar of Events

Unless otherwise noted, Area 60 meetings are held at the Comfort Inn, 699 Rodi Road, Penn Hills, PA

DATE	TIME	EVENT
May 7, 2023	8:30 am registration 9:00 am workshop 10:15 am meeting	2nd Quarterly Meeting Room 226 & Grand Ballroom
June 2-4 2023	Boston Marriott Burling- ton Boston, MA	NERF
June 11, 2023, 2023	9 am via Zoom	Officers/Coordinators Mtg. PCAW Wrap Up
June 25, 2023	8:30 registration, 9 am workshop, 10:15 meeting	Post Conference Assembly Grand Ballroom
July 9, 2023	9 am via Zoom	Officer/ Coordinators Meeting
July 15, 2023	Saturday Day of Sharing, D3, D6, D21	Day of Sharing
August 26, 2023	Traveling Workshop D27/12 Harmar Hope	2599 Freeport Rd. Pittsburgh, PA 15238
September 17, 2023	9 am via Zoom	Officers/Coordinators Mtg.
October 15, 2023	8:30 am registration 9:00 am workshop 10:15 am meeting	Fall Assembly
November 5, 2023	9 am via Zoom	Officers/Coordinators Mtg.

See All Those s to the Right?

Several service opportunities are available throughout Western PA Area 60.

When by devoted service to family, friends, business, or community we attract widespread affection and are sometimes singled out for posts of greater responsibility and trust, we try to be humbly grateful and exert ourselves the more in a spirit of love and service.

-- 120912 Step Twelve, p.124

Area Committee members, DCMs, and GSRs are welcome to help spread the word to fill open, needed positions in our service structure, or to *volunteer* to serve themselves.

For more information on any open position, please feel free to contact secretary@wpaarea60.org or newsletter@wpaarea60.org.

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA AREA 60

ELECTED OFFICERS:

Delegate: Jon C.
Alt Delegate: Walter G.
Chairperson: Dani M.
Alt Chair: Sherri Lynn D.
Secretary: Scott Mc.
Treasurer: Greg K.

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Archivist: Nancy H. Registrar: Chad U. Recording Secretary: Natalie O. recsec@wpaarea60.org Alt. Newsletter:

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Alt. Archives: Corrections: Tim D. Alt. Corrections: Bill B. CPC/PI: Tami D. Alt. CPC/PI: Jon A. Grapevine: Linette R. Alt. Grapevine: Becky C. Literature: Marcia W. Alt. Literature: Don F. Treatment: Natalie O. Alt. Treatment/SN: Tracy T. Website: Dave K Alt. Website:

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AREA 60 WEBSITE

There are many resources on the Area 60 website, including: back issues of the newsletter, flyers for Days of Sharing, the Area 60 calendar, Area 60 Guidelines, pamphlets, service documentation, and more. Direct questions or suggestions to the Website Coordinator at website@wpaarea60.org.

DONATIONS TO AREA 60

Support from groups and individuals is always welcome and appreciated! Make checks payable to:

> Area 60 Treasurer P.O. Box 386 Canonsburg, PA. 15317