



SEEDS OF SERVICE

VOL. XXXI, Issue 4
Fall 2017

SELF-SUPPORT & THE FUTURE OF AA

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 www.wpaarea60.org. It can also be sent electronically to DCMS and GSRs, if the Area Registrar has a correct email address.

Write for SoS

The 2018 theme for the General Service Conference is "AA – A Solution for All Generations."

Winter 2018 (deadline 12/31)

"Today's Alcoholic: Inclusion, Not Exclusion"

Spring 2018 (deadline 3/1)

"Participation in All of AA – Is My Triangle Balanced?"

Summer 2018 (deadline 6/6)

"AA Technology: Where Innovation Meets the Traditions"

Fall 2018 (deadline 9/20)

"Group Conscience: The Guiding Force"

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.

Please include your first name and last initial, district, and home group.

Submissions may be emailed to:

newsletter@wpaarea60.org

Gratitude, Automated & Monthly, without the Parade

Jon M, Area 60 Website Coordinator

Donating money is not something that comes naturally to me as an alcoholic. Before finding this recovered way of life, the idea of giving my "hard-earned money" to anyone else, deserving or not, was frankly not something I thought of. Donations were equated with tax write-offs in some strange, distant way. Here's \$10 to some charity somewhere else, look at me, the most generous and humble man in the universe [clap clap clap].

In AA, I learned that gratitude is an action. That everything I have today is far more than I deserve, regardless of what – or how much – it is. I put a dollar in the basket for many, many years before I understood *what* those dollars were being used for. My home group was giving some of the money to rent, some for supplies, and some for a reserve. A small token of what was left went to our District Treasurer. Area and GSO weren't mentioned, or if they were, I didn't hear them.

Today that has changed. We have a reasonable prudent reserve, 3 months of rent and supplies. Everything else gets donated. 40% to district, 30% to area, and 30% to GSO. I even built a web app to help me be a better group treasurer (email me if you want to try it out).

But what about on a personal level? Certainly, many (if not the majority) of AA groups do not donate to the General Service Office. If it only would take \$8 per AA member per year for AA to be self-supporting, certainly not enough people are making those donations. So, gallant captain of humility that I am, I made a (small) donation online to GSO, patted myself on the back for what an amazing example of service I had become, and then promptly forgot about it for a year. During that year, I made no donations.

I found the Automated Recurring Contribution tool on AA's website sometime after that, and signed up to donate \$10 per month, then promptly forgot about that, too. The trend with me seems to be that I can get very excited about doing something good, and then I forget all about it. Automated donations solve that issue nicely. I don't notice \$10 a month being pulled from my bank and donated, and it is significantly more palatable than \$120 a year in a one-time donation.

And the bonus? I don't remember that I'm donating money each month, so my ego doesn't have as much of a chance to pat me on the back and hold a small parade in my honor for this small, small, tiny return on what's been given to me.



Start your automated donations to GSO at: wpaarea60.org/gratitude

On the Hook without a Hat

Chad U, Area 60 Newsletter Editor

The Big Book says, on page 159-160:

“In addition to these [regular] casual get-togethers, it became customary to set apart one night a week for a meeting to be attended by anyone or everyone interested in a spiritual way of life. Aside from fellowship and sociability, the prime object was to provide a time and place where new people might bring their problems.”

The pamphlet *The AA Group... where it all begins* (P-16) says this:

“There are no dues or fees for membership in AA, but we do have expenses such as rent, refreshments, AA Conference-approved literature, meeting lists and contributions to services provided by the local intergroup (central office), district, and area, and the General Service Office of AA. In keeping with the Seventh Tradition a group may 'pass the basket' for contributions, and members are encouraged to participate.”

However, P-16 also says this: “The main difference between meetings and groups is that AA groups generally continue to exist outside the prescribed meeting hours, ready to provide Twelfth Step help when needed.”

Now, Tradition 7 says (emphasis added) “Every AA **group** ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

Here's a thought for your consideration: Can we read the Seventh Tradition to mean that **only home group members** should support their meetings? That is: do we **have to** pass the basket at every meeting?

It's not that crazy an idea. For example, I have heard people in my district explain they don't contribute to other meetings they attend; they *only* contribute to their home group. Others mention only putting \$1 into the basket, unless it's their home group, where they *give more*.

Additionally, a member of my home group says “I'm not promised a cup of coffee in AA – I'm promised *a message of recovery from alcoholism*.” His view is that the primary thing is to keep the doors open (rent) and everything else is negotiable (sobriety chips, donuts, coffee). While AA literature and contributions to service offices help directly carry the message of AA, they are clearly not as necessary to him as the group providing Twelfth Step help and holding a meeting for those “interested in a spiritual way of life.”

- What if we **didn't pass the hat** and paid the rent, for literature, and service office contributions ourselves?
- What if we only passed the hat for *incidentals* (like coffee, donuts, and coins)?

How would that change our meetings and groups? As someone who himself *loves* AA literature, our service structure, donuts, and coffee, I've found this to be an interesting meditation on being an active and accountable home group member.

What does self-support mean to MY home group?



Spiritual Bankruptcy

Heidi M, Grove City Wednesday Night Step Study, District 18

Recovery is regaining what we thought was lost. Alcoholics lose their family, friends, and possessions, but the greatest loss is a feeling of separation. It is a form of spiritual sickness that can only be remedied with a spiritual solution. After trying everything else, we discover we have to believe in a power greater than ourselves. The power we were searching was found in God, who lives within each of us. God had been obscured by layers of our self-centeredness. His voice was covered up by the chatter in our heads. His will was hidden beneath the layers of our will, our ego, and our judgment.

Through the Steps, we find the things that brought us to physical, moral, and spiritual bankruptcy. We uncover what is separating us from the fullness of relationships we desire. We become willing to go to any lengths to reconcile broken relationships and make direct amends.

A young man had tried every form of therapy and medication, but nothing worked. Alcohol was his only reprieve, until the alcohol didn't work anymore. Through a belief in a God he didn't understand and practicing AA's principles, he found his relationships restored. Through the Steps, he was given a confidence empowering him to reach out to others who have struggled as he has struggled.

Sitting in a recovery meeting, a young woman heard a man say his alcoholic daughter hadn't spoken to him in ten years. Although she had not spoken to her biological father in ten years, she remembered saying she had forgiven her father for not being present in her life. Then, she realized she was not living out the actions of those words. She reached out, and forgiveness, love, and grace was received by both of them. Today they enjoy a healthy relationship. As the young woman tells her story to others, it offers hope.

Recovery is a way of life: following God's design for living and staying close to Him.

When we are honest, open, and willing to take simple suggestions, extraordinary things will happen.



Mixing in the Hat

Bill W, Co-Founder (July 3, 1955)

At the time, Lois and I were receiving thirty dollars a week as the result of Mr. Rockefeller's dinner. We were living in a little room in the Twenty-Fourth Street club. Our household furniture was still in storage and we were mighty hard up. One morning a bleary-eyed friend just off a bender stuck his head into the little Vesey Street office. I was pacing up and down, cussing out the drunks for being so slow in sending in their buck apiece. I was in a really mean mood, so I gave my bleary-eyed friend a big gripe on how stingy drunks were. Naturally, he agreed. Just to make myself generous I pulled out a five-dollar bill and handed it to him. It was money that Lois needed for the groceries, and I knew very well that he would go out and drink it up. But this grandiose act made me feel good. I, poor I, could give five dollars when those guys out there couldn't even send in one dollar!

Distinctly satisfied with myself, I went to the meeting that night in the club. The club was behind on its rent. In those days, you could not mix the material with the spiritual at all. Money was a subject you could hardly mention. But the landlord was not getting his rent, so it **had** to be mentioned. At intermission, my old friend Tom B, who led the meeting that night, timidly asked, "Now, folks, can't you go a little heavy on the hat tonight? We're kind of behind with the rent." Such was his apologetic announcement. I was sitting on the stairs with some new convert. Nevertheless I heard him and I knew the club was behind. Finally the hat came up the stairs where we were, and I reached in my pocket and got a coin. When I fished it out, it was half a dollar. Scarcely thinking, I dropped that half-dollar back in my pocket and produced a dime which clinked thinly in the hat. A minute later I woke up. I who had boasted of my generosity that morning was treating my own club worse than the alcoholics who had forgotten to send the Foundation their dollars. I realized that my five-dollar gift to the backslider was an ego-feeding act, bad for him and bad for me. There **was** a place in AA where spirituality and money would mix, and that was in the hat. I never since have criticized anybody for failing to send a dollar or so to Headquarters.

Excerpt reprinted from (AA Comes of Age, pages 112-113), with permission of AA World Services, Inc.



Self-Support – A Different Take

Jon C, Area 60 Alt Chair

Most of us have heard "We are going to pass the basket, in accordance with the 7th Tradition." This phrase seems to encapsulate the spirit of Tradition 7. But, is that all there is to it? I think not.

The long form of the 7th Tradition starts out: "The AA groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members." When I hear voluntary contributions, I think of the buck or two I put in the basket. But financial contributions alone are a poor measuring stick to determine the health of a group.

It takes a lot more to keep a meeting running than simply money. Making the coffee, setting up and taking down the chairs, emptying the butt can, welcoming the newcomer, doing the readings or group reports, etc. Are not these and many other acts of service also voluntary contributions?

When I hear a meeting is in need of active home group members, I hear that they are struggling with this broader sense of the 7th Tradition. What does this type of struggle mean for the future of AA?

It means some groups will close. And that is not always a bad thing. When a group outlives its purpose, it is no longer needed. If a group cannot be fully supported through its own members, whether financially or through service, maybe it *is* time to close the doors, temporarily or even permanently.

AA's 12 Traditions help ensure that AA as a whole survives, that somewhere the doors will be open and the lights will be on for the newcomer walking in the door... even if a particular group folds.



Ask-It Basket Questions

From the Day of Sharing in Mount Lebanon (9/23/2017)

Q1. I'd like to take my sponsees to a variety to different meeting types, but I can't search on that in the Area 60 meeting finder. Can that be added to the web-search?

A1. *Jon M (Website Coordinator) replies:* The web search is only as good as the information the groups and districts provide to the Area Registrar. I would *love* to build in a more complex meeting-type search mechanism, but we first need to get all the groups to let the Area Registrar know what type of group they are. The information shown on

the meeting search is pulled from GSO's list of our area's groups – so if anything is incorrect, it can and should be corrected via our Area Registrar. Any suggestions related to the meeting search or the website in general are always appreciated, thanks!

Walter G (Registrar) adds: Unfortunately, only a few of the meetings (about 25%) fill out that part of the New Group Form or Group Change Form, so we don't have good information. When DCMs sit down with the GSRs in their district for the annual review of Group Information Pages (GIPs) that update the Northeast Directory of Groups, adding this information would help the website. (I also sent an email on 11/21/17 to all the listed GSRs and primary group contacts asking for information updates on their groups, especially meeting time, address/zip code, and type of meeting.)

Q2. Our meeting needs support. What are ways to get more support?

A2. *Margie S (Alt DCM) and Shelley S (Treasurer) collaborated on this answer:* Lack of home group support usually falls into two categories:

- Financial
- Low Attendance

There can be several reasons for both:

- Not understanding how 7th Tradition Funds should be collected and distributed;
- Not adhering to our Traditions (it should be noted the Fourth Tradition *should not* be used to break other traditions!);
- Too many meetings in the same geographical area; or
- Sometimes it's as simple as needing *several* greeters.

Whatever the reason(s) might be, AAWS has literature to help with the problem.

Your group conscience might want to take some time to explore the pamphlet *The AA Group* (P-16), full of the collective experience of our fellowship. It can be purchased from the Literature Coordinator for \$0.30, or downloaded for free. Also worth exploring are the *AA Guidelines on Finance* (MG-15).

- https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-16_theaagroup.pdf
- https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/contributions-and-self-support/mg-15-finance

Lastly, feel free to contact your DCM Liaison, or any officer, for more insight.

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

We Don't Have Much, but... We Make It Work

Charles G, SCI Greene

Self-support at Greene County (SCI-Greene) is the backbone of our home group, building our foundation for a bright future of sobriety. Being in prison we don't have much, but what we do have, we make it work.

We have the best volunteers a home group could ever ask for coming in every week to help us achieve our dreams of living sober. We are a small group, but big on commitment. We all love to take turns chairing, setting up, and passing out literature.

But our real support at Greene County comes from our fellow members sharing their stories and giving each other encouragement when needed. We are changing lives one day at a time.

We may not be able to serve coffee at our meetings, but we are definitely carrying the message.

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.

Let us therefore proclaim our gratitude to Providence for manifold blessings — let us be humbly thankful for inherited ideals — and let us resolve to share those blessings and those ideals with our fellow human beings throughout the world.

— John F. Kennedy, Proclamation 3560 — Thanksgiving Day, 1963

One Buck at a Time Should Begin Today

Cole L, District 14

Two little known facts:

1. GSO spends about \$38 more per group each year than they receive in contributions from groups.
2. Only 40% of listed groups contribute to GSO. So, there are about 36,000 listed groups that make no contributions.

One could infer that 36K group conscience meetings have formally resolved to Not Contribute. Or have they?

Just one dollar per week from those groups would provide \$1.8 million a year. Six dollars per month would more than offset GSO's \$2.2 million shortfall. This shortfall is now covered by print materials sales, which places an additional burden on groups that choose to carry the message by distributing literature at no cost.

Although AA does not require groups to contribute to GSO, it is certainly reasonable that we should voluntarily assume some responsibility for administrative costs of the organization that has provided us a basis for recovery.

But how do we do it? Proactively emphasize at our meetings that no contribution is too small. Although some of us may not be able to afford a dollar each meeting, could we afford a quarter? It all adds up.

Bill W's thoughts on the service agencies: "Their costs are a collective obligation that rests squarely upon all of us. Our support of services actually amounts to a recognition on our part that AA must everywhere function in full strength, and that under our Tradition of self-support, we are all going to foot the bill."

Find out your home group's position regarding GSO contributions. Many may not have even considered the significance. At a group conscience, encourage a commitment if necessary.

Be Responsible!



Seventh Tradition (Long Form)

The AA groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members. We think that each group should soon achieve this ideal; that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous, whether by groups, clubs, hospitals, or other outside agencies; that acceptance of large gifts from any source, or of contributions carrying any obligation whatever, is unwise. Then, too, we view with much concern those AA treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated AA purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority.

News from the PA State Convention (PSC) Planning Committee

Karen H, PSC-2018 Convention Chair

Yes, "SOBER" and "FUN" do belong in the same sentence! It is truly an experience to go to a convention and be surrounded by so much strength, love, and laughter.

The PSC is an annual event held for AA and Al-Anon members in Pennsylvania and surrounding states. Our typical attendee resides in PA; however, we have had many dedicated attendees from outlying states and even out of the country!

This year we are celebrating the 25th Convention on August 3-5, 2018. The primary purpose is *Unity, Service, and Recovery*. PSC offers great speakers, workshops, discussion panels, an awesome hospitality suite, and entertainment that will overload your "fun meter."

Because of local groups' contributions, we have the privilege of inviting a few local rehabs to attend part of the conference. They get to experience a convention, the "fun" part of AA, with opportunities to hear strong messages of long-term recovery, as well as meet potential sponsors. Their experience at this one event could be life-changing, and that is **huge**.

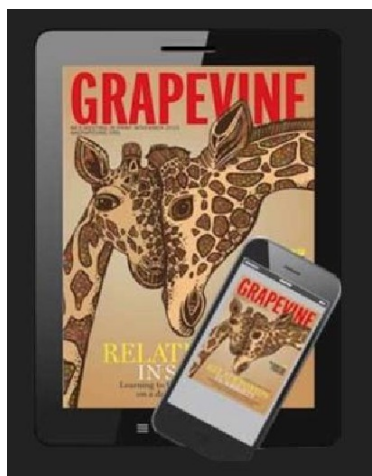
This year we are taking action on past attendee reviews and implementing changes that will surely please attendees.

Planning committee meetings are currently in progress, and there is always a need for committee members on all subcommittees. This is a unique service opportunity in which to learn and grow in sobriety. All are welcome!

Simply attend our next planning meeting on **Saturday, January 27, 2018**, to see what we have to offer. You can participate either in person at the Red Lion Hotel on Lindle Road in Harrisburg, or by phone by calling in on our conference bridge. Details can be found on our website: www.aapastateconvention.com.

We look forward to making this year's convention the best one to date!

NOTE: In Western PA, contact Chad U, the PSC Area 60 Liaison, for more details.



AA GRAPEVINE

The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous

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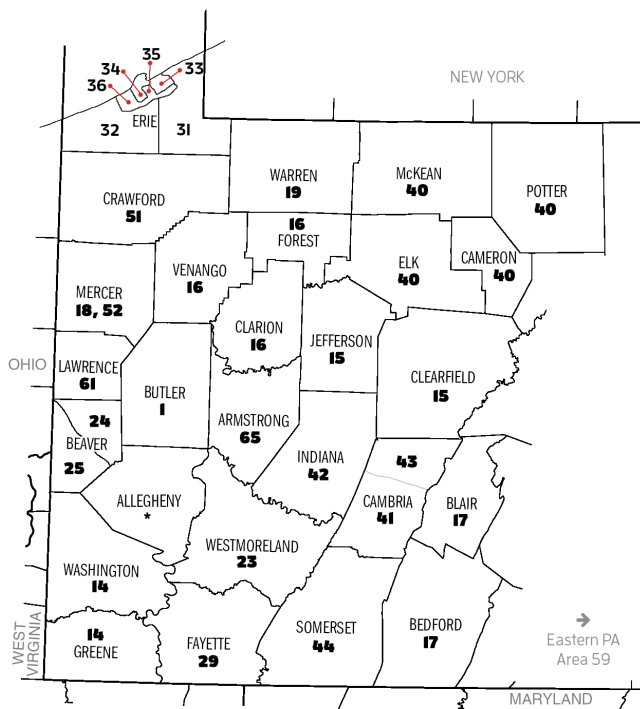
<http://www.aagrapevine.org/>



Pre-Conference Assembly Weekend

Save the Date! (March 23-24, 2018)

An annual service workshop held in the spring to discuss General Service Conference-related Issues and concerns affecting AA as a whole, as well as pertinent aspects of our **Three Legacies (Recovery, Unity, Service).**



* Allegheny County: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 70, 71

Area 60 Web 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**.

Check it out at:

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

Two Types of Area Meetings

1. **Quarterly Meeting:** Decides area business. DCMs, Area Officers & Coordinators, past Delegates vote.
2. **Area Assembly:** Elects officers, provides pre-Conference group conscience, hears the Delegate's post-Conference report. GSRs, DCMs, Area Officers & Coordinators, past Delegates vote.

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 his or her 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 two-third majority for approval. In some cases, the minority opinion (the people who "lost" the vote) may be larger than 50% of the 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.**

2017-8 Calendar of Events

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

DATE	TIME	EVENT
Sunday, Dec 10	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	4th Quarterly Meeting
Sunday, Dec 17	9 am	Officers/Coordinators Meeting
2018		
Sunday, Jan 7	9 am	PCAW Planning Meeting
Sunday, Jan 21	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	1st Quarterly Meeting
Sunday, Feb 11	9 am	Officers/Coordinators Meeting PCAW Planning Meeting
Feb 23-25	All Weekend	NERAASA Cromwell, CT
Sunday, Mar 4	9 am	PCAW Planning Meeting
Mar 9-11	All Weekend	NERD Tarrytown, NY
Mar 23-24	FRI/SAT	PCAW
Sunday, Mar 25	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	Pre-Conference Assembly
Sunday, Apr 8	9 am	Officers/Coordinators Meeting
Apr 22-28	All Week	General Service Conference
Sunday, May 6	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	2nd Quarterly Meeting

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA AREA 60

ELECTED OFFICERS:

Delegate: John K delegate@wpaarea60.org
Alt Delegate: Margie S altdelegate@wpaarea60.org
Chairperson: Jody K chairperson@wpaarea60.org
Alt Chair: Jon C altchairperson@wpaarea60.org
Secretary: Jane R secretary@wpaarea60.org
Treasurer: Shelley S treasurer@wpaarea60.org

APPOINTED OFFICERS:

Alt. Treasurer: Mario D'A treasurer@wpaarea60.org
Archivist: Al C archivist@wpaarea60.org
Registrar: Walter G registrar@wpaarea60.org
Recording Secretary: Christa F recsec@wpaarea60.org
Newsletter Editor: Chad U newsletter@wpaarea60.org
Alt. Newsletter: _____ newsletter@wpaarea60.org

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Website: Jon M website@wpaarea60.org
Alt. Website: Brent E website@wpaarea60.org

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 1496
 Washington, PA 15301

See Those _____s Above?

Volunteer to be an Alt, and learn about Area service!