



SEEDS OF SERVICE



VOL. XXXII, Issue 3
Summer 2018

AA TECHNOLOGY:

WHERE INNOVATION MEETS THE TRADITIONS

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 available 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."

Fall 2018 (deadline 9/20)

"Group Conscience: The Guiding Force"

The 2019 theme for the General Service Conference is "Our Big Book - 80 Years, 71 Languages"

Winter 2019 (deadline 12/20)

"Our Meetings: Purposes, Needs, & Etiquette"

Spring 2019 (deadline 3/4)

"Yesterday' World - Our Legacies Begin"

Summer 2019 (deadline 6/4)

"Today's World - Demonstrating Integrity, Anonymity, and Service"

Fall 2019 (deadline 9/20)

"Tomorrow's World - Courage to be Vigilant"

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

A Magical Happening

Meredith D, District 20/22, Welcome Home Group

A magical thing happened in my home group because of today's technology and the ingenuity of a member of Alcoholics Anonymous.

In January 2018, I received an email from a fellow member inviting me to participate in an online study of the Twelve Traditions. I responded right away, and began to receive by email the fruits of this person's extensive research and interest in passing along this important information to fellow members of AA.

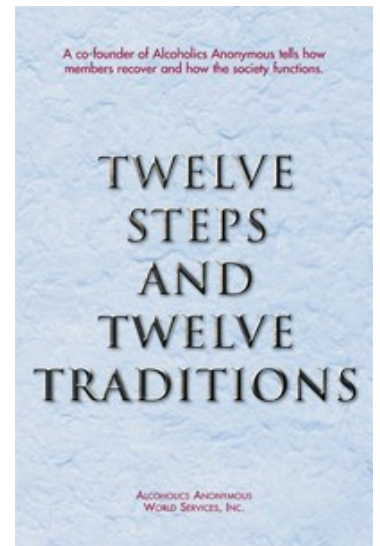
On a monthly basis, I receive AA-approved literature by email that relates to the Tradition coinciding with that month. I wanted a way to pass this information along to people who attend my home group meetings. My group is an open discussion group, usually with a large attendance, that asks up to three topics. Beginning in January, I decided I would offer Tradition One as a discussion topic as one of the three to just see what would happen.

Tradition One: "Our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends upon AA unity."

The response was so surprising I could hardly believe it. Compared to the other two topics raised at that meeting, the discussion focused at least 75-80% on Tradition One. It was thoughtful, insightful, enlightening, and carried a message of the importance of the Traditions in a way I never could have, even if I had conducted a workshop.

In both February and March, I repeated this effort with the Traditions Two and Three. It amazed me that, again, there was enthusiasm and thoughtful participation about these Traditions when introduced as a topic for discussion in the meeting. To hear the variety of perspectives and the clear honoring of the Traditions was a magical moment.

I am grateful for a fellow member of AA who thought to do this, and also for the computer technology that made this carrying of the message so easy and fruitful.



"The Way We Have Always Done It"

Jon C, Area 60 Alt Chair

The world and technology are changing at an ever-increasing pace. Technologies that didn't exist a few years ago are rapidly becoming household names. It wasn't that long ago that Amazon only sold books, or Facebook was only for students. More recently, Uber and Netflix have disrupted whole industries. But where does this fit in with Alcoholics Anonymous?

Both passively and actively there is an attitude of "This is the way we have always done it" in AA. And for good reason: We have a program of action that has helped millions of alcoholics find sobriety through the Big Book, which has been largely untouched for the last 79 years. But the rest of AA has changed a lot, both positively and negatively.

The attitude of GSO is "it is important not to let the speed of technological development pressure a committee into a quick solution as opposed to a well-thought-out AA-oriented decision." (MG-18, *AA Guidelines - Internet*). And I think this is the attitude we need to apply in our home groups, districts, and area committees. Just because we can do something doesn't mean we should... but just because we have always done it a certain way doesn't mean it is the best way. Remember that "The temporary good is the enemy of the permanent best."

Some innovations fit easily into our AA lives. Email is faster and quicker than traditional mail. The 68th General Service Conference used electronic voting for the first time. There are now hundreds of online AA meetings. GSO – and Area 60 (see page 3)! – now accepts online contributions. Online meeting lists have made finding a meeting that much easier.

Other technologies have had a much bumpier integrations into our lives as recovering alcoholics, like social media. I know I have broken a Tradition or two online. (Videoing speakers was another bumpy integration: the 1980 General Service Conference recommended that anonymity traditions should be maintained on videotape.)

Innovation is not stopping. Whenever we use a new technology as recovering AA members (like sober podcasts or web conferencing), we should always be mindful of the Traditions. We should ask questions if we do not know the answer, and should not use Tradition Four as an excuse to break other Traditions.

"A well-thought-out AA-oriented decision" will never be about oneself, but always about carrying the message and protecting this wonderful fellowship.

68th General Service Conference Bullet Points

John K, Area 60 Delegate

AAWS/GSO REPORTS

- Membership levels remain flat.
- A total of 896 new groups were listed.
- Contributions were a record \$8,409,452.
 - ◇ 6% increase over 2016; 43.7% of groups contributed, up from 41.5%.
- Gross sales were \$13,904,794; up 1.5%.
 - ◇ Navajo Big Book available on Audio Books.
 - ◇ e-book sales were \$213,492.
- 2018 budget GSB projects an expected profit of \$502,000.
 - ◇ It takes \$7.40 per member from contributions to be self-supporting.
- Over 13,000,000 visits to www.aa.org.

COMMITTEES

Agenda Committee:

- *The Theme for the 69th GSC will be:*
Our Big Book - 80 Years, 71 Languages.
- *Presentation/Discussion topics for the 69th GSC will be:*
 - ◇ Yesterday' World - Our Legacies Begin.
 - ◇ Today's World - Demonstrating Integrity, Anonymity, and Service.
 - ◇ Tomorrow's World - Courage to be Vigilant.
- *Discussion Workshop for the 69th GSC:* Clarity of Purpose - Addressing the Needs of Our Meetings.

Trustees Committee: The agenda items on Censure of the Board and Reorganizing the Boards were returned by the Committee with a recommendation to **Take No Action**.

Literature Committee: The pamphlet *Experience, Strength, and Hope: AA for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues & Their Sponsors* was approved, and the pamphlet *The God Word* was approved.

Treatment and Accessibilities: Approved that pamphlet *Accessibility for All Alcoholics* be renamed *Access to AA: Members Share on Overcoming Barriers*.

Archives: Approved new publication *Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W's General Service Conference Talks (1951-1970)*.

Public Information: Approved video PSA "Changes."



Full Delegate's Report in our next issue!

Where the Heck are the Donuts?!

Nancy H, District 7 DCM

Tradition Four states “Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups and AA as a whole.” I once heard an old-timer at a meeting say, “All you need to start a new AA meeting is a resentment and a coffee pot.” How true I have found that statement to be over the twenty-odd years I have been blessed to be a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. I also have discovered over those years that there are as many styles of meetings as there are personalities in the rooms.

At a little over three years sober, I moved home to Pittsburgh, PA, from Akron, OH. Getting sober in Akron and having a sponsor who knew the history of this program inside and out, I was used to some serious old-school AA. Imagine my surprise when I walked into my first speaker meeting and it was *nothing* like my old home group! There weren't any greeters at the door. No one was selling 50/50 raffle tickets. There wasn't a certificate passed around for everyone to sign to thank the speaker. And as soon as the speaker was done speaking, the meeting promptly ended without anyone standing up to thank the speaker in front of the group. To top it all off: ***where the heck were the donuts?!***

The worst part for me, however, was afterward. At the beginning of the meeting, I had identified myself as new to the area. At the end of the meeting, not a single person came up to me to welcome me. I thought I had walked into the Land of Oz, and walked out of there with a resentment.

Thank God I had a wonderful sponsor (still in Akron) who answered her phone, listened to me complain, and then asked me “well, did you talk to anyone?” No, I had not. She then proceeded to burst my bubble, stating that not all meetings around the world were going to be what I was used to, and that the Fourth Tradition said that was okay – as long as the group adhered to the principles of AA.

Since then, I have had the blessing of attending thousands of AA meetings and conferences up and down the East Coast from NY to FL. Some held in tiny smoke-filled rooms, some on beaches, and even some on a cruise ship to Mexico. Some of these meetings opened with the Serenity Prayer and closed with the Lord's Prayer; some did not. Some greeted me at the door; some did not. Not one of the Big Book Study, 12&12, *As Bill Sees It*, speaker, and discussion meetings I have attended over the years have been exactly alike.

However, the one thing that I have found that always stays the same are the **12 Steps** and the **12 Traditions**: thank God for that! Those who wrote those 12 Traditions knew how we alcoholics are. Like it says on page 146 of the 12&12: “...we are so largely a band of ego-driven individualists.”

As long as a group's sole objective is sobriety “every group has the right to be wrong” (12&12, p. 147). Personally, I am grateful they were given the insight into the need for a group's individuality.

After all, some of us like donuts at our meetings; some of us do not.



Save the Stamp – Area 60 Online Donations

Jon M, Area 60 Web Coordinator

You can now make donations on the Area 60 website using a debit or credit card. You can make secure donations just like for GSO: make a **one-time** or **recurring** contribution (for your *Group* or as an *Individual*). Recurring contributions can be set-up for a once-a-month donation for up to a year, and you can view your donation history online, any time you want.

Your payment information is not stored on our website: all transactions are handled by Stripe, Inc. (and they have a much higher budget for web security than we do)!

Make your donation online today at: www.wpaArea60.org/myaccount/

The Principles of Rotation

Walter G, Area 60 Registrar

In the many articles and pamphlets written on service in AA, one topic is not discussed much: rotation of service positions.

The Traditions cover the topic very well, sometimes not directly coming out and saying it, but by indirect analogy. In Tradition One, it talks about unity: if we are not doing the same things that others do in AA, we are no longer unified. The Traditions were written because of the mistakes that were made along our path of growth in AA.

The Principle of Rotation

Traditionally, rotation ensures that group tasks, like nearly everything else in AA, are passed around for all to share. Many groups have alternates to each trusted servant who can step into the service positions if needed. To step out of an AA office you love can be hard. If you have been doing a good job, if you honestly don't see anyone else around willing, qualified, or with the time to do it, and if your friends agree, it's especially tough. (P-16, *The AA Group*)

All the articles that are written on rotation refer back to the *AA Service Manual*. The *Service Manual* has a few paragraphs on page S24 directly on "The Principles of Rotation" – anyone that holds (or is thinking of holding) a service position should read this.

In the 12th Step, it talks about practicing these principles in all our affairs. In Tradition Twelve (the short form): "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities." Anonymity reminds us to practice humility, we are no greater or less than anyone else.

Being humble is the key to walking away from a service position we love or are doing really well. We should not take these positions and make a career out of them. Rotation helps us develop the sense of humility that reminds us that the AA message is what is important, not the messenger. We are hurting ourselves and all those that need to find *their* selves. Rotation keeps our egos in check, allows someone else to learn and grow, keeps new ideas coming in, and stops any build-up of personalities. By guiding someone in a service position, we are allowing them to grow by serving others, and build their self-esteem by feeling useful, needed, and trusted.

Both the 12th Step and the 12th Tradition remind us that the principles must come first, not our egos!

Humility allows us to walk away from a position and become the elder statesman.



A Great Time to Be an Alcoholic

Kevin W, District 11, Ingram 12 Step Study Group

It's a great time to be an alcoholic.

Boy, have we come a long way from one man carrying a Big Book around the country; today, millions share their experience, strength, and hope around the world at the stroke of a computer key.

Technology has played a big role in my recovery. For the first couple of years, I had trouble sleeping. So I would go to meetings online, eventually chairing them and becoming a moderator.

YouTube and other websites have hundreds of AA speakers. I can go to camp and have a Big Book Study with Joe and Charlie while sitting around the fire.

Having the Big Book and 12&12 on my phone in text and audio is another great example of how technology helps us in sobriety. While those will never replace my printed Big Book with all my notes and such, it is great to be able to look up a page or listen to a chapter while I mow the lawn.

We can receive the *Grapevine* online or through an app on our phones, giving us decades of experience, strength, and hope anywhere in the world. I personally like the audio *Grapevine*. I like to listen to it while driving.

The internet gives me greater ability to research our past history. It also makes it possible to find specific words in the Big Book, how many times a word is used, and its definition.

As DCM for District 11, I am able to keep in touch with my fellow trudgers, reminding them of upcoming District and Area meetings. I can forward them pertinent information on their concerns from Area 60 or GSO in the blink of the eye.

Nothing will ever replace two alcoholics sharing their experience, strength, and hope with each other in person, but what a Spiritual Toolbox we have here in the 21st Century!

I think Bill and Bob would be amazed.

New Grapevine Collections!

Amber G, Area 60 Grapevine Coordinator

There are two new books that just came out that I'd like to share with you:

Voices of Women in AA: *Voices of Women in AA* is a collection of 61 stories from *Grapevine*. The book begins with articles by or about women who contributed to AA early in its history, followed by stories by some of the program's earliest female members. Sections are devoted to spirituality, sponsorship, life changes, relationships, family, careers and friendships. The collection concludes with a chapter devoted to women's meetings. The stories demonstrate the various ways women alcoholics – often with great courage – find sobriety in AA and embrace the program to live rich and rewarding lives.

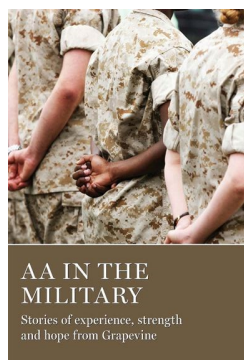
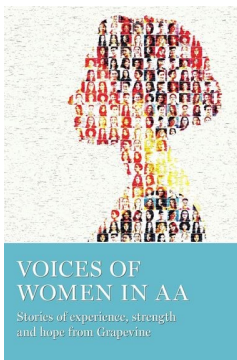
AA in the Military: *A.A. in the Military* is a collection of stories, previously published in *Grapevine*, by members of Alcoholics Anonymous who have served in the military. The book begins with letters from the troops during World War II, when *Grapevine* first became a vital tool in keeping soldiers sober and connected to AA. The chapters that follow are filled with stories of experience, strength, and hope – by both men and women – who served their country on land, sea, and air. These personal accounts illustrate the challenges alcoholics in uniform encounter, often under difficult circumstances, far from loved ones. The book concludes with a powerful selection of stories by our sober veteran members, titled "Coming Home."

You may purchase these books online at aa.grapevine.org or visit me at Days of Sharing and area meetings and assemblies.

Also, I am working hard with Janet B from the New York service office to have in hand a list of all *Grapevine* Representatives in each district to reach out to and share information with. Stay tuned!

One last thing: if anyone attended the Pre-Conference Assembly and bought *Grapevine* material, we sold a total of **\$533.50**.

Thank you for all your love and support.



Convenient Searching

Christine N, District 7, Mayfair on Moffett

A few weeks into my AA experience, I downloaded an electronic copy of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. I can "carry" all the books and magazines I am reading (plus my Big Book, the *Grapevine*, *As Bill Sees It*, etc.) all on one device, contained in less space than a paperback novel.

Since I began carrying an electronic version of my books, I noticed others do this also. Often members of our fellowship use a smartphone or tablet to follow along in a meeting or reference a quote in discussion. The more I see others use these tools, the more often I do the same.

The next right thing is always with me. Search features help me find specific quotes and passages for reference, which often enhances my sharing and listening experiences. Multiple references quickly available for quoting adds context to meetings and gives me clarity with regard to the intentions of the speaker.

Using a phone, e-reader, or tablet can seem impersonal to those still not quite ready to embrace technology. I will readily admit an old-fashioned book still feels good in my hands. But using this compact, convenient technology to keep my AA with me at all times helps me remember change is good. I remain teachable when I try something new, and I have something to give when I show others how easy it can be to use new tools to enhance sobriety.

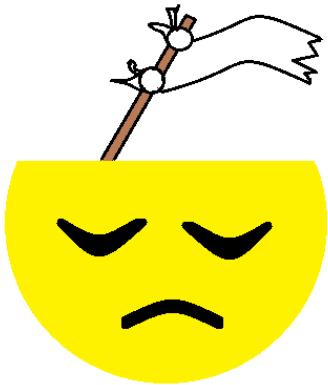
If you use an app or cloud to store your materials you can have the same "book" in many places. My Big Book is on an iPhone app, my iPad, and my Nook reader. This also makes my reading water resistant!

I did not use any of my technology efficiently before I lived a sober life. Now that I have the *spiritual tools* for living happy, joyous, and free, I use a subset of many *technological tools* to aid my path along an easier, softer way.

I can literally and figuratively lighten my load by placing my AA content on new and compact technology.

Surrender

Harry D, District 14, Renewal



Forced to abandon the Confederate capital of Richmond, blocked from joining the surviving Confederate force in North Carolina, and harassed constantly by Union cavalry, Lee had no other option.

In retreating from the Union Army's Appomattox Campaign, the Army of Northern Virginia had stumbled through the Virginia countryside stripped of food and supplies. At one point, Union cavalry forces under General Philip Sheridan had actually outrun Lee's army, blocking their retreat and taking 6,000 prisoners at Saylor's Creek. Desertions were mounting daily, and by April 8, the Confederates were surrounded with no possibility of escape. On April 9, Lee sent a message to Grant announcing his willingness to surrender.

At Appomattox, Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered his 28,000 troops to Union General Ulysses S. Grant, effectively ending the American Civil War.

All officers and men were to be pardoned, and they would be sent home with their private property – most important was their horses, which could be used for a late spring planting. Officers would keep their sidearms, and Lee's starving men would be given Union rations.

My surrender to my alcoholism was really no different than Lee's to Grant.

Being sober six weeks, frustrated at what I perceived going on around me (I was completely surrounded by assholes!), I made yet another decision to drink. All the phone numbers and all the AA members in the world weren't going to keep me sober – I found myself *without defense* against my next drink.

However, on that night, less than 5 minutes after making that decision, I received a gift: an envelope containing two hundred dollars and a note.

The note read: "Judy and Lare proud of what you're doing and we hope everything works out well for you, so please accept this gift to get something nice for yourself at Christmas."

I could have taken the two hundred dollars to drink on and threw the note in the trash, but I kept the note. I went into the walk-in freezer, sat down on a milk crate, and cried like a baby because I had discovered something that evening: *somebody out there cared more about me **than I did***.

"Powerless" is not about what goes on in between my ears *after* I pick up a drink but what goes on *before* I pick up a drink. "Insanity" is not about the crazy things I do *when I'm drinking*, but about the decisions I make *when I'm sober*.

That evening, I realized I was completely surrounded with no chance of escape, because the enemy was in-between my ears.

That evening, I came to believe that a Power greater than myself could and would restore me to sanity. Beginning the next morning and for many thereafter, I would ask God to help me stay sober for today.

That evening, my terms of surrender were to make a decision to carry out the program of action as outlined in Steps 3-10.

I am brought to tears, eternally grateful, when I think of how gracious my God has been to me. So I don't ask Him each morning to stay sober anymore; I ask Him each morning how I can help His children.

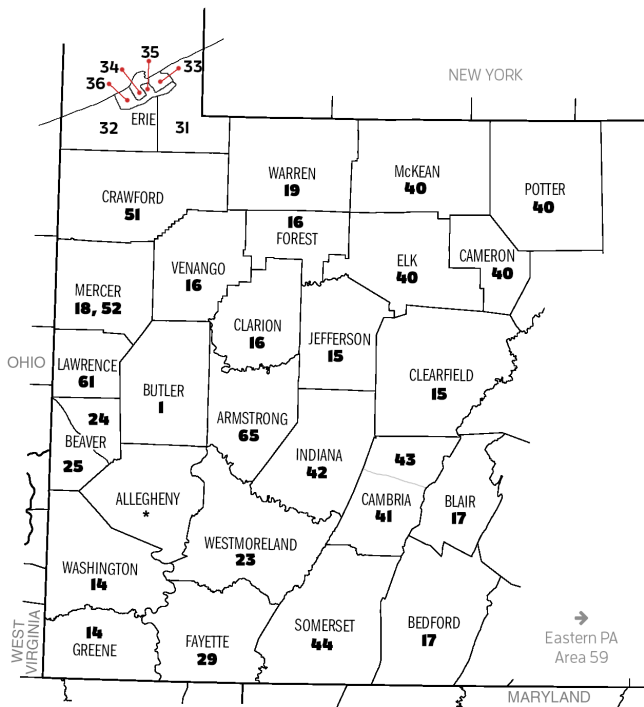
I have been restored.



Pre-Conference Assembly Weekend

March 22-23, 2019

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

- Quarterly Meeting:** Decides area business. DCMs, Area Officers & Coordinators, past Delegates vote.
- 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.**

2018 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, June 24	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	Post-Conference Assembly
Sunday, July 8	9 am	Officers/Coordinators Meeting
August 3-5	All Weekend	PA State Convention Harrisburg, PA
Saturday, Aug 18	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	3rd Quarterly Meeting St. John's Lutheran Church 2216 Peach Street, Erie, PA
Sunday, Sept 16	9 am	Officers/Coordinators Meeting
Saturday, Oct 6	9:30 am to 3:30 pm	Day of Sharing: District 19 Warren, PA
Sunday, Oct 14	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	Fall Election Assembly
Sunday, Nov 11	9 am	Officers/Coordinators Meeting
Sunday, Dec 9	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	4th Quarterly Meeting
Sunday, Dec 16	9 am	Officers/Coordinators Meeting PCAW Planning

2019

Sunday, Jan 6	9 am	PCAW Planning
Sunday, Jan 20	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	1st Quarterly Meeting
Sunday, Feb 10	9 am	Officers/Coordinators Meeting PCAW Planning
February 22-24	All Weekend	NERAASA Hunt Valley, MD

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
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Registrar: Walter G registrar@wpaarea60.org
Recording Secretary: Christa F recsec@wpaarea60.org
Newsletter Editor: Chad U 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 for a position, and learn about Area service.

We especially need a **CPC/PI Coordinator!**