



SEEDS OF SERVICE



VOL. XXXII, Issue 4
Fall 2018

GROUP CONSCIENCE: THE GUIDING FORCE

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 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.

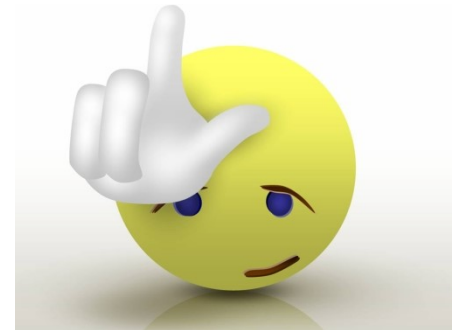
Submissions may be emailed to:

newsletter@wpaarea60.org

The Losing Side

Jon C, Area 60 Alt Chair

It didn't take being around long in AA before I was on "the losing side" of a decision in a group conscience. I call it that because that is definitely how I felt at the time. However, I have since come to firmly believe that God expresses himself in an informed group conscience decision. I would love to tell you that my actions always match that belief, but that isn't my experience. Here is an example of how I probably should and shouldn't act.



The first time occurred when I was in earlier sobriety, somewhere under two years. Being convinced of my intellect, I brought a great idea up to my home group conscience. There was some debate about it, but it was plain that I was the only person in the room who thought this was a great idea. The motion got defeated. I accepted that decision and continued to love and support the group I belonged to.

A number of years later, say around 5 years of sobriety, I had the privilege and pleasure of opening up a new group with a few friends. I thought "Perfect! Here is a group of likeminded individuals who will finally see the greatness of my ideas." So I brought up that same old idea again. Like the last time, there was some debate about it, but it was again plain that I was the only person in the room who thought this was a great idea. But this time, I had even come armed with facts about how other groups do this, knowledge of the traditions, and general BS that I thought was important. Once again, the motion got defeated.

The major difference this time was how I reacted. I pouted. I didn't practice unity. I wouldn't participate. I would bad-mouth the decision to anyone who would listen. It wasn't until someone pointed out how I wasn't practicing Traditions One or Two that it became clear that my behavior needed to change.

There is a good question from Tradition Two in the Traditions Checklist published by the Grapevine: "...Can I yield in good spirit to the group conscience and work cheerfully along with it?" The best way for me to practice this Tradition is to accept the decision of the group regardless of which way I cast my vote. And the rest of the fellowship shouldn't need to know which way I voted, because the group decided and I should support that.

And if a benign, loving Power is guiding this fellowship, shouldn't I go along with It rather than stick to my little plans and designs?

Speaking with the Voice of God?

Chad U, Area 60 Newsletter Editor

The following came to me in meditation one day...

Our *AA Service Manual* says on p. S26: "The GSR represents the voice of the group conscience..." That means the GSR is called to be the representative, avatar, or agent of a spiritual entity called "the XYZ Group."

Then, the short form of **Tradition Two** says: "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience."

So... congratulations, GSRs! As the voice of the group conscience, you are called upon to serve as **the voice of God as the XYZ Group Understands Him**.

(That's in addition to personally serving as an agent of God as a recovered alcoholic – directly stated as "He is the Principal; we are His agents" on page 62 of the Big Book.)

From my experience as a GSR, I found myself speaking and acting a little differently depending on if I was speaking:

- In a regular meeting as simply myself, an ex-drunk;
- In a group conscience as a home group member;
- As a GSR at a district meeting;
- As an officer who is **also** a GSR at a district meeting; and
- As an officer who is **not also** a GSR at a district meeting.

I think that in each of these different contexts, I'm representing the God of my understanding, the God of my group's understanding, or the God of my district's understanding. It's completely understandable if I'm talking or acting a little differently in each situations.

It can also be a big neon warning sign if I sound exactly the same in all these separate contexts. That is, unless I'm a spiritually fit paragon of integrity...

(Spoilers: I'm not!)



Cast Aside Old Ideas

Heidi M, District 18, Grove City

Wednesday Night Step Study

How different would our lives be if we were to cast aside old ideas for new ideas? The process of uncovering, discovering, and discarding old ideas is one that enables us to connect with God and recover.

Admitting powerlessness over alcohol was easy. To concede to my innermost self I was alcoholic, I had to accept I had a mental obsession and phenomenon of craving others do not experience when they drink alcohol. Unmanageability happens every time I try to manage my life drunk or sober.

To believe in God is not the same as believing in God's power. The foundation of my life was established on the new idea the power of God was available to me, and it could and would restore me to sanity.

I had to do more than make a decision. It needed to be followed with vigorous action of listing all my resentments and fears for there to be a permanent effect. I discovered I had set things in motion because I followed my will instead of trusting God. Taking my inventory to another person opened the channel for forgiveness.

I thought I would give God what was good in me, and I could fix the imperfections. (Those defects were the ways I was trying to fix my internal condition with an outside substance.) It was not humiliation, but a step into humility to have to ask God to remove them. Making amends was not saying I'm sorry: it was acknowledgment I had hurt someone, and being willing to make things right.

AA is an avenue to having a personal relationship with God. By connecting to God throughout the day and practicing prayer with meditative inventory at night, I continue to rid myself of the things blocking me from the Sunlight of His Spirit. Taking each suggestion molded me for my primary purpose of carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic.

If you are new, position yourself to set aside old ideas so you may have the experience of a new freedom and an amazing way of life.



68th General Service Conference Highlights

John K, Area 60 Delegate

(Highlights of full report delivered to the body of Area 60 at the Post Conference Assembly, June 24, 2018)

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 and 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."

If you have any questions or want more details on the 2018 General Service Conference, please contact John by email or phone. A fully detailed presentation is available; he could come to your district to discuss it.



A DOLLAR IS NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE

1935: \$1.00

Remember inflation when deciding upon your 7th Tradition Self-Support Contributions for:

- Group Meetings
- Online Recurring Contributions
- Birthday Gifts
- November Gratitude Month

2018: \$18.04

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Agenda

- ◻ It was recommended that:
- ◻ 3. The theme for the 2019 General Service Conference be: "Our Big Book - 80 Years, 71 Languages."
- ◻ 4. The following be presentation/discussion topics for the 2019 General Service Conference:
 - ◻ Yesterday's World - Our Legacies Begin Today's World - Demonstrating Integrity, Anonymity and Service
 - ◻ Tomorrow's World - Courage to be Vigilant
- ◻ 5. The following be the workshop topic for the 2019 General Service Conference: "Clarity of Purpose - Addressing the Needs of Our Meetings"



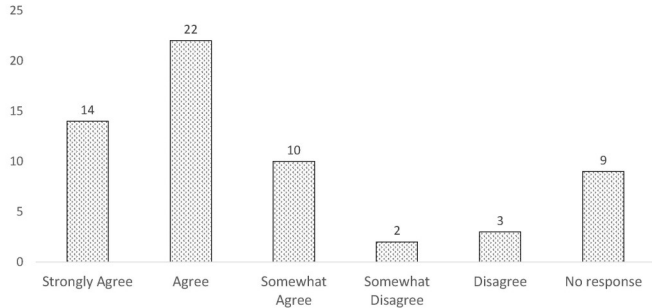
Area 60 Inventory

Jody K, Area 60 Chair

(Highlights of full presentation delivered to the body of Area 60 at the 3rd Quarterly Meeting, August 18, 2018)

Number of members participating: 60

I feel educated regarding Area matters after the Quarterly and Assembly meetings



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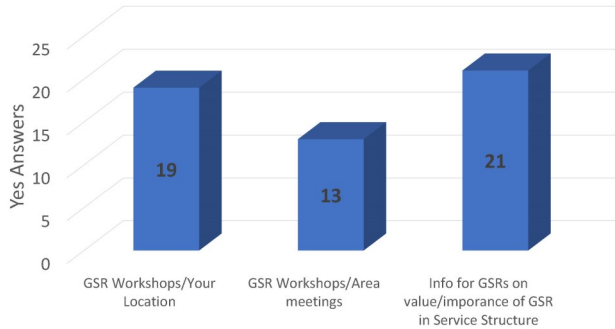
Comments...

I feel educated regarding Area matters after the Quarterly and Assembly meetings

- Always a wealth of knowledge
- Don't know where to find it on internet. Never get a hard copy or email
- I am new to area learning
- I am new to my GSR role. Everything I have been able to attend so far has been useful to me
- I can see how some folks are confused. We need to let people know we are available to help them
- There is clearly too much "politics" in the area

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Could Area officers assist Districts by providing...



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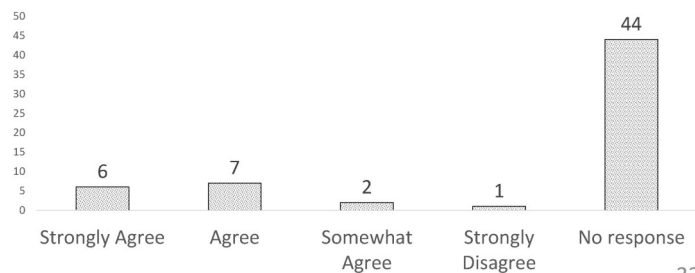
Comments...

More training workshops would be helpful to assist me in my service position

- 1. How to set up a district, 2. Teach a district properly, tactfully, respectfully in leadership, 3. how to do district with Roberts Rules of Order
- Grapevine
- I am very interested in workshops that balance the underlying principles AND the "nuts & bolts" work of service positions
- I do not attend area meetings because of schedule conflict
- I enjoy things like the roundtable where we can discuss matters freely
- My home group is interested in more information on facilitating weekly meetings

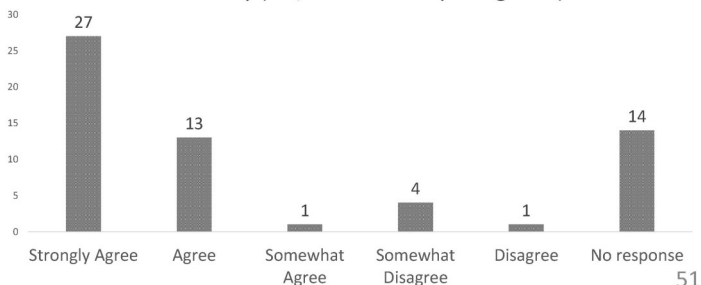
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As a DCM, I feel confident and informed enough to accurately share happenings at the Area level with my district committee



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The current Area meetings (beginning January 2017) have been an example of Unity in the face of controversy (i.e., the Manuscript Litigation)



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Unity: Comments

- I would like to see more dignity & humility from past delegates. George K -- his immature comments & actions are a turn off for area service.
- Our servants abided by Concept 3. Litigation, lawsuits, inside controversy, calling members "nefarious" such as Past Delegate Jean did, among other things rarely create an atmosphere of unity. Call me for more elaboration.
- I somehow feel that "consensus" was not achieved and that a minority position managed to prevail without proper vetting. Perhaps the appropriate position was finally reached but the path was very rocky.
- We're still opinionated drunks
- I feel that our area officers and coordinators are extraordinary in their commitment to AA

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If you have any questions or want more details on the Area 60 Inventory, please contact Jody by email or phone.

A fully detailed presentation is available; she could come to your district to discuss it.





The Language of the Heart is Not the Language of Statistics

Amy C, District 22 Secretary

Inventory is meant as a constructive tool to see where things are not sound. It is not meant as a means of patting one's self on the back.

What I witnessed in the 3rd Quarterly disturbed me about the attitude our Area took toward the outcome of the inventory. The end focus appeared to be on what we were doing right – not what we need improvement on. Diligently writing down what needs improvement, and then overlooking it in favor of our assets. If an individual AA did this on their inventory they could get spiritually sick – or worse, die.

Only sixty members participated. We didn't establish a quorum as a minimum amount. (However, we can't make people give us their input.)

The PowerPoint presentation could've been much simpler. I've taken college statistics classes, and even I found the presentation drawn-out and taxing.

People who take the time to do the inventory questionnaire would not typically "skip" a question. That means people felt too conflicted to answer the question in the manner that it was asked.

From my experience, there's many mixed feelings that need sorting out when doing inventory work of any kind. This is why a third party is asked to help groups and districts with their inventories. In the case of a group inventory, a DCM may be the one presiding over the inventory. In the case of a district inventory, it may be a member of the Area Committee.

Who oversaw Area 60's inventory? I don't know. Overseeing our own inventories isn't a good idea.

This is why in personal inventories, we do inventory work with the help of a sponsor, and then the 5th Step with another human being.

Ask-It Basket Questions

From the Virtual Ask-It Basket, online at:
<https://www.wpaarea60.org/newsletters/>

Q. What's the difference between cross-talk and side conversations?

Chad U (Newsletter Editor) answers:

A **side-conversation** is when two members at a meeting carry on a private conversation during the meeting. Many groups ask for side-conversations to be taken outside because they are rude and distracting.

Depending upon the group or region, **cross-talk** can mean speaking out of turn, interrupting someone while they are speaking, commenting **at all** (negatively or positively) on what someone has shared, giving direct advice to someone in a meeting, or even any "you should" statements (instead of "I did" statements).

Prohibition of cross-talk is a common practice in clinical group therapy. Many people first encounter this custom in a rehab setting. This might have influenced how we share in AA, directly or indirectly.

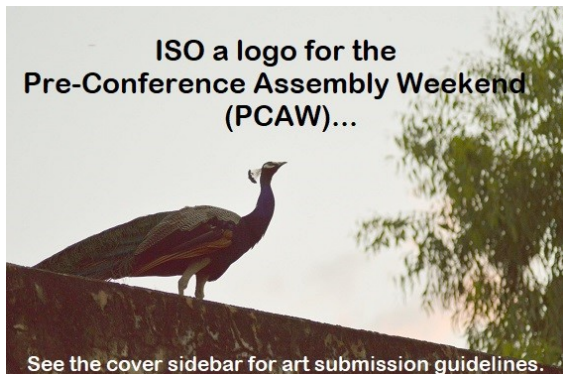
However, AA is not intended to be a form of group therapy. From the very beginning, one drunk talking to another is the heart of the AA program: experience, strength, and hope being shared to apply a common solution to a common problem.

Custom varies. What cross-talk is accepted and what is rejected differs from group to group. In some groups, AA might interrupt one another for joking comments; in other places, the person might be asked to leave for doing the same thing. (It is interesting that in many places in Europe, the idea of cross-talk being detrimental *doesn't exist!*)

Some suggestions that might be helpful when sharing in a meeting include sticking to one's own experience, avoiding debate or labored refutation of another's share, and being nonjudgmental (no preaching, scolding, or belittling others).

When in doubt, ask the group Secretary or GSR about their group's customs regarding cross-talk.





PCAW Evaluation: An Opportunity for Learning

Margie S, Area 60 Alt Delegate

The response to the Pre-Conference Assembly Weekend (PCAW) was overwhelmingly positive. The surveys reflected that people felt welcome and not afraid to ask questions. Many people felt they were just learning (their positions, or about general service), and this weekend was quite helpful. The committee was commended for reaching out and making people comfortable.

There are a few comments worth mentioning from this year's PCAW Evaluation Survey. A brief synopsis of them will provide an opportunity for learning how to better plan future events:

- We were asked by more than one day-commuter to publish the daily schedule prior to the event so they could better plan their commutes and ride-sharing.
- Some suggested on doing more Traditions work.
- Someone said we need to make “the Concepts come alive for people.”
- More than one survey addressed the workshops:
 - People felt there should be a better explanation of the materials handed out prior to the workshops.
 - The committee was asked to try get the conference agenda items and background which will be discussed at PCAW prior to the actual weekend, allowing GSRs and DCMs to familiarize themselves with all the items. (More than one person mentioned that in the past, the DCMs received the agenda items and a brief synopsis prior to the weekend.)
 - There was concern that the committee workshops were disorganized.
 - There was concern that personal opinion entered facilitation, rather than the facilitator moderating the workshop and being a guiding hand. (One person remarked that negative personal opinion from a facilitator about the committee agenda items discredited past work done by our trusted servants on these topics.)
 - There seemed to be no “fixed end point” when discussing the agenda items. The person felt after discussion and voting, there was no need for the further discussion and they should have moved on to the next item.
 - Not a lot of effort was made to shut down the “self-impressed” who apparently shared repeatedly.
- Some felt Past Delegate George K's remarks to Past Delegate Jean M from the microphone (during the Manuscript Litigation panel) lacked “humility and grace”.
- Many were extremely upset this year by the sidebar conversations going on in the Ballroom (some of the officers tried to address this at the time to no avail). There were also complaints about the rudeness of sidebars during Trustee Rich P's lead, which also made it difficult to hear.

Additionally, there were lots of kudos for the hospitality, greeters, registration, and (happily!) about the panels, roundtables, and workshops.

Lastly, *Recording Secretary Christa F* was specifically given kudos for her handling of a disruption, which remarked on how gracious she was and hard she worked during both her workshop and at the podium under such difficult circumstances.

Survey after survey stated, “I learned a lot.” More than a few even said “Best PCAW/Getaway ever!”

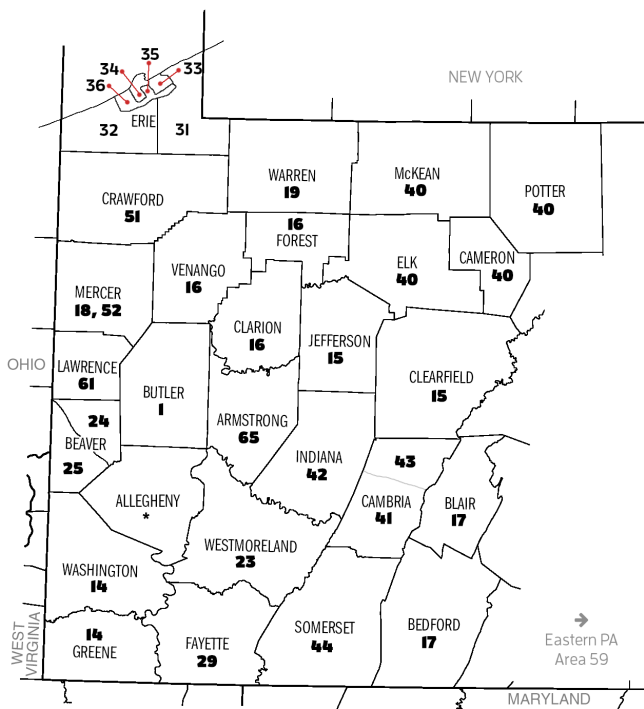
Your honest responses are a valuable opportunity for us improve PCAW!



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

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.**

2018-19 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, Oct 14	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	Fall Election Assembly
Sunday, Nov 11	9 am	Officers/Coordinators Meeting PCAW Planning
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
Sunday, Mar 3	9 am	PCAW Planning
March 8-10	All Weekend	NERD Somerset, NJ
March 22-23	Fri/Sat	PCAW Weekend
Sunday, Mar 24	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	Pre-Conference Assembly
Sunday, Apr 7	9 am	Officers/Coordinators 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: Thomas S 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

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Corrections: Wayne S corrections@wpaarea60.org
Alt. Corrections: _____ corrections@wpaarea60.org
CPC/PI: _____ pi@wpaarea60.org
Alt. CPC/PI: _____ pi@wpaarea60.org
Grapevine: Amber G grapevine@wpaarea60.org
Alt. Grapevine: Jordon W grapevine@wpaarea60.org
Literature: Becky C literature@wpaarea60.org
Alt. Literature: _____ literature@wpaarea60.org
Treatment/SN: Maresa S treatment@wpaarea60.org
Alt. Treatment/SN: _____ treatment@wpaarea60.org
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 and learn about Area service!