



SEEDS OF SERVICE



VOL. XXXV, Issue 4
Fall 2020

ATTRACTION THROUGH ACTION

PANDEMIC EDITION

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on home printers)

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 2021 theme for the
71st General Service Conference is
"AA in a Time of Change"

- ◆ **Winter Topic:** Practicing AA's Spiritual Principles in a Changing World
- ◆ **Spring Topic:** Recovery in a Changing World
- ◆ **Summer Topic:** Unity in a Changing World
- ◆ **Fall Topic:** Service in a Changing World

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

What Impression of AA Do My Actions Transmit to the Newcomer?

Anonymous

A general conception is that AA is comprised only of skid-row bums. Newcomers are happily impressed to find this is not so. If I tend to look slovenly, I need to try to maintain a neat appearance at meetings—something I am not always so good at! After all, if I am trudging the Road of Happy Destiny, shouldn't I be dressed for the occasion?

If I spend my time during the important "meeting *before* the meeting" or "meeting *after* the meeting" just talking with my regular friends and ignoring the newcomer, they will come in lonely and leave lonely. My less-than-welcome reception may cause their first AA meeting to be their last.

If I use the same sort of shocking or foul language that I used as a thirteen-year-old to show my parents that I have finally "grown-up," I can leave the newcomer with the impression that I am too immature or slow-witted to be taken seriously. I should talk like an actual adult person.

If I mock the reading of "How It Works" (*What's the point? Balk-balk!, Who's Earnest?, etc.*), I am likely to leave the newcomer with the impression that the AA Twelve Step program is not to be taken seriously. While "we are not a glum lot," I should still respect our common solution.

It does feel good to "let it all hang out" when I share at discussion meetings. However, if I do not *also* share how the Steps are working in my life (that is, my experience, strength, and hope), I can give the impression that AA is simply a group-therapy solution. Group therapy is good, so far as it goes, but AA is better than that: we have a Twelve Step solution that really works!

Bill Wilson wrote: "Sobriety—freedom from alcohol—through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps, is the sole purpose of an A.A. group."

[F-8, Problems Other than Alcohol].



Magnets: How Do They Work?

Chad U, Area 60 Newsletter Editor

The word “attraction” makes me think of magnets – how they exert an invisible pull (or push!), how they make compasses point north, how they keep important “stuff” stuck to my fridge. And these things make it a great metaphor to me for the spiritual attraction we feel in recovery.

Magnets do not just attract (or repel!) other magnets. They also attract ferromagnetic materials like iron, nickel, and cobalt. But they don't attract everything: put even a powerful magnet in the middle of a pile of wooden toothpicks and it attracts little.

This is similar to that spiritual attraction in recovery: there has to be something inside someone that resonates for them to be attracted to me. But just as magnets do not attract everything, I should not be upset that my actions and experiences cannot attract everybody.

On further thought, I'll go one step further: I don't think I'm a “permanent magnet” (that is, one that is always magnetic). It's more likely that I'm an **electromagnet**: a core, wrapped in a coil of wire, which only generates a magnetic field when power is run through it. No power, no magnetic field.

The material of a magnetic core (often made of iron or steel) is composed of small regions called *magnetic domains* that act like tiny magnets... Before the current in the electromagnet is turned on, the domains in the iron core point in random directions, so their tiny magnetic fields cancel each other out, and the iron has no large-scale magnetic field. When a current is passed through the wire wrapped around the iron, its magnetic field penetrates the iron, and causes the domains to turn, aligning parallel to the magnetic field, so their tiny magnetic fields add to the wire's field, creating a large magnetic field that extends into the space around the magnet. The effect of the core is to concentrate the field, and the magnetic field passes through the core more easily than it would pass through air.

from < https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electromagnet#Magnetic_core >

In this metaphor, I see the core as being my *will, actions, and experiences*; the coil of wire as *the 12 Steps*; and the current is provided by *my Higher Power*. The combination of practicing the disciplines of the Steps in my life using the power provided by God align all the random and contradictory tiny magnetic bits of my life into a powerful, concentrated force that can attract others.

I don't have to be an insane clown to see that as a miracle!

How I Learned to Think Before I Think)

Bob S, Area 23 (Richmond, IN)

The current explosion of violence in our country, along with a continuing string of discordant events, has spawned flashes of irrational fear in me. This fear often appears as justified anger. I have come to believe these two devils – fear and anger -- fit in the same box, because when reason takes over, both disappear at the same time! AA has taught me a method to face and be rid of this character defect in a timely manner.

I feel sure that there's a little fellow who lives in my brain, in my subconscious ego, and he will never leave. His job is to protect me, and he never sleeps. Unfortunately, he is excitable, often exaggerates, and loves to repeat himself. He will drive me paranoid and make me miserable if I allow him to take over my conscious mind.

But this is where AA comes to the rescue! It has taught me how to think before I think. After realizing that I cannot be rid of irrational fear on my own and that I need to ask God for help, I started praying like this: “Dear God, please remove my fear and direct my attention to what you would have me be.” (AA, p. 68)

My attention is often directed to what God would have me be through living and practicing Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve as described in the Big Book. If I follow the Big Book directions today, there is no way that I will “be” the same tomorrow: I will absolutely be further from self-will and closer to God's will.

By remaining alert to when I'm angry and/or fearful, and then saying the above prayer asking for my Higher Power's help, I can successfully quiet that little fellow in my brain, and remain happy, joyous, and free.

Virtual Ask-It Basket Questions

Q1. My home group hasn't met for months because of COVID. I'm the GSR. How am I supposed to do my job if we are not meeting? Should I still go to district meetings, if the DCM schedules one?

Lori G, Area 60 Recording Secretary, responds:

I would encourage GSRs to continue being a source of information and announcements: they can still attend area events regardless of their DCM's involvement, and give a report via a Zoom meeting. Remember: GSRs have a vote at area assemblies, including area elections!

Margie S, Area 60 Delegate, responds:

The pandemic is a unique situation not only for the world as we know it, but for Alcoholics Anonymous as a society. As such, we do not have the usual shared experience that our fellowship so heavily relies on. If the group has chosen not to meet, but has not disbanded, it would seem that you are still the GSR.

So, continue doing your job much in the same way as you did before. As the GSR, you should attend your district meetings and area assemblies, and craft a report for to your group. You are also to report your group's business back to the district. However, since you cannot give your report at a regular home group meeting or group conscience, you could either telephone or email (hopefully, you have a home group list!) a copy of your report to keep the members apprised of the business of AA and ask for feedback. On a personal level, if your group is not meeting, I would still make a concerted effort to connect with other AAs through other either virtual or real-time meetings. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety!

Q2. If a district ceases to meet (whether in person or by video), is it all right to try to restart the district? I know when a DCM doesn't show up repeatedly, we can re-elect after a few months, but what about when the elected officers decide to not hold or cancel meetings repeatedly? Is it more appropriate to elect some new officers and redistrict? When is too soon, when is too long?

Lori G, Area 60 Recording Secretary, responds:

I would suggest contacting the DCM to inquire or contact Area 60 to connect with the officer/coordinator liaison for that district.

Margie S, Area 60 Delegate, responds:

It seems like perhaps the district is not dark, but is not meeting due to the current circumstances. In regard to districts and even areas, there is no shared experience yet on how to proceed; since that is the case, I would refer you to your district officers and coordinators. When reaching out, if you do it by email and receive no response, make some phone calls. There are usually several district officers who can help. Also, when reaching out, perhaps if you are competent in Zoom or another virtual meeting platform, you may want to offer your services to assist in helping with a virtual district meeting. It is good to remember that in AA general service, everything moves slowly... and there is good reason for that.

This is definitely not a time to redistrict. Even if it were, without some input from the Area Chair, I would not start reforming the district or trying to schedule any elections – that should be a decision made and voted on by majority of registered groups in the district with the aid of an impartial AA member (usually from the Area Committee). It is possible that a substantial number of groups in the district are comfortable with not meeting during this time – and that is okay. The district is autonomous.

While we all struggle through the pandemic, it is crucial to support each other in a myriad of ways. But we need always remember that our primary purpose supersedes all things: just like in the beginning of AA, we need to take care of the sick and suffering alcoholic – and the local needs which support that – first.



Send your AA 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/>.



Meeting Great Needs

Jean M, Past Delegate Panel 61

“The history of AA shows that whenever a great need arises, that need is always met. In this respect, I’m quite sure that our history will go on repeating itself.”

Bill W, “Guardian of AA—Our General Service Conference,” *AA Grapevine* (April 1958); *Grapevine Daily Quote* for June 15, 2020

As true as Bill’s words above were in 1958, they remain true today.

During this time of serious threat to our health and safety, most groups have suspended in-person meetings; only recently have some begun re-opening. And yet, our expenses have continued just the same. A group could still be paying rent, either to hold their meeting space or because it’s the right thing to do. Groups using Zoom for meetings often pay to use that service.

Some districts are continuing to carry the message locally, through literature or face-to-face meetings; some are also using Zoom. Our Pittsburgh Central Office has expenses for rent, newsletters, telephones, and website maintenance. (The Central Office is still maintaining the 12-Step call hotline.) Area 60 has been meeting via Zoom for quarterlies, assemblies, and officer/coordinator meetings. Services continue to be provided by the General Service Office in New York City – although the office is empty, many AA employees are working from home. Telephone calls are being answered, bills are being paid, and literature is being shipped. The *Grapevine* is still being published and mailed. All these activities are still being done, and all require money.

When I was treasurer for my home group, we had a member whose job required travel, so she often missed meetings. When she was able to attend, there was frequently an extra \$5, \$10, or \$20 in the 7th Tradition basket. She said that she knew that even though she was not there, the group continued to meet and still had expenses.

Because many groups are not meeting, the basket is not passed for donations, and therefore fewer contributions get sent to AA service offices. I realize that many people have had a loss of income because of this crisis. But I find I just don’t seem to have the opportunities to spend like I used to: I have a couple of extra bucks because I’m not driving or stopping for lunch as much. So, I was able to contribute to our service offices on behalf of my home group.

If you are able to help in this way: please do! If you are able, perhaps your group (or even individual members) could send whatever you can afford to help these valuable supports to our – and others’ – recovery.

How can we help to meet this great need for AA services in this time of crisis?

Virtual GSC (2020) Items

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the 70th General Service Conference (GSC) was held virtually from May 16 to May 19, 2020.

Committee Recommendations that pass the whole Conference with a 2/3 vote become ADVISORY ACTIONS.

Data on Delegates

Average Age: 59

Oldest: 76

Youngest: 33

Average Sobriety: 22

Longest: 43

Shortest: 5

Average Service: 17

Longest: 40

Shortest: 5



Agenda Committee

Theme of 71st GSC: "AA in a Time of Change"

Archives Committee

The Committee discussed creation of a book on AA history from 1955 to the present.

Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC)

The Committee considered discontinuing the pamphlet *AA In Your Community*. They **Took No Action** but suggested that the Trustees' CPC/Treatment & Accessibility Committee consider updating this pamphlet (**Committee Consideration**). They also made suggestions for the next GSC to consider issues concerning LinkedIn and creating a pamphlet for mental health professionals.

Corrections Committee

Committee considered a report from AAWS Publishing on getting our literature onto electronic media in prisons. They also suggested that *The God Word* pamphlet be added to the Corrections Kit.

Finance Committee

The Committee recommended that a paragraph concerning digital contributions (the Virtual Basket) be added to the *Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix* pamphlet. **PASSED: became an Advisory Action.**

The Committee also considered the pie charts in the *Self-Support* pamphlet and heard a report from a Trustees' Ad Hoc Committee on Google AdWords/Grants and the Seventh Tradition.

Grapevine Committee

The Grapevine Committee recommended that the name of this committee be changed to "The *Grapevine* and *LaViña* Committee." **PASSED: became an Advisory Action.**

The Committee considered changing the wording of the Preamble; it was referred back to Committee (**Committee Consideration**).

The Committee suggested that the GV Board develop examples of gender-neutral language. It also suggested several books to be produced in 2021 in English and Spanish, proposed an annual survey of the Fellowship (in English, Spanish, and French) on which books should be produced, and also discussed Instagram, advising that the Trustees continue planning regarding it.

International Conventions/Regional Forums Committee

The Committee discussed the use of The Lord's Prayer at the end of the "Big Meetings" and International Conventions.

Literature Committee

The new video on the GSO be approved. **PASSED: became an Advisory Action.**

"A.A.W.S. Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials" be approved. **PASSED: became an Advisory Action.**

That the pamphlet "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic" be updated. **PASSED: became an Advisory Action (through a Floor Motion).**

Policy/Admissions Committee

It was recommended that the Process for Approving Observers to the GSC be approved, that electronic voting be used for Trustees' elections, and that the process for picking Conference dates be changed. **PASSED: became an Advisory Action.**

Public Information (PI) Committee

The PI Committee recommended that all AAWS video titles be adjusted for search engine optimization (SEO). They also considered reports on the AA and GV websites, the AAWS YouTube account, the Google AdWords/Grants issue, the Comprehensive Media Plan, the plan to create video shorts from existing pamphlets, the proposed new system of financial reporting of public service announcements (PSAs), the creation of a new form of communication about anonymity, and developing an AA podcast. Furthermore, they had many more suggestions for the Trustees.

Report & Charter Committee

The Committee recommended that the words "participating in the vote" be added to Article 4 of the current Conference Charter.

The Committee discussed restoring the 2 paragraphs and footnote that were removed from the essay on Concept Eleven and **Took No Action** but referred it back for **Committee Consideration**.

The Committee reviewed the draft of the *Service Manual* and requested that an updated draft be brought to the 71st GSC.

Treatment & Accessibilities (T&A) Committee

The Committee recommended that the *Bridging the Gap* pamphlet be updated. They also suggested that the trustees' CPC/Treatment & Accessibilities committee update bridging the gap service material to reflect currency and inclusion. Additionally, the Committee urged that the call for stories in the update of the *AA for the Older Alcoholic* pamphlet be re-opened to gather broader and more inclusive representation of AA experience.

Floor Actions

The following floor actions will be sent to the 71st General Service Conference.

- ◆ That the Trustees' Finance Committee revise the pie chart percentages in the *Self-Support* pamphlet to emphasize more clearly that any percentages included in the pamphlet are only suggestions.
- ◆ That the GSC consider developing a PSA about AA geared toward minorities.
- ◆ That the *AA for the Black and African-American Alcoholic* pamphlet be updated to include fresh stories and a new title that is respectful and inclusive.
- ◆ That the launch of Google AdWords/Grants by the General Service Office be halted until the 71st GSC convenes and approves that launch, and that the ad hoc committee progress report "Google Grants and the 7th Tradition" from the trustees' Finance Committee (March 30, 2020) be immediately released to all members of the 70th GSC.

AA's program of recovery is spiritual, but the hands-on action of two drunks – one sober, the other new or returning from a slip – helping each other is what glues it together, as our co-founders quickly found out. Looking back on their relationship some years later, Bill W observed, "Dr. Bob did not need me for his spiritual instruction... What he did need, when we first met, was the deflation at depth and the understanding that only one drunk can give to another. What I needed was the humility of self-forgetfulness and the kinship with another human being of my own kind." (*As Bill Sees It*, p. 212)

– "Sponsorship Goes Two Ways," *Box 4-5-9* (April-May 1998)

Get to Know Area 60!



Two Types of Area Meetings

1. **Quarterly Meeting:** Decides area business. DCMs, Area Officers and 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 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?"

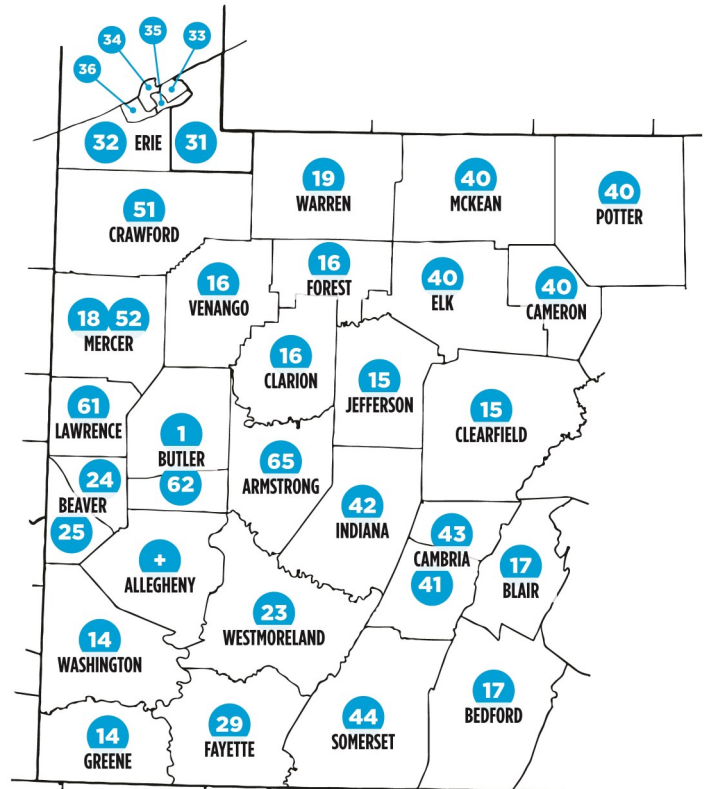
- ◆ To ensure that all voices that wish to be heard are heard.
- ◆ To ensure that no one voice dominates all others.
- ◆ To ensure that everyone gets to speak **once** before another speaks **twice**.
- ◆ To ensure that everyone understands the content of the vote.
- ◆ To ensure that it is clear what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

Motions requiring substantial unanimity of the meeting require a two-thirds 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

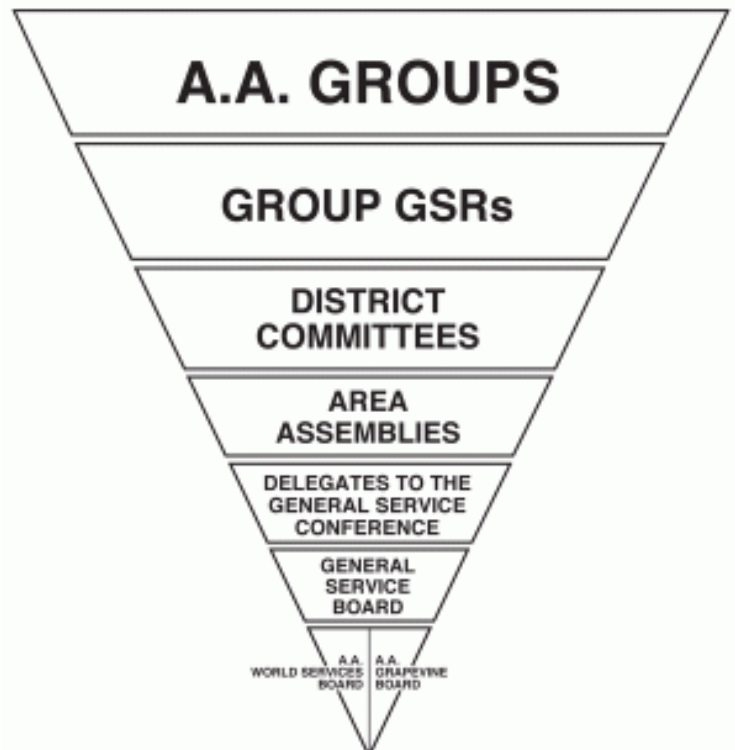
<https://www.wpaarea60.org/calendar/>

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**.



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

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



2020 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 18	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	Election Assembly
Sunday, Nov 8	9 am	Officers/Coordinators Meeting PCAW Planning Meeting
Sunday, Dec 6	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	4th Quarterly Meeting
Sunday, Dec 13	9 am	Officers/Coordinators Meeting PCAW Planning Meeting
2021		
Sunday, Jan 24	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	1st Quarterly Meeting
Sunday, Feb 7	9 am	Officers/Coordinators Meeting PCAW Planning Meeting
Friday–Sunday Feb 26-28	All Weekend	Virtual NERAASA
Sunday, Mar 7	9 am	PCAW Planning Meeting
Friday–Sunday Mar 19-21	All Weekend	Pre-Conference Assembly Weekend (PCAW)
Sunday, Mar 21	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	Pre-Conference Assembly

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA AREA 60

ELECTED OFFICERS:

Delegate: Margie S delegate@wpaarea60.org
Alt Delegate: Jody K altdelegate@wpaarea60.org
Chairperson: Jon C chairperson@wpaarea60.org
Alt Chair: Walter G altchairperson@wpaarea60.org
Secretary: Christa F secretary@wpaarea60.org
Treasurer: Becky C treasurer@wpaarea60.org

APPOINTED OFFICERS:

Alt. Treasurer: Jane R treasurer@wpaarea60.org
Archivist: Al C archivist@wpaarea60.org
Registrar: Jon M registrar@wpaarea60.org
Recording Secretary: Lori G recsec@wpaarea60.org
Newsletter Editor: Chad U newsletter@wpaarea60.org
Alt. Newsletter Editor: Sherri Lynn D newsletter@wpaarea60.org

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Alt. Website: _____ 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 473
 Apollo, PA 15613

Save the Dates!

Pre-Conference Assembly Weekend (PCAW)
 Friday, March 19 & Saturday, March 20, 2021



Pre-Conference Assembly
 Sunday, March 21, 2021

See Those _____s Above?

Volunteer and learn about Area service!