



DELEGATE'S DISPATCH

AREA 60/PANEL 69 WESTERN PA

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STATEMENT OF CONCERN SENT TO THE 71ST GSC

Attached you will find a "Statement of Concern" sent to the 71st GSC by some of the delegates. I was one of the delegates to sign this statement. As with the other delegates that signed, I did not sign on behalf of the members of Area 60, I signed as follows: "Signed as myself, Marjorie B. Stanislaw, member of the 69th and 70th General Service Conference."

The items outlined have to do with a continued lack of transparency and failure to adhere to the spirit of some of our Traditions and Concepts over the past several years, and are not limited to particular items that occurred at the 70th General Service Conference.

I want to make it clear that I do not think that the General Service Board or our management staff are acting out of malice, or that they have some kind of hidden agenda. In my mind, we expect a lot from our trustees and they work very hard. However, in recent years it seems that there is a pervasive top-down management style at our General Service Office, rather than an adherence to our upside-down triangle. The issues in the Statement convey those concerns.

STATEMENT OF CONCERN (CONT.)

It is a strong statement, but we are also to have a strong informed group conscience. The Group Conscience is the backbone of AA and the General Service Conference is the group conscience of AA as a whole. I felt it necessary to express my concerns to that group conscience. If I cannot express my concerns to the group conscience out of fear that certain things could or might happen, then it means that the process is not working.

For my part, I am going to trust the conference process, and it is my hope that a robust democratic discussion will take place at Conference. Some change is already occurring, with a new general manager and a new GSB chairman coming on board. However, with the loss of so many staff members, and new management and trustees coming into the fold, I think discussion is crucial so that everyone has an understanding of the fact that we are not your everyday corporation, we are a spiritual entity and the upside-down service structure is our guide.

MY FAREWELL

Dear Friends,

I have no words to express what the last two years have meant to me. And for the very last time, Thank you for Allowing Me to be Your Delegate. It has been the ride of a lifetime, but I could not have done it without all of you.

Service is not always easy, and as it says in our text, getting and staying sober requires self-sacrifice and you can get plenty of that here, but you also get the wonderful gift of humility and friendship. I am not the same delegate as I was in 2018, because I am not the same person. This opportunity has once again changed me and filled my heart with so much love and more.

I hope you are satisfied with my representation of you at the 69th and 70th General Service Conference. I kept you all in my hearts the whole time I was there and did the job to the best of my ability. I hope it was enough.

I never expected to be a Pandemic Delegate, but I'm sure that God gave me the job because he knew that I could do it. It wasn't what I thought I wanted, and the biggest sacrifice was how much I missed coming out to visit you all at our districts and getting to know you better. But with that being said, it was a great challenge and my greatest privilege to represent you all and to be part of the Group Conscience of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole during this time of upheaval and change.

I cannot tell you how much I am going to miss you! We did it! All of us....we got through this 2 years, and for some of us we were together for years. During that time, AA changed beyond what we could have imagined as did all of us, and I pray daily that our change is for the good and brings more people to our doorstep. I am going to ask you all to do three things for me. 1) Please continue in service. Don't rotate out, rotate on....we need you! 2) Continue to keep me in your prayers and 3) Start praying for Jody right away. She needs you all too!

DELEGATES FAREWELL (CONTINUED)

So, I am going to try to stop crying here and leave you with this:

I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright no matter how gray the day may appear.

I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun even more..

I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive and everlasting.

I wish you enough pain so that even the smallest of joys in life may appear bigger.

I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting...

I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess.

I wish you enough hellos to get you through the final good- bye.

*I wish you enough love to always remember our time together!**

Warmly in service,
Your delegate,
Margie
Area 60/Panel 69

*Original Poem "I Wish You Enough" by Bob Perkins



OUR AGENDA ITEMS RESOLUTION

Shortly after our last meeting, I sent the Agenda Item to Release the Adhoc Committee Progress Report on Google Ad-Words and the 7th Tradition, as well as the Letter of Support for the Area 29 Agenda Item to the Conference Coordinator

On December 17th, I received word that the letter of support will be added to the background information for the Area 29 Agenda Item. It was felt at this time that the Google Ad-Words Report Item did not reach the level of a Conference Agenda Item and it was forward to the Public Information Committee who had requested that Finance compile the report, for them to consider. I am hoping the Trustees PI Committee will release the report. (If anyone would like to see the report please let me know.)

HISTORY OF ERP (GSO'S NEW OPERATING SYSTEM)

Coincidentally (or maybe not) the day after the Statement of Concern was sent to the Conference Coordinator, all the delegates received the attached report discussing the management issues and financial issues that the General Service Office had with the system.

As a note, this was asked for at Conference and at numerous meetings with the trustees since then.

US/CAN EASTERN REGIONAL FORUM 2020

OUTREACH TO THE SICK AND SUFFERING ALCOHOLIC IN A VIRTUAL WORLD: ARE WE DOING ENOUGH?

MODERATOR: AREA 60 PANEL 69 DELEGATE MARGIE STANISLAW

SCRIBE: AREA 60 PANEL 69 CORRECTIONS COORDINATOR DANI M.

On December 5, 2020 Margie S., Delegate Panel 69, Area 60 Western Pennsylvania moderated a workshop titled Outreach to the Sick and Suffering in a Virtual World. Ironically, this forum was also the first ever to be done virtually, and it was attended by more than 1000 alcoholics.

After opening with the Serenity Prayer, several questions, issues, and ideas were presented in this “shared experience” venue. In the form of audio or chat, newcomers and long-time members alike posed scenarios which could have baffled them.

An intergroup member stated that the intergroups were working hard to provide clear instructions for meeting locations, and the hotline was on fire. One of the topics which was often being addressed was from people who were referred by the courts to attend our meetings. Where could they find meetings, and how could they get attendance verification on a virtual screen?

Well, many ideas were brought forth. First, due to an unexpected pandemic, many companies and agencies were forced to utilize online services. Therefore, an email from the virtual group is often adequate for verification purposes. Some groups have pre-printed verification emails. A CPC special committee is used to handle such matters in Area 11. Even providing a Zoom ID number, passcode, and chairperson’s or group name has worked for others seeking verifications for courts, probation, housing, etc.

Another barrier in the virtual world of AA is the resistance from those who are “old school”, those who are concerned about anonymity being broken, or those who lack technical abilities or resources.. Hybrid meetings are an option for some, but not for those who are technologically impaired or unwilling. Dori S. was forced to try a meeting on zoom when her home group collapsed because of Covid-19; and, although she found it “invasive” at first, she now expresses gratitude for the meetings.

PI committees are using radio announcements to inform, not sensationalize, the help available through AA. As one member mentioned, persistent reminders about the need to remain teachable in one-on-one conversations has worked for years. A phone conference call meeting is another option to hear the message of AA.

The importance of keeping meeting information current and available was another point of discussion. Websites are constantly being updated with the constant changing of meeting locations, times, and formats due to Covid-19. Place a contact number for someone looking for a meeting at a location no longer meeting in person. Because some groups are reluctant to share their information publicly, they are posting spreadsheet lists of virtual meetings in private social media groups. Someone from a central office noted the newcomer will not find a meeting in a private group, and that if we use the AA structure as designed, work will not be duplicated or inconsistent across the board. The groups have to be available, or they may as well be dark.

REGIONAL FORUM CONTINUED

So, how are some of us helping the sick and suffering newcomers find us? Of course, just like in the old days, word of mouth still works great. Another AA, Bob D., put flyers out in his neighborhood markets and liquor stores with detachable contact information. He even put some in the places where people find the need to seek help, like at the exit of the police station. Less traditional ways of reaching the sick and suffering were found on public bus ads and placemats. QR codes were being used for easy access to virtual information. One member puts a link to find other online meetings in the chat area of several

In service, we use bridging the gap committees for helping people being released into the community after treatment or jail connect to the program on the outside. Erin in PA got together with the jail and started an inmate sponsorship program where direct phone conversations are made between the two AA's. In Canada, Ron A. takes meetings into the mental health facilities, and he shares information about AA with nurses on college campuses to connect with younger prospects. In Area 28, Gene W. helps build relationships with facilities that house alcoholics and offers other facilities "FREE assistance" to provide help.

A couple of districts created a newcomer packet which contains information and a link to virtual/digital meetings. (The link was shared in the chat.) Nursing homes and assisted living facilities were receiving information about online meetings through flyers laying on the coffee tables in common areas and from prepaid gift subscriptions of the Grapevine.

In the end, whether in person or virtually, we are responsible to be found. It is imperative that we make more of an effort to get the word out and to keep information accurate so that no one goes without a meeting. The forum closed with the Responsibility Statement.

Respectfully submitted,
Dani M.
Area 60/Panel 69 Corrections Coordinator

NERAASA AND PCAW DATES AND INFORMATION

The Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly, affectionately known as NERAASA will be virtual on February 26, 27, and 28, 2021. Attached is a flyer, you can also register from our website at wpaarea60.org. There is a minimal charge. There will be panels and discussion on the upcoming Agenda Items for the 71st General Service Conference, and of course everyone's favorite—Roundtables!

The Area 60 Pre-Conference Assembly Weekend (PCAW) will be on March 19, 20, and 21, 2021. It is important for all DCM's and GSR's to attend. This is where our Area discusses Agenda Items and prepares our delegate to take our Group Conscience to the 71st General Service Conference. A flyer will be forthcoming.

If you are rotating out, please help whoever is taking your place understand the importance of these two events. Communication in all of our service positions is key!

MEETING WITH OUR TRUSTEES

The Northeast Regional Delegates were finally able to meet with the Trustees as we had been requesting and I had promised you a further update on GOOGLE ADWORDS. Trustee Leslie Backus reported that the Trustees Finance Committee Adhoc Committee Report on Google AdWords and the Seventh Tradition is to be released in January of 2021. She further

TRUSTEE MEETING CONTINUED

Indicated that the report was so long in being released because there was further information gathered. Ms. Backus stated that the report is very complex.

She further addressed the fellowship about the new ERP/ NetSuite system, and how things are finally working much better. She was able to show us copies of financials and other reports that had previously been unavailable.

Lastly she discussed our overall financial situation and how the Board is making plans to pay back the draw down from the Reserve Fund, and it is also noteworthy to mention that for the first time in many years, monthly contribution from April through October, were higher each month than Literature Sales. If this continues, we will truly be on the path to self-support. Keep up the good work!

Class B Trustee Beau B. spoke to the group about Fellowship Connection which was formerly known as My Portal and is the Areas' part of the ERP System. There has been a high rate of frustration amongst the registrars because this system currently does not do as much the old system called Fellowship New Vision.

The system finally launched last Monday even though it is not everything the registrars want to date. However, GSO has hired a new technology director and our trustees have also been working to make sure that what is being requested will be delivered in the future. There is however, a high level of mistrust amongst the current registrars because of the high level of disappointments over the past 2 years. Currently there will be training again in January for new registrars coming on, and there are weekday office hours where registrars can call and request assistance and explain what else is needed. Listening to Beau, I felt that this issue is very much a priority with him.

I asked if the Fellowship Connection is meant to interact with the other components of the ERP system and the answer was an emphatic yes. Eventually the system will be able to assist and track sales, and contributions using group numbers, but none of that will happen until the registrars/Areas are satisfied with how the system is working for them.

Well my friends! This is it...really...for the last time. The honor and privilege has been all mine.

Warmly in service,
Your delegate,
Margie S.
Area 60/Panel 69

