



Seeds of Service

VOL. XXX ISSUE 1
WINTER 2016
Connecting with
The New Comer
**PLEASE SHARE WITH
YOUR GROUP!**

New Editor Needed to Begin January 2017

Barb G. Area 60 Newsletter Editor

The Area 60 Newsletter Editor is a four-year appointed officer position. They are responsible for the production, printing, and distribution of the Area 60 newsletter, which is published four times a year, coinciding with the four quarterly Area 60 business meetings.

The subject for each edition is based on the theme of each year's General Service Conference. Ideally, the newsletter is created and produced with the assistance of an Alternate and a committee to provide input and review. The Editor attends Officer/Coordinator meetings, quarterly meetings/assemblies and other events; and serves as an Area 60 liaison to three districts in Western PA.

The Seeds Of Service is intended to be a resource to help our members better meet the needs of their groups and districts in carrying the message of AA. **It is also a resource for GSRs to use for their reports; and for home**

groups to use for group consciences or discussion topics. Each issue includes excerpts of GSO material

The biggest challenge ... has been to help members understand that the newsletter is open to *everyone*; and to encourage broader participation across Western Pennsylvania.

relevant to the theme (including pamphlets, books, Box 459's, Grapevine articles, regional forum reports, and other Area newsletters, etc.) Area Officers, Coordinators, DCMs and any other AAs may submit articles for the newsletter. Notice of Area 60 sponsored events are also published and districts are encouraged to supply information for a district news section.

Once the newsletter is formatted

properly and proof read to assure accuracy, it is printed and distributed to the groups in Area 60, Central Offices and GSO. It is also distributed to the DCM email list and made available on the Area 60 Website. The biggest challenge of the position has been to help members understand that the newsletter is open to *everyone*; and to encourage broader participation across Western Pennsylvania.

The past three years have been the best service experience of my sobriety. I have learned more about all aspects of our program of recovery than I ever thought possible.

If you have the interest, some technical skills and the desire to learn, please consider being part of our current committee; and possibly stepping up to become our next Newsletter Editor in January 2017. I'm happy to answer any questions sent to newsletter@wpaarea60.org. ▲

Connecting With the Newcomer

Scott A. Fayette SCI



Connecting with the newcomer is an easy thing for me to relate to. First I have to go back to my early days coming to A.A.—how the members made me feel, how they listened when I talked and how they offered to help me any way they could. After I just met them, I definitely felt – well for lack of a better word – welcome.

These people, just strangers to me, really cared about me, my problems and my welfare. After my first meeting, a handshake, and the words "keep coming back" made me feel at

home. This was over six years ago.

How I connect with the newcomer is always the same – a handshake, a hug, and a welcome to A.A. I also like to hand out a few brochures, such as "A Newcomer Asks" along with another pamphlet. I want to make them feel comfortable in the meeting, that they can say anything and it stays in the rooms. We don't take and share things here. When they see how we all share the same basic problems, and they are not the only ones, they may share as well. I also like to remember their names if I can, and if I see them outside the meeting, say hello. I always share in every meeting, and am open and honest

about my life – about how I was abused as a child. I don't blame my alcoholism on that, but my drinking helped me to forget it and numb the pain. This shows the newcomer that they can share the painful things from their lives as well.

Many times after a meeting, I'll pull someone aside and thank them for their sharing; and let them know I got a lot from what they said. I can always learn something new at each meeting and I am thankful for that. I often become friends with the new people, and I never forget that the newcomer is the most important person at the meeting. ▲

ON MY BOOKSHELF

Jean M., Past Delegate, Panel 61 Area 60 WPA

Sometimes my bookshelf is my computer. Today, with the popularity of digital books, someone can have any number of books available at one's fingertips. I understand, although I don't have one of those hand-held devices, that one can buy, rent or borrow a digital book. One of the ways that my computer doubles as a "bookshelf" is when I use the internet, specifically the AA Grapevine's website, aagrapevine.org.

There are many services available on the Grapevine website. There are a variety of resources and features, including the Quote of the Day, which often has an uncanny connection to things that are happening around me. Available at no charge, you can sign up at AA.Grapevine.org and it is sent to your in-box daily. If you haven't already signed up, you are missing out!

Another valuable feature on the website is the original workbook for GvRs, or Grapevine Representatives, which has been out of print for more than several years. It contains a history of the magazine, including features that have been incorporated into our recovery life, and useful tips



for being a Grapevine Representative or Area Grapevine Chair.

My favorite part of the Grapevine website is the Grapevine online; it includes the online edition of the monthly Grapevine magazine, 8-10 new online stories added each month, audio recordings of stories and access to the archives from 1944, when the Grapevine began, up to, and including, the current issue, all for just \$34.97 a year.

I know someone who subscribes to the online Grapevine, downloads it to his smart phone and listens to it on his commute to work. The possibilities are endless.

My favorite part of the Grapevine online is the Digital Archives. Yes, now it's called the Story Archives,

but change does not come easy to me. I used it just this week to research Bill W.'s original essays on the Twelve Traditions, introducing them to the Fellowship through the Grapevine Magazine in 1947-48. If there is a story from my current magazine that I want to use as a topic of discussion at my home group, the Murrysville Grapevine Study Group, I can print it out from the website; after the meeting I offer it to someone who may want to read it again.

I was looking through some records recently and came across an original flyer for the "Digital Archive". Introduced in June, 2004, it began with a one-month free trial, and had several packages available: 30 day access for \$2.00, one year to Grapevine subscribers for \$10.00, and \$15.00 per year to non-subscribers. I subscribed right away, and have continued since then.

If you would like to try it before you invest in it, there is a one-week free trial offer on the Grapevine Website.

Thank you for your service and for giving me the opportunity to be of service. ▲

HEARD AT MEETINGS



HUMOR

An alcoholic is a person who wants to be held while he's isolating

INSIGHTS

You can't live one way and pray another

THOUGHTS

AA is a program for those that want it, not necessarily everyone that needs it.

SLIPS

Sobriety is the leading cause of relapse.



"It's about 12 steps from here. We can make it!"

Grapevine Cartoon Contest Winner
November 2013 — Dee D., Louisville, Ky

Editor's Note: Given the usefulness of the Traditions and Concepts checklists to the health and continued growth of the fellowship, we continue to reprint portions in each issue of our Area 60 newsletter. They can also be found online at www.aa.org for a complimentary single print or to order copies for your group.

TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

Reprinted with permission from the A.A. Grapevine



These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion. Practice These Principles...

TRADITION FOUR: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.

1. Do I insist that there are only a few right ways of doing things in AA?
2. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of AA? Of nearby groups? Of Loners in Alaska? Of Internationalists miles from port? Of a group in Rome or El Salvador?
3. Do I put down other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?
4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in AA, I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?
5. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths—his lengths, not mine—to stay sober?
6. Do I share my knowledge of AA tools with other members who may not have heard of them?

TRADITION FIVE: Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

1. Do I ever cop out by saying, "I'm not a group, so this or that Tradition doesn't apply to me"?
2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the limitations of AA help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
3. Have I today imposed on any AA member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?
4. Am I willing to twelfth-step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
5. Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?
6. Do I remember that AA old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them?

CONCEPTS CHECKLIST

Service Material from the General Service Office

This is a service piece for home groups, districts, areas. Some of these discussion points were originally developed by an A.A. group and further developed by the trustees' Literature Committee to be distributed by the General Service Office. While this checklist is intended as a starting point for discussion by groups, districts or areas, individual A.A. members may find it useful along with our co-founder Bill W.'s writings, a service sponsor if you have one, and reflection on your own service experience. Additional information about the Concepts can be found in The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service and "The Twelve Concepts Illustrated" pamphlet. (Concepts stated here are in the short form.)

CONCEPT IV: At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

1. Do we understand the spiritual principles underlying the "Right of Participation"?
2. What does "in reasonable proportion" mean? Do we understand when it is appropriate for A.A. paid staff to have a vote at the General Service Conference or in our local service structure?
3. Do we expect that, because we are A.A. members, we should be allowed to vote at any group, even if we are not active members of that group?

CONCEPT V: Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

1. Do we encourage the minority opinion, the "Right of Appeal," to be heard at our home group, district committee meetings, area assemblies and the Conference?
2. What does our group accept as "substantial unanimity"?
3. Has our group experienced the "tyranny of the majority" or the "tyranny of the minority"?
4. Does our group understand the importance of all points of view being heard before a vote is taken?

Service and Commitment—Doing Our Best

Reflections of a Former DCM

Walter G., Area 60 Registrar

As we start out in life we are taught many things—one of which is commitment. As we grow our parents teach us to be responsible, at a young age we are given tasks to do and in aiming to please we commit to doing the best we can. In return we get hugs, smiles and a lot of love.

As we get older we enter school and commit ourselves to getting good grades. The benefits are much the same in the lower grades, hugs, smiles and a lot of love. As we get older in school we find other things that interest us, sports, music, drama and many other categories that take a lot of commitment.

At an early age we are taught to do our best by committing ourselves and doing the best we possibly can. As we enter college we are committed to doing our best in everything we do, our grades will directly affect where we will go in life. To succeed you have to be fully committed or your failure will be your own.

Later in life most of us take on a job and a spouse. Again we have to commit to the work we chose or we will not be doing our best and may let the company down. In turn it will reflect in lost wages for us and lost profit. At some point our job may be at stake. We let down our boss our employer our coworkers, our family and most of all ourselves knowing we could have done better.

We may take on a spouse, and make a commitment to another person. The same rules apply as in any other commitment, to do the best we can. There may be children and the commitment to them is one that will last a life time. Just as our parents have done so must we, and the cycle of life goes on as it has since the beginning of time.

"... for us in A.A., we too have a cycle of life, it is called service."

Now for us in A.A. we too have a cycle of life, it is called service. We come into A.A. all beaten and broken. We get lifted up and brushed off by the people who have come here before us. They give us suggestions to follow and that helped get them sober. This is a form of service to the new comer.

As we get sobered up, we too are directed to service — doing small tasks within the groups — greeter, coffee maker, secretary, treasurer, GSR and any other task that keeps the doors open and helps the group to run smoothly. As we take on these tasks, people depend on us to do our job. We commit ourselves to doing the best we can for our own survival and the survival of others.

If we are a General Service Reprehensive (GSR) for our home group and we fail to do our job then the group loses. It becomes an uninformed group and its voice is not heard throughout the service structure — at the District, Area and the General Service Office. Information that needs to be passed to the groups does not reach them.

GSR's are the back bone of the group and the group is the back bone of A.A. Part of the GSR's duties are to attend District and Area meetings so that their group can have an informed group conscience to pass on to those other levels for consideration.

If we take on the responsibility of a service position at the District or any other level — we are committing ourselves to doing what is required of us to carry out that position. District and Area meetings are important for GSR's DCM's and Committee members to be at so there voice can be heard and their duties carried out so the committees can be well informed as well as the groups.

For A.A. to grow, it is very important for everyone in any type of service position to commit to performing their duties to the best of their ability as stated in the A.A. Service Manual or we as individuals may parish. ▲

I Am Responsible—Connecting With Newcomers

Sue H. Donora Saturday Special and Corrections Volunteer

Welcoming the newcomer is really one of the sole responsibilities of each member in Alcoholics Anonymous: Our Responsibility Statement reads:

I am responsible. when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there, And for that, I am Responsible!

Whether that newcomer is in my home group (Donora Saturday Night Special) or in the prison meetings where I

volunteer; we hold out our hands to newcomers.

When I finally came into this fellowship I, too, was a newcomer. What could AA offer me? From Chapter Two of our Big Book, "THERE IS A SOLUTION" it states, that "*we are people who normally would not mix. But there exists among us a fellowship, a friendliness, and an understanding which is indescribably different.*" I found members of different color: white, black, and brown sitting side by side. All types of professions and levels of society were represented from

doctors and lawyers to housewives and even ex-convicts and the homeless. The same is especially true in the correctional facilities that I frequent.

And it is much more. In coming together we demonstrate that it is possible not only to stop using alcohol and other substances, but to heal and to grow. Life can be better than before. Recovery well beyond the baseline is the norm, rather it is something more fulfilling and whole.

In my second year of sobriety, I was

A Newcomer Asks—P24

Reprinted with Permission from the A.A. General Service Conference

This leaflet is intended for people approaching Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) for the first time. In it we have tried to answer the questions most frequently in the minds of newcomers—the questions which were in our minds when we first approached the Fellowship.

Am I an alcoholic? If you repeatedly drink more than you intend or want to, if you get into trouble, or if you have memory lapses when you drink, you may be an alcoholic. Only you can decide. No one in A.A. will tell you whether you are or not.

What can I do if I am worried about my drinking? Seek help. Alcoholics Anonymous can help.

What is Alcoholics Anonymous? We are a Fellowship of men and women who have lost the ability to control our drinking and have found ourselves in various kinds of trouble as a result of drinking. We attempt—most of us successfully—to create a satisfying way of life without alcohol. For this we find we need the help and support of other alcoholics in A.A.

If I go to an A.A. meeting, does that commit me to anything? No. A.A. does not keep membership files, or attendance records. You do not have to reveal anything about yourself. No one will bother you if you don't want to come back.

What happens if I meet people I know? They will be there for the same reason you are there. They will not disclose your identity to outsiders. At A.A. you retain as much anonymity as you wish. That is one of the reasons we call ourselves Alcoholics Anonymous.

What happens at an A.A. meeting? An A.A. meeting may take one of several forms, but at any meeting you will find alcoholics talking about what drinking did to their lives and personalities, what actions they took to help themselves, and how they are living their lives today.

How can this help me with my drinking problem? We in A.A. know what it is like to be addicted to alcohol, and to be unable to keep promises made to others and ourselves that we will stop drinking. We are not professional therapists. Our only qualification for helping others to recover from alcoholism is that we have stopped drinking ourselves, but problem drinkers coming to us know that recovery is possible because they see people who have done it.

Why do A.A.s keep on going to meetings after they are cured? We in A.A. believe there is no such thing as a cure for alcoholism. We can never return to normal drinking, and our ability to stay away from alcohol depends on maintaining our physical, mental, and spiritual health. This we can achieve by going to meetings regularly and putting into practice what we learn there. In addition, we find it helps us to stay sober if we help other alcoholics.

How do I join A.A.? You are an A.A. member if and when you say so. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking, and many of us were not very wholehearted about that when we first approached A.A.

How much does A.A. membership cost? There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership. An A.A. group will usually have a collection during the meeting to cover expenses, such as rent, coffee, etc., and to this all members are free to contribute as much or as little as they wish.

Is A.A. a religious organization? No. Nor is it allied with any religious organization. There's a lot of talk about God, though, isn't there? The majority of A.A. members believe that we have found the solution to our drinking problem not through individual willpower, but through a power greater than ourselves. However, everyone defines this power as he or she wishes. Many people call

(Continued on page 9)

GRAPEVINE Quote of the Day

August 28, 2015

"Humility is the soil in which all other virtues grow."

Milwaukee, Wis., April 1966
"What Is Humility?"
AA Grapevine

August 29, 2015

"It is impossible to know everyone, but if I try to relate myself with just one other person, something will happen, something remarkable."

Marietta, OH, April 1993
"The Guy at the End of the Bar"
AA Grapevine

July 14, 2015

"Just how and when we tell the truth - or keep silent - can often reveal the difference between genuine integrity and none at all."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W.
August 1961
"This Matter of Honesty"
Best of Bill

Around AA - Items of AA Information and Experience

Newcomers Meetings Explained

AA's General Service Office has prepared a kit on newcomers meetings to give guidelines to those members whose job it is to lead meetings for men and women just starting out in the AA program.

The kit includes five basic AA pamphlets and an eight-page summary of suggestions of what to do and what not to do, based on the experience of many groups.

Price of the kits is \$1.00 each. They may be obtained by writing:

GSO
P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, N. Y. 10017

AREA 60 CLASSIFIEDS

The Area 60 Classifieds are intended to highlight service opportunities available throughout Western PA. Area Committee members and DCMs are welcome to submit items to help spread the word and fill positions. Send information to newsletter@wpaarea60.org.

▲ CORRECTIONS VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Please contact Sue H. at sch920@verizon.net to become involved in correctional meetings at Fayette and Greene SCI's. The only requirement is two years of continuous sobriety and to be "off paper" (have fulfilled any parole and/or probation responsibilities). Meetings are held on Sundays:

- SCI Fayette (Brownsville area) 9:00AM
- SCI Greene (Waynesburg area) 1:00PM

▲ CPC/PI COORDINATOR & ALTERNATE.

The CPC/PI Coordinator assists AA members, groups, and Districts to inform the general public about the program of recovery and what AA does and does not do—whether it is through a community awareness event, a media interview or other non-AA gathering. They also set up displays at Area-60 sponsored events, such as when asked; and respond to requests from GSO. If interested, contact Teresa K. at chair@wpaarea60.org

▲ CORRECTIONS COORDINATOR.

The Corrections Coordinator recruits AA contacts to Bridge the Gap between inside and outside meetings by introducing newly released alcoholics to local meetings; encourages AA members to participate in AA's Correctional Correspondence Program; and offers assistance in the work of those members who carry the message through AA meetings in correctional facilities. If interested, contact Teresa K. at chair@wpaarea60.org

▲ ALTERNATE TREATMENT. Alternate will assist the Treatment/SN Coordinator with their duties, including assisting District Committees and groups in the formation of new AA meetings in treatment facilities and coordinating a "Bridging the Gap" program. Also assist and educate groups and districts with special needs members; and attend Area events helping to staff Treatment information table. If interested contact Meredith D. at treatment@wpaarea60.org

▲ ALTERNATE REGISTRAR. Alternate will assist the Registrar with their duties. Must have good computer skills, database experience and a willingness to learn the software provided by GSO. Also attends Area events helping to answer questions, collect information and staff their table. It is hoped that the Alternate will rotate into the position when the Registrar's term is completed. If interested contact Walter G. at registrar@wpaarea60.org

▲ ALTERNATE WEBSITE. Alternate will assist the Web Site Coordinator with their duties, including communicating with the Webmaster to insure accurate transfer of information to the site, answering e-mails, and routing inquiries to appropriate Officers/Coordinators, and attending Area events to help staff Website information table. If interested contact Hubert H. at website@wpaarea60.org

Remembering How I Felt Keeps Me in Touch

Leslie E. Alternate DCM, District 23

When I heard the topic for this newsletter, my first thought was that I had nothing. After some consideration I decided to share my own experience as a newcomer. I have come into the rooms twice, once by court order and once on my own.

Needless to say the first of the two did not work for me. None-the-less, I did get some very helpful suggestions which made it easier to come back in the rooms the second time.

The first time I came into the rooms I was court ordered to rehab, and of course, received a strong suggestion from them to get to meetings. There was a very kind soul in my outpatient group with whom I was very comfortable. He became my meeting buddy. We traveled here and there for meetings all over District 23. After about a week he and



everyone else suggested a sponsor. Since I did not know how to go about this process, my friend pointed out a viable option. I took his suggestion and she became my first sponsor.

My first sponsor, bless her heart, tried very hard to help me. One thing she did tell me was to shake the hand and introduce myself to every person I see. I did. That experience helped me to be more comfortable walking into a meeting. I no longer felt like a stranger in the room. Regardless of whether or not I remembered their names from meeting to meeting, I still recognized their faces. Most of all ... they remembered mine. That one little thing made all the difference in the world.

I try to continue that practice still today. Some days it is most difficult and I do slack a bit. Although I may not have very good follow thru some five years later, I do my very best to make the newcomer

feel welcome... to introduce myself time and time again if for no other reason than for me to remember their name.

Remembering how intimidated and full of fear I was the first time I walked into the rooms of A.A., I still get that same feeling from time to time in my various service work. Walking into a room of strangers is still an uncomfortable feeling. By the time the event is over hugs and well wishes are passed about and all my fears are unfounded. New friends and relationships have begun and I feel even more welcome the next time.

To be in touch with how I felt keeps me in touch with the newcomers' feelings. To know they are not alone. To know they never have to be alone again. To know that I too suffer from the fear and uncomfortablity of walking in a room of seeming strangers. "By the Grace of God" we shall overcome. Blessings to you and yours this New Year. ▲



24th ANNUAL AREA 60 GET AWAY WEEKEND MINI-CONFERENCE April 1-3, 2016

***"Our Spiritual Way of Life:
Steps, Traditions and Concepts "***

Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of the Get Away Weekend is for GSRs, DCMs, Area Officers and Coordinators and A.A. members of Area 60 Western Pennsylvania to discuss General Service Conference related issues and concerns affecting A.A. as a whole as well, as pertinent aspects of Recovery, Unity and Service.

Highlights

Committee Workshops & Presentations

Panel Presentations

Saturday Night Banquet & Speaker Meeting

Red Ball Alkathon Meetings

Onsite Registration & Hospitality Room

Opens @ 3:00PM Friday, April 1, 2016

Program Begins @ 4:00PM Friday, April 1, 2016

Contact Information

Any questions please contact...

John K. 814-688-3219

Mario D. 412-952-8397

E-mail treasurer@wpaarea60.org

Location

Comfort Inn & Conference Center

699 Rodi Road

Pittsburgh, PA 15235 (412) 244-1600

Room Rates

\$79.00 + \$11.06 tax = \$90.06 per night

Includes: Complimentary Breakfast Buffet, use of indoor pool, hot tub, exercise facility, and wireless internet.

Please make reservations with the hotel directly by MARCH 7TH, 2016 and mention the Area 60 Get Away Weekend.

* Restaurants are available locally if you prefer not to purchase your meals through the conference.



PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY (or use address label)

Name: _____

Registration \$20.00 What is your District?

Address: _____

Friday Dinner \$25.00 _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Saturday Lunch \$12.50 Service Position?

Phone: _____

Saturday Banquet \$30.00 _____

Email: _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

I would like to volunteer _____

PLEASE RETURN BY MARCH 7, 2016

Make check payable to:

Area 60 Treasurer, P.O. Box 266, Monroeville, Pa. 15146

(write GAW on memo line of the check.)

Registration and meals are transferable BUT NOT refundable.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HOSPITALITY ROOM WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED!

Tentative Schedule of Events

Registration

Friday, April 1	3:00PM - 8:30PM
Saturday, April 2	8:00AM - 1:00PM

Hospitality Room (#126) (Hosted by members of PENNSCYPAA)

Friday April 1 3:00 PM through Sunday April 3 12:00 noon

Alkathons

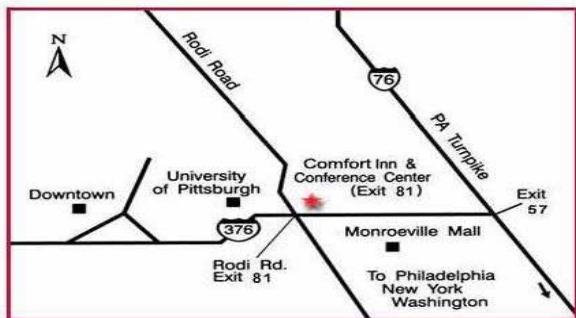
Hourly from midnight—5:00AM on Friday and Saturday nights

Presentations / Workshops

Friday, April 1	4:00PM—5:00PM 7:00PM—10:00PM
Saturday, April 2	9:00AM—12:00 noon 1:30PM—5:00PM 7:30PM—10:00PM
Sunday, April 3	8:00AM—8:45AM

Directions to the Comfort Inn, 699 Rodi Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15235

- From PA Turnpike, take Exit 57 and follow I-376 West to Exit 81. Turn right at the first traffic light. Follow signs to hotel on top of hill.
- From U.S. Route 22, follow I-376 Exit 81.
- From Business 22 West to 791 North (Rodi Road)



FORMING TRUE PARTNERSHIPS

How AA members use the program to improve relationships

ANNOUNCING A NEW BOOK FROM GRAPEVINE!

Just published! Only \$10.99

When we were drinking, many of us had, as the Step Four chapter in the AA book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* puts it, a total inability to form a true partnership with another human being.

Forming True Partnerships is a collection of Grapevine stories that show the many ways members use the Twelve Steps, sponsorship, and the tools of the program to improve and repair relationships, old and new. With candid and colorful stories on families, friendships, marriage, divorce, dating, romance, coworkers, sponsorship and pets, *Forming True Partnerships* covers a wide range of experience from sober alcoholics on how we form true partnerships with others. For yourself, or someone you know, each page in this book, offers an inspiring passage of experience, strength and hope to bring into your life. ▲

A Newcomer Asks—P24

Continued from page 5

it God, others think it is the A.A. group, still others don't believe in it at all. There is room in A.A. for people of all shades of belief and nonbelief.

Can I bring my family to an A.A. meeting? Family members or close friends are welcome at "Open" A.A. meetings. Discuss this with your local contact.

What advice do you give new members? In our experience, the people who recover in A.A. are those who:

- (a) stay away from the first drink;
- (b) attend A.A. meetings regularly;
- (c) seek out the people in A.A. who have successfully stayed sober for some time;

- (d) try to put into practice the A.A. program of recovery;
- (e) obtain and study the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous.

Here is a list of A.A. pamphlets which may be particularly helpful to you:

- Is There an Alcoholic in Your Life?
- Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.
- Is A.A. for You?
- Do You Think You're Different?
- A.A. for the Woman
- Young People and A.A.
- Too Young? ▲

A.A. Guidelines Serving Alcoholics With Special Needs MG 16

Excerpted from G.S.O., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

A.A. Guidelines are compiled from the shared experience of A.A. members in various service areas. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference (U.S. and Canada). In keeping with our Tradition of autonomy, except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole, most decisions are made by the group conscience of the members involved. The purpose of these Guidelines is to assist in reaching an informed group conscience. **Editor's Note:** *There are Guidelines available on a wide variety of topics that may be helpful to or your group in carrying the message of A.A. at www.aa.org. This particular topic was chosen for its relevance to the theme of "connecting with newcomers."*

While there are no special A.A. members, some members need special help to receive the A.A. message. For the purpose of these Guidelines, we define A.A.s with special needs as persons who are blind or visually impaired; deaf or hard of hearing; chronically ill or homebound, those who are developmentally disabled, and many others who may have less visible challenges.

General Guidelines for All Special Needs Accommodations. Respect for the dignity of others is the foundation for all our efforts to carry the message to alcoholics with special needs, with



emphasis on identification rather than on how we are different.

As one deaf A.A. put it, "I'm just an alcoholic, like everyone else here. I have the same need to be a 'worker among workers' and not be singled out for special treatment. If you can just make the program available to me, I'll do what I have to do to work it." The goal is to include all alcoholics in the wonderful experience of belonging to a group and partaking of a full range of benefits of membership.

Beyond helping those in your own group or committee, others may be

I Am Responsible ...

Sue H., *Continued from page 1*

asked to become involved in jails and prisons. Diversity was and is alive and well in correctional and treatments facilities. I contend that inmates and newcomers not only allow me to remember where I came from, but also teach me more than I could have learned in any other way.

In order to connect with the newcomer at the prison level (*taking meetings for over 30 years*) I need to provide an atmosphere that is similar to that of meetings 'on the street.' We offer the inmates discussion meetings, study groups (Big Book, 12 x 12, Came to Believe, Living Sober, etc.) and most importantly outside speakers. I try to make the meetings as close to the outside meetings as possible. We offer the men an opportunity to share prison challenges, and use the AA principles to allow them to grasp on the recovery within the walls — so that their lives can take on new meaning.

NOW I NEED YOUR HELP!! Please contact me at sch920@verizon.net to become involved in the correctional meetings. The only requirement is two years of continuous sobriety, and to be "off paper" (have fulfilled any parole and/or probation responsibilities). Our meetings are held on Sundays:

SCI Fayette (Brownsville area) 9:00am
SCI Greene (Waynesburg area) 1:00pm

I hope to hear from many of you who are willing to connect with newcomers! ▲

informed about carrying the message to alcoholics with special needs through workshops and presentations at A.A. gatherings, such as area assemblies, conventions, conferences, round-ups and Regional Forums. This set of Guidelines also discuss the following topics in some detail:

- Carrying the Message to A.A.'s with Physical Disabilities and/or Chronic Illnesses
- Carrying the Message to Deaf or Hard of Hearing A.A.s
- Carrying the Message to Blind or Visually Impaired A.A.'s
- Easy-to-Read Literature
- Special Needs Accessibilities Committees
- How to Order A.A. Special Needs Materials

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Fuzzy Lines ... Where Does My Group Belong?

Barb G. Area 60 Newsletter Editor

Area 60 serves 887 groups organized into 43 districts. For those new to service, it can be confusing, to say the least. Knowing what district your home group is a part of—is a first step. Understanding that they usually hold regular business meetings is the next. *How can I be a part of something that I'm not aware of?*

I began attending district meetings on a regular basis in 2006, at about two years of sobriety. It was my first real encounter with doing things together with other groups—Days of Sharing, treatment commitments, public information, service events, etc.

It was the beginning of my service journey, and I came to understand the meaning behind the saying “*we are a lot that would not normally mix.*” ☺ I learned—a little at a time—how and why our traditions and concepts evolved the way that they have.

I've also discovered a great deal about how Area 60 conducts business, ultimately for the purpose serving our districts, groups and members. Although we are all autonomous—from the home group up through GSO—Area 60 has evolved ways of doing things that help us to think of AA as a whole, here in Western PA. Here are a few of the things I've learned about “where my group belongs.”

- Districts are generally intended to be geographical groupings, physically adjacent to each other so they can work together to carry the message.
- New groups may have no knowledge of the larger process and sometimes choose districts on their own. However, the Registrar assigns districts when they register a new group, because their position offers a broader perspective.
- If a home group encounters a reason to change districts, a request can be made to the Area 60 Registrar—who coordinates the process with the officers and coordinators.
- It is best for all of the groups in both districts to have a group conscience to consider the request, before it is heard at an Area Assembly.
- Quite simply, it is a slow, well thought out process intended to help us identify problems and set aside personalities for the good of AA as a whole.
- Not following it often leads to what I call “Fuzzy Lines.” For example, there are meeting places in Pittsburgh where three districts are represented at the same address.

(Continued on page 11)

The Practice of the 12th Step—Connecting With the Newcomer

Jan H., Past Delegate Panel 57

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.” “The joy of living is the theme of A.A.’s Twelfth Step, and action is its key word.” (*Twelve & Twelve*, p.106)

Do you remember when you were a newcomer? Little did I know that, as a newcomer to A.A. many years ago, I was being treated with “the kind of giving that asked no rewards.” All I knew is that I was bewildered, scared, shaking apart and lost! At my very first meeting, folks came over to me with handshakes, hugs, one half cup of coffee (*all my shaking could handle*), phone numbers, smiles, welcome



words and assurances that I was in the right place.

As foggy and half drunk as I was that night, I have never forgotten that first encounter. There was something about these happy people that intrigued me! Slowly but surely I learned that they had found their happiness through the process of the Steps. In Step Twelve,

“we begin to practice all Twelve Steps of the program in our daily lives so that we and those about us may find emotional sobriety” (*Twelve & Twelve*, p. 106)

My first year of sobriety was filled with newcomer “light bulbs.” I was taken care of by a group of people and picked up for meetings every night for the first month of my journey. In that time, I was taught about the necessity of having a home group and a sponsor who would guide me through my steps. The very gracious lady I chose, by God’s grace, is still my sponsor today. She slowly and gently guided me on the step path to the AA way of life.

(Continued on page 11)

The Practice of the 12th Step

Jan H., Past Delegate Panel 57
Continued from page 10

We have become long timers together. Her spirit of humility and perspective of strength, composure, calm and common sense is still a beautiful example of "how it works." She is a wonderful example for me as my time eventually came to give back what was so lovingly and freely given to me.

The step journeys that I have shared with women that I have sponsored have also enlightened my life. The Big Book tells us that: "*Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics... Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of*

friends—this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives."

A.A. groups exist to help alcoholics achieve sobriety. Each group has one reason for being: to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic. Greeters at your home group door can help everyone feel welcome, comfortable and at home.

Sponsoring and newcomers can keep us vibrant rather than allowing us to drift back to self-centeredness. Connecting with a newcomer can remind us once again of the joy, grace and spiritual growth that is our reward from our AA way of life. ▲

A.A. Guidelines: Serving Alcoholics With Special Needs

Continued from page 9

SUMMARY. Our Big Book says, "We are people who normally would not mix," and this is especially true when someone is a little "different" from the others. But the rewards of giving this kind of service to a fellow alcoholic are immense! Group unity grows stronger, the person with special needs is included and respected as a fully-participating member of the group, and everyone's sobriety is strengthened.

When faced with the challenges of accommodating a special need, we

would do well to remember: "When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that, I am responsible."

Please share with the General Service Office your experiences and successes in carrying our A.A. message of recovery to alcoholics with special challenges to receiving that message. G.S.O. will in turn share your experience with any A.A. member trying to reach out to alcoholics with special needs. ▲

Fuzzy Lines ... Where Does My Group Belong?

Continued from page 10

- Sometimes districts are dark—and there is no DCM. The Area's process gives us time to ask questions, like "what's been done to relight? For how long did we make an effort—did anyone even try?" My own district has been dark for some time; and has struggled to hold regular meetings, even when there was a DCM. Unfortunately, several groups left the district over the past few years. Some used the Area process, and some did not. But none, from what I could see, made an effort to relight—to bloom where they were planted. Of course, I may be wrong.

I know that as an alcoholic, I suffer, metaphorically and literally, from "first thought wrong" disease. I have a sponsor and a home group to help me take pause for my own personal recovery—to save me from myself. And as a responsible member of my home group and of my district—I also need to take pause. The Area's process affords us all the opportunity to be thorough and deliberate—rather than just "do si do" our way to a new district. It also affords me the opportunity to work through differences and grow. ▲

AA GRAPEVINE

The International Journal of Alcohol as Anonymous

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Service Opportunity: Become a Grapevine Representative!



Grapevine Representatives are the link between AA Grapevine and the groups. It's a fun way to get involved! All you have to do is announce the latest issue at your meeting, let people know how they can participate by sending in stories, art work, or jokes.

It's easy to get started. Simply let your home group know that you are interested. Register with us online at aagrapevine.org and you will receive a complete information kit from the Grapevine office.

GRAPEVINE NEWS



Mobile-Friendly Grapevine

Soon you will be able to subscribe and receive GV magazine through an app.

- The app will be free
- 1 year subscription to Grapevine magazine will be offered
- You will be able to save your issues for reading on-the-go
- Existing Grapevine Online subscribers will receive 6 months free Stay tuned for details!

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA AREA 60 NEWSLETTER

ELECTED OFFICERS:

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 Alt Delegate - John K. altdelegate@wpaarea60.org
 Chairperson - Teresa K. chairperson@wpaarea60.org
 Alt Chair - John R. altchairperson@wpaarea60.org
 Secretary Jody K. area60secretary@wpaarea60.org
 Treasurer - Mario D. treasurer@wpaarea60.org

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NEWSLETTER THEMES & DATES:

The 2016 theme for the General Service Conference is "Our Spiritual Way of Life: Steps, Traditions and Concepts." SOS quarterly themes will be:

<u>Due</u>	<u>Theme:</u>
Jan 4	Q1. Connecting With the Newcomer
April 25	Q2. Connecting With Each Other
July 25	Q3. Connecting With A.A. as a Whole
Nov 14	Q4. YOU choose! _____

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 check payable to:

Area 60 Treasurer

P.O. Box 266, Monroeville, PA 15146

2016 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*Area 60 meetings are held at the
Comfort Inn, 699 Rodl Road Penn Hills, PA*

DATE	TIME	EVENT
Sunday Jan. 17	8:30 AM - Registration 9:00 AM - Workshop 10:15 AM - Meeting	AREA 60 1ST QUARTERLY MEETING
Sunday Feb. 7	9:00 AM	Area 60 Officer Coordinator & GAW Planning Meeting
Fri-Sun. Feb. 26-28	All Weekend	NERAASA – Springfield, MA
Fri-Sun. Mar 11-13	All Weekend	NERD
Sunday March 6	9 am	Officer/Coordinator Meeting & GAW Planning meeting
Fri-Sat. April 1-2	Friday & Saturday	Getaway Weekend
Sunday April 3	8:30 am, Registration 9 am Workshop, 10:15 am Meeting	Pre-Conference Assembly
Sunday April 10	9 am	Officer/Coordinator meeting
April 17–23 2016	All Week	General Service Conference, NYC
Sunday May 15 th	8:30 am, Registration 9 am Workshop, 10:15 am Meeting	AREA 60 2ND QUARTERLY MEETING
Sunday June 5	9 am	Officer/Coordinator meeting
Sunday June 26	8:30 am, Registration 9 am Workshop, 10:15 am Meeting	Post Conference Assembly

Seeds of Service. The WPA Area 60 newsletter is published quarterly by the Area Committee. It is for A. A. members only. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors and not necessarily that of the Area Committee or AA as a whole. The newsletter is a useful reference for GSRs reports.

Newsletter Distribution. Paper copies are distributed to DCM's at each quarterly meeting for redistribution to A.A. groups through their GSRs. A digital copy (PDF) of the newsletter is available at www.wpaarea60.org; and *will also be sent to DCMs and GSRs, if the Registrar has a correct email address.*

Newsletter Submission Guidelines. Suggested length is 500 words or less. 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 appears on a space available basis. 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 first name/last initial, home group and district. Submissions may be emailed to newsletter@wpaarea60.org.