



SEEDS OF SERVICE



VOL. XXXIII, Issue 1
Winter 2019

OUR MEETINGS: PURPOSES, NEEDS, & ETIQUETTE

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"

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"

Winter 2020 (deadline 11/20)

TBD

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.

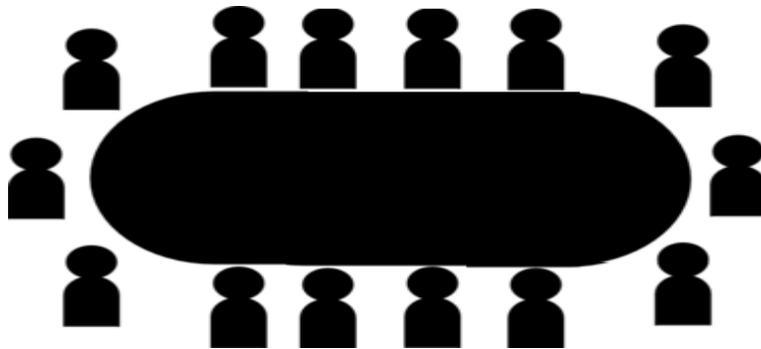
Please include your first name and last initial, district, and home group.

Submissions may be emailed to:

newsletter@wpaarea60.org

Seeing much of each other, scarce an evening passed that someone's home did not shelter a little gathering of men and women, happy in their release, and constantly thinking how they might present their discovery to some newcomer. In addition to these casual get-togethers, it became customary to set apart one night a week for a meeting to be attended by anyone or everyone interested in a spiritual way of life. Aside from fellowship and sociability, the prime object was to provide a time and place where new people might bring their problems.

- *Alcoholics Anonymous*, "A Vision for You," p. 159-160



Talking about the Solution

David S, District 18 DCM, Grove City Saturday Morning Big Book

When I first came to AA, I was drawn to the fellowship. I remember my first meeting, and the connection in the camaraderie. As people shared, I felt like I belonged. Today, I go to a meeting to help others. It's an opportunity to share about how the power of God has – and continues to work – in my life through the action of the 12 Steps.

I didn't come into the rooms practicing manners: AA taught me how to treat others. Part of treating others with respect was to know what to bring to a meeting. I learned I needed to take my problems to my sponsor and bring the solutions to the meeting. If talking about my problems with alcoholics was an effective solution for the disease of alcoholism, I would've gotten sober sitting at the local bar. I learned AA etiquette: sharing only my experience, shaking people's hands, and being willing to help wherever needed. Today, talking about the solution, as it's outlined in the Big Book, helps maintain my spiritual condition.

Meetings are not the program. They are not group therapy or an opportunity to talk about our day. They are a place where we can talk about the power of God, how the 12 Steps have changed our lives, and how we can stay sober one day at a time.

That's the solution.

To Learn a Group's Purpose, Listen

Chad U, Area 60 Newsletter Editor

If our personal stories are the basis for individual 12th Step work, I believe the basis for a group's collective 12th Step work is its meeting format.

Our Fourth Tradition allows us to have meetings in any manner we wish (based on our autonomous group consciences): there is no "official" way. Our Fifth Tradition states that each group's primary purpose is "to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers." A meeting format is the primary method a group has to transmit its particular message of recovery, and these elements influence and shape that message.

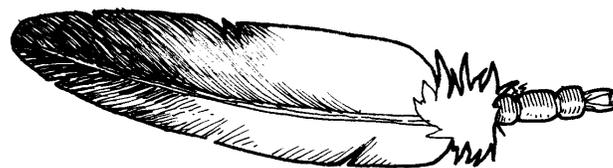
The **BASIC FORMAT TYPE** is the first thing that expresses a group's message. Speaker meetings emphasize listening and identifying with another AA. Literature meetings study AA's written word, to tease out common experiences and solutions. Discussion meetings focus on specific topics in sobriety. Step or Tradition meetings delve into AA principles we should practice in all our affairs.

The **SELECTION OF READINGS** (how many, which particular ones, and who reads them) is often interesting. Some groups read many, some read fewer to maximize time for discussion or a lead. Some that cater to newcomers include readings from "There is a Solution" or "More About Alcoholism." Some read the 9th Step Promises, some read the 10th Step Promises, some read "A Vision for You." Some groups hand out readings exclusively to newcomers, others only to home group members.

There is also **WHAT THE CHAIR AND OTHER GROUP OFFICERS SAY**. While most read from a guide sheet for their reports, those can be very different from group to group. For example, regarding sponsorship, who does the group ask to raise their hands? Those looking for sponsors, or for those willing to sponsor? Do they mention "temporary sponsorship" or not? Does the GSR let the attendees know what's going on elsewhere in AA? Does the Secretary explain where the bathrooms are? Is there a Treasurer's Report?

Lastly, the suggestions the group makes – or doesn't make! – on **HOW TO SHARE** are valuable. This can be as simple as how long to share (2-5 minutes), what to share (the topic or "where you're at"), and who shares next (raise your hand and be recognized by the chair, to the last speaker's left/right, "shout-out" as the next speaker is picked by the last speaker, as the Spirit moves you, etc.). However, some groups offer further sharing suggestions like sharing only one's experience (not opinion) on a topic or asking those intoxicated or not identifying as an alcoholic (in closed meetings) to pass on sharing.

Has your home group recently checked its meeting format against its message at a group conscience?



Talking Circle Format

Art C, District 24, Walking the Red Road Group

I am a member of the Walking the Red Road meeting – or "talking circle" as it is called. It is a different meeting format than other AA meetings because we also incorporate Native American Indian prayers and traditions into the meeting as described on the Native American Indian General Service Office website. Our topics are derived from AA literature and Native American Indian teachings that correspond with AA teachings.

As a group, we offer the opportunity to smudge with white sage prior to the meeting as a spiritual cleansing in preparation of communication with each other and the Great Spirit in ceremony. The talking circle is a ceremony. Everything an Indian does is in a ceremony.

There is a purpose behind everything that is done during the talking circle. We are all equal in the circle: we are all an equal distance from the center. The colors of the Medicine Wheel are explained as the opening to the talking circle. Each has a teaching of its own.

A talking feather is passed, and each person has an opportunity to speak while the others listen. When we are finished speaking, we say the word *Aho*, and pass the feather to the person on our left, always moving in a clockwise direction.

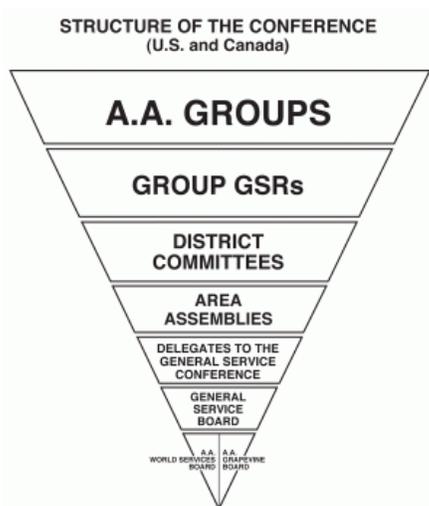
I have found that in a talking circle format, I can best explain the many spiritual gifts I have experienced to the open hearts and minds of those who participate. It just works in a different way than other meetings because of the structure.

If you question the purpose of some of the things that occur weekly within your home group, you might collectively ask, "how can we make this meeting more beneficial to the teaching, learning, and understanding of the program Alcoholics Anonymous, in an environment that allows understanding, patience, tolerance, and love to work and move through us?" This is for the group conscience of each group to decide. I would think that you will find the answers together.

***We keep the coffee warm, set up the chairs every week,
and allow a place for our collective Higher Power(s)
to work among us.***



The Upside-Down Triangle of Service: See How It Works!



SAVE THE DATES!

**Area 60 Pre-Conference
Assembly Weekend
(PCAW)**

March 22-23, 2019



Pre-Conference Assembly

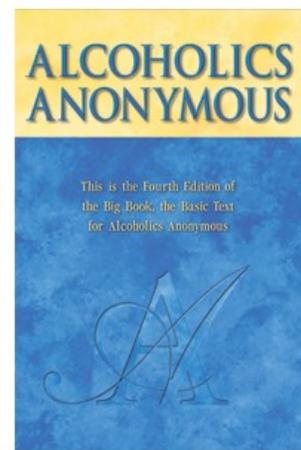
March 24, 2019

Varieties of Big Book Study Experience

Chad U, Area 60 Newsletter Editor

In the short time I've been in AA, I've noticed that the meeting format that has the most variability is the **Big Book Study**. Nearly every group I've been to does it a little differently, and I think that is a great strength of our fellowship.

- **CONTENT:** Some start from the title page ("The Story of How Many Thousands of Men and Women Have Recovered from Alcoholism") and read the Preface and Forewords; some don't. Nearly all read "The Doctor's Opinion," but do all read "Doctor Bob's Nightmare"? Some groups stick to just the "first 164 pages" and some read cover to cover.
- **METHOD:** Some groups read line-by-line, some by paragraphs, some do whole pages, some whole chapters. Some groups have a single reader, some go around the room. Some groups listen to audio (either audiobook or a workshop on CD like Joe & Charlie's *Big Book Comes Alive*). Some groups use study guides, like the *Primary Purpose Group Big Book Study* or *Big Book Awakening*).
- **SHARING:** Some groups allow those attending to share multiple times (especially if the section read is short), some allow only sharing once.



You may already know that the theme for the 2019 General Service Conference is "Our Big Book - 80 years, 71 Languages." In the interests of that, it'd be fascinating to collect the wide diversity of how we here in Western Pennsylvania (Area 60) collectively approach our basic text of recovery.

For those that are interested, please email us a copy of your group's chair guide to newsletter@wpaarea60.org. Generally, the chair guide will quickly describe your group's preferred way of reading and studying our Big Book. You can send your group's chair guide as DOC, DOCX, PDF, plain text, a good cellphone picture, whatever. If you do a different sort of Big Book study outside of a group (with your sponsor, perhaps?) write in and tell us that too! **Deadline for inclusion is 3/4/2019.**

We'll take what you tell us, and put it into an article to publish in our next issue!

Setting the Tone of Discussion

Heidi M, District 18, Grove City Saturday Morning Big Book

Experience, strength, and hope separate the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous from a group counseling session or a religious organization. The founders knew people who suffered with problems of ego could not and would not hear when someone told them what they thought they should do. What they discovered was an alcoholic will listen to someone who can share how they overcame a similar experience. In our meetings, instead of giving advice, we should be giving others hope by sharing what the power of God has done in our lives through the action of the 12 Steps.

When a topic is brought for discussion, the chairperson can set the tone of the meeting by turning a “problem” topic into discussion of the solution. It's an opportunity to share with others how the Big Book has a solution for all our problems. Just before the 3rd Step, we are told God is the principal, and we are his agents. Are we pointing people into the solution, which is God, or do we get caught up in the problem?

Throughout the Big Book, we find prayers and promises. Those prayers range from asking God to remove our bondage of self to asking Him to direct our thinking. Within every Step, there are promises to be received after the action has been taken. The most powerful meetings I've attended have been when I've heard how God has worked through these prayers and promises.

***It is at those meetings there is a chance for
the light of hope to shine through the darkness of alcoholism.***



Etiquette for All

Amy C, District 22 Secretary, Duquesne Heights

Some of us are more rambunctious than others – they don't call us “children of chaos” in the 12 & 12 for nothing! As such, it is hard to train an alcoholic, whether they be newcomer, middle-timer, or old-timer. Each stage of our recovery life and service life brings us new challenges to our meeting lives. Usually we associate “meeting etiquette” with the newcomer, but the middle-timer and old-timer can be just as challenged in how to “properly” act in different meetings. Sobriety time is irrelevant here.

A group's discipline comes from its group conscience: the ability of home group members to stand behind what was voted there, and carry those standards through in their meeting. If older home group members don't help execute their meeting format, then younger members won't either. We lead by example

Some of our membership are very talkative. No one ought to hold a meeting hostage. We need to remember that as recovering alcoholics we have a short attention span. Sometimes it pays more to say less. Some groups have made a group conscience decision to limit sharing-time with bells, timers, and timekeepers to ensure that no one goes over 3 to 5 minutes (sometimes 2 to 3 minutes if the meeting is large).

The simple things are sometimes the most important. Not coming in late, not texting, turning off cell phones, not talking when the speaker is sharing – these are some common-sense suggestions for meeting etiquette.

***Simply respecting to the upmost one hour to save your life and sobriety
can quash most problems before they begin.***

Ask-It Basket Questions

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

QUESTION: At my home group, I am a new GSR. I chaired my first business meeting in which I had invited a couple of AA members from another group who shares our same meeting space in the same room at a different time to attend to present their concern about being told by one of our members that they could not use the church bulletin board.

I was ripped-apart at the meeting and told I did not follow proper protocol. I asked what proper protocol was and the old-timer did not tell me, but he proceeded to apologize to the guests for having an inexperienced GSR. My question is do you know of any home group business meeting protocol that requires inviting an outside group to our meeting should be addressed to the committee and voted on before they actually appear? Our business meeting is an open business meeting.

I have been going to business meetings for 12 years. I introduced the guests under New Business with their bulletin board question. Was this wrong? They were not an outside group, they are AA members.

Please refer me to any AA literature with any direction. Thank you.

Chad U (Area 60 Newsletter Editor) answers:

As I mentioned in my report at the 4Q meeting, this one is a doozy! So much is going on in here, it is easy to get side-tracked into discussions about Traditions and so forth. (Let me offer my thanks to the other Officers and Coordinators for their help on this one!)

Leaving all of the implied and/or explicit violations of our 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts here (and there are many!), the **actual question that was asked** has to do with the protocol of running a home group's business meeting.

From *The AA Group — Where It All Begins* (P-16):

A.A. Business Meetings

In most groups, the chairperson or another officer calls the business meeting, which ordinarily is held on a monthly or quarterly basis.

While some groups may occasionally permit nonmembers to attend, the group may request that only home group members participate or vote. [...]

Business meetings generally are scheduled before or after the group's regular meeting. They tend to be informal, but custom varies from group to group. Some groups have tried observing Roberts Rules of Order, a parliamentary procedure for running smooth meetings, only to find that many members are inexperienced in the procedures and feel too intimidated to speak up. Besides, there is the spiritual nature of our Fellowship, embodied in our Traditions and Concepts, which give ample guidance.

Since P-16 mentions some groups using Roberts Rules and the questioner mentions protocol and New Business, here's some information I found at <https://www.dummies.com/education/politics-government/roberts-rules-using-an-agenda-to-produce-better-meetings/>:

Program

If you're offering some other general presentation of interest to your members, whether it's a film, a guest speaker, a lecturer, or any other program, it should be presented before the meeting is adjourned. If you would rather conduct the program at some other place in the agenda, it may be scheduled to take place before the minutes are read or, by suspending the rules, inserted within the standard order of business.

REMEMBER

Guest speakers are often on tight schedules, so it's quite proper for the chair to ask for unanimous consent to place the program at any convenient place on the agenda, even if the only convenient place is within the order of business.

So, *if the group follows Roberts Rules*, the chair of the business meeting (the GSR, in this case) could have brought up inviting the outside-group members as guest speakers for the next meeting to be voted on by the committee. However, since this business meeting has already been described as an open one, these individuals could've easily shown up on their own accord. That point is therefore moot.

After these non-home group members showed up, wishing to speak in the open business meeting, *if the group follows Roberts Rules*, the chair properly should've asked for unanimous consent to have any guest share their concerns during New Business (or wherever else the chair wanted within the agenda) instead of waiting until the standard order of business was completed.



So long as the chair, acting as a trusted servant, is considerate of both home group members and guests, how the meeting is conducted is their prerogative.

Meetings: Do's and Don'ts

Rockford Illinois Area Intergroup Newsletter (July/August 2013, Volume 20, Number 3)

"Miss Manners" is a nationally syndicated newspaper column that offers suggestions on how to behave in society. The following Top 10 list is a "Miss Manners" for Alcoholic Anonymous meetings. These are some meeting-related suggestions from seven Rockford-area AA members who averaged more than 30 years' sobriety. These are good ideas for both the AA newcomer and seasoned AA member. You will not find these suggestions in the Big Book, but they will help you while trudging the Road of Happy Destiny.

DO:

1. **Listen:** Listening is a skill that can be practiced. Try to give your undivided attention to whomever is talking.
2. **Come early, stay late:** It helps you to get to know the other AA members. You can help set-up the meeting and clean-up afterward.
3. **Be a regular and chair meetings:** Have a meeting you attend regularly so you feel comfortable sharing your experience, strength, and hope. You can start chairing meetings and giving leads there when asked or told to do so by a sponsor.
4. **Stay on topic:** Try to talk about the topic so there is a common theme to the meeting.
5. **Welcome newcomers:** Explain briefly to the newcomer how the meeting works and how the Lord's Prayer ends meetings. Get them a meeting schedule.
6. **See sponsor at meeting:** Attend meetings that your sponsor attends. Sometimes it is easier to talk to a sponsor face-to-face than over a phone. Have a one-on-one session with him/her every week.
7. **Have a topic:** If chairing a meeting, be prepared and have a topic ready if no one else has one.
8. **Wait, wait:** When asking for a topic, wait at least a minute before coming up with one. And, when asking for a moment of silence, give it more than one second.
9. **Leave the newcomers (of opposite sex) alone:** They need to feel this is a safe place, and the last thing they need is being hit on.
10. **Be courteous and respectful of others:** Consider the audience when using profanity or raising otherwise sensitive topics that are best left to private discussions with your sponsor.

DON'T:

1. **Leave phone alone:** Don't text or use your cellphone during meetings.
2. **No "preaching":** Do not tell fellow AAs what they "should do." Share how it works from personal experience. Share your experience, strength, and hope.
3. **No early signing:** Don't sign court papers until after the meeting.
4. **Your time only:** Don't talk too long, depriving other people the opportunity to share. Most people naturally will quit listening to you after a few minutes. A longtime member once suggested that a person do the math before speaking – divide the time remaining in the meeting by the number of people yet to speak; the answer is how much time you can speak.
5. **Quiet:** Don't talk to the person next to you while someone is talking. Don't talk to others while "How It Works" is being read – they might need to listen to what it says.
6. **No venting:** Do not vent about "your day". It takes up time, doesn't help anyone. Some things need to be shared with a sponsor before bringing it up in a meeting. Not everything is "meeting material."
7. **AA-approved only:** Don't read from unapproved literature.
8. **No pets:** Do not bring pets to meetings.
9. **OK to pass:** Don't share if you don't have anything besides opinions to share, or must spend your time "commenting on someone else's comments". It is OK to pass once in a while.
10. **Expand AA routine, fellowship:** Don't limit yourself to the same meetings week after week and year after year. Continue to widen your circle of AA friends and acquaintances; attend at least one AA conference a year. Get out of your comfort zone and do service work and new meetings.

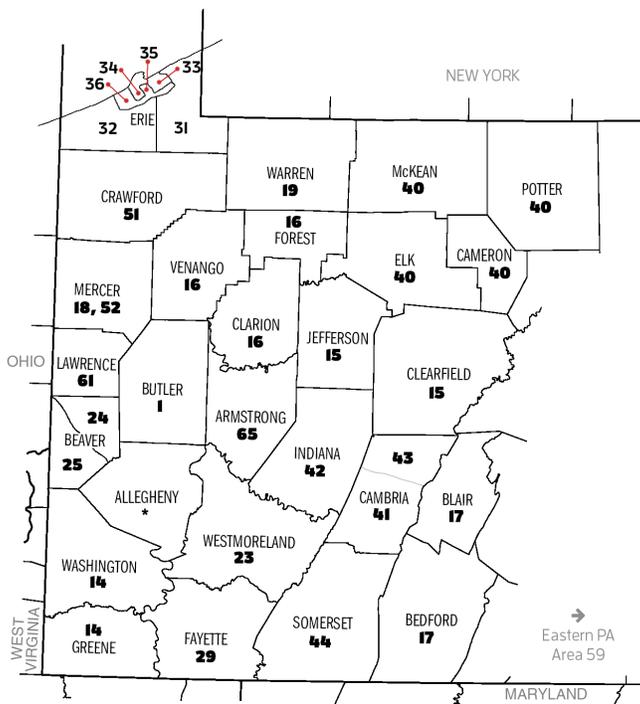
Thanks to Patti S, Jo S, Jack P, Jim J, Jim B, Linda W, and Tim J for their contributions.



Pre-Conference Assembly Weekend

March 22-23, 2019

An annual service workshop held in the spring to discuss General Service Conference-related Issues and concerns affecting AA as a whole, as well as pertinent aspects of our **Three Legacies (Recovery, Unity, Service)**.



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

Area 60 Web Calendar

Our website has an updated online calendar, which lists service events (Pre-Conference Assembly Weekend, the General Service Conference, assemblies, etc.) in **green**; Area 60-sponsored events (quarterly meetings, Days of Sharing, etc.) in **blue**, and other events of interest to AAs (district-level events, recovery community events, etc.) in **red**.

Check it out at:
<https://www.wpaarea60.org/calendar/>



Two Types of Area Meetings

- Quarterly Meeting:** Decides area business. DCMs, Area Officers & Coordinators, past Delegates vote.
- Area Assembly:** Elects officers, provides pre-Conference group conscience, hears the Delegate's post-Conference report. GSRs, DCMs, Area Officers & Coordinators, past Delegates vote.

Rules of Order at Area 60 Meetings

- Items for consideration are put on the agenda.
- Items are posed to the meeting in the form of a motion.
- All motions require a second.
- Motions can be amended, tabled, or moved to a vote.
- A vote is taken and the results are announced. The minority vote is allowed to voice its opinion.
- If a member of the majority (those who "won") wishes to change his or her vote, a second vote is held on the motion.
- The result of the second vote stands and the meeting moves to the next item for consideration.

What's the Point of Order?

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

Motions requiring substantial unanimity of the meeting require a two-third majority for approval. In some cases, the minority opinion (the people who "lost" the vote) may be larger than 50% of the vote.

ALL members of the Fellowship are welcome at meetings and assemblies. GSRs are especially encouraged to attend even when they do not have a vote. **Every GSR is potentially a future DCM.**

2019 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, Jan 20	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	1 st 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
SATURDAY, May 11	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	2 nd Quarterly Meeting SEASONS BALLROOM
May 19-25	All Week	General Service Conference
Sunday, May 26	9 am	PCAW Wrap-Up
May 31-June 2	All Weekend	NERF Tarrytown, NY
Sunday, June 23	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	Post-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

COORDINATORS:

Archives: Wayne S archives@wpaarea60.org
 Corrections: Dani M corrections@wpaarea60.org
 Alt. Corrections: _____ corrections@wpaarea60.org
 CPC/PI: Maresa S pi@wpaarea60.org
 Alt. CPC/PI: _____ pi@wpaarea60.org
 Grapevine: _____ grapevine@wpaarea60.org
 Alt. Grapevine: _____ grapevine@wpaarea60.org
 Literature: _____ literature@wpaarea60.org
 Alt. Literature: _____ literature@wpaarea60.org
 Treatment/SN: _____ treatment@wpaarea60.org
 Alt. Treatment/SN: _____ treatment@wpaarea60.org
 Website: Brent E website@wpaarea60.org
 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

See Those _____s Above?

Volunteer and learn about Area service!

Grapevine, Literature, Treatment Coordinators needed!

Alt Coordinators needed!