



SEEDS OF SERVICE



VOL. XXXV, Issue 2
Spring 2020

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 2020 theme for the 70th General Service Conference is "2020: A Clear Vision for You"

Summer 2020 (deadline 6/5)
"Service – Keeping AA Relevant"

Fall 2020 (deadline 10/5)
"Attraction Through Action"

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

UNITY – PRACTICING OUR PRINCIPLES

United by Hope

Sherri Lynn D, Area 60 Alternate Newsletter Editor

Unity affirms that all things work for our good. No matter how daunting or difficult, every situation or circumstance contains a blessing. The Twelve Steps and their principles unite us as a community with one single purpose. We achieve this purpose through hope.

Frida Kahlo's painting "Without Hope" is a gloomy depiction of sickness and death. As alcoholics, if we do not unite with one another and embrace hope, we will continue to be sick and alcoholism will eventually lead us to death.

Many people arrive in the rooms angry or distrustful of God, yet they are told that they need to find a Higher Power in order to recover from their addiction to alcohol. This can be a stumbling block in recovery. In the past, God may have seemed harsh, indifferent, or completely absent. It is important to remember that we are free to choose the God concept that works for us.

"Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore me to sanity." (AA, p. 59)



Without Hope (1945), Frida Kahlo, courtesy of www.FridaKahlo.org

<https://www.fridakahlo.org/without-hope.jsp>

The Big Book outlines the principles as a single virtue that embodies each step. Step Two is about finding faith in some Higher Power, and the accompanying principle of hope. Hope means that you should never give up that faith, even when you suffer a setback. Hope is easy to understand when it comes to practicing it on a daily basis. In recovery, not every moment will be positive, but if you keep that hope and faith alive, you'll come back out on the other side.

"Therefore, Step Two is a rallying point for all of us. Whether agnostic, atheist, or former believer, we can stand together on this Step. True humility and an open mind can lead us to faith, and every AA meeting is an assurance that God will restore sanity if we rightly relate ourselves to him." (12&12, "Step Two," p. 33)

In the quietness of meditation and prayer, we find that hope can indeed free us from any negativity or challenge.

Just as we are, we are automatically and irreversibly a community united with our Higher Power by hope.

Unity Starts with the Home Group

Chad U, Area 60 Newsletter Editor

Pound for pound, you just cannot beat the charge you get from feeling “part-of” a good home group.

However, I’ve been a home group member of five different groups, but only felt “plugged in” in two of them. After observing how other groups in my home district operate, and hearing things from around the area, I don’t think many people get that charge from their current home groups either. Why?

I have noticed that not all of the groups in AA are actually groups, but simply “meetings.” They don’t really exist outside of their scheduled day(s) and time(s), rarely pick up service commitments for treatment or corrections, and/or struggle to keep members and pay the rent.

In my opinion, the long form of Tradition Five best explains how a group can achieve that “connecting energy” with its new members: “Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity *having but one primary purpose*—that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”

If I’m a member of the right group (for me), I fully participate in being a valued part of that spiritual entity. I’m not talking here about cosmetic differences of opinion (like which brand of coffee to buy or who should chair the meeting), but core agreements in perspectives on what things we need to do together to carry our message, and how our principles get practiced in doing so. I surmise I wasn’t suited to be a member of those three groups because of differences in *what* message was being carried, and *how* it was being carried.

The unity I found in the two groups I connected to made “practicing principles in all my affairs” with my fellow members much easier, despite our disagreements. This built in me – and continues to build – greater resilience, flexibility, patience, tolerance, kindness, and forgiveness. I can then take those skills out into the world and the rest of my life.

Have our failures in unity at the group level led to increased divisiveness in our districts, areas, and AA-as-a-whole?

The AA Home Group

The AA Group... Where it all begins (P-16)

Traditionally, most AA members through the years have found it important to belong to one group that they call their “home group.” This is the group where they accept service responsibilities and try to sustain friendships. And although all AA members are usually welcome at all groups and feel at home at any of these meetings, the concept of the home group has still remained the strongest bond between the AA member and the Fellowship.

With membership comes the right to vote on issues that might affect the group and might also affect AA as a whole – a process that forms the very cornerstone of AA’s service structure. As with all group-conscience matters, each AA member has one vote; and this, ideally, is voiced through the home group.

Over the years, the very essence of AA strength has remained with our home group, which, for many members, becomes our extended family. Once isolated by our drinking, we find in the home group a solid, continuing support system, friends and, very often, a sponsor. We also learn firsthand, through the group’s workings, how to place “principles before personalities” in the interest of carrying the AA message.

Talking about her own group, a member says: “Part of my commitment is to show up at my home group meetings, greet newcomers at the door, and be available to them – not only for them but for me. My fellow group members are the people who know me, listen to me, and steer me straight when I am off in left field. They give me their experience, strength and AA love, enabling me to ‘pass it on’ to the alcoholic who still suffers.”

GSR Kits Online

Jon M, Area 60 Registrar

Since GSO is behind on sending out DCM and GSR kits, we have posted the digital contents of the kit on the Area 60 website. New DCMs and GSRs, please refer to this page:

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

A Different View of “Diversity in AA”

Dave R, Area 60 Literature Coordinator

I would like to comment on the idea of “Diversity in AA.” It seems to me that diversity has become a cause, and our preamble states that AA “neither endorses or opposes any causes.”

This perspective is based on my experience of working more than 30 years in a corporate setting. I have watched the concept of diversity evolve into a cause that required attendance at “Diversity in the Workplace” workshops. These workshops usually provided examples of how employees do not embrace diversity, discriminating on the basis of race, sex, religion, etc., and how to behave to become more diverse.

Not treating someone properly for any reason (their skin color, the car they drive, their hygiene, the way they make or drink coffee, or even the way they conduct a meeting) is discrimination, which is a character defect. A stated goal of ours in AA is that “we may develop the best possible relations with every human being we know.” A lofty ideal that, from my experience, can only be approached with the help of a Power greater than myself.

Comparing AA membership statistics to census data implies that we need to somehow change our membership to match that of the government statistics, which further implies that we should take up programs and actions associated with achieving diversity as defined by those statistics. Does this mean we start telling members specifically what to do and how to act? It also seems to me that there is a strong political aspect associated with diversity, which should be left in the meeting place parking lot along with the other political issues that are outside the realm of AA.

I’m not at all suggesting that we, individually (and AA as a whole), shouldn’t review our past, acknowledge where we were wrong, and correct our mistakes. This is a principle for anyone’s continual growth. We do, however, need to be careful of what we use as the standard – actual or implied – for our evaluation and our ideal behavior. Perhaps this effort could be relabeled as “How well are we carrying the message – especially to those who we would rather not mix with?” rather than being specially associated with the diversity cause.

***Our Responsibility Declaration is simple and clear and perhaps should be emphasized from the inside-out, not the outside-in:
When anyone, anywhere needs help, we should be there.***

There is Strength in Unity

Art C, Walking the Red Road Group, District 24

It is believed that through the circle of life we are connected to all things. When we enter the Circle, we say *Mitague Oyasin*, which means “All my relations,” a prayer of oneness and harmony with all forms of life: other people, animals, birds, insects, trees, plants, and even rocks, rivers, mountains, and valleys. The Circle connects us to each other.

In the Circle we are all equal. When in the Circle no one is in front of you. No one is behind you. No one is above you. No one is below you. The Sacred Circle is designed to create unity. There is strength in unity.

The Circle has healing power. There is a place in our Circle for all who are seeking sobriety. All are equal in the Circle – in our alcoholism, and in our sobriety. There is no beginning and no end – only the opportunity for continuous sobriety.

Join our AA Talking Circle for the 3rd Annual Spring Gathering. Celebrate Earth Day with others in recovery in a beautiful setting as we meditate on our interconnectedness on **Saturday, April 25th, 2020, from 1 pm until 3:30 pm.**

All are welcome!

I.S. and Gertrude Sahli Nature Park
194 McKinley Road
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

***This is an open AA discussion meeting uniting AA traditions with Native American Indian traditions,
hosted by the Walking the Red Road Group of Alcoholics Anonymous.***

Ask-It Basket Questions

Send your 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/>.

Q1. Q1. I noticed that only 6 of our Area Servants are elected. I also noticed that over 23 are appointed or chosen to be coordinators. Why does the Area Assembly have so little say in who serves on the Area Committee?

Yvette N, Area 60 Past Delegate (Panel 63), responds:

Like many organizations, AA—and Area 60 in kind—is served by a board of officers that is responsible for the functioning of its operations. That includes the Chairperson who “appoints all non-elected service officers, service coordinators, and interim replacements for elected officers,” per the Area 60 Guidelines. They do not govern however, as the guideline continues with “after review and recommendation by the elected Area Officers.” We elect trusted servants, and empower them with an authority equal to their responsibility via The Twelve Concepts for World Service. Practically speaking, it would be impossible to function efficiently and serve the fellowship effectively if every trusted servant had to be elected and/or replaced when necessary (as this happens frequently) by vote of the Area Committee. Keep in mind “The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for AA world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole fellowship.” The collective conscience is one reason why the GSR may be the most important job in AA: without the GSR, the voice of the membership may not be heard.

Margie S, Area 60 Delegate, responds:

In Area 60 there are **6 elected officers, 5 appointed officers, and 7 appointed service coordinators** for a total of **18 officers and coordinators**. The remainder of the Area Committee is made up by DCMs which are elected by GSRs. Appointed officers are generally specialized positions requiring a specific skill set. They have less responsibility than elected officers, but more responsibility than appointed coordinators.

With the exception of the Alternate Delegate and the Alternate Chairperson, the alternate service coordinators (including those assisting the appointed officers), are working on a trial basis or being trained in the position, and there is no voice or vote attached to those positions at the Officers and Coordinators Meetings, or in the Area Meetings and Assemblies.

Custom and tradition runs the processes of Alcoholics Anonymous. In doing some research, I have found that this was the way our area was set up at inception. Our neighboring districts in Eastern PA and Maryland are set up the same way. I asked fellow delegates in the United States and Canada about their election/appointment process, and it is about a 50/50 split between Areas who appoint their service coordinators and areas that elect them. Out of the areas that elect coordinators, around a third of them have a mixture of elected and appointed coordinators. Some areas have large standing committees made up of DCMs. In that case, the committee elects the service coordinator from their committee membership.

Area 60 has in-depth guidelines which outline the procedures for election and appointment. Those guidelines are reviewed every two years. Should the DCMs and GSRs chose to make changes to the guidelines, they will again be reviewed in 2021 prior to the Fall Assembly.

Q2. When is the next Steering Committee meeting? Can you put them on the calendar?

Margie S, Area 60 Delegate, responds:

Area 60, the Pittsburgh Area Steering Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous intergroup, and the **Erie Area Central Committee** intergroup are each autonomous organizations with their own steering/central committees. The Area provides a conduit of communication between the groups and districts in Western PA and AA as a whole via the General Service Office in New York. The intergroup steering committees provide local services.

Each entity has a different purpose, and each entity maintains their own calendar. Both intergroups are encouraged to send the Area 60 Website Coordinator their schedule of meetings, so that Area can add that information to our calendar.

Please go to aaerie.org or pghaa.org for information on their steering committee meetings.

Q3. How common is the existence of a steering committee as part of an AA Group? Do you feel they are necessary, or is just a home group's group conscience the better way to decide matters affecting the group? Is there a recommended size of the group to decide whether or not a steering committee is best for the group?

Margie S, Area 60 Delegate, responds:

Steering Committee for home groups are generally used for very large groups that often host more than one meeting. One example I was told of is a home group in Wyoming that 150 members.

That being said, there are also some groups that call their business meetings (or group conscience meetings) “steering committee meetings.” What is best for a group is something that each group must decide for themselves.

Chad U, Area 60 Newsletter Editor, responds to Q3:

From my experience, I'd say that informal group steering committees (current officers having quick meetings as needed) are common, but formal ones (current and past officers meeting on a schedule) are uncommon.

In some of the home groups I've been part of, the group's Secretary, Treasurer, and GSR act as an informal steering committee for questions that need immediate response because there's not enough time to call for a group conscience of the entire group. They then report-out actions taken at the next group business meeting.

My extrapolation on at what size an informal steering committee should become a formal one (based on my experience of groups in my home district) is that a "small" group with an informal steering committee of 3-5 probably has 15-25 home group members, and a "larger" with a formal steering committee group probably has 75+ members.

(One could consider the Area Officers & Coordinators as a formal area steering committee for Area 60. "The OC" has regularly scheduled meetings between the quarterlies and assemblies where routine area business is handled.)

More information on group steering committees can be found in pamphlet P-16, *The AA Group... Where it all begins*.

Q4. My home group has 27 members on the group secretary's list, but many of them don't regularly show up to the meeting. We haven't seen some of them in months. If they do show up, they don't help with anything like making coffee, setting up chairs, doing readings or charring, putting money in the basket, or taking meetings into jail and rehabs. Some of them don't even share at meetings! Only 3 or 4 group members do all the work. How do we get them to actually help, or can we kick these freeloaders out of our group?

Margie S, Area 60 Delegate, responds:

As home group members in Alcoholics Anonymous, it is up to us to hold each other accountable. I can only share my experience, strength, and hope in regard to this issue as there are no hard and fast rules.

My first suggestion would be to have a group conscience meeting or a series of meetings and review the pamphlet, *The AA Group... Where it all begins* (P-16), which can be downloaded from www.aa.org or purchased through the Area 60 Literature Coordinator.

As this is your meeting, and each group is autonomous, another suggestion would be to read, review, and discuss portions of the pamphlet at the regular meeting. The group could even preface the meeting outlining issues with needing help. After discussion, perhaps attendees would have a greater understanding of what it takes to belong to a home group and host a meeting.

The next step would be to come up with a plan to deal with the homegroup list. For instance, perhaps you could contact the people on your list that aren't active and find out their intentions—if there is little or no feedback, in my home group we remove them from the home group list. Many of us were taught the home group is where you go every week. Of course, sometimes people can't make it due to work or a family obligation, but they should stay in touch with the other members.

In regard to setting up and cleaning up, and making coffee, if a schedule or discussion at the group conscience and group levels is ineffective, then perhaps the 3 or 4 of you that are doing all the work should **stop**. If attendees want a meeting at that place and time, my experience shows people will step up.

Q5. What are the dates for the Cook Forest Spring 2020 Conference?

Chad U, Area 60 Newsletter Editor, responds:

Since the Cook Forest Conference is not a service event or an Area 60-sponsored event, its dates do not currently appear on the Area 60 website calendar at < <https://www.wpaarea60.org/calendar/> >.

However, from what I can tell by googling, the dates seem to be **May 15, 16, & 17** for the Cook Forest Spring Conference 2020.

If the Cook Forest Conference Committee supplied a flyer to our Website Coordinator at < website@wpaarea60.org >, it would be listed in red as an "Other" event, just as other conferences/conventions, group anniversaries, speaker jams, and district workshops are.

Send those events in to us!

Save the Dates!

International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous

July 2-5, 2020. Detroit, MI. Area 60 is cohosting a hospitality room with Area 59.

Contact **Terri H** if you are interested in volunteering: terriheinrich58@gmail.com

North East Region of Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (NERAASA)

Feb 26-28, 2021. Pittsburgh, PA. We everyone in Area 60's support to host our first NERAASA in 20 years!

Contact **Yvette N** if you are interested in helping out: vette1105@gmail.com



About Those AA Group Problems...

The AA Group... Where it all begins (P-16)

Group problems are often evidence of a healthy, desirable diversity of opinion among the group members. They give us a chance, in the words of Step Twelve, to “practice these principles in all our affairs.”

Group problems may include such common AA questions as: What should the group do about members who return to drinking? How can we boost lagging attendance at meetings? How can we get more people to help with group chores? What can we do about one member’s anonymity break, or another’s attempts to attract the romantic interest of newcomers? How can we get out from under those oldtimers who insist they know what’s best for the group? And how can we get more of the oldtimers to share their experience in resolving group dilemmas?

Almost every group problem can be solved through the process of an informed group conscience, AA principles, and our Twelve Traditions. Some groups find that their GSR or DCM can be helpful. For all involved, a good sense of humor, cooling-off periods, patience, courtesy, willingness to listen and to wait — plus a sense of fairness and trust in a “Power greater than ourselves” — have been found far more effective than legalistic arguments or personal accusations.

Harmony & Unity

Debbie E, Renewal Group, District 14

Harmony within our AA structure is vital to our recovery. Imagine if we attended meetings where arguments about politics, religion, money, and social status were commonplace. Who would have recovered in that environment? I would guess not many.

We are fortunate that our predecessors had the foresight to design and write the Twelve Traditions, ensuring that harmony and unity would be guided by tenets of common welfare. Money is not our guiding force and neither is power. How different than the outside world! We are held together by a group of loosely written “suggestions” that have worked for years.

What I have noticed is that the more we focus on each other, the more unity we have. Unity, then, is the result of *caring for* and *attention to* each other. I have learned this unity is the most precious value that we possess.

Without harmony & unity, AA would not exist.



I look for *similarities* to **connect**.

I look for *differences* to **grow**.

E PLURIBUS UNUM:

“Out of many, one.”



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?"

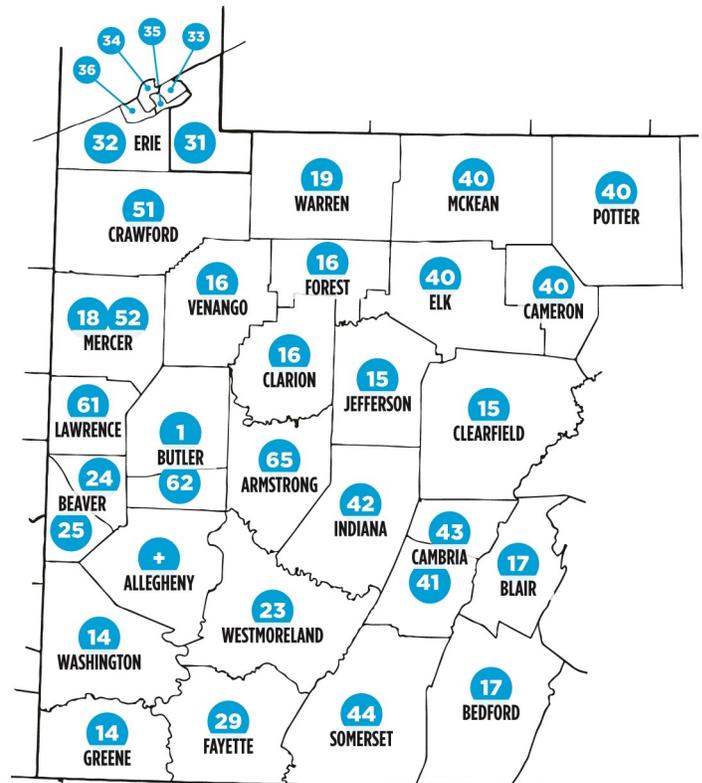
- ◆ To ensure that all voices that wish to be heard are heard.
- ◆ To ensure that no one voice dominates all others.
- ◆ To ensure that everyone gets to speak **once** before another speaks **twice**.
- ◆ To ensure that everyone understands the content of the vote.
- ◆ To ensure that it is clear what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

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

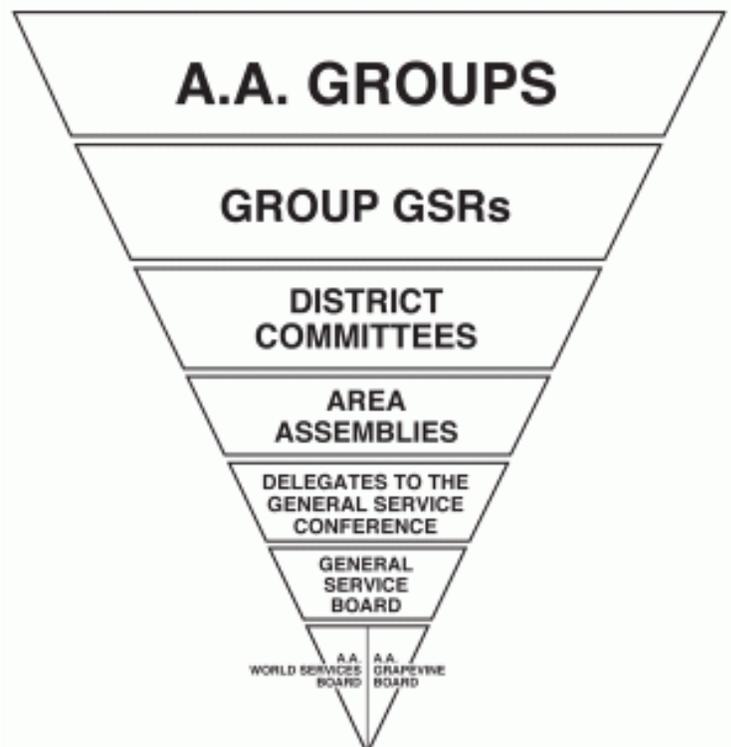
<https://www.wpaarea60.org/calendar/>

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
Mar 20-21	Fri/Sat	PCAW Weekend
Sunday, Mar 22	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	Pre-Conference Assembly
Sunday, Apr 5	9 am	Officers/Coordinators Meeting NERAASA Planning Meeting
Saturday, Apr 25	10 am – 3 pm	District 1 Day of Sharing St. Marks Evangelical Lutheran 201 West Jefferson Street
Apr 19-25	All Week	GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE Rye Brook, NY
Sunday, May 3	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	2nd Quarterly Meeting
Sunday, Jun 7	9 am	Officers/Coordinators Meeting PCAW Wrap-Up
Sunday, Jun 28	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	Post-Conference Assembly
Sunday, Jul 12	9 am	Officers/Coordinators Meeting NERAASA Planning Meeting
Sunday, Aug 16	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	3rd Quarterly Meeting
Sunday, Sep 20	9 am	Officers/Coordinators Meeting NERAASA Planning Meeting
Sunday, Oct 18	8:30 am Registration 9 am Workshop 10:15 am Meeting	Election 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
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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

See Those _____s Above?

Volunteer and learn about Area service!