

"Get Your Kicks On Route 66..." From the SENY Delegate

"Get your kicks on Route 66" were the opening words to the theme song of the popular TV show, Route 66, that ran from 1960 to 1964, and it serves to segue into our journey to the 66th General Service Conference in New York City, April 16-23 of this year. The journey thus far has been paved with numerous responses to the Delegates' Questionnaire via the SENY mailbox, drop-offs at our gatherings, and e-mail. Each serves as a reminder that the group conscience is of the utmost importance in the Conference process per Concept IV and the "Right of Participation." Our expectations are that this year's responses will exceed the 221 responses received in 2015.

The recent Delegate's Day of Sharing featured excellent presentations on how the Conference process works, on Tradition Two (see elsewhere in this issue) and the group conscience, and on Concept III and the "Right of Decision." These were followed by equally powerful presentations by our Literature Chair, Michelle G., on the "plain language" Big Book item; by Nisaa A., P.I. Chair, on the "Young People and A.A." pamphlet item; by Michelle E., Accessibility/Special Needs Chair, on removal of/rewording of the CPC/TF/A-SN committee name, scope and composition; and by John W., our alternate delegate, on the agenda item related to the "Twelve Traditions Illustrated" pamphlet. Each presentation is in the process of being made available to everyone on the SENY website. The session then wrapped up with an overview of the 2016 Conference Agenda.

The Day of Sharing was an overwhelming success. Never in our wildest dreams did we expect to see the approximately 180 attendees (thanks to buses from Brooklyn, Manhattan and Suffolk as well cars full of enthusiastic attendees) on hand for an event that lately had only gathered a little more than 100. We ran out of food and Rockland County rose to the occasion and sent out for pizzas in the hopes of accommodating the overflow. Discussion from the microphones was lively and, except for the bus from Manhattan breaking down prior to heading home, the day was highly positive.

As I read each questionnaire and record responses in a spreadsheet in preparation for my final Conference as your delegate, I'm also reminded that the time for farewells nears. The Panel 64 delegates bid their farewells to the Conference last year in an emotional and sometimes tearful way. I wonder how the farewells of the Panel 65 delegates will reflect how each feels about having had this opportunity to serve. And I also wonder how the 32 SENY delegates who went before me to the Conference felt about this honor. Perhaps the time has come to record the feelings of surviving past delegates and to capture our future delegates on tape as they rotate off so we have a "living" portrait of the Conference experience in our area's digital archives.

Sincere thanks and deep appreciation for the gracious gift God has bestowed upon me for the many opportunities to serve Area 49 throughout the years.

Peace and serenity,

Jim W.

Your voice in The Link

Your SENY Office

Are you willing to share your experience, strength and hope about your service in A.A. at the group, district, county or area level? *The Link* is published ten times per year and welcomes articles from all AA's in our area. Please limit your article to 275 words, and email it to link@aaseny.org or mail it c/o The Link Editor, P.O. Box 571, NY, NY 10116. Thanks!

Visit: 199 Lincoln Ave., Suite 302 Bronx, NY 10454

Send mail: P.O. Box 571, New York, NY 10116

General inquiries: info@aaseny.org

Call: 718-665-1253

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

Theme of AA's 2016 General Service Conference

The Joy of Service! From the SENY Alternate Delegate

At the area inventory back in November, there was a request for "other unity experiences to promote unity in the area." I'm excited to write about what we're now doing to address just that.

On Saturday, May 14, SENY will be sponsoring a "Joy of Service" workshop at the Asbury Crestwood United Methodist Church in Tuckahoe, Westchester County (check the SENY calendar for more details). There will be three panels drawing speakers from Bronx/Upper Manhattan, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, and Westchester Counties. Doors will open at 12:30 pm and the first panel will begin at 1 pm.

That first panel of speakers will address "How It Works" with topics examining how we, as individual members, are linked to AA as a whole, with an overview of our general service structure; discussing the roles and responsibilities of general service versus those of our local intergroups; and reviewing how an idea becomes a General Service Conference agenda item.

It is planned to have the second panel address "Practicing These Principles" and include presentations on applying the Traditions in our daily lives. Topics will cover "Understanding Anonymity" with a review of Traditions 11 and 12; a look balancing and our limitations through the lenses of Traditions 3 and 5; and a look at AA's relationship with the outside world through our traditions about anonymity, non-affiliation, self-support, opinions on outside issues, and professionalism.

The third panel is set to be about "Carrying the Message" and features the work of three SENY's standing committees: Corrections, Public Information, and Cooperation with the Professional Community.

The workshops are still being finalized as of this writing, but our aim is to have topics that will enlighten, encourage, and inform all members of the Fellowship on the joys of service.

I am most grateful to Sally B. and the rest of Westchester General Service for so eagerly offering to host this workshop. Our goal is to have one more "Joy of Service" workshop this fall in Nassau.

I hope to see you all there!

In love and service, **John W.**



Together We Can From *The Link* Editor

Every strand of my process of spiritual awakening is slow, so it took me a few months to step up to the fullness of this position. I'm grateful for your patience, and I feel honored to serve the area as *The Link* editor for the remainder of 2016.

My first question is: how can *The Link* better serve the area? Meaning, how can it help reinforce the connection between AA group members, their trusted servants areawide, and our General Service Conference; and how can it better align with the area's conscience as expressed in our area inventory last fall?

I don't have the answers, but I do have a few hypotheses that I'll be testing out this year. Along the way I'll need your feedback to determine if *The Link* is (or is not) becoming more useful and relevant—not only for you as area trusted servants, but also for the members of your groups. If we're not making progress, please let me know how you think *The Link* can evolve to better meet your service needs.

Here are some of the changes currently in process:

Content: close alignment with the 2016 Conference theme, including its topics for presentation/discussion; more info re. area service opportunities; excerpts from General Service Office publications (Box 459, Markings, The Grapevine/La Viña); excerpts from other AA literature that serve to help us understand our general service structure, our history, and the underlying principles that guide us as a Fellowship; and...more articles by GSRs, DCMs, and standing committee chairs! [If you're serving in any of these positions, please consider sharing your service experience, strength and hope in an article we can publish in this newsletter.]

Graphics: more extensive use of graphics, all created by AA members in service, and mainly found in AA literature and GSO publications—although there will be also be a call for new graphics going out to SENY; use of a more modern and accessible font (Myriad Pro); updating our printing to a two-color process. [Thank you for approving an increase in funding to support a two-color printing process for 2016, on a trial basis. This greatly expands our graphic capabilities with regard to how we present and share information in our newsletter.]

Access: improvements in distribution; ensuring *The Link* is also available every month in a timely fashion on our area's website (www.aaseny.org).

Together we can!

Love and Service, **Domi E.**

Tradition 2 and Group Participation in the Delegate's Questionnaire From Anne L., GSR, Suffern Group

A lot of people say they first felt they were part of A.A. when going through Step Five. But I first truly felt like a part of A.A. as a whole, when for the first time--at nine months sober--I handed our GSR my response to the Delegate's Questionnaire (DQ). Before my home group's business meeting, my sponsor and I reviewed the questions using an article written in *This Day,* Area 44's newsletter, that provided background material--and some opinions about the pros and cons of each item. I filled out the DQ as thoughtfully as possible. I don't remember my home group's discussion bringing up any new information that would change my mind on my responses, though I hoped it might (because those moments when the minority opinion sways us, and the possibility of seeing things in a new way, were already having a strong effect on me). And even if, in my opinion, our GSR wasn't as excited about it all as I was, I knew that however he chose to share or not share my contributions with the delegate, that I had done my part for my home group and for A.A. as a whole. For me, not to try to micromanage someone else's handling of their job is a miracle, a gift of our program of recovery.

A year later I was attending district meetings, and SENY assemblies as alternate GSR. And here I am today, to share my experience on Tradition Two as a GSR, presenting the Delegate's Questionnaire to my home group. Part of how I understand this Tradition, why I take it so seriously, comes from Bill W. himself. In *A.A. Comes of Age* he writes that while other societies have laws and rules and authority:

"We found we need no human authority whatever. We have two authorities which are far more effective...There is God...who very simply says, 'I am waiting for you to do my will.' The other authority is named John Barleycorn, [or alcohol in plain language] and he says, 'You had better do God's will or I will kill you.' And sometimes he does kill. So...we conform to God's will or perish. At this level, the death sentence hangs over the A.A. member, his group, and A.A. as a whole... So there is authority enough, love enough, and punishment enough, all with out any human being clutching the handles of power... For us, it is do or die." [p. 105, slightly edited]

For me that's the bottom line. I am still powerless over alcohol and unable to manage my life (or yours, or the business of A.A.) on my own. Even in a business meeting. Even in an area assembly. I can't function on my own power. And since I'm pretty sure most of you are real alcoholics too, I don't trust you to lead on your own power either. I need to remain willing to seek and to do God's will, every day, and to work with other alcoholics who are trying to live on that spiritual basis as well. On a personal level, I have Steps for that. And as a trusted servant in A.A., I am wiling to follow A.A. Traditions. So I do my homework in order to try to be a 'guardian of the Traditions' for my home group. I make use of Tradition meetings as well as our literature, especially my A.A. Grapevine online subscription where I find not only Bill's writings on the Traditions but also the experience of A.A. members and GSRs and delegates over the past seventy years.

When I think of Tradition Two, I think of the necessity of an informed group conscience, a phrase found throughout our literature about decision making in A.A. groups, a phrase which Bill W. sometimes uses to describe this Tradition. In a February 1996 A.A. Grapevine article, a past delegate wrote about an experience he had at the 1957 General Service Conference. He recalls asking Bill W. how he wanted a particular issue to be decided. "I can still hear his words. 'My friend, I no longer make such decisions. You are experiencing God at work through our group conscience."" And I hear one of our old-timers reminding us that "God may express Himself in our group conscience," suggesting that sometimes God does not. The question of when and how God is present in our group conscience turns out to be a matter of practical steps rather than mystical revelation. I personally believe that God loves an informed group conscience and never fails to show up when:

- we seek to understand the pros and cons of an issue so we can develop informed opinions, despite our initial prejudice or reactions;
- we place principles before personalities, and listen to what others have to say, even those we don't like;
- we avoid sounding off about matters on which we have no experience and little knowledge (as the Traditions Checklist reminds us);
- we try to understand the issues underlying proposed changes, such as those in the Delegate's Questionnaire: does the agenda item seek to address a current failure to carry the message--and if so, is the proposed change the best way to address that failure?
- · we pray for guidance to put selfishness and ego aside so we can do what's best for the newcomer, our home group, and all of A.A.

The suggestions for bringing the DQ to our home groups address this idea of 'informed group conscience' in the notion that without the context of attending the Delegate's Day of Sharing, "your group's responses to the questionnaire won't be nearly as well-informed." We are asked to take in as much information on the agenda items as we can and to share it with our home group. This year, my home group will review the questionnaire at our monthly business meeting. With only four questions we'll have enough time to address each item thoroughly. No one complained about not having a longer questionnaire; and if they did I would be happy to provide the full list of conference agenda items for their perusal.

This is what I wrote our delegate this time last year, about the process surrounding the DQ: "Hi Jim, I am attaching my home group's response. We had a great turnout at the special business meeting we had to discuss the questions. I love that my home group takes this process seriously, and reviewing the questionnaire with them was a joyful and humbling experience. It always amazes me how much I learn from them, especially when I start thinking it's my job to inform them! Thank you so much for your service."

Every time I try to give back in A.A., I receive so much more than I give. As a GSR, it is my job to inform my home group, and to carrytheir concerns and wisdom and experience to the district, to SENY, and through our delegate to the General Service Conference, which our founders established to hold the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship. In our delegate's letter to us in the February issue of *The Link*, which outlines the questionnaire, the last line reads, "The future of A.A. depends upon your input." I believe that's true, and I am fortunate that my home group believes we have something to offer and that we care enough about A.A. as a whole to take the time to review the agenda items thoughtfully and respond thoroughly. To me, that effort itself is evidence of trying to know and to do God's will, to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

(presented at the Delegate's Day of Sharing, March 26, 2016)

Synergies: Step Four, Tradition Four, and Concept Four From the SENY Chair

Autonomy, the foundation of Tradition Four, is all about allowing each group in A.A. the right to manage its affairs as it pleases. *Participation*, the foundation of Concept 4, is all about allowing trusted servants the right to cast their vote as they please. So you might say that the parallels between the two could be defined simply as "allowance."

But such "allowance" leads some to ask the following questions:

- 1) Isn't such liberty foolishly dangerous?
- 2) Are there no safeguards to prevent A.A. groups from making decisions that could possibly threaten A.A. as a whole?
- 3) How do we keep A.A. safe from the tyranny of a sometimes uninformed majority?

Shared A.A. experience reminds us that so long as the "spiritual entities" that constitute A.A. never regard any member as second class and allow each of them the right to participate in making decisions within their group (or service entity) that will best meet the needs of their group (or entity), the ideas of autonomy and participation will usually stop the misapplication or misuse of final authority.

By adding Step Four into the mix, it appears that the relationship between the Fourth Step, the Fourth Tradition, and the Fourth Concept is this: I participate fully in life by being searching and fearless about my oneness with God through inventory, and I serve others by encouraging and accepting their right to participate fully in sobriety. Through allowing members to take their own inventory, a group to manage its own affairs, and trusted servants to cast their vote as they best see fit, we continue to grow into a society where expanding the circle of ideas, processes, and beliefs will ultimately expand the circle of love, compassion, and understanding necessary to keep A.A. safely in the arms of a loving God as we understand Him--our ultimate authority.

In love and service,

Rick W.



Tradition 4

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.



Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix

(from page 8 of the pamphlet)

"The paradox of A.A. is that financial independence and the support of our Fellowship by alcoholics and alcoholics alone not only enhances A.A.'s importance to each of us, but stimulates our engagement in our own recovery... A.A. is 'our thing,' from our group's treasury to the balance sheets at the General Service Office."

For more information on how contributions support 12th Step work go to www.aa.org and download F-203 (English) or SF-13 (Spanish):

Contributions Fact Sheets.

The 2016 General Service Conference

Presentation & Discussion Topics for the 2016 General Service Conference

The theme of the 2016 Conference is "Our Spiritual Way of Life: Steps, Traditions and Concepts" and the topics of presentations/discussions for this year-long Conference are:

A. Connecting with the Newcomer

- 1. All Inclusive Never Exclusive
- 2. Are We Doing Enough to Help the Newcomer Are We Going to Any Length?
- 3. Home Group Where It Begins

B. Connecting with Each Other

- 1. Singleness ow Purpose Staying Pertinent in a Changing World
- 2. Informed Group Conscience The Key to Unity
- 3. Be Involved. Be Inspired. Be of Service

C. Connecting with A.A. as a Whole

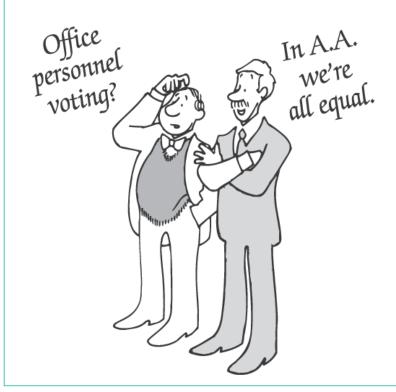
- 1. Participating in All of A.A.
- 2. Understanding Self-Support
- 3. Reaching Out to the Next Generation of AAs



In the spirit of unity, Area 49 groups and their members are encouraged to discuss and reflect upon these topics in 2016.

Concept 4

Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional "Right of Participation," taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.



The Concepts, The Conference and A.A. As A Whole

Writing of the Concepts, a former delegate from the South Florida area, Sam S., noted the permanent importance of the Concepts to A.A.'s general welfare and how inherent the principles behind the Concepts are to A.A. members, whether they are specifically aware of the Concepts or not. "They tell us that we should never become money- or power-conscious, that we are all equals, that decisions should be made, if possible, only when we are substantially agreed, that our actions should never be judgmental, and that we should act, at all times, as trusted servants only. These...are guides for the relationship of the Conference to all of A.A.; but they are guides, too, by which any group of A.A.s, anywhere, can work effectively together to keep our Fellowship safe for those yet to come.

"Not only are the lines of communication clearly drawn in our Twelve Concepts, but we are given methods for communicating that are full of A.A. concern, trust, love, mutual respect, and recognition of the dignity of each individual. Indeed, we find that our Twelve Concepts are the spiritual foundation for all of A.A.'s world services."

(from Box 459, Vol. 57, No.3 / Fall 2011)

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From The General Service Office

The Birthday Plan (what's yours?)

Contributions to the General Service Office support GSO's services to members and groups throughout Canada and the U.S. and help ensure that the A.A. message is carried around the world. *The services that GSO provides the A.A. groups cost more than \$6 per member per year.*

GSO suggests that members contribute \$1, \$2 or even \$5 a year for each year of sobriety—others may give a penny or a nickel a day for each day of their sobriety.





THE GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE POST OFFICE BOX 459 GRAND CENTRAL STATION NEW YORK NY 10163-0459

dating back to the 1961 Conference.....

AA EXCHANGE BULLETIN

News and Notes on Alcoholics Anonymous Worldwide

Volume 6

Published by General Service Office of A.A., P. O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York 17 Number 6

June 1961

THE BIRTHDAY PLAN

This year at the General Service Conference in April, the Delegates recommended adoption of the Birthday Plan. The Plan gives the individual AA member a chance to help foot the bill for AA world services. It supplements the group contribution of \$3.00 per member.

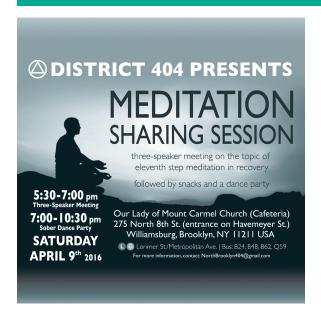
The Birthday Plan was conceived during a coffee break at the Oklahoma State Convention in 1954. Ab A., the Oklahoma Delegate, and another AA were talking about the need for voluntary contributions to GSO and trying to figure out what could be done about it. "We wondered", Ab said, "Wouldn't a lot of AA's be glad to contribute a dollar a year to GSO for each year of AA life, up to a top limit of \$10.00?"

"I received a great inspiration from this idea and couldn't get it out of my mind," Ab said later when he got back home to Tulsa. He then talked about the idea to some members who were no longer very active. Without exception they were all enthusiastic. By 1956 the idea had caught on all over the state. Now for the past five years Oklahoma has been among the top states in per capita contributions to GSO -- with an average of over \$3.00 per member.

Why are voluntary donations to GSO so important? There are some reasons. Last year, for example, only half the groups listed at GSO contributed to GSO services. Fifteen per cent of all AA members are in groups in prisons and hospitals. Another 13% are outside the U.S. and Canada where not only is money scarce but where, in some countries, it is illegal to send it out. Other groups are new - still struggling to survive. And the chief reason, perhaps, is that so many AA's don't yet know enough about GSO to feel a sense of responsibility to it.

So the Conference recommends the Birthday Plan, confident that it will keep growing to help pay for AA world service needs. GSO has sent special envelopes for Birthday Plan contributions to area Delegates and Committee Members. These envelopes are available without cost for any individual member who wishes to use the Birthday Plan. If you are interested, see your Delegate, Committee Member, or write GSO direct.

Upcoming Events & Service Opportunities

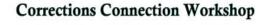


Calling all Manhattan Groups!

Please help us make this Manhattan Share-A-day 2016 possible by sending in your contributions as soon as possible

> Please make checks payable to: **Manhattan Share-A-Day** P.O Box 6990, FDR Station New York, N.Y 10150

With Love and Gratitude. Manhattan Share-A-Day 2016



May 13, 2016 9:00am - 3:30pm



Contact Anthony . 1919 282-8173- corrections@aaseny.org

This workshop is easily accessible from the MTA Metro North Railroad's Ossining Station

The Quality of Work Life Building is within walking distance



Carrying the message

of recovery to the incarcerated alcoholic

General Service Committee of AA

NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision Lower Hudson Valley/NYC Region 1

Sing Sing Correctional Facility Quality of Work Life Building

354 Hunter Street Ossining, NY 10562

District 620

10th Annual Service Workshop

"A Spiritual Way of Life" Steps, Traditions and Concepts

SATURDAY

April 23, 2016

From 8:30 am to 3:00 pm

Place: St. Philip Church 204 West 134th Street Between Adam C. Powell Jr. and Frederick Douglass Blvd. New York, New York

website: aadistrict620.org email: aadistrict620@gmail.com



All groups between 125th and 179th St. East River to Hudson River and groups between 110th & 125th Street, East of Morningside Avenue



There are many opportunities to participate in general service in our area! District, county and area committees always need more volunteers. You can find information about these committees on SENY's website at www.aaseny.org/service.

SAVE THE DATE **SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 2016**

A/SN SHARE-A-DAY

THIS IS ACCESSIBILITIES / SPECIAL NEEDS

WHERE: IS5 - THE WALTER CROWLEY INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL 50-40 JACOBUS STREET, ELMHURST, NY 11373
TIME: 10:00 AM- 3:00 PM

LUNCH WILL BE SERVED.



MORE TO BE REVEALED!!!!!

Calenda	ar of Ever	Visit www.aaseny.org for complete, up-to-date information. E-mail agenda@aaseny.org to add an event.
04/09/16	5:30 pm	District 404 Presents A Meditation Sharing Session: Our Lady of Mt Carmel Cafeteria, 275 N 8th St,Bklyn (enter Havemeyer St)
04/09/16	8:00 pm	Hispanic Districts' Committee / DCM Meeting: 145 Mount Vernon Avenue, Mt Vernon NY 10550 (basement)
04/10/16	9:00 am	Rockland County 12th Annual Spiritual Breakfast: Crowne Plaza, 3 Executive Boulevard, Suffern, NY 10901
04/10/16	10:00 am	SENY Corrections Committee Meeting: SENY Office, 199 Lincoln Avenue, Bronx, NY 10454
04/10/16	11:30 am	SENY Web Committee Meeting: SENY Office, 199 Lincoln Avenue, Bronx, NY 10454
04/10/16	7:00 pm	Staten Island General Service Meeting: Oakwood Heights Community Church, 345 Guyon Ave, Staten Island, NY
04/11/16	7:00 pm	Queens County GSR Boot Camp: Queens Intergroup, 105-29 Metropolitan Avenue, Queens, NY 11375
04/12/16	7:00 pm	Putnam County General Service Meeting: Mount Carmel Baptist Church, 76 Gleneida Avenue, Carmel, NY 10512
04/13/16	7:00 pm	Bronx Upper Manhattan General Service Meeting: Bedford Park Congregational Church, 3008 Bainbridge Avenue, Bronx, NY 10458
04/13/16	7:00 pm	District 602 Meeting: 208 West 13th Street, New York, NY Ask at the desk for meeting room# (Steering Committee meeting @6:45)
04/15/16	8:00 pm	Suffolk County General Service Meeting: True North Church, 1101 Lakeland Avenue, Bohemia, NY 11716
04/16/16	10:00 am	2016 SENY Convention Wrap-up Meeting: St. Mary Gate of Heaven Church-basement 103-12 101st Ave. Ozone Park
04/17/16	9:30 am	Asamblea de Distritos Hispanos: El Grupo 30 de Enero, Iglecia San Simón, 2191 Valentine Ave, Bronx 10457
04/17/16	3:00 pm	Sullivan County General Service Meeting: Sullivan County Community College, 112 College Rd., Loch Sheldrake, NY 12759
04/18/16	7:30 pm	Nassau County General Service Meeting: Nassau Intergroup, 361 Hempstead Turnpike, West Hempstead 11552 (New GSR Mtg @6:30)
04/19/16	6:30 pm	Manhattan General Service Meeting: Seafarer's House 123 East 15th Street NY, NY 10003
04/19/16	7:00 pm	Orange County General Service Meeting: First Presbyterian Church, Campbell Hall, Rte. 207, Campbell Hall, NY 10916
04/19/16	7:15 pm	SENY Public Information (PI) Committee Meeting: NY Intergroup Office, 307 7th Avenue #201, New York, NY 10001
04/20/16	7:15 pm	SENY Cooperation w/ the Professional Community (CPC) Comm. Mtg: NY Intergroup Office, 307 7th Avenue #201, New York, NY 10001
04/20/16	7:30 pm	Westchester County General Service Meeting: Memorial United Methodist Church, 250 Bryant Ave, White Plains, NY 10605
04/23/16	8:30 am	District 620, 10th Annual Service Workshop: St. Philip Church, 204 West 134th Street, New York, NY

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