



My First Conference Experience From the SENY Delegate - Panel 67

"It was like best friends coming together to make a lifelong goal come to pass," is how one of my fellow delegates described the experience. I can't think of anything that summed up the 67th General Service Conference more beautifully. Conference members - all 133 of them - were unified in the best interest of the fellowship that has saved our lives.

A few highlights:

Participating in the deliberations of the Literature Committee and seeing our work discussed and approved by the Conference as a whole was both awe-inspiring and humbling. I got chills when our first recommendation for a change to one of the pamphlets was adopted. And it happened again and again.

Bonding with my fellow delegates from the North East Region (fondly called NERDs). We got to know each other as we prepared for the Conference while at the North East Regional AA Service Assembly (NERAASA) in February and at a "NERD weekend" in March. Attending my first Conference already knowing 17 other delegates was a wonderful safety net for what turned out to be a highly emotional week. These folks will be friends for life.

Lastly, being inspired by the hard-working and dedicated staffers from GSO. In particular, Sandra W., the staff secretary for the Literature Committee; Rick W., the Conference Coordinator; and Greg T., GSO's general manager. Sandra worked long hours to ensure that all our committee work was accurately presented and offered us invaluable guidance during our deliberations. Rick was the engine that kept the Conference on track and moving forward. And Greg chaired most of the Conference proceedings with grace, humor, and gentle reminders that things don't really need to be said a second, third or fourth time. Our Fellowship is in good hands with the support of these special workers.

I will have lots (LOTS!) more to say at the post-Conference assembly. I hope to see you there.

Yours in service,

John W.

Actions taken at the General Service Conference on agenda items contained in this year's Delegate's Questionnaire and discussed by Area 49 groups can be found on page 5 of this issue of *The Link*.

Your voice in *The Link*

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 AAs 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!

Your SENY Office

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General inquiries: info@aaseny.org

Call: 718-665-1253

"Supporting Our Future"

Theme of AA's 2017 General Service Conference

Goings On From the SENY Area Chair

I'm at the Northeast Regional Forum (NERF), also known as the "GSO Road Show," and thinking about what I heard the first night about informed group conscience; about how we shouldn't rush things in AA, and how we discuss them until we have substantial unanimity.

One of the things I like best about NERF is that the AA Service Manual comes to life. I'm reminded of how the General Service Conference lasts for one week, and the General Service Board works the rest of the year to carry out the will of the Conference.

Another presentation has me musing about attraction, not promotion, and how to practice Tradition Eleven. I'm uncomfortable when I hear members claim to be in "the best group in AA" because I wonder how that affects unity. I've shared about how we have found a solution, not the solution, to the alcohol problem. Our Big Book tells me that "we realize we know but a little." The AA way of life works for me, beautifully. I best not pontificate about how AA is "the only game in town," or some other such nonsense; that's surely promotion, not attraction.

A Trustee-at-Large from Canada taught us that the highest per capita consumption of alcohol is in Uganda, where there are four meetings per week and 50 AA members; and how our contributions to General Services carry the message there. 411 attendees came and I'm glad I was one of them!

We do not meet again until September; please feel free to call, text or email me. Even better, meet me at the NYS Informational Workshop! It's in Rochester August 4-6. The cost is \$175.00 for the entire weekend, meals included. The registration form is on our website, and if you have questions, I'm always available.

Have a happy, safe, and sober summer!

Jane E.



AA Business Meetings From the DCM, District 601

If you want to clear a room in AA, announce that the business meeting starts in five minutes.

While many groups enjoy strong participation at business meetings, many, if not most, struggle to attract much interest beyond a tiny minority of members.

Why is this?

Some AAs say they find business meetings 'boring,' or 'pointless,' or even 'a threat to my sobriety' (the latter meant only half in jest). They complain variously about time wasted on 'trivial' issues; or about a lack of civility discussing issues; or about not much getting accomplished.

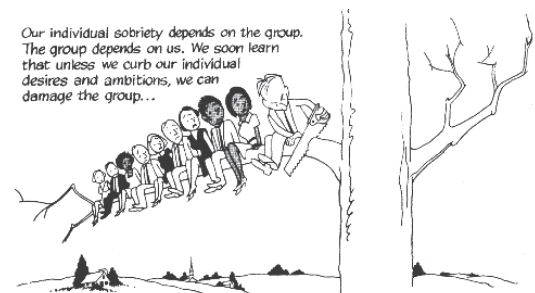
At the same time, business meetings have never been more important to a group's health. Landlords are passing along more costs for insurance, security, heat and A/C. They are also asking groups to be more proactive in addressing clean-up, noise and security.

So, with business meetings being so important, how can greater participation be encouraged? Here is District 601's contribution:

In August 2016, we hosted an informative, fun and well-attended workshop called "How to Run An AA Business Meeting." The workshop featured two speakers who had served as overall chairs of large groups. After sharing their experiences, our moderator quizzed them on a list of specific issues. Attendees could then ask questions. Many sought advice on current group issues. They also left with an information packet on different ways of running business meetings, culled from groups and AA entities around the US and Canada. We received very positive feedback from attendees, many reporting they took helpful ideas back to their groups.

District 601 is running the same workshop again on Wednesday, August 2, 2017 at The Bronfman Center, 7 W. 10th Street in Manhattan. See the SENY calendar online or contact dcm@601.senya.org for more info. All AAs are invited!

Michael M.



Let's Step It Up, Fellas!
From the SENY Corrections Chair

I recently had the opportunity to speak with Diana L., our AA "special worker" currently manning the Corrections desk at the General Service Office (GSO). It wasn't hard to reach her: I just called. Any one of us can call GSO at (212) 870-3400 and speak to staff members! I asked for data on the Corrections Correspondence service and quickly received it: so far in 2017, 82 male inmates and 17 female inmates have been connected to AA on the outside using the Corrections Correspondence service; however, there are still 64 men on the inside waiting for AAs to write to. The ladies are super covered: 125 AA women on the outside are waiting to be connected with female inmates! So let's step it up, fellas! If you're interested in carrying the message to the alcoholic on the inside, you can grab me at the next assembly or you can fill out the Correspondence Form and email it directly to Diana at corrections@aa.org. The form is inside the AA pamphlet about this service. You can find it online by typing "Corrections correspondence f-26" into your browser, or email me at corrections@aaseny.org and I'll send it to you.

Thanks,
Mike D.

GRAPEVINE Quote of the Day

May 11, 2017

"The AA program does not recognize walls. It is immune to the conditions which break down an individual relationship, the difference in social levels, of intellect, of experience. AA takes no heed of this. It has one primary law, help your fellow man and do it by example rather than by instruction."

Washington State Penitentiary, February 1955
 "Prisoner AA," AA Grapevine

NY State Informational Workshop!

The New York State Informational Workshop is a wonderful sharing forum focused on carrying the A.A. message through our General Services Committees. It meets annually with the four General Service Areas in New York State, to share our experience, strength and hope with the most effective ways to do our 12th Step Work through our service entities.

This event is open to all who wish to learn about carrying the A.A. message, through their Home Groups, Districts, and Area General Service Committees. If you serve on a Committee, or would like to, this event will be of great interest to you!

**38th Annual
 New York State
 Informational Workshop**

August 4-6, 2017
 Hosted by Area 47

2301 Westside Dr. Rochester, NY 14624
Roberts Wesleyan College

The 38th New York State Informational Workshop (NYSIW) is held each summer, with the host being rotated between the four NYS general service areas, to inform the four general services areas in NYS on the activity in each areas' service committees. We are also guided by the Fifth Tradition: Each group has but one primary purpose-to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

The Second Tradition:
For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

Questions? Email NYSIW Chair Michele F.
 michele.generalservice@gmail.com

Register by mail to:
 NYSIW Area 47, PO Box 15612, Rochester, NY 14615

Please make check/money order payable to:
 Area 47 Treasurer

Pre-Registration Due Friday, July 21
 On-site Registration Opens at 3:00 Friday, August 4th

CORRESPONDENCE FORM — for Outside A.A. Members Only **CCS-3**

PLEASE PRINT - Return to address below

I am a MALE FEMALE How many inmates are you able to write to?: _____

I can correspond in English French Spanish Other language _____

Name: _____ Phone (office use only): _____
(First and Last)

Address: _____ Email (office use only): _____
(P.O. Box or Street Address, City, State or Province, Postal or Zip Code)

Corrections Desk, General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
Direct: (212) 870-3085 Email: corrections@aa.org Fax: (212) 870-3003 Website: www.aa.org

The 2017 General Service Conference

The 67th General Service Conference

The General Service Conference was established to maintain a link among all AA groups, and to help AA effectively and consistently carry its message in ways impossible for local groups to do, yet important to the fellowship. At its heart is the communication through GSR's and other elected representatives to the area's Delegate who in turn represents the area's conscience and spirit of service on questions and issues before the Conference.

The following questionnaire was prepared by our delegate John W. for Area 49's consideration, and is based on the final agenda of this year's Conference.

- 1. ARCHIVES:** Consider proposal for a new publication: *Unity in Action: Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951 – 1970* (working title)
- 2. COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY:** Consider request that the title of the pamphlet "Is There an Alcoholic in the Workplace?" be changed to "Is There a Problem Drinker in the Workplace?"
- 3. FINANCE:** Consider request to add text to the pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix" indicating there is no dollar limit to the amount a group may contribute.
- 4. LITERATURE:** Consider request for revisions to the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship."
- 5. LITERATURE:** Consider request to retire the pamphlet "Too Young."
- 6. LITERATURE:** Consider requests for literature and/or language regarding safety.
- 7. LITERATURE:** Discuss request for a revision to the pamphlet "The A.A. Group."
- 8. POLICY/ADMISSIONS:** Consider a request to add a "YPAA Subcommittee" to the service structure.



Conference Theme: *Supporting our Future*

The topics for presentations, discussions, and workshops relating to this theme are:

"Growth"

- Diversity – Outreach and Attraction
- Safety – An Important Consideration
- Communication – Today and Tomorrow

"Participation"

- Fellowship vs. Membership
- Leadership: I Am Responsible
- Is Your Voice Heard?

"Contributions"

- Spirituality and Money
- Fully Self-Supporting Our Obligations
- Apathy and the Power of the Purse

In the spirit of unity, Area 49 groups and their members are encouraged to discuss and reflect upon these topics and the future of support for all levels of service in AA.

New Service Material Available

The General Service Office has developed two new service pieces that are now available to the Fellowship upon request (in English, French and Spanish). Service material differs from Conference-approved literature in that it has not come about through Conference Advisory Action. It is produced when there is a need for readily available information on a specific subject. Service material reflects A.A. group experience as well as specific and timely information that is subject to change.

The first new service piece is titled "Safety and A.A.: Our Common Welfare" and shares some of the experience groups have had in ensuring the safety of the group and its members. As noted in the opening of this service piece, "Safety is an important issue within A.A. — one that all groups and members can address to develop workable solutions and help keep our meetings safe based on the fundamental principles of the Fellowship."

The second service piece is an Accessibilities Checklist, designed for meetings and groups, to help determine how accessible a meeting place is and to help diminish the trials that people with access barriers may encounter. The checklist reflects the experience many groups have had in developing meeting spaces that are accessible to all alcoholics.

To obtain service material, please contact G.S.O. at (212) 870-3400 or email the Literature Desk.

2017 General Service Conference Actions on Delegate's Questionnaire

Here are the actions taken with regard to GSC agenda items discussed by Area 49 groups:

1. ARCHIVES - *It was recommended that:*

A draft or a progress report of *Unity in Action: Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951 – 1970* (working title) be brought back to the 2018 Conference Committee on Archives for review.

2. COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY - *It was recommended that:*

The title of the pamphlet "Is There an Alcoholic in the Workplace?" be changed to "Is There a Problem Drinker in the Workplace?"

3. FINANCE - *did not result in an Advisory Action*

4. LITERATURE - *It was recommended that:*

The following two bullet points in the section "What procedures can a group set up to sponsor new members?" in the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" be removed:

- A file of names, addresses, and phone numbers of newcomers (who wish to volunteer the information), with notations showing sponsor or sponsors for each one.
- Review of newcomers list by steering committee (or Twelfth Step or sponsorship committee) – with follow-up activity where it seems needed.

5. LITERATURE - *It was recommended that:*

The pamphlet "Too Young?" be revised to reflect more current collective experiences of young alcoholics and their welcome to A.A.

6. LITERATURE - *It was recommended that:*

- Question 10 in the pamphlet "The A.A. Group" in the section "A.A. Group Inventory" that currently reads, "Are we doing all we can to provide an attractive and accessible meeting place?" be revised to read: "Are we doing all we can to provide a safe, attractive and accessible meeting place?"
- The pamphlet "The A.A. Group" be revised to add the following text from "Safety and A.A.: Our Common Welfare" to the section "Principles Before Personalities":

Safety and AA: Suggestions to Consider

"Safety is an important issue within A.A. – one that all groups and members can address to develop workable solutions and help keep our meetings safe based on the fundamental principles of the Fellowship.

"Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward. (Tradition One, Long Form)"

"A.A. groups are spiritual entities made up of alcoholics who gather for the sole purpose of staying sober and helping other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. Yet, we are not immune to the difficulties that affect the rest of humanity.

"Alcoholics Anonymous is a microcosm of the larger society within which we exist. Problems found in the outside world can also make their way into the rooms of A.A. As we strive to share in a spirit of trust, both at meetings and individually with sponsors and friends, it is reasonable for each member to expect a meaningful level of safety. Those attending A.A. meetings derive a benefit by providing a safe environment in which alcoholics can focus on gaining and maintaining sobriety. The group can then fulfill its primary purpose – to carry the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. For this reason, groups and members discuss the topic of safety."

For more information see "Safety and A.A.: Our Common Welfare" (SMF-209) www.aa.org.

- The trustees' Literature Committee develop language regarding safety to be incorporated in current and new recovery literature, where appropriate, along with a plan for implementation. The committee requested that the draft language and proposed plan or progress report be brought back to the 2018 General Service Conference.

7. LITERATURE: The Literature Committee considered the request and took no action. Committee agreed that an AA group's relationship with its landlord falls within autonomy of the group.

8. POLICY/ADMISSIONS: The Policy/Admissions Committee considered the request and took no action.

Being a Loner Sponsor

On Day 91 of his sobriety, back in July 1986, Chuck W.'s sponsor suggested that he send a letter to the Loners-Internationalists Meeting (LIM) desk at G.S.O. asking if he could become a Loner Sponsor. He did so, and that single letter would set him on a road to travel the world — without ever leaving home. After 30 years of sobriety, Chuck has sponsored Loners who live in the U.K., Australia, South Africa, Tanzania, Italy, India, Uganda, South Korea, the Philippines, Russia, China, as well as the U.S. and Canada.

He has sponsored a missionary in a leper colony in Africa, an American of Iranian descent who started a meeting in Tehran in 1992 — a place where alcoholics could be imprisoned or executed if the regime found out they drank — and a Russian journalist who helped start the first meetings in that country back in the 1980s.

For a would-be sponsor like Chuck, it all starts with a simple note — in the old days, a postcard placed inside an envelope, but now, for the most part, he reaches out via email. The men and women he contacts fall into three categories: Loners — A.A.'s who are unable to attend meetings regularly because there is no meeting near where they live; Homers — A.A.'s who are unable to attend meetings because of health; and Internationalists — sailors on vessels for lengthy periods of time. (A G.S.O. staffer coordinates the Loners, Homers and Internationalists correspondence service.)

"It's obviously different than sponsoring someone face-to-face," Chuck says, "but the principle is the same: sharing your experience, strength and hope to help another person stay sober. You're writing to someone who had that moment of clarity: 'I need help.' Just like you. So you say: 'If you would like some help with your recovery process, please contact me.' The act of putting your thoughts on paper or emailing takes your recovery and transfers it to another person."

Chuck's first step after making LIM contact is to ask if the person has a mailing address and would want Chuck to send him or her a copy of the A.A. brochure on sponsorship. "It's not as easy as it sounds, because many people have to travel a long way to pick up mail." Anonymity needs to be carefully maintained. Many Loners can also use the Internet to access A.A. material at www.aa.org, including digital files of Alcoholics Anonymous and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.



"If they are at the point in their recovery where they are going to do the Steps, I work with them on that," Chuck says. "I help them with Fourth Step lists, etc. Sometimes, it's more making contact, being a sounding board." Chuck also shares with Loners through the confidential bimonthly LIM bulletin, which contains excerpts from LIM letters that are sent to G.S.O. (Since the bulletin contains full names and addresses it is distributed only to Loners, Homers and Internationalists, and their sponsors.)

Chuck has had some memorable experiences as a Loner Sponsor. "For several years I corresponded with people in a Havana, Cuba meeting at an old Baptist church, a meeting actually cleared by the government. I would correspond and they would respond back to me. It was just beginning in Cuba. They were reaching out to the outside for help to strengthen what was beginning to happen there with A.A. When I sponsored the Russian journalist, he didn't speak English and I didn't speak Russian, so he would have someone translate my letters and I would do the same for his. And the beauty of corresponding with people in foreign countries is you share pictures, and they send pictures — of their area, the geography, and you do get to know them, just as you do in any sponsorship. I still have some beautiful pictures of Western Australia, where one of my former sponsees lived."

Ultimately, being a Loner Sponsor has helped define Chuck's sobriety. He has had four sponsors in his 30 years in the program, but still remembers what his first sponsor told him, back in 1986. "It is great to help those at meetings around you, but how do you help alcoholics in remote areas, far from regular meetings?" Chuck feels that "without the Loners, Internationalists and Homers who have worked our Twelve Steps, this recovering alcoholic would not be where I am today in recovery."

County General Service Meetings		Please visit www.aaseny.org for the most up-to-date information	
Bronx-Upper Manhattan (2nd Wed, every other month)	Bedford Park Congregational Church, 3008 Bainbridge Avenue, Bronx, NY 10458	8/9/17	7:00 pm
Brooklyn (3d Wednesday, every other month)	St. Francis College, 180 Remsen St., Brooklyn, NY 11201	7/19/17	7:30 pm
Hispanic Districts (3d Sunday, monthly)	Location rotates - please see aaseny.org or aacdhseny49.org each month	6/18/17	9:30 am
Manhattan (3d Tuesday, every other month)	Seafarer's House, 123 East 15th Street, New York, NY 10003	6/20/17	6:30 pm
Nassau (3d Monday, every other month)	Nassau Intergroup Office, 361 Hempstead Tpke, West Hempstead, NY 11552	6/19/17	7:30 pm
Orange (3d Tuesday, monthly; not July or August)	First Presbyterian Church, Campbell Hall, Rte. 207, Campbell Hall, NY 10916	6/20/17	7:00 pm
Putnam (2nd Tuesday, monthly)	Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, 76 Gleneida Avenue, Carmel, NY 10512	7/11/17	7:00 pm
Queens (last Monday, every other month)	Saint Mary Gate of Heaven Church, 101-18 104th St., Queens, NY 11416	6/26/17	7:30 pm
Rockland (3d Wednesday, monthly)	Elim Alliance Church, 40 Lake Road, Valley Cottage, NY 10989	6/21/17	7:30 pm
Staten Island (does not meet July or August)	Oakwood Heights Community Church, 345 Guyon Ave, Staten Island, NY 10306	TBD	7:00 pm
Suffolk (3d Friday, monthly)	True North Church, 1101 Lakeland Avenue, Bohemia, NY 11716	7/11/17	8:00 pm
Sullivan (3d Sunday, monthly; except July & August)	Sullivan County Community College, 112 College Rd., Loch Sheldrake, NY 12759	6/18/17	3:00 pm
Westchester (3d Wednesday, monthly)	Memorial Methodist Church, 250 Bryant Avenue, White Plains, NY10605	6/21/17	7:30 pm

Standing Committee & District Meetings (recurring)		Please visit www.aaseny.org for the most up-to-date information	
Accessibility and Special Needs Comm. (1st Friday, monthly)	NY Intergroup Office, 307 7th Ave. #201, New York, NY 10001	7/7/17	7:00 pm
Corrections Committee (3d Saturday, monthly)	SENY Office, 99 Lincoln Ave., Bronx, NY 10454	7/15/17	12:00 pm
PI & CPC Joint Comm. Meeting (last Tuesday, monthly)	NY Intergroup Office, 307 7th Ave. #201, New York, NY 10001	6/27/17	7:15 pm
District 404 (second Sunday, monthly)	Greenpoint Reformed Church, 136 Milton Street, Brooklyn, NY 11222	7/9/17	5:30 pm
District 601: 12 Concepts Workshop (first Wed, monthly)	Bronfman Center, 2nd Floor, 7 W. 10th St., between 5th and University Place	7/5/17	7:00 pm
District 602 (second Wednesday, monthly)	LGBT Center, 208 W 13th St., New York, NY 10011	7/12/17	7:00 pm
District 603 (first Tuesday, monthly)	St. George Church, 209 E 16th St., New York, NY 10003	7/4/17	6:30 pm
District 605/608 (monthly)	NY Intergroup Office, 307 7th Ave. #201, New York, NY 10001	6/19/17	7:00 pm
District 618 (second Wednesday, monthly)	Church of the Holy Name – Little Room, 207 West 96th Street, New York, NY 10025	7/12/17	7:30 pm

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