

### AREA 61 ASSEMBLY: GOBS OF GOOD INFORMATION

The Area 61 Assembly on January 19th delivered a wealth of information to AA members and groups. The day was chock full of service details, AA updates both near and far and fellowship.

Perhaps the most special element of the day was the participation of Greg T. who serves as the General Manager of the General Service Office of AA.

Greg T. presented two sessions. The first was an overview of the Communications Audit. Greg explained the process and methodology used by Impact Collaborative, the consultant firm contracted by the General Service Board, and introduced some of the findings. A few interesting discoveries were:

- AA's primary purpose is alive and well at the group level
- The public sees little difference between AA and other recovery programs
- There is a strong desire for more useful communication at the GSR level

Greg explained that the job ahead is to overcome whatever is keeping AA from reaching any and all who need us.

Q&A from the Assembly floor focused on the effectiveness (pro & con) of pamphlets and other literature, in particular for active alcoholics and for professionals who interact with alcoholics. On the topic of agenda items at the General Service Conference, a desire was stated for dissemination of background material to the group level. Further, the benefit of background material in French and Spanish was conveyed.

The second session presented by Greg was a general AA World Services Update. Here Greg shared details about the new AAWS app which will be linked to the recently licensed Meeting Guide technology, among other functions. Other news included the upcoming release of the new book, *Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W.'s*

General Service Conference Talks, 1951-1970.

Another current event is the recent launch of the AAWS YouTube Channel.



Our Delegate Mary K. and Alt Delegate Steve L. shared that

they are already in the flow of pre-conference communications, in addition to their service with the groups and Districts in RI. Treasurer Tricia I. and Secretary Gary D. are also hard at work in their service. Registrar Ted D. informed the Assembly that there are 304 groups registered with GSO. Sadly, 25% of these groups are entirely disconnected from the AA General Service structure and consequently do not have input into AA affairs beyond their group and the vital future of AA.

On the committee front, the standing committees and special committees revealed an extensive array of services being delivered throughout the state and a clear picture of needs. The committees are doing much heavy lifting, but they need help – our help. Kelly U. from the Corrections Committee noted that they need

new volunteers, as the inmates see the same cast of AA characters and would benefit from some fresh faces with new stories of recovery. Jason D. from the Treatment & Accessibilities committee reminded the audience that we are guests subject to each institution's protocols when we bring commitments to treatment facilities. He also reported that the committee will hold an open house on Feb. 4 at the Area office with pot luck at 6:30 and meeting at 7pm. Fredericka A. and Bob H. represented the Cooperation with the Professional Community/Public Information committee. Their current projects include outreach to police stations and senior centers and they are gearing up for health fair season. The Archives Committee is continuing to coordinate

Longtimers Panels in each district. Nancy R. mentioned that they are looking for a group in District 3 to host the next Longtimers panel in the spring. Grapevine is our meeting in print and is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. The Grapevine committee in Area 61 serves to spread the word about Grapevine and LaViña and their value as tools of recovery for individuals and groups. Our Alternate Delegate Steve L. is stepping in to serve as the acting Grapevine chairperson.

Often referred to as the Pied Piper of RI AA, Steve's enthusiasm for all things recovery and good nature are sure to enliven the GV committee and lay the groundwork for a prepared chairperson to rotate in when the time comes. The Information Services Committee had a host of data to share. Of note, John E. reported that the Area 61 website is experiencing heavy traffic. In particular, the website had

262 unique users on December 23rd (335 sessions, 911 page



views) which is an indication that both Rhode Islanders and visitors from out of town are using aainri.com to learn about holiday alkathons and meetings.

Ken D. encouraged all to register for the 43rd Rhode Island Convention at Gurney's in Newport on March 22-24. In fact, Ken cautioned that he would soon 'stroke-out' if we the Assembly didn't get a move on it and reserve our rooms, meals and seats. Let's keep Kenny healthy-please register today.

Grace N. represented Young People in AA and with enthusiasm she announced the great news that RISCYPAA won the bid to host NECYPAA in December 2019. More details will follow, but with certainty our Young People committees will work

hard in the months ahead to foster a celebration of sobriety among young people in Rhode Island AA and beyond. Hold onto your hats!

Beyond Area 61 Rhode Island General Service, two AA entities function to deliver assorted services to individuals and groups. It was a pleasure to have representation from Southern RI Intergroup and RI Central Service at the Assembly. Sharon L. reported news from Intergroup, including the new call forwarding plan to ensure a volunteer AA picks up the phone after hours or when volunteer phone shifts are not filled. Sharon also mentioned that tickets are available for the Valentine's dance on Feb. 9th. The incoming Central Service liaison to Area is Lisa L. and she announced that tickets are available for Jersey Boys at PPAC on May 12. Additionally, Central Service has a library of speaker CDs available for free check out and makes the traveling bookstore available to groups.

The Districts in Area 61 are made up of groups from a particular geographic area of the state (see insert). One District report after another emphasized that both GSRs and district officers are committed to steady service work. Reports conveyed common themes, such as outreach projects to disconnected groups, progress with district inventories, and district group conscience exercises. Furthermore, juicy discussions about group concerns make the district meetings ever so

DISTRICT	CITIES & TOWNS
1	Woonsocket, Cumberland, Lincoln, Smithfield, North Smithfield, Burrillville, Glocester
3	Providence, Cranston, Johnston, Scituate, Foster
4&2 combined	Pawtucket, North Providence, Central Falls, East Providence, small strip of Providence, Barrington, Warren, Bristol
5	Newport, Middletown, Portsmouth, Tiverton, Little Compton
6	Warwick, West Warwick, East Greenwich, West Greenwich, Coventry
7	Narragansett, North Kingstown, South Kingstown, Charlestown, Westerly, Jamestown, Exeter, Hopkinton, Richmond, Block Island
8	All Spanish language meetings throughout the state

interesting and informative. Each DCM emphasized that the best fix to a disconnected group is an active GSR. The dozens of GSRs in attendance at the Assembly gave a voice to their groups and a vote for their groups. They are the two-way communication link that Bill W. intended when he devised the General Service Structure over 60 years ago. Our districts in Area 61 are top notch and dedicated. The DCMs who reported were Lauren P. (District 1), Kerra M. (District 3), Dave C. (District 5), Anne M. (District 6), and Becky T. (District 7). GSR Laurie presented for District 4&2 Combined.

The much anticipated 4th annual chili cook-off did not disappoint. Eleven (eleven!) bubbling crock pots of chili served the gathering, along with some terrific side dishes. After much taste-testing, participants voted for their favorite chili. The blue-ribbon winners were Steve L. (District 6), Dave C. (District 5) and Lauren P. (District 1). These winners earned their bragging rights. Three cheers for all the cooks who contributed to the fun and fabulous lunch.

Under the agenda item of the Area 61 Guidelines for Service, a few healthy modifications to the Area 61 structure were reviewed and approved. The Information Services Committee will formally be added as the sixth standing committee and Young People in AA will formally be added as the third special committee.

It was observed that assorted wires and headsets filled a back table at this latest Area Assembly. Both hearing assistance equipment and Spanish translation equipment were available. Jeff N. performed audio-visual magic and Dennis B. was on site to perform translation. It is hoped that future Assemblies will also offer these accommodations.

The new services flyer was distributed to all participants at the Assembly. It describes the General Service structure and the services provided by Area 61 RI General Service. Group contributions fund our Delegate's participation in the General Service Conference and the work of Area's service committees. Of course, contributions are encouraged.

Assembly participants left with a full belly and a head full of valuable service information to pass along to their groups. It's time well spent! Please save the date for the Pre-Conference Area Assembly on Saturday, April 27th, at 9am, at St. Kevin's Parish Hall in Warwick.

—Alison H., Chairperson

## THE ALPHABET

AAWS	AA World Services, Inc
CPC	Cooperation with the Professional Community
DCM	District Committee Member (Chairperson of District Meeting)
GSB	General Service Board
GSC	General Service Conference
GSO	General Service Office
GSR	General Service Representative
GV	Grapevine
GVR	Grapevine Representative
NECYPAA	New England Conference of Young People in AA
NERAASA	Northeast Regional AA Service Assembly
PI	Public Information
RISCYPAA	Rhode Island Service Committee of Young People in AA
JOS	Joy of Service meetings

## Area Officers

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