

District 25 Panel 66: DCM Report (Cort H.)

4-5-16

Welcome to our monthly District meeting.

1. As a reminder, Southeastern PA Intergroup (SEPIA) has moved to a new web site:
www.aasepia.org.
2. (Continued from last month's DCM Report): DCM attended NERAASA (North East Regional AA Service Assembly) on Feb. 26 - 28, 2016 in Springfield, MA 01103. "Celebrate Our Silver Anniversary in the Golden West (MA)." Of note (continued):
 - a. DCM attended Panel 5 "Literature." There were three presentations:
 - i. In the first, "Consider Development of a Plain Language Big Book," the presenter explained the concept and some of the pros and cons of developing a "Plain Language" version of the Big Book for those with "limited literacy." This kind of book is often considered a "translation" into a more accessible language, like a translation to a new language, as opposed to a revision or new version. The U.S., according to the presenter, has a population of 15% with "limited literacy." This indicates that many have severe difficulty reading and understanding the Big Book as it is written, in Bill's language. As well, teens and those with mental challenges could more easily gain access to A.A. from such a book. In the following discussion, there were many voices in favor of a "translation." However, there were also many who were concerned that the "Plain Language" version would inevitably distort the original text, which many feel is importantly unique, even divinely inspired. As well, a few worried that the new book might be an attempt to alter or update the language around gender and religion. Cost was also a concern.
 - ii. In the second, "Consider Development of Literature for AA's with Mental Health Issues," the presenter advocated for the consideration of this type of literature, which would, or could (?), primarily be personal stories, mostly narrative style. The stories could be solicited from the fellowship and include the experiences of those with various mental health issues, the experiences of members who sponsor someone with such an issue, and other information from GSO. It seems unclear (to the DCM) at what stage this discussion is at in the fellowship at large and whether the Grapevine (the literature production entity of A.A) has decided that this book is a good idea or not. Concern about cost and A.A.'s financial health was again discussed, though it was also unclear whether these types of books make money or not. As well, book production models were discussed, including consideration of online accessibility/ cost and literary companies that produce the book after the order, therefore, ensuring profitability.
 - iii. In the third, "Consider Revising Text in Concept XI Essay by Bill W.," the presenter again advocated for revising, even simply deleting, the rather sexist language used by Bill in this essay. The writing of concern is in *The A.A. Service Manual* combined with *Twelve Concepts for World Service* on page 58. The highlights of this text include the lines: "Women workers present still another problem.... Men, for example, because they *are* men, are apt to be better at business." The language has a footnote #10, which somewhat qualifies A.A.'s fair employment practices. In the discussion, many were concerned about this language and it's archaic or offensive or non-inclusive message. Others worried

that changing Bill's language alters the text too significantly and could open a Pandora's box of potential changes to other texts written by Bill. It was noted that the text of concern could be revised or deleted and then put into the footnote.

- b. DCM attended Panel 6 "Public Information." There were three presentations:
 - i. In the first, "Google-for-Nonprofits and Twitter for Carrying A.A.'s Message," the presenter explained the concept and some of the pros and cons of using such platforms to carry the AA message. These platforms are becoming more and more popular with young people, and society at large, and if AA took the initiative and controlled its own image and message on these sites, then it could ensure clear and accurate representation of itself to potentially suffering alcoholics and the public. Concerns include the fact that these platforms, especially Twitter, are often in real-time and would need attention on a continual basis. As well, a concern was voiced on AA's difficulty with modernizing and the way it gets frequently misrepresented online and in the media.
 - ii. In the second, "Develop Guidelines on Carrying the A.A. Message Online and in Social Media," the presenter focused on Facebook and explained some of the common misunderstanding about how to use social media in an anonymous way, especially through unintentional association via "friends" and what "friends" post which breaks anonymity. Above all, care and careful consideration of others' anonymity was encouraged. As well, there already are some guidelines on aa.org for how AA members should use social media.
 - iii. In the third, "Reconsider 2011 Action Re: Use of Full Faces in A.A. Videos," the presenter explained the reasons for using full faces in AA videos, which has been avoided, even for actors representing AA members, out of concern for anonymity breaks. It was argued that faces provide important information to the viewer, such as emotion and pain and success, which helps inform the public about the value of AA. As well, for some, such as the deaf, faces are a necessary component to basic meaning.
- c. DCM [did not listen] to Panel 1 "Our Spiritual Way of Life: Steps, Traditions, and Concepts." There were three presentations: (DCM can make a copy for whoever wants one and bring it next meeting.)
 - i. "Connecting with the Newcomer."
 - ii. "Connecting with Each Other."
 - iii. "Connecting with AA as a Whole."
- d. DCM [did not listen] to Panel 2 "Staying Relevant to the Professional Community." There were three presentations: (DCM can make a copy for whoever wants one and bring it next meeting.)
 - i. "Consider Retiring 'Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W.'"
 - ii. "Add Text Re. AA and Medications to 'If you are a Professional...'"
 - iii. "Consider Feasibility of AA Presence on Sites such as: Linked-In."
- e. DCM listened to the N. E. Regional Trustee Report. GSO has a new General Manager, Greg T. The Trustee gave a lot of information about AA finances, GSO and Grapevine. He said that the "trends" indicate that AA is headed for trouble, though it is still afloat and can definitely make some positive alterations. Of note, the General Service Conference Inventory 2013-2015 provides some information, though (the DCM thinks

that) clearer representation of this data is needed. Trustee indicated that AA has already cut costs everywhere it can (or should), and that it doesn't want to cut more to useful or necessary services. AA is somewhat in conflict between its spiritual axiom to help others (think the responsibility pledge) and the financial constraints it faces. As well, the Trustee spoke of promoting inclusiveness in AA and embracing the changes of the modern world (such as technology). He also spoke of the fellowship not growing.

3. DCM attended **Area 59 Quarterly Meeting** on **March 13th, 2016** at Hemlock Farms Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company in Hawley, PA. Of note:
 - a. Area 59 Convention Committee Chair, Past Delegate Marty, reiterated that the yearly Convention will take place on November 4-6, 2016 in Gettysburg, PA at the Wyndham Gettysburg Hotel and Resort. We cannot register yet because the contract is still being negotiated, probably not until June, at which point online registration should be available.
 - b. Area 59 Treasurer, Steve S., reported that the Area's finances are in "good" shape, experiencing a slight increase in 2016 donations compared with 2015.
 - i. Please send donations to EPGSA, P.O. Box 222, Glenolden, PA 19036-0222.
 - ii. Please make checks payable to EPGSA (Eastern PA General Service Assembly).
 - c. Area 59 Secretary requested that Districts continue to send their minutes to Ken D. at secretary@area59.org. District 25 hasn't sent since September 2015.
 - d. Area 59 Chairperson, Melanie S., announced that nominations for the EPGSA Convention Guest Observer must be brought to the next Area 59 meeting, June 12th (which means they must be brought to District 25's June 7th meeting). The Chairperson explained that the observer "should be a non-alcoholic who has little or no familiarity with our Fellowship. ... [And] it should also be someone outside the treatment field." To be considered, DCMs need to bring 56 copies of a brief resume from the nominee to the next Area meeting.
 - e. Several Districts have been, or will be, doing District Inventories. DCM plans to get information and inventory materials from them soon.
 - f. District #28 raised the question as to who votes at the District Meeting, depending on whether one group has a GSR and another officer in a service position (such as ADCM or DCM). Most Districts try to stick to one group = one vote.
 - g. District #36 sent out a "Contribute to District, Area, Intergroup, GSO" reminder flyer. (Sounds like a good idea.)
 - h. District #38 will be hosting a workshop "Carry The Message" on April 23rd from 9 AM – 1 PM at St. James UCC, 321 S. Limerick Rd., Limerick, PA 19468. (DCM plans to attend.)
 - i. District #51 sent out a flyer announcing District Meeting: where it meets, what it does, how to get involved, & etc. (Sounds like a good idea.)
 - j. District #59 announced the new position of Officer-at-Large in their District. Among other responsibilities, this person collects and is in charge of Group Information.
 - k. The Area 59 Grapevine Committee announced that in May the Grapevine is scheduled to launch an App, for online and smart-phone use. Also, offered to give Grapevine presentations at groups, District meetings, or Workshops (flyer provided).
 - l. Area 59 Structure Committee made a recommendation/ motion to rescind its motion from the previous (December) Area meeting that the Area map have a non-geographic symbol

for District 68, the Linguistic District (for non-English speakers (dominantly Spanish speakers)). This motion failed. So the Area will go ahead with the previously chosen symbol.

4. **Pre-Conference Sharing Session** sponsored by Area 59 on **April 3rd, 2016**. Meeting started at 9 AM and ended at @ 4 PM at The Washington @ Historic Yellow Springs, 1701 Art School Road, Chester Springs PA 19425.
 - a. DCM attended (as did two GSRs). Notes to be included in next month's DCM Report.
5. Upcoming important District 25 and Area 59 Events:
 - a. **General Service Conference** from **April 17-23, 2016 (for Area Delegates, Trustees, and employees)**.
 - b. **District 38** will be hosting a workshop "**Carry The Message**" on **April 23rd** from 9 AM – 1 PM at St. James UCC, 321 S. Limerick Rd., Limerick, PA 19468. (DCM plans to attend. All GSRs and AA members are invited to attend.)
 - c. **Area 59 Quarterly Meeting** on **June 12th, 2016**: Site TBD. (DCM plans to attend. ADCM and GSR's are invited to attend.)
 - d. (**Altered**): **Mini-Assembly & Delegate's Conference Report 2** on **June 26th, 2016** from 10 AM and end at @ 2:30 PM at Goshen Fire Co., 1320 Park Ave., West Chester, PA 19138. (DCM plans to attend. ADCM and GSRs are encouraged to attend.)
6. DCM Group/ Meeting Visitation in the District this past month: None
7. Travel Log this past month:
 - a. DCM attended **Area 59 Quarterly Meeting** on **March 13th, 2016**: Hemlock Farms Volunteer Fire and rescue Company 402 Hemlock Farms Rd. Hawley, PA 17025.
 - b. DCM attended **Pre-Conference Sharing Session** on **April 3rd, 2016** at the Washington @ Historic Yellow Springs, 1701 Art School Road, Chester Springs PA 19425.
8. Expenses this past month: District owes DCM \$96.00.
 - a. DCM had travel expenses for going to the Area 59 Quarterly Meeting on March 13th, 2016 at Hemlock Farms Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company: 402 Hemlock Farms Rd. Hawley, PA 17025. [Drive was 240 miles (@ 120 miles x 2) x \$.40 = \$96.00]