

Sober Times

June 2017

The Missing Connection - CPC/PI Position Remains Unfilled

The service position of Williamsburg Area Intergroup CPC/PI chair is empty, and someone willing is needed to step up and fill it. The Cooperation with the Professional Community and Public Information committee chair is a vital link between AA and the local community as a whole.

The purpose of Public Information service work is to provide accurate AA information to the public when requested. This can be done by making known our own experience, as individuals and as a fellowship, in learning to live without alcohol.

Cooperation with the Professional Community service work ensures that there is a good working relationship between AA members in the community and paid alcoholism workers, providing information about where we are, what we are, what we can do, and what we cannot do.

This outreach might include schools, businesses, churches, and civics groups, and professionals such as health care providers, lawyers, police, and teachers. The position also serves as a resource for local media, emphasizing our Traditions of anonymity, singleness of purpose, and non-affiliation, and stressing our eagerness to act as a resource to the recovering alcoholic.

The position also might ensure that public libraries, colleges, high schools, police stations, hotels, and doctor's offices have appropriate literature about AA in the form of books and pamphlets, and may include staffing an 'AA booth' at community health fairs and the like. The CPC/PI chair also insures that accurate local information, such as meeting lists, are available to both AA's and others.

Above all, the CPC/PI chair lets the local fellowship know how to reach out to those in need, by building a wider understanding of the application of the Twelve Traditions, and helps fight apathy by keeping members informed and involved in the community.

The prospective committee chair should have sound sobriety, be thoroughly familiar with the AA program, and able to provide consistent and accurate information about the fellowship. Experience in public relations is not essential. Please contact the newsletter through our local website, or speak to your home group's intergroup representative, to volunteer.

July 4th Picnic - Food Fellowship and Fun!

The Williamsburg Area Intergroup is organizing its annual July 4th AA cookout, to be held Tuesday, July 4th from 11am to 2pm at Chickahominy Riverfront Park, located at 1350 John Tyler Memorial Highway, just west of Williamsburg on Route 5. Food, fun, and fellowship will be from 11am to 1pm. A speaker meeting follows at 1pm.

In describing it, one member said, "It's supersoberfellowshipisticserenelyaladocious!" Said another, "As I recall it rained a bit last year. But it was crowded, over a hundred people, very successful. I stayed for three hours and people were coming and going." And another member stated, "I enjoyed meeting the families; I see the AA members at the meetings, but at the picnic they brought their kids, their dog. I got to see what their lives were like."

AA's and their friends and families are all invited. Chicken, hotdogs, hamburgers, and soft drinks will be provided. Please bring a covered dish or dessert to share.

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The Delegate's Report

The annual Delegate's Report to District 38 was given May 20, 2017 at St. Martin's Episcopal Church Fellowship Hall, with Elliot B. our Panel 67, Virginia Area 71 Delegate, reporting. Ben K, our District 38 DCM, opened the meeting, and introduced our Delegate.

Elliott first provided a poster and explanation of AA's "bottom up" hierarchy, in order to give attendees unfamiliar with AA's service structure an idea of how AA functions. The chart provided a picture of how individuals in AA, as home group members, elect representatives to the local districts, who then in turn elect representatives to the area, who in turn elected him as Area Delegate to the General Service Conference for a two year term. He described his responsibility as gathering the conscience of the Area to take to the Conference.

Elliott had created a video blog, edited down from 30 hours to 11 minutes, sharing his experience of the conference. The blog included a time-line of the week. The 67th General Conference was held at the Westchester Hilton in Rye, NY. There were about 130 conference attendees, most of whom were delegates. The remainder were trustees, or General Service Office staff. Committee meetings were held for the first two days. Elliott served on the Finance Committee, and was elected chair. Committees brought forward specific agenda items. Those were considered at the General Conference business meeting, which began on day 3. The business meeting concluded on the 5th day.

Following presentation of the blog, Elliott provided a summary of highlights of the conference and GSO activity. At the conference, there was considerable discussion of contributions. The fellowship responded to last year's plea to members: contributions for the last year was a record breaking \$7.9M. Two years ago, GSO generated the ability to make contributions online. Approximately 7% of all contributions are made online now. The other guidelines for AA contributions were not changed. The summary included several charts delineating the sales and financial health of AA literature and Grapevines sold.

Other highlight points which Elliott emphasized:

The AA website receives over 1000 visits daily for "Need Help With a Drinking Problem?" The Public Information page for media and press coverage averages about 3000 requests monthly. AA.org had over 13 million visits last year in total.

The PI committee agenda report made it clear that they are focusing on multiple electronic media outlets. Most are still "under consideration", as ways to use them appropriately are investigated. It was recommended that AA Grapevine create a Google for Nonprofits account, with use limited to the YouTube Nonprofit Program, and with a guarantee that the comments not be shown on AA World Services or the Grapevine YouTube pages. A suggested first video was the "Doors" PSA.

Elliott actually went "to the mike" for this issue, making the point that it was an opportunity for AA to show how the internet might be used appropriately to carry the message (as opposed to scolding people who violate anonymity and other principles by posting medallions or personal pronouncements on social media).

While discussing this, a District 38 member present asked our delegate how he decided to support an initiative on which this Area was split 50/50. Elliott responded that he listened to other Area attendees to the conference. He also cited the 12 Concepts principle that we lead by example.

Finally, there was much discussion about safety at this conference. A relatively new service piece on safety has been well received. Other pamphlets will be reviewed for possible safety issue additions. However, no strictly safety pamphlets will be created at this time. There were a few changes to other pamphlets, too. "Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W." was retired. The pamphlet for young people will not be retired, but will be revised.

In all, the Delegate's report provided attendees an overview of how GSO functions on our behalf, what decisions are being made to keep AA vibrant, and a glimpse of what the future holds for our fellowship.

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Our Bookstore – Our Resource

Our bookstore in the Williamsburg Intergroup office has more than hard-cover Big Books and fact-filled pamphlets, and is open to anybody who wants to buy or browse, not just local Group Representatives. So, how do we use the bookstore to further our recovery, and why is the literature from AA World Services and The Grapevine important?

To find out, Sober Times sat down recently with Joe S, who has been the Williamsburg Area Intergroup Bookstore Committee Chairperson for three years.

He says: “I got into the service position here when I heard an announcement at a meeting, saying the position was open. My sponsor had always said that 'the answer is in the literature,' so I volunteered. My discovery is that, while the literature remains the same, I change as a person in recovery over time, so when I read something, I may not at first completely understand it. But, I grow over time as a person in recovery, and when I then read it again sometime later, my perception of the literature changes, because I have changed, and my understanding grows.

“When I was new, reading the first 164 pages of the Big Book, the text, the recovery concepts, could be a little overwhelming, but the stories in the back were simple, and easy to find, and reading them, I found *my* story, and could identify the common experiences we have as alcoholics in recovery as my experiences too.

“What's new and exciting in the bookstore is that we now have, published in book form, letters and stories from the Grapevine, which gives both newcomer and old-timer alike the chance to read, identify, and find ways to grow in recovery through the literature.

“We have several volumes of new Grapevine compilations, including a Daily Quote book, similar to the Daily Reflections, with an entry for every day of the year, and these are submissions from AA members. Our Grapevine compilations also cover specific subjects, with the newest one in our bookstore the stories on 'making amends.' These are spiritual stories, organized for the first time by subject, in books.

“Since different home groups have different approaches to meetings, they are not likely to all have every piece of literature available, so someone new to the rooms has no idea of the magnitude of resources available to someone who wants to read about recovery. We now carry a lot of specific books and pamphlets that specialize and break it up for people, so old-timers, the new LGBTQ meeting, womens' groups, and others, can find literature that meets their needs. We as a fellowship are inclusive, but we as alcoholics can feel alone, so having books and pamphlets that speak to us as individuals, and tell our stories, helps.

“Grapevine is a separate entity from AA World Services, so their literature doesn't go through the lengthy approval process that pamphlets and AAWS books do, so they are more flexible and can respond faster to a need.

“Ultimately, our literature is world-wide, but we can find the books within it that tell *our* story, and help us grow. Our first exposure to AA literature was probably at tables at meetings, but the bookstore expands our options, and having a local store brings it closer to us. We not only are open the first and second Wednesdays from 530 to 630 pm, we also are mobile, and bring literature to events – The 4th of July picnic, Alcothons, anywhere we are asked, really, and while people may not buy the book right then, they can browse, and maybe the speaker at an event may refer to a book that generates interest later on in reading it.

“The website aawilliamsburg.org also has a list of the literature we carry, and while you can't order it online from us, you can do so at aa.org, or ask your home group literature representative to pick it up for you. We encourage folks to just come by too, and find out what's new, and what's news. New Grapevine publications are frequent.

“The message of AA is in the literature, so reading the literature is for the alcoholic who is looking for a solution.”

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Young and Sober? Take Note!

The 2017 VSCYPAA conference will be hosted at the Hilton Hotel Downtown, in Richmond from June 30th to July 2nd.

The Virginia State Conference of Young People in AA, or VSCYPAA, was formed for the purpose of carrying the message to young newcomers in Alcoholics Anonymous. According to the VSCYPAA website, the mission of the committee is "To unite AA members in the State of Virginia, and to help young people stay sober and have fun."

The conference is hosted annually in Virginia. In fact, the conference was hosted in Williamsburg in 2002. It provides a forum for newcomers to experience the fellowship of AA, become more informed about the twelve-step program and its traditions. Further, it allows newcomers to hear the experience, strength, and hope from fellow young AA members. The conference enables active AA members to learn new ways to assist any young newcomer in their area.

IT UNDERWORLD by Phil Johnson



Summer Sobriety:

ICE CREAM FLAVORS WORD SEARCH PUZZLE



BLACK CHERRY	COOKIES AND CREAM	MOOSE TRACKS	PRALINE PECAN
BUBBLE GUM	COTTON CANDY	NEAPOLITAN	RAINBOW SHERBET
BUTTER PECAN	FRENCH VANILLA	NUTTY COCONUT	ROCKY ROAD
CHOCOLATE CHIP	MINT CHIP	PEANUT BUTTER CUP	STRAWBERRY
COOKIE DOUGH	MOCHA ALMOND FUDGE	PISTACHIO ALMOND	VANILLA BEAN



Sober Times is a publication made possible by the Williamsburg Area Intergroup in District 38. Opinions expressed are strictly those of the authors and do not reflect those of AA as a whole. Contributions, suggestions, and comments, are welcomed. So is help. Write to newsletter@aawilliamsburg.org

Intergroup meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month, 630PM at 4925 Centerville Rd. For more info go to www.aawilliamsburg.org or call (757) 253-1234