

NEPAIG MESSENGER

SUMMER 2023



Hotline.....570-654-0488 — 800-640-7545

Central Office.....570-654-1226

Website <https://aaintergrouppnepa.org/>

Office Address:

422 N. Main St., Pittston, PA 18640

Office Hours:

Saturdays 10 AM—2 PM
2nd Tues./month 5—6:30 PM

Email:

nepaintergroup@gmail.com

Monthly IGR Meeting:

Meeting held at 7PM the 2nd Tuesday of the month at

Queen of the Apostles School bldg.

715 Hawthorne St, Avoca, PA 18641

NEPAIG — gateway to service

NEPAIG — who are we and how do we carry the message of hope? As described in A.A ©. Guidelines on Central Groups and Offices, we are a “partnership among groups in a community—just as groups are a partnership of individuals”. We are the extension of the groups in the NEPAIG geographical area. Our Intergroup carries out many functions. We cover a broad area of NEPA. Our membership includes 7 districts, each one composed of multiple AA groups.

The Hotline offers phone coverage to reach the suffering alcoholic more efficiently. Having a well populated 12 Step Contact List will assure that any call for help in our region can be met with localized help, but that’s only true if we keep it filled. More contacts on that list mean more chances we can help and assist those in need.

Producing an accurate up to date Meeting List is another priority. It is important that when anyone looks to find or go to an AA meeting they can expect the meeting will be open. We operate and staff an office making literature sales possible locally. We try to keep our shelves fully stocked with AA conference approved Literature, AA pamphlets,

GV material, meeting aides and other items as requested by our members. Our office is staffed by volunteers and there is always room for more help. Don’t be shy if you want to help!

Our monthly meetings also offer groups the opportunity to participate in service and fellowship among groups. We exchange service ideas, group activities, promote unity and much more. Having a District liaison at each meeting is important so the districts can maintain contact with the Intergroup. When we work together, we grow together, just as our Traditions suggest!

Our Committees are made up of members, each one having a chairperson, and each one needing members to help them perform their specific functions,

Any member can join, so please come onboard!

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FROM YOUR EDITOR

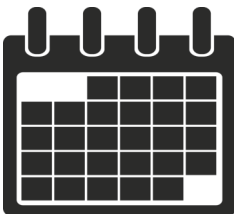
I'd like to introduce myself as your chairperson for our NEPAIG newsletter. Your help is expected and of course appreciated. Pardon my dust and new construction, I'm not a graphic designer or an experienced editor. I will try to offer an informative and useful periodical. I am hoping to publish the newsletter quarterly, and hopefully we'll get in a Fall edition and one before the Christmas holidays.

Your input for two columns, one being "Dry Dock humor" and the other "Only in Service" is needed. The humor section is straight forward. The "Only in Service" submissions should be stories of experiences in service that have offered a change in perspective or had an effect on your sobriety. I believe there are things in sobriety that can only be learned in service.

As we go on maybe we can add another column of two with your input. Send any comments or suggestions you have. The newsletter email has changed and is now: **nepaignewsletter@gmail.com**

Remember any stories or jokes will be edited if required. Yours in service;

bob p



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE FOR UPCOMING EVENTS AT:

<https://aaintergroupnepa.org/nepaigaaevents>

BOX 459 is the quarterly bulletin for AA, to stay abreast of service happenings from our GSO, sign up here: **<https://www.aa.org/box-459>**

Eastern PA Area 59 EPGSA released the registration form (English/Spanish) for this years convention. It can be found at :

<https://area59aa.org/calendar/66th-annual-eastern-pennsylvania-general-service-convention-assembly-epgsa/>

Eastern PA Area 59 EPGSA has a monthly Newsletter. You can sign up for to keep current with EPGSA activities and information. Lots of service related info and links here:

<https://area59aa.org/area-59-business-additional-resources/>

MEET YOUR NEPAIG COMMITTEES

Activities— Christine S

The Activities committee is always planning something! We host the annual “H to H Dinner Dance”, a historical gathering of AA’s in North-eastern PA. A sober summer is usually celebrated with our “Soberstock” event. Always a day of fun, food, music and fellowship for the entire family. In the Fall there’s the Annual Halloween Party another good time for sober members and their families to enjoy. This committee is not limited to just these and is always open to ideas and suggestions. ***If your sponsor says “get active” there’s no better committee to do just that!*** Any member in NEPAIG can join.



Archives—Barry M

Archives.....now what the heck is that about? Usually we think, “well there’s nothing there for me.” Don’t believe that for one moment. AA Archives are composed of all of our history. We have old books, manuscripts, records and the like. We also keep records on group histories, AA events and tons of other things. We have an Archive display room at the Central office. Stop in and see it for yourself, maybe you’ll want dig in? ***Jump in and be a part of capturing our AA history instead of letting it slip away.***

Unity—Dave A

Our unity committee is and does what it’s name implies, promotes unity throughout the NEPAIG area. Some activities that are in the works include old fashioned Booker Exchange Meetings. Usually a group hosts another group and they bring their meeting members and format to another group, and the other group will reciprocate. Another function is to attend various district meetings and workshops in the NEPAIG area to promote unity and fellowship. ***BUT, it’s hard to promote Unity with a committee of one. Tour the NEPAIG area!***

Hotline— Mike B

Our NEPAIG Hotline is the heart and soul of our service. It offers individuals seeking assistance with a drinking problem a rapid and correct answer to their requests. The Hotline connects them to us, the alcoholic needing help. A problem drinker can reach our Hotline in many ways via 411, an internet search, word of mouth, area institutions and other methods. It’s not only for the potential alcoholic. It offers a contact for family members, employers, students and anyone who wants to ask about AA.

Our Hotline covers 7 districts comprising of Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Montour, Northumberland, Pike, Schuylkill, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wayne and Wyoming Counties.

It operates 24/7 made up of NEPAIG volunteers answering our toll-free lines. Callers seeking help may be referred to nearby AA meetings, or have a member from our 12th Step list call them back. We are always looking for more members for the 12th Step List of contacts, especially in the outlying areas. We receive dozens of calls daily.

Get in touch with us to sign up!

Bridging the Gap —Shaun A

BTG offers a program designed to assist new members after their release from treatment or correctional facilities. The committee is composed of AA’s who sign up to be a POC for someone asking for help. After their release a POC helps them integrate into AA.

It’s a temporary arrangement meant only to introduce them to AA meetings in the area where they are going to be staying or living. They can be helped leaning about the importance of a home group, a sponsor, our 12 steps and of course our Big Book.

BTG always needs a list of people who can be there when called.

Follow the links on page 5 to join us!

“The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it”

Alcoholics Anonymous

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With permission of AAWS

MEET YOUR NEPAIG COMMITTEES

Institutions—Phil C

Our primary responsibility is to be a point of contact with local treatment facilities and institutions. We offer and assist in bringing meetings and speakers in to carry the message of AA. We do this by sharing our experience, strength & hope. All important updates or policy changes by the facilities would pass along directly to the chair. I bring them to the attention of IGR's or make changes to our list of active commitments. I act as that primary point of contact to facilitate communication.

If a group is unable to make a commitment they should provide me notice ASAP. I can then reach out to our IGRs to get the commitment filled. If no IGR's can take these unexpected openings, I reach out to AA's in our Intergroup willing to serve.

Throughout COVID many facilities stopped access. These restrictions have loosened and most facilities are open to us again. As the Chair I reach out to institutions. When new ones open, I see if we can offer a chance to bring in the AA message to their clients. Members who know of any such opportunities should bring them to my attention.

Website and Text Blast Samantha B

The Website Committee keeps the NEPAIG website up to date and organized. We update the online meeting list, which populates the "Meeting Guide" app. It also is used to print the hard copy meeting list available for pickup at the monthly IGR meeting. We post all AA events and flyers we receive.

We also coordinate, compose and schedule the "TEXT BLAST". Remember to keep any Text Blast messages under 139 characters.

nepaaigwebsite@gmail.com



"I am responsible, when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA to be there.

And for that, I am responsible.

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Public Information—Dylan W

Our PI committee wears many hats, all carrying the same message. PI is there to inform the public about AA. We can be asked to set up booths at local community events, a function that always requires a few committee members. This may be a health fair, school, government or professional event. It is important that when we are asked, we provide accurate information about who we are and what we do, and also what we don't do!

We also provide our literature to local agencies, libraries and other places through our "Adopt a Spot" program. We will provide and maintain small literature racks with AA pamphlets on what and who we are and what AA has to offer to those who may have a problem with alcohol. **Our committee is in need of help with this; any NEPAIG group member can join.**

Corrections—Rich

As the chair, it is the responsibility to provide the services of AA to people who are in need of the AA message, experience, strength and hope inside the walls of prisons and jails. We also provide information to the Department heads of the facilities, not only with organizing meetings but providing literature and links with other AA resources to help educate and support prisoners and staff members.

Our first tradition talks about unity. As a committee, we collectively work with other committees to help strengthen our relationship with the incarcerated population. This includes Public Relations, Bridging the Gap and brainstorming with others in AA, including members in our groups, districts, areas and intergroup.

The **PINK CAN** program collects monies from AA members and uses it to provide AA books to Institutions in our service area.

This is a "We" fellowship and remember, there are three "I's" in our responsibility statement!

MEET YOUR NEPAIG COMMITTEES

Central Office—Johnny B

Our Central Office store is where it's at! There's always a lot to do here, and often little people to do it. What goes on here? Let's take a look. Our store is open Saturdays from 10 AM to 2 PM. We offer AA books and pamphlets. The store also opens on the 2nd Tuesday 5 to 6:30 PM, before the IGR meeting.

The Saturday before the IGR meeting is when meeting lists are folded. What a perfect service opportunity for newcomers and old timers alike. We keep our AA books and pamphlets stocked, inventoried and ordered.

In addition we also have some AA Grapevine items, AA birthday program envelopes, meeting accessories and posters. We carry a selection of anniversary coins, monthly and yearly. Monthly are in aluminum and bronze, the yearly are bronze. Items requiring a special order can be placed and added to the next store order.

The store can also accept Group and Pink Can contributions. When the store is open so is our NEPAIG Archive display. It's a good place to bring other AA's in to show them some of our history. Our collection of archive material changes all the time. When the office is open the office phone becomes another outlet for 12th step calls. Item pricing is current with AAWS. Sales tax is mandated by PA so it will show on your receipt. A cataloged receipt is proved for every sale and group contribution. "Pink Can" receipts will be hand written.

NEPAIG BOARD MEMBERS

Chairperson	Tate S
Vice chairperson	Annie H
Secretary	Jean G
Treasurer	Frank B

Newsletter— Bob P

Our newsletter is breathing again! It might need some mouthwash, but it's back in action! This will be **YOUR** newsletter for **YOU** to stay abreast on what we do as NEPAIG. We provide the frontline AA service in our geographical area. We coordinate activities and offer all AA's a chance to be of service to AA.

Our newsletters primary focus will be our Committee activities and NEPAIG operations. Rich E. and myself came up with a replacement for the old Grapevine "Ham on Wry" only our humor column is going to be know as "**Dry Dock Humor**". The second column is "**Only in Service**" about lessons, experiences or other adventures you experienced in your AA service.

I sincerely hope we get some participation. If not, you are going to be stuck with me, and even I get tired of that in short order!

Send in your sobriety based jokes and service stories to nepaignewsletter@gmail.com

"The Spirit of Sacrifice"

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1994 Conference theme

What is our Central or Intergroup office about?

- An intergroup is established to carry out certain functions common to all the groups — functions which are best handled by a centralized office.
- Basic services of an intergroup might include, AA inquiries, office facilities, meeting lists and other literature, information exchange, local committees, local AA events and a newsletter
- Intergroup is complimentary, rather than competitive with general service area committees. Both exist to help insure and to fulfill AA's primary purpose of carrying the message.
- Central intergroup offices are essentially AA service entities, "directly responsible to those they serve" as described in Tradition Nine.

AA Guidelines, Reprinted with permission of AAWS

Bridging the Gap



Bridging the Gap is a program creating a temporary partnership between a treatment program and A.A. members. Bridging the Gap is designed to help an alcoholic in a treatment program make that transition.

One of the more “slippery” places in the journey to sobriety is between the door of the facility and the nearest A.A. group. A.A. members have volunteered to be temporary contacts and introduce newcomers to Alcoholics Anonymous

Request Services: <https://aaintergroupnepa.org/bridging-the-gap-member-signup>

Become A Volunteer: <https://aaintergroupnepa.org/bridging-the-gap-volunteer-sign-up>

Comments or Questions: NepaBTG@gmail.com



A look at Traditions 7, 8, 9

Tradition 7 – Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

1. How can I help our intergroup be self-supporting?
2. Does my group contribute on a regular basis? Do I participate when I can?
3. Do I feel the monthly treasurer report is unimportant? Do I pass on the report to my group?

Tradition 8 – Alcoholics Anonymous shall remain forever non-professional, but our service boards may employ special workers.

1. Is my behavior accurately described by the Tradition? Do I act as a “know it all”?
2. Do I understand the roles of our committees, board, office manager and others?
3. Am I willing to be a part of our NEPAIG committees?

Tradition 9 - AA as such ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

1. If I am part of an activity do I try to boss things or is humility my aim?
2. Do I complain or demand upon our committees, or do I join them?
3. When I take a job or task in NEPAIG do I understand the importance of following through?

Reprinted in part from the AA Grapevine “Traditions Checklist” with permission of the AA Grapevine Inc.



The IGR — Intergroup Representative, who, how, why?

IGR, the heartbeat of NEPAIG. Every IGR is their home group voice. They make sure the groups voice is heard, and that the intergroup functions and carries on in the spirit of AA Tradition. A group in the NEPAIG area should select an IGR and also an alternate to make sure they are participating. The IGR usually has a minimum of 1 year of sobriety, so they have the basic understanding of AA service. A “service sponsor” is very helpful.

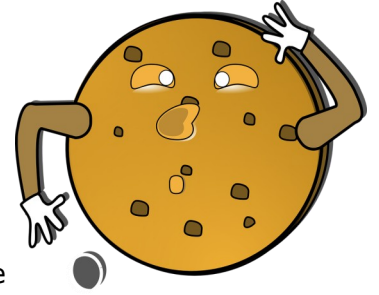
At a minimum an IGR should regularly attend the monthly IGR meeting. Their responsibility to the group is to inform group members of activity in the intergroup and of the opportunities to be of service. It’s a good idea for the IRG to become familiar with the AA Guidelines for Central Offices/Intergroup. A copy of the NEPAIG by laws is available on the website and is something each IRG should become familiar with.

At the monthly meeting each IGR has a voice. The IGR’s must make motions to approve or to disapprove of board members monthly reports. Questions on the reports or motions are allowed and encouraged. The same procedure is followed for monthly committee reports. Occasionally a motion or action is put out to the IGR’s for agenda items that need the AA groups approval. In this case, the IGR compiles the information and returns to their home group. Then they can gather the effective “informed group conscience” and return to the next monthly IGR meeting to vote. An IGR also has the responsibility to exercise their “right of decision” if facts become available that the groups were not aware of.

Being an IGR is one step in being of service to AA and to carry the message to those who want it. *IGR’s are encouraged to join a committee and better yet, bring some group members along with them!*

“ Only in Service “

Two women to the rescue, with a helping of cookies and hope.



I couldn't imagine a life not drinking. I hospitalized with liver failure and terrified about never being able to drink again. In that insanity, alcoholism became truth, and my life changed. I made no decision; surrender was the result of defeat. I was decimated by chronic alcoholism's damage, but happier and more grateful than I had ever been. I re-entered AA and life took on a new meaning, even if it wasn't guaranteed. I met an old sponsor who become a new sponsor. I asked about the 12 Steps, he grumbled "read the book kid". I did but felt I wasn't going to be able to do this. He told me something I never forgot, "you'll take the 12 Steps in concert with a Higher Power". I didn't understand what he said, but I believed him.

As sobriety grew I learned all about AA, reading, researching AA history etc. I wanted to belong to this AA thing. An old-timer gave me an AA Grapevine once and said, "here kid, read this". I read it and thought, "I'll write my story and send it in." A few weeks later I received a reply from the AA Grapevine. They weren't going to use my story, but thanked me graciously. I took my letter and went to a meeting where I was adopted by these older AA women and proudly showed them the letter. They said the Grapevine was really impressed. Years later I found out everyone gets one of those nice rejection letters!

Our DCM had heard my incessant ramblings about the Grapevine at meetings and asked, "would you like to be the District GVR?" I didn't know what a GVR was, but it sounded important. I said "yes" immediately! Months later the DCM asked if I would represent the District at an Area GVR workshop. I said "yes" before I knew what it was. I spent hours preparing the report.

When the date arrived I drove down and walked into the hall. I saw a hundred or more AA members inside. I thought, "I can't do this" and ran back to my car. I sat there, wanting to leave. I got the courage to return. I saw two older women seated alone and sat next to them. "Hi" they said. I just mumbled something incoherently. They sensed I was a wreck and talked to me. They asked my name and why I was there. One of the women was Reba W. She told me she was a past delegate. I didn't know what that meant. The other was Marcia G., she was the current delegate. Seeing I was not calming down Reba reached into her purse, got a bag of cookies and gave me some. While I ate them, Marcia told me not to worry. She shared something with me that changed me forever. She said when she felt like I did, she simply said a prayer to God and asked that she be given the strength to say something that was going to help someone. I was so scared I believed her. They called my name out. I walked up to the podium. I looked out and saw the two women. They were smiling and clapping. I introduced myself, saying that prayer before I got up there. I started my report and soon all the fear vanished. I began talking all about the GV. I talked so much he timekeeper had to cut me off. Fear was replaced with the strength of a Higher Power.

A few years later as a DCM I was attending a dinner at the Area convention. A woman came up to me. She was really upset and shaking. I asked her what was wrong. She told me she had to introduce the guest speaker at the assembly, the General Manager of G.S.O. and was physically sick she was so nervous. We walked to the side and I held her hand. I looked at her and said, "don't worry Marcia, whenever I get like this, I just say a little prayer and ask God to help me say something to help someone." She looked at me and smiled. She said "thank you" and gave me a big hug. She remembered that scared kid she helped a few years ago. I was returning what I was given, the strength of another AA and their Higher Power. AA service at it's best!

bob p.

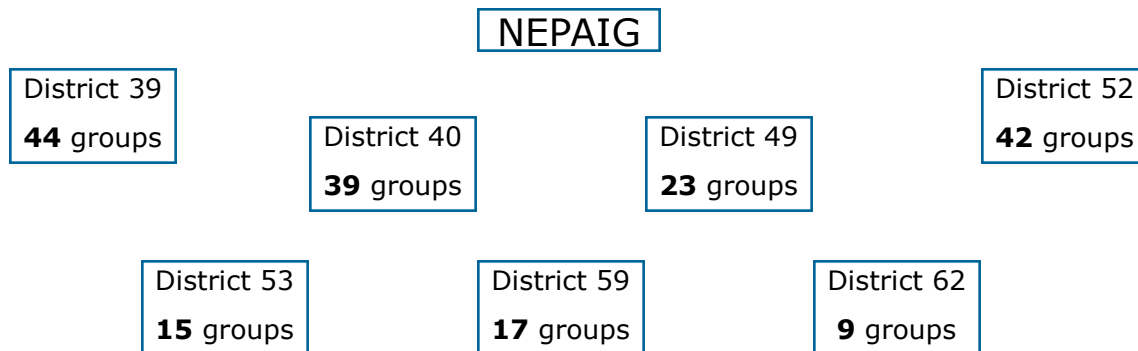
NEPAIG - Structure and participation

Our NEPAIG geographical area consists of 7 Districts in EPGSA 59, (Eastern PA General Service Area) A breakdown shows the statistics provided currently on the EPGSA website. In addition this only lists "registered" AA groups. We have other groups not registered and many "meetings" in our boundaries. It makes for a lot of things, a lot of area, a lot of groups and a lot of AA members. When we look at all the resources for AA service this provides, you have to wonder why the actual number of AA members joining and becoming involved in NEPAIG is so low.

Historically each service committee has been lucky to have a chairperson, let alone a committee. Same can be said of our board members. We often have vacancies in both categories. Why is that? It surely isn't because of a lack of membership. More likely it's a lack of participation.

It's a question as sober members of AA we all need to ask ourselves. NEPAIG participation hasn't always been this way. When the NEPAIG was first formed, and for many years after, our elections consisted of a slate of candidates. We held actual elections in the spirit of our 3rd Legacy procedure. In the past 10-15 years we fill positions by a random volunteer and quick majority approval. While grateful to fill the positions, no member should be satisfied with that method. *Our history and our Traditions tell us otherwise!*

Here's a look at the metrics.



Doing the math, we see our NEPAIG geographical area comprises a total of 189 groups. A conservative estimate of say 3-5 actual group members is a sum of 567-945 members. If we look at those numbers as a viable service pool and divide our committees by that total number here's what we have.

At 5-10% participation rate and we'd have 28-47 member joining our committees. At this conservative estimate each committee gains 2-5 members. What a difference that would make. It might eliminate the "burn-out" some many of our committee chairs experience. Even better, it might offer more help to the new or old alcoholic seeking it!

Lessons we learned as we adapted to COVID by the loss of "face to face" meetings and more showed that as a fellowship we can improvise. Meetings flourished on Zoom and digital platforms. So why not carry that experience over to our service committees? If we have members willing to participate but distance is stopping them, make them aware they can "sign up" either by Smartphone, email or other means. Our website list a POC for all of our committees is at:

<https://aintergrouppnepa.org/contact-us-2>

Our NEPAIG board functions quite often via text messaging and email. Why can't our committees also function in the same manner? We're only as limited as we choose to be. Sobriety shows us we don't have to settle for less. We are a free people and we need to show that. Your intergroup needs your help, anytime, anywhere. *Remember, "I am responsible".*

DRY DOCK HUMOR

In the spirit of
"Ham on Wry"

AA Grapevine ©

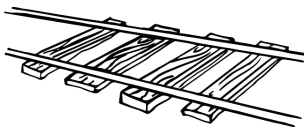


**WHEN THE LIGHTS ARE FLASHING, THE WHISTLE IS BLARING AND
THE ENGINE IS SCREAMING IN VAIN**

IF YOU SIT ON THE TRACKS AND IGNORE THE FACTS

YOU CAN'T BLAME THE WRECK ON THE TRAIN

heard at an Alano Club in Michigan circa 1992



A man was driving home and feeling no pain when he was stopped by a policeman who asked, "Sir you are driving well above the speed limit, swerving and reckless. What is your hurry?" The man focused and said "Officer I am going to a lecture on the evils of alcohol, smoking and staying out late."

"And just where might that lecture be buster" the cop asked. "In my living room when I walk in the door!"

anonymous



Remember,

*"He who drinks a fifth on the
fourth may not come forth on
the fifth!"*

John O

On the 1st day of school the teacher asked what had the children learned over the summer. Sally said she babysat and earned money and learned about childcare. Johnny raised his hand and told the class he hung around with his father and listened to stories about when he was in the war. One story his father told him was when he was in a foxhole in the war. All he had was a one ammo clip, a knife and a bottle of whiskey. He said they were in a battle and surrounded by the enemy one day.

His dad said the fight started he began shoot his ammo and drink the whiskey. When he ran out of ammo and whiskey he used his knife in hand to hand combat. Finally he defended himself using his bare hands until the enemy was beaten. The teacher asked Johnny, "what did you learn from that story Johnny?" He replied, "I learned one thing, you don't mess with my dad when he is drinking whiskey!"

Rich E



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