



July 10, 2020

TO: All Members of the Area 59 Committee

Dear Fellow Servants:

Thank you for your patience and service during these challenging times for our communities. Your steadfast dedication and leadership has enabled the Area Committee to operate with minimal disruption during this COVID-19 pandemic. I am deeply grateful to serve our marvelous Fellowship with you.

It is my duty to announce the recent decision by the Convention Committee to host an on-line EPGSA Convention in 2020 in the place of an in-person gathering. We will be communicating more details as they are clarified over the coming weeks.

At our June, 2020 Quarterly business meeting many DCMs shared significant concerns about hosting an in-person Eastern PA General Service Assembly and Convention this November. The outcome was to leave the decision in the Convention Committee where the most detailed information and contracting authority has already been delegated by our structure.

The Convention Committee subsequently (unanimously) voted to review the contract options and penalties with our hotel partner management, with a perspective for "rolling" the current contract to 2021. After our Convention Committee contract managers communicated our concerns with hotel management, they decided the option to roll the contract to 2021 is viable and there would be no penalties to forgo the 2020 convention at the hotel. As a result, the Convention Committee met via Zoom on July 9th and voted (unanimously) to host our 2020 EPGSA Convention in an on-line format. Those who have registered so far will be fully refunded.

Please know that we have been preparing for the possibility of an on-line election assembly since early February through the Virtual Election Delegate's Advisory Team (VEDAT). The progress has been outstanding and we are confident that an on-line election can be conducted within our Traditions and Concepts. The techniques and technology have been used successfully at the 70th General Service Conference. Our VEDAT group has been in touch with all resources from the GSC Tech leader and Zoom account manager to prepare for this alternative. All voting members, if they desire, will have the opportunity to get training and assistance in order to participate.

While these methods of conducting our service business and elections are not ideal, the public health considerations during the spread of COVID-19 leave no easy choice. It would be exclusionary to require GSRs and Assembly Members to gather in person in order to represent their groups. Persons who are over 65 years of age and those with underlying health considerations might be excluded and thus, their group's voice would be excluded. In addition, many groups are reporting financial difficulties during the pandemic so that it would be impossible to pay for their GSR's way. This situation would be contradictory to Concept XII where we are called to act in a democratic fashion.

So, I am asking for your full support in Unity to help get the word out and make our 2020 EPGSA Convention a success. Please watch www.area59aa.org for updates and we will be communicating via all means in the coming weeks. If you have questions, please contact me at delegate@area59aa.org or , our Convention Chairperson, Paul M., convention@area59aa.org.

In Fellowship & Service,

Ken D.
Delegate, Area 59
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