

2015 NYS Informational Workshop Treatment Report

On August 14-15th, 2015 I represented Area 47 in my capacity as Treatment Chair at The New York State Informational Workshop, hosted by Area 49 (SENY) at The Storm King School in Cornwall-On-Hudson, NY. In attendance were approximately 100 trusted servants from the 4 Areas of New York State.

Friday evening's schedule consisted of a speaker meeting and AA trivia. At the speaker meeting, Laura C., from Area 49 shared her experience, strength, hope, and opinion. I found it refreshing that at the beginning of her story she was very upfront that she would be sharing her opinion, and that we should not confuse it with the message of AA. Her story contained a message that it is possible to get sober at a young age in spite of growing up in a horrendously violent household, and to maintain sobriety through service, working the steps, and carrying the message.

Saturday schedule consisted of 8 workshops and an evening meeting. The workshops were, CPC, PI, Corrections/Treatment, Accessibility/Special Needs, Grapevine, Achieves, Website, and Underrepresented Populations.

Some of the important points made during the CPC panel were that CPC is about outreach to the professional and while it often overlaps with PI work, PI work is mainly concerned with outreach to the alcoholic. Important points that were made were when doing CPC work to act and dress professionally, and to use both the resources provided by GSO, and the experience members that have previously held CPC service positions.

The PI Panel expressed that the GSO desk was one of the best resources for tips and information, that everyone can be a PI person, and that it is often best when getting started in committee work to pick small projects and to work at them "a step at a time".

I was not originally asked to speak on the Treatment/ Corrections panel. I was approached at the last moment to speak which I agreed to do, but just prior to joining the panel I was told that I would not be needed. The panel presentations were all focused on corrections work, with none of the panelists speaking on the topic of treatment. It would be an understatement to say that I was a little disappointed.

The Accessibility panelists were all informative and thought provoking. I was presented with a challenge to think in broader terms to what it means for a meeting to be accessible, and what some of the challenges may be face by members trying to attend meetings.

The Grapevine panelists shared suggestions on how to be an affective Grapevine representative, while the Archives panelists spoke of our need to preserve our past for the future good of AA.

I found that the Website panel one of the most informative. The steps that are being taken by current website committees to use technologies to create sites that can be managed by the average AA member was welcome news. I have long felt that one of the greatest problems with website management is the ability for the duties of the current webmaster and committee to be handed off to the future webmasters and committees.

The Underrepresented Populations panelists were from the spanish community, LGBTQ community, and young persons community. Each of the panelists shared their experience with feeling like an outsider at meetings, and what we can do as a fellowship to be more inclusive.

As a whole, I did not feel that this year's NYS Informational Workshop was as successful as in years past. I thought that the venue was not accessible to members who were handicapped or mobility impaired, and that they should have had panels on Friday evening.

Pete B., Treatment Chair