

Area 31 Committee Meeting - March 13, 2013

The Area Chair, Mark N., opened the meeting at 7:30 PM with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer and a reading from Chapter 5 of the Service Manual (p. S 44).

Secretary's Report:

- ⌚ Secretary read the old and new business from the February Area Committee Meeting minutes.
- ⌚ Motion to accept: passes.
- ⌚ Area Directories & CDs containing information about 63rd GSC Agenda and Background distributed.

Treasurer's Report:

- ⌚ Beginning February Balance: \$6,971.73; Group Contributions: \$3,886.77; Other Deposits: \$2,000; Total Area Expenses: (\$1,082.10); Closing February Balance: \$5,889.63 plus Prudent Reserve: \$6,000 = \$11,889.63 Total Funds Available.
- ⌚ Motion to accept: passes.
- ⌚ Further comments:
 - ⌚ \$2,000 received from MA State Convention put into line item budgets.
 - ⌚ Get receipts to Treasurer for NERAASA no later than April 5th.
 - ⌚ Donations for Feb 2013 (\$1,932.96) up from Feb 2012 (\$1,553.16) as well as participation (29 groups in Feb 2013 vs. 27 groups in Feb 2012).

Registrar's Report:

- ⌚ Registrar enjoyed sharing with and hearing about the "best practices" from registrars around the Northeast region at NERAASA last month. It was a very rewarding experience and once again, it has made me grateful to be of service in the Golden West!
- ⌚ All updates have been entered into the FNV database which was down for maintenance the weekend of 3/2 and 3/3. They are in the process of transferring to a new server to improve functionality. Registrar has received a number of e-mails from individuals requesting that people be entered into the database so GSR's can receive their packets. This is good, but the information that is absolutely necessary is:
 - ⌚ Group name
 - ⌚ Group number (if you have it – otherwise Registrar can get it from the name)
 - ⌚ GSR's full name
 - ⌚ GSR's mailing address
 - ⌚ GSR's phone number

If any of this information is missing, it is impossible to enter into the database.

- ⌚ Optional information if available - GSR's e-mail address.

Area Archivist Report:

- ⌚ Area Archivist attended NERAASA and sat in at the Archives Roundtables.
- ⌚ Most of the sharing at NERAASA was about digitizing of Archives. Some Areas are doing a great deal of digitizing. Their Areas are much larger and have budgets that are more substantial than that of Area 31. Other Areas like Area 31 are just getting started with the process.
- ⌚ A full set of CDS from NERAASA has been added to our Archives.
- ⌚ Other items that are now in our Archives are the CD of the GSR Presentation and all of the Registrar's Notes from Connell.

ADHOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Handbook Committee:

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- 🕒 Have not met since February Area meeting but will meet next week
- 🕒 Received submission from Archivist re: updates to Area 31 History.
- 🕒 WYMPAA working on committee description.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Accessibility:

- 🕒 9 attending – including 3 new members, 2 members of the deaf community and an ASL person
- 🕒 Discussed getting ASL meetings listed in future editions of When & Where
- 🕒 Attempting to get the Accessibility Committee phone number listed in future When & Wheres
- 🕒 2 headsets are not working. Accessibility Co-Chair is looking into resolving this problem.
- 🕒 Identified the need for 10 more headsets for the hearing impaired. This will require further study.

Archives:

- 🕒 8 in attendance at March 5th meeting including Chair, Co-Chair, Archivist, Alternate Delegate and 4 Archive Committee members.
- 🕒 Moved the meeting place from the Archives room to the room where the Area Committee meets.
- 🕒 Archive mini boards were brought to the All about We group on 2/26 and the large boards were brought to the Randall Group on 3/3.
- 🕒 Upcoming open house was discussed:
 - 🕒 Boards will be set up in the hallway
 - 🕒 Coffee and homemade refreshments will be offered
- 🕒 Would like to make Archives Open House a quarterly event

CPC:

- 🕒 9 reps in attendance at meeting of 3/12. 4 were new
- 🕒 Commitments filled (radio, intergroup and institutions)
- 🕒 Experienced CPC member gave a brief demo presentation for new members
- 🕒 Finalized a mailing to Greenfield medical facilities including Greenfield Community College Nursing School
- 🕒 Sponsor your Doctor program was discussed
- 🕒 Personal references are the most frequent source of successful leads. Please forward any you have to the CPC committee

Grapevine:

- 🕒 In attendance Chair, Co-Chair and 10 reps, 6 of whom are new
- 🕒 GV boards went to the Randall Group Anniversary meeting
- 🕒 Will bring boards to the LGBT Group in Northampton on April 26th
- 🕒 Grapevine turned an operating profit in 2012 but not without significant operating expense cuts. Subscriptions are still down.
- 🕒 Audio Project – members can make submissions by calling the voice line and leaving a submission of 7 minutes or less. Can also submit mp3 or wav files. See instruction on aagrapevine.org website
- 🕒 Grapevine is now accepting articles about keeping AA safe for newcomers to be published in the upcoming “Day Counters” issue.
- 🕒 GV committee discussed what priorities should be for spreading the message about the Grapevine.

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Public Information:

- ⌚ Chairperson gave a brief explanation of what PI does and doesn't do. He also reminded the members of the importance of keeping commitments.
- ⌚ Monthly commitments were filled, including chairperson and "shadows", with an explanation of what each commitment entails.
- ⌚ New member packets handed out by Chair. Contains member questionnaire, radio show format and information on public speaking.
- ⌚ Somers High School Commitment scheduled for April 1, 2013 will address groups at 3 times throughout the school day.
- ⌚ St. Rose De Lima presentation on 3-10 went very well. Lots of questions.
- ⌚ Chair and committee member gave a mock presentation for the group.
- ⌚ Discussed possible Area forum presented by PI to collect groups' insight on Tradition 11/media.
- ⌚ Starting to get responses from mailing to schools and need volunteers to speak during the day

Website Committee:

- ⌚ Chair resigned due to an increase in family commitments.
- ⌚ Committee discussed whether or not to require a skill set for chair in order to ensure that the Chair can back up the Webmaster. The group decided not to do this.
- ⌚ Spaghetti dinner posting for WMYPAA – discussion raised a lot of issues that will help set up standards and criteria for what to post and not to post.

Round Up:

- ⌚ 13 people at March 13th meeting
- ⌚ Chair requested all Area Committee members to attend the Roundup. Slots have been scheduled for all Standing Committees, Invited Committees and Districts to make presentations on various topics.
- ⌚ Roundup Chair will try to attend as many District meetings as possible between now and the Roundup in order to promote attendance and participation.
- ⌚ Box 4-5-9 will publish the Western Mass Roundup date, times and place.
- ⌚ Will attend the Service Workshop in Lenox on April 6th in order to promote and handout registration info.
- ⌚ Will also attend the Archives Open House and Spring Assembly with the same purpose.

Webmaster:

- ⌚ Website Committee Co-Chair gave the Webmaster's NERAASA report
- ⌚ Website and IT Roundtable –
- ⌚ 15 people attended the Friday night meeting and 11 attended on Saturday.
- ⌚ Some attendees were not involved in Area's websites but wanted to educate themselves.
- ⌚ The discussion was mostly about what software and online technologies areas were using.
- ⌚ Question was raised about whether there is a need for a disclaimer when linking to an outside website, for instance GSO. The general consensus was yes.
- ⌚ The discussion of social media website postings elicited a strong recommendation to protect our anonymity; i.e., don't discuss AA related events on these sites.
- ⌚ Caution was also advised when it came to choosing the types of content we post on our websites since it is accessible to anyone, anywhere. Some Area websites contained protected areas where a login id was required to access certain types of content.
- ⌚ A few areas had good cooperation with their Intergroups while other Areas were not so lucky.
- ⌚ More than one Area webmaster was also the webmaster for their local Intergroup. The discussion here included:
 - ⌚ who hosted the local meeting lists.

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- ⌚ Area 48 offered to send their meeting listing code to any Area that would like to have it.
- ⌚ How to come up with a search function that would be able to cross Area borders, listing meetings by distance criteria.
- ⌚ Website construction and maintenance requires certain technical skills and keeping things as simple as possible allows for a lower entry level for participation as webmaster. At least two Areas have the webmaster serve as a non-rotating position but at some point even they will need to consider finding a replacement to fill this ever more important position.
- ⌚ Email addresses were also a topic of discussion where maintaining anonymity was strongly advised. In the furtherance of this goal it was recommended to create addresses that could be rotated with the position. These addresses should not be of the freely available types such as Gmail or Yahoo, etc. but privately hosted.
- ⌚ At the end of Friday night's roundtable the suggestion was made that we should set up a forum for AA webmasters and website chairs so we can discuss, in a more timely fashion, the quickly moving changes in the field of online technology. More discussion was had on Saturday and a list of email addresses was created so that we might start this discussion amongst those interested.

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Invited Committees

Institutions:

- ⌚ # of New Institutions Reps (IGR's) 4
- ⌚ \$1,455.67 Available for A.A. General Conference Approved Literature
- ⌚ Bridging The Gap received 1 call in February from a female. Low call volume may indicate the need to do a better job of publicizing the BTG program.
- ⌚ Open Meeting List: Progress is being made - both open Sponsor and Alternate positions are being filled from the Open Meeting List.
- ⌚ 11 slots were filled during the "roll in" process at February's monthly meeting.
- ⌚ Guidelines and Job Descriptions
 - ⌚ Sponsor - 1 year of continuous sobriety.
 - ⌚ Alternate - 6 months of continuous sobriety.
- ⌚ A member from the body - suggested "Open meetings at institutions where people are not allowed to leave the facility to attend outside AA meetings, should be filled first."
- ⌚ Librarian is stocking fewer Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and more Living Sober and Came To Believe books due to the apparent wants and needs of the people in the various Institutions which we serve.
- ⌚ Opportunities for Service:
 - ⌚ "LIP Service" - Literature in Prisons - Flyer available. Some alcoholics aren't lucky enough to be able to go to meetings when they want to. They are in prison. They have limited contact with the shared experience that our Fellowship offers through its meetings. Members of Alcoholics Anonymous can help by donating any new or slightly used A.A. General Service Conference - approved literature to the "Lip Service." Bring any such literature to the Institution Committee meeting or give your Group Institution Committee Rep.
 - ⌚ Open Meeting Lists - Lists are available- for you to share with either individual AA members, Home Groups, and or Districts that are interested in carrying the AA message of recovery to all alcoholics who might benefit from a meeting brought into their facility.

Western Mass Intergroup:

- ⌚ Ad hoc committee established to redo guidelines for WM Intergroup. Meeting monthly (can attend even if not on Ad hoc committee). Call or email Intergroup for more info.
- ⌚ Announcement to be made at next Intergroup meeting – pricing going up on chips and coins (1993 last hike).
- ⌚ New W&W will be out by the end of the month. Price is going up.
- ⌚ Intergroup can promote group anniversaries and other events (e.g., Create flyers, publish announcements in FYI).
- ⌚ Bookie meeting – many groups take advantage of this forum to make incoming and outgoing commitments. Takes place the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7pm just before the monthly Western Mass Intergroup business meeting.
- ⌚ Invite Area to attend Intergroup meeting.

Berkshire Intergroup (BIG):

- ⌚ 17 in attendance at last meeting
- ⌚ All BIG shifts are covered.
- ⌚ BIG won first place in building wide decorated door contest.
- ⌚ Ad Hoc Committees and/or open action items:
- ⌚ Review of last year's operating expenses and recalculation of the prudent reserve.

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- ⌚ Review of the Hot Line volunteer list to determine if names are still valid.
- ⌚ Develop an information flier about BIG's purpose and thanks for their support out to group.
- ⌚ District 3 and BIG Service Workshop scheduled for April 6, 2013. Next planning meeting 3/19/13.
- ⌚ Generate a list of all the facilities that have received a Grapevine subscription.
- ⌚ Action Items Completed:
- ⌚ Mission Statement has been written and distributed for review.
- ⌚ Pie Chart modified to add BIG's correct address.
- ⌚ Motions/Approvals: Donated a Big Book for a raffle at the April 6, 2013 Service Workshop.

WMYPAA:

- ⌚ 150 people attended spaghetti dinner on 3/10. The event was self-supporting. A donation will be made to the church for use of the space.
- ⌚ Events subcommittee meeting will be held 3/14 at 6:30pm at Barnes and Noble in Holyoke to plan the rest of the year's events.
- ⌚ WMYPAA will be presenting at the Service Conference in Lenox on April 6th.

MSCYPAA

- ⌚ Convention schedule for Sept 27, 28, 29
- ⌚ Website has all info on convention www.MSCYPAAhost.com

DISTRICT REPORTS:

District 1:

- ⌚ Attendance: Co DCM, 4 GSRs and Alternate Delegate
- ⌚ DCM attended and made a presentation at NERAASA.
- ⌚ Group Reports:
 - ⌚ Original Downtown Group - slight growth in group membership but could still use more membership / participation. Detox commitment is going strong.
 - ⌚ Mixed Nuts Group – has both a beginners and a regular meeting. Considering starting a discussion meeting as well.
 - ⌚ Better Life Group - attendance is still up and group is doing both detox and group visitation commitments.
 - ⌚ East Springfield Group - attendance is back up after holiday drop-off (Xmas & New Year's eves). Members have been newly elected to area service positions and are attending those committee meetings.
- ⌚ Alternate Delegate was present to give a GSR Training presentation to new GSR's. All GSR's present had either seen the demo or had previous service experience as GSR's. A vote was taken to reschedule the presentation so that new GSR's could be present to benefit from it.
- ⌚ DCM has attended some Spanish speaking groups and realized that they are relying on Area 30 for their Spanish speaking support. DCM will try getting them to come to District 1 and turn toward Area 31 for the support they need.

District 2:

- ⌚ Concerns about meeting rents were expressed
- ⌚ 5 new GSRs (will ask them what attracted them to help promote to dark meetings)
- ⌚ Got volunteers to visit dark groups in the District
 - ⌚ Bring literature
 - ⌚ Help fill out Group Form
 - ⌚ Let them know District 2 is there to help

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- ⌚ Need money from area to purchase more GSR packets
- ⌚ Group voted for use of 3rd Legacy voting procedures
- ⌚ Birthday envelopes were encouraged. Asked GSRs to announce at group meetings.
- ⌚ Looking for speakers and chairs for Roundup sessions assigned to District 2.
- ⌚ Thinking about hosting a self-support workshop

District 3:

- ⌚ GSRs gave a brief report (to allow for GSR presentation) on info about their groups as follows:
 - ⌚ Berkshire Big Book, Berkshire Village, Lanesboro meets weekly Wed. Evenings @ 7:30 p.m. Group brought 3 speakers for their first Speaker Exchange Commitment @ Southern Berkshire Group in Great Barrington and it went very well
 - ⌚ Tues. Women's Step Meeting: Tues @7 p.m. at St. Mark's, Fr. Lenard Hall. All Positions Filled. Commitments to Jail Fulfilled
 - ⌚ Northern Berkshire Group: 7:30 Tues. Eve., St. John's Church. Received letter asking for more contributions to G.S.O. Working through Group Inventory.
 - ⌚ Keep It Simple Group- meets Mon-Sat. Noon meeting in Gt. Barrington. Started Institution's Commitment @ Barton's Crossing
 - ⌚ I Don't Have a Clue Group -6:45 a.m. in Lee. House of Corrections Commitment (Women's) fulfilled; McGee Commitment fulfilled.
 - ⌚ The AD Hoc Committee meetings for the Service Workshop are held every other Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. We meet at Berkshire Intergroup Office in Pittsfield. Our next meeting will be on March 19th. The Service Workshop planning is going great. Our Ad Hoc committee has had 3 meetings; the last one was for volunteers. We had 9 volunteers show up (totally stoked about that). The budget is looking good: We have:
 - ⌚ Rent for the day's event \$250
 - ⌚ Lunch \$250
 - ⌚ Cream, decaf, paper goods to be purchased soon
 - ⌚ We need RSVPs returned to know who will attend to present so that we can adjust our time schedule for the day.
 - ⌚ We are placing flyers for the event in some of the half way houses as well as some of the local rehab facilities.
 - ⌚ Berk Intergroup will have a literature sales table set up as well as some free brochures on display. Berk Intergroup is donating a big book and some of the district groups are donating other literature for a free raffle taking place in the later part of the day. We are all really looking forward to the event.
 - ⌚ Alternate Delegate gave the GSR Power Point Presentation and there was a great question and answer time that followed.

District 4:

- ⌚ 3rd legacy voting discussion was helpful
- ⌚ Groups doing well
- ⌚ Alternate Delegate made GSR presentation which was well received.
- ⌚ All GSRs were given a list of group related topics as possible themes for a District 4 hosted workshop. The workshop will be discussed at the March meeting.

District 5:

- ⌚ 15 attendees , 4 new GSRs
- ⌚ Lost Co DCM due to job change.

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- ⌚ Continued discussion of the Service Manual/Tradition, which is taking place monthly at our meetings based on a 2 yr. rotation schedule. Concept II and Tradition 3 were March's topic. 2 GSRs led that discussion. Service Manuals continue to be provided to new GSR's along with our beginner's packet.
- ⌚ Alt Delegate educated the District on the Conference Item "The Plan" (possible merging the board of directors – AAWS and The Grapevine)
- ⌚ Needs / Concerns / Ideas for outreach:
- ⌚ Cold Spring Group is hurting financially ~ could use support.
- ⌚ Brimfield Academy Group can't fill service positions, will ask if group would like a service commitment.
- ⌚ The same problem exists at the No Nonsense Nooner ~ GSR will also ask the group about a possible service commitment.
- ⌚ Sunrise Group moved to the Palmer Historical Society Building ~ 2072 Main St ~ Three Rivers (it will be in the new When & Where).
- ⌚ Free For Today Group expressed concerns, which will be addressed by that group around commitments not getting filled.
- ⌚ GSR's are taking Assembly items back to their groups for feedback ~ we will discuss group outcomes at our April (District) Meeting. We will also be discussing with GSR's our intentions for reaching out to our District's dark groups which DCM/LCM are beginning to discuss and organize.
- ⌚ April ~ District 5 will hold elections for the CO-DCM position. Also GSR's will volunteer to chair our assigned Round-Up meeting topics (Third Legacy, Step 2, and Step 12).
- ⌚ Thanks you Area 31 for your support of NERAASA participants. NERAASA was awesome! Present from District 5 were... DCM, LCM, and 1GSR.

District 6:

- ⌚ Met 2-18. 9 GSRs (5 new). There are 41 registered groups in District 6.
- ⌚ GSR presentation was made by the Alternate Delegate.
- ⌚ Hard to conduct business other than orientation given the attrition of GSRs
- ⌚ Needs / Concerns / Ideas for outreach:
 - ⌚ GSRs want more info re District 6 on our webpage
 - ⌚ Would like further training for GSRs
 - ⌚ Think about Roundup presentations
 - ⌚ Think about hosting a service workshop. Discuss at March meeting.

Delegate's Remarks:

- ⌚ Final Conference report provides information on Advisory Actions and Recommendations. If anyone needs the report of the 62nd GSC that took place in 2012, contact Delegate
- ⌚ Mini conference – upcoming 63rd GSC agenda and background material on the CD distributed tonight. Stress anonymity when sharing the CD. The Mini conference will
 - ⌚ Give you a taste of what happens at the GSC
 - ⌚ Give delegate the area conscience
 - ⌚ Give info on time and place for mini conference
- ⌚ Next Mass State Convention planning committee meets the last Tues in March.
- ⌚ Northeast Regional Forum (NERF) will be held June 7 – 9. Registration can be done online at www.aa.org. Select For Groups and Members tab on the Home page. On the left hand side of the screen select Regional and Local Forums. Then select Regional Forums Schedule. Links for online registration and hotel reservation will come up for you to follow. Crown Plaza offers a special rate

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for those making reservations by 5-13-2013. ZA1 is the group code to use to obtain the discounted rate.

🕒 The Big Book has been translated into 69 languages and AAWS is working on 14 more. Navajo is a language with no written component. An oral translation is planned for a Navajo Big Book.

🕒 General Service Board approved the publication of a commemorative version of The Big Book (75th anniversary). It will be a facsimile of the 1939 edition. This proposal must pass the General Service Conference before approval is finalized.

Alternate Delegate Remarks: not in attendance

Area Chair Remarks:

🕒 NERAASA almost 1000 in attendance. Several presentations from Area 31.

🕒 Spaghetti dinner was great. WMYPAA is doing a lot for Area 31

🕒 Service Commitment – 7am Sat 3-23 Morning Light The Church of Christ 284 Montgomery St, Chicopee

Old Business:

🕒 GSR presentation comments

🕒 Hardcopy distribution to GSRs to follow along and take notes

🕒 Chair will send GSR presentation to all Districts and Committees for distribution

🕒 3rd legacy voting – no comments or concerns

🕒 Webmaster becoming non-voting non rotating – no comments, concerns

🕒 Chair has passwords to update the website. Chair and Webmaster discussed holding a seminar about maintenance of website.

🕒 Motion to cancel the April 10 meeting of Area Committee. Unanimously passed

New Business:

🕒 Spring Assembly questions – every committee and District is expected to report on what transpired in the last 6 months and what is planned for the next 6 months. Anyone can give Mark agenda items up to the day before. Be sensitive to raising controversial topics at the last minute (speak to your service sponsor before suggesting a new agenda item).

🕒 Standing Committees - Looking for Chairs for Website and CPC – contact Area Chair

Meeting closed at 9:21 pm with the Responsibility Declaration.