

SPRING ASSEMBLY

March 29, 2015

Area Chair opened the meeting at 1:05 pm with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer and a reading from Chapter 5 of the Service Manual (p. S 40).

Area Chair read voting requirements for Spring Assembly

Count= 59; 36 required for substantial unanimity, 28 required for simple majority.

Secretary's Report:

Secretary read Old Business and New Business from Fall Assembly 2014. A motion to accept report was made, seconded and passed.

Treasurer's Report:

This report will capture activity from the Fall Assembly 2014 to the Spring Assembly, 2014

Opening balance for October 2014 was \$9,051.77. Contributions for the past six months totaled \$11,945.51.

Area total expenses totaled \$163025.17 with a closing balance of \$3,472.11 plus Prudent Reserve: \$7,500 = \$10,972.11 total funds available.

The contributions are down compared to both the past 6 months and the same 6 month time period of the prior year. Our expenses are up but we planned to spend more anticipating a continuing upward trend in donations. We must continue to educate our fellowship about the importance of the seventh tradition and the service that is being done at the district, area and GSO levels.

Over the last 6 months:

- Dist 1 has 30 registered groups. 11 groups made contributions of \$1,324.50 averaging \$120.41.
- Dist 2 has 39 registered groups. 20 groups made contributions of \$2,793.86 averaging \$139.63.
- Dist 3 has 67 registered groups. 23 groups made contributions of \$1,389.22 averaging \$60.40.
- Dist 4 has 52 registered groups. 15 groups made contributions of \$2,191.90 averaging \$146.13.
- Dist 5 has 58 registered groups. 23 groups made contributions of \$2,338.46 averaging \$101.67.
- Dist 6 has 39 registered groups. 17 groups made contributions of \$1,307.27 averaging \$76.90.

There were 15 contributions from anonymous donors totaling \$600.30.

Registrar's Report:

- Area 31 currently has 302 groups listed as "active". Nine of which are registered groups in correctional facilities.
- At the records office, they are now in the process of "Cleaning up" the database and one of the categories that they are concentrating on is the list of "incomplete" group records.
- I am happy to report that we do not have any "incomplete" groups in Area 31, but we do have some "unknowns". Which means that the group contact has either been removed or that the mail has been returned as undeliverable resulting in removal of the contact by the Records office.
- Currently, we have 23 (down from 32) groups listed as "unknown"...some of which are inactive groups, but some I know are still meeting that do not have current contact information in the record.
- The General Service Office is once again compiling the regional directories and we have a "deadline" for entries into the new directory of May 8th. Any changes after this date will not make it into the new directory.
- I have sheets for each district on these unknown groups and would like for the DCM's to attempt to update their information.

Area Archivist Report:

- There has been 4 Archive Service Days held on Saturdays at 474 Pleasant Street. The attendance has been low, but those who attended have been introduced to Area 31's Archives. It also gives an opportunity for sorting documents, CD's and tapes.
- Attended the NERAASA assembly in Somerset NJ and attended the round table and shared my experience with Archives.
- Recent discussion on digital equipment for transferring tapes to CD's.

Webmaster:

- Encourage representation from Area 31 to come to the Website. Encourage Area and Districts to look at the website.
- Documents for posting can be sent in word or open doc with no personal information or names.
- Email addresses for Area, DCM's, and Committee Chairs are access points for positions and to your emails. Encourage members to use these emails addresses and not personal emails.
- You can find statistics of number of hits to the website on the website. Monthly posting.
- NERAASA 2016 is on the website.
- Calendar submissions – a number of committees make regular use of this feature – make submissions to 'webmaster@area31aa.org' to have events added to the calendar. All Area Committee, Standing Committee and District Committee meetings are listed.

Ad Hoc Reports:

Handbook Ad Hoc Committee:

- The Hand Book Committee is charged with the revision of the 2011 edition of our area handbook. We are not only updating the information, but we are submitting changes in the hope that at the end of this task the area will consider the addition of the handbook on our area website. Points considered:
 - allow immediate changes after approval by the committee to appear on the website
 - enable the Area committee to create current copies without a year or more long process to revise the handbook itself since changes will be made in real time. That does not mean that a committee to review and revise the handbook will never exist again; it is just to keep the handbook as current and as accessible as possible to all.
 - it may or may not save in printing costs as we have not looked at printing less copies more often versus more copies less often.I cannot say what achieving the goal of putting it on the website will look like, but I envision it looking something like this. The committee votes to change something and then sends the change to the website committee for their review and insertion. The reason the website committee would review prior to the insertion is to ensure there are no issues that would violate any of our traditions or there procedures. We were fortunate to have had a group prior to us do much of the leg work saving us a lot of time.

Standing Committee Reports:

Accessibility:

- Public Information and Accessibility on radio broadcast.
- Looking into using CART to assist individuals with disabilities.
- New display boards
- 10 headsets and associated equipment for the hearing impaired was purchased, tested and are currently in use.

Archives:

- In the past 6 months, the Archives Committee has lost two dedicated AA members who were both chairing the Committee at the time of their deaths.
- Recently, we took part in a collaborative event sponsored by WMCYPAA and MSCYPAA as well as the sharing of their stories by two long term local AA members.
- Last month at NERAASA in New Jersey, the program included a round table for Archives members, which was held on both Friday and Saturday nights. Topics included discussing collection policy, such as what should be collected at a national, Area or District level.

CPC:

- CPC board completed
- Presentation to Professionals outline has been completed.
- CPC contact list manager position created. Tasked with keeping track of our contacts.
- Presentation recently done at the Elms College for an addiction class being taught to students studying nursing, criminal justice and social work.
- CPC has been handing out sponsor your doctor packets to CPC reps to bring to their home groups and hand out as requested.
- The committee has been keeping its monthly commitments which include the radio show, Institutions Committee and Intergroup.

Grapevine:

- The committee ranged from 14-4 in attendance.
- There is a subscription challenge going on in the Grapevine. State wide challenge. You can get the Grapevine online as well as a hard copy.
- Grapevine has a display of book, over 25 to view.

Public Information:

- The previous 6 months have seen our standing monthly commitments expand from 6-11, while being available at short notice to provide presentations at local events, or schools and institutions why which we have standing relationships. After trial, error and exhaustive discussions, a simple mechanism was developed to institute a Sponsor a Rack Program that will prove effective for future PI committee members and chairs, as well as participating AA groups.
- The committee will continue to properly prepare new and standing members to fill the variety of presentation roles, while establishing a short notice list of AA members experience in PI work. We will better assess outside event request within the committee, but when conflicted will resource the Delegate, Alt Delegate and Area Chair for guidance. We will continue to attract new committee members, as we prudently expand our standing and short notice commitments, by highlighting the spiritual rewards inherent in carrying the AA message, using the PI format. Last, PI will reach out to other are committees offering all its resources to help aid their work, and when possible will provide a presence, when appropriate, at any AA event or invited request.
- PI work encompasses all aspect of recovery and AA, from the burgeoning social media concerns to one on one presentation for the still suffering alcoholic. Your PI committee is very active, focusing on direct communication thru presentations rather than exotic and expensive ways to introduce educate and promote AA exposure. The challenge is in balancing the time, energy and resources available in meeting all the demands and objectives of PI, work while find tuning the method and format in which this effort is carried out.

Round Up:

- Next Round-Up is June 6-7, 2015 at the LaQuinta. This is an opportunity to hear the Delegates report. There will be a speaker from the General Service Office on Saturday night, and a spiritual speaker on Sunday morning. The program is finalized and can be found on the website where you can register for the event. Hotel accommodations available.

Website:

- The committee has spent many months creating and modifying a pamphlet, which is now complete and in the process of being printed.
- The website committee voted to change the wording of the website disclaimers to read as follows: this link will take you to another site. Please be aware, though that the Area 31 General Service Committee is responsible only for the content and policies of its own site. *this has been completed
- Link – is in process to the new live NERAASA 2016.org
- Upcoming agenda items: Spanish Language (Webmaster is reaching out to the Spanish Community for assistance), Mobile Site Capability, Marquee, Tradition 8 Payment for service, Committee Inventory, Chat Space and Should the next printing of the Website Pamphlet be a tri-fold?

Invited Committee Reports:

Institutions Committee:

- \$7,000 spent on literature
- The Institutions Committee was represented at NERAASA from Area 31. The consensus from the tables was all the paperwork one has to provide to gain admittance to the facilities are barriers to people going into the facilities, the bureaucratic process is too much. Members believing they have never done time so they have nothing in common to offer. Solutions: informing groups that we are Responsible and utilizing sponsorship as a means of Service and having and forming a person bond with the facility I.E. liaisons.

Western Mass Intergroup:

- WMIG was established in 1953 to serve the now registered 300+ groups in Area 31.
- WMIG acts as a conduit for communication and information exchange, and exists as a parallel service entity.
- WMIG help coordinate AA activities among its varied groups to be of assistance to those groups that may be in need of help.
- Our 24 hour hotline continues to be covered by Intergroup staff and volunteers from Area 31 AA groups.
- The office as well as the website (westernmassAA.org) provides an inventory of conference approved AA literature as well as non AA items.
- The website provides not only pertinent and fun information about the “happenings” here in Area 31, but also provides an up to date meeting list (When & Where).
- The two main events hosted by WMIG are the annual picnic in August and the Alkathon on Christmas Eve/day.
- Online Bookstore accessed via the Intergroup website www.westernmassaa.org is now accepting payment via PayPal.

Berkshire Intergroup:

- No report.

WMYPAA:

- Currently we have 8 active members.
- Held Area History dinner on 3/14 in Longmeadow co hosted by MSCYPAA bid @ Area 31 Archives 75 attended.
- We've been visiting districts and reaching out to meeting explaining what we're about. We look forward to being of service to the area and its committees and remain open to help in any way, were asked.

Western Mass MSCYPAA Bid:

- April 11 event in Worcester – 4 speakers will be from our committee, co hosting.
- Asking for a letter of support from Area 31. This is a part of the requirement for our bid package.

District Reports:

District 1:

- Averaged 8-10 GSR's
- District 1 attendees are currently reaching out to groups in the district to update group information forms and to promote participation within the District.
- Discussion on having a workshop and are working on what topics to cover.

District 2:

- Introductions of members at District 2 meetings have been shortened to name and group name in order to spend as much time as possible on District business.
- .working on passing information from and to new GSR's from the members about what it means to be a GSR.
- Due to the revolving GSR's, there are GSR packages for the new members so they don't have to wait to receive theirs from GSO. It is hoped that once they receive theirs, they will bring it to the District meeting for the next GSR.

District 3:

- In December, District 3 started focusing the majority of their meeting time on fulfilling our GSR's primary purpose of connecting their group to AA as a whole, in particular to the annual General Service Conference. Each item we consider for our meeting agenda, we ask ourselves whether it's helping our GSR's perform their role.
- District 3 has reviewed the new pamphlets approved at the 2014 General Service Conference, as well as advisory actions from the conference. We have studied articles from Box 459. We have heard from the GSR's on matters of concern to their groups, which have led to great discussions, and may someday lead to an agenda recommendation to the General Service Conference. GSR attendance and enthusiasm is on the increase.
- District 3 will be co-hosting a service day with Berkshire Intergroup. We're planning it for Saturday May 9, but haven't gotten confirmation yet from the Lenox Community Center. Intergroup will do a workshop on Safety in AA in the morning, and District 3 will do a workshop called Welcoming Those Who Need Our Help in the afternoon.

District 4:

- Interest in getting others involved in District 4 thru the LCM reaching out to meetings and looking for GSR's.

District 5:

- Number of registered groups: 59
- District 5 average participation is 15.
- GSR's are active participants, volunteering to take on District responsibilities and some have attended the Concept meetings. Members have also attended NERAASA.
- Our District continues to hold a monthly discussion of the Tradition of the month, and a topic from the Service Manual (based on a two year rotation schedule).
- It is hoped that GSR's will continue to assist in visiting our District's "Dark Groups", and updating contact information ASAP.
- We are seeking more NERAASA volunteers for the 2016 event.

District 6:

- New GSRs are acclimated to their new positions with a 20 minute presentation from the Alternate Delegate
- Last October, District 6 had a successful workshop at the Alano Club focusing on: Anonymity, new technology in AA and safety pertaining to the home group.
- 2015 has brought an increase in GSR's and alternate GSR's as well as renewed interest in service.
- District 6 will have 2 workshops this year the 1st will be in Granville, May 2 with topics including: GSR presentation, tradition 1 and sponsorship with regard to new comers.
- We are continuing our effort to update all groups in our area to update contact information and solicit new GSR's to attend.

Delegate's Report

- Area 31- among the smallest areas of the 93 Delegate Areas. Among the smallest with groups and memberships but one of the highest in terms of contribution rate. It is one of the ways it is measured in AA. We are in the top 10% of groups participation of contributions to GSO and in the bottom of 24% of size.
- Many spoke today of their participation to the Northeast Regional Alcoholic Service Assembly last month. If you weren't there lets reflect. Area 31 had the opportunity to speak or attend workshops on topics from the 65th Service Conference. Area of service in Area 31 measures up very favorably we know how to do service and recovery in Area 31. The opportunity to host in 2016 NERAASA is a great opportunity to show this participation in the Northeast. Do GSR's have a responsibility, yes we have a responsibility, any and all who are present in the room today.
- As Delegate, the first one is terrifying and then there is the last one. Reflecting on experience of her service work and remember being alternate GSR she heard that the position of GSR is the most important and could not understand how that could be. Without it there is no AA, through you, (quote from Bill W.)"You transmit the ideas and opinions as well as the facts through you the group conscience becomes a part of the collective conscience of our fellowship as it gets expressed at the General Service Conference." And the work of the General Service Representative is to provide service and AA service is whatever helps us reach a fellow suffer.
- Also it is your responsibility, as your groups GSR to listen and to learn about know about what the committee are doing as well. Unfortunately many groups do not send representative to these committee meetings and information is not being brought back to homegroups unless the GSR brings it back. Work being done at CPC, PI, and Website etc... and the important work that is being done is not being shared.
- Grapevine contribution. Massachusetts as of today is #7 of 93 and tie with North Carolina. First place is Idaho.

- International – July 2-5, 2015 in Atlanta, Georgia.
- NERF- (Northeast Regional Forum) forums put on by the General Service Office and hosted locally in Albany on May29-31st. enhance communication and participation between AA members, General Service Boards and staff and directors of the General Service office and Grapevine.

Alternate Delegate's Report:

- Visit standing committees has been a pleasure and a privilege to do so over the past year.
- Mass State Convention in Framingham, Nov. 6-8 2015 hosted with Area 30. Needing participation from Area 31.
- The last Convention had a 97% approval rating from the attendees with a 99% approval rating on the workshops.
- Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (NERAASA), it's an educational process and panels were spot on with the work that will be done at the General Service Conference and the opportunity to prepare the Delegate before going to the General Service Conference.
- Northeast Regional District (NERD) – prepares the Delegate and Alt. Delegate for the General Service Conference.

Area Chair's Report:

- Calendar on the website and hard copy to share with you to know where the Committees, District, and events are happening throughout the month.

Recount of attendees eligible to vote – 63 Total; 42 required for substantial unanimity, 34 for simple majority

Old Business:

(This motion made at Fall Assembly, 2014 and is required to be presented at the Spring Assembly)

- Motion: Motions from the floor may be made by any voting member.
Vote: 53 in favor, 8 oppose
Minority swayed-
Vote to decide-17 revote, 40 not to revote
Motion carries

New Business

- Motion: The Area approves the posting of our Handbook and Guidelines to the Areas Website.
Vote: 41 in favor, 8 oppose
Minority swayed-
Vote to decide-5 revote, 10 not to revote
Motion carries
- A non-voting member stated they would like to make it be known that bequests to the Area have no guidelines on the limit of the amount of bequest to the Area. While our Area has Bo limit they would think that the Area would want to keep with the Spiritual principal and A.A. World Service and would like the Area to adopt the same guideline as the AAWS.
Motion: Money limits on bequest for the Area and follow guidelines of GSO. (\$3,000 max, \$5,000 upon death.)
2nd
Motion: Follow AAWS guideline as it pertains to contributions of individual and a 1x bequest at the time of death.
Friendly amendment: Area 31 follows AAWS limits to all members' contributions
2nd.

Accept friendly amendment.
(Guideline change requiring 2 Assemblies)

Vote: 2 in favor -25 opposed

Vote: doesn't carry

Vote to revote: Motion doesn't pass

- Motion: Cancel April 15th Area Meeting because we had 2 meetings in March.

Motion to table, 2nd

Vote: 22 in favor, 17 opposed

Passed to table (Only Area members can vote on this)

Motion: All in favor to cancel Area meeting on April 15th

Vote: 13 favor, 7 opposed

Minority speak

Swayed

Revote: 7 favor, 13 opposed

Motion: Doesn't pass

Motion to close:

Made and seconded. Motion passes unanimously. Close at 4:48 pm