

FALL ASSEMBLY

October 18, 2015

Area Chair opened the meeting at 1:03pm 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 Fall Assembly
Count= 53

Secretary's Report:

Secretary read Old Business and New Business from Spring Assembly 2015.

Treasurer's Report:

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

Opening balance for April 2015 was \$3,472.11. Contributions for the past six months totaled \$-12,934.17. Area expenses totaled \$12,373.81. The Closing balance was \$4,032.47 plus Prudent Reserve: \$7,500=\$11,532.47.

The contributions are down compared to the same 6 month time period of the prior year but up compared to the prior 6 month period. Our expenses are down compared to the prior 6 month period but up from the same 6 month time period of the prior year. The former was due to some frontloading of one-time expenses in the early months of the year (e.g., contribution to NERAASA 2016, General Service Conference, NERAASA 2015 reimbursements). The latter was a planned increase in spending based on our 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. Given where we are in the calendar year, we probably won't meet our projected goal for contributions this year unless there is a significant push by individual groups to collect and/or contribute more to Area Services.

Over the last 6 months:

- District 1 has 30 registered groups. 09 groups made contributions of \$ 619.00 averaging \$ 68.78.
- District 2 has 42 registered groups. 19 groups made contributions of \$3,004.76 averaging \$158.15.
- District 3 has 68 registered groups. 16 groups made contributions of \$1,495.67 averaging \$ 93.48.
- District 4 has 54 registered groups. 21 groups made contributions of \$2,532.07 averaging \$120.57.
- District 5 has 60 registered groups. 27 groups made contributions of \$2,809.47 averaging \$104.05.
- District 6 has 41 registered groups. 13 groups made contributions of \$1,408.59 averaging \$108.35.

There were 5 contributions from anonymous or unidentified donors totaling \$200.00.

Registrar's Report:

- Area 31 currently has 306 groups listed as "active" (an increase of 4 since the Spring assembly). Ten of which are registered groups in correctional facilities.
- There are no "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.
- I met with Karen H from the records office in two special sessions specifically for registrars at NERF I have been able to correct all of the incorrect addresses and email that were "bouncing" in the database. The database uses the same search function that the postal service uses to verify addresses and informs me if there is a problem with the address.
- As always, I am ready to accept group information change forms and enter them in. Keep in mind, that I need the group number (or at least the name and meeting date/time) full contact information including address, phone number and e-mail (if they have one). Changes can be submitted manually, via e-mail or by phone.

Area Archivist Report:

- On the Archives display table there are the obituaries of Jack B. and Margaret C. Jack had 50 years of sobriety and Margaret C. had 56 years. They have passed from sight, but they will always be with us in spirit. They were very both very active members of Alcoholics Anonymous in Area 31 also contributing to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole by serving as your delegates to the General Service Conference. Margaret also served as the USA Trustee At Large. Jack initiated our Area 31 Mini Conference.
- We now have a computer and a scanner in our Archives Office. It was donated to us. It will be very instrumental in the digitizing of all of the documents that are important to the history and growth of Area 31. That is going to be a huge task.

- Sorting and filing is an ongoing activity for an Archivist with the help of the Archives Committee. We did have three service days, all on Saturday for any member of Area 31 to come and help. They were poorly attended but it gave me some quality time in the Archives.
- As committee chairs rotate out of their positions my suggestion would be to collect and store your flyers, minutes, reports etc. in the Archives. Documents are getting lost with rotation. When stored in the archives they become a great resource for information.
- Please make sure that who, what, when, where and why are on all documents that will be archived.

Webmaster Report:

- Area 31- authorized to purchase “our own” security certificate to eliminate the annoying certificate error received when accessing the Area’s webmail inboxes. After speaking with webhost, he was persuaded to simply change the access method at no expense to the area. It was as simple as change the webmail to dnchosting.com (our webhost) from area31aa.com; this makes the security certificate match.
Translation of the website to Spanish is in its infancy.
- NERAASA 2016- the creation of this website is up and running. The creation of the registration form and online registration was where most of my efforts were concentrated.
- A few statics: Website September totals: 2949 pages 10090 hits of which 1965 pages 4500 hits were the Webmaster. October- so far total: 1176 pages 6594 hits of which 538 pages 1083 hits were Webmaster.
- Highlight from NAATW- Search technology changes. Changes in Google. Google is starting to penalize websites that are not “responsive”, that is to say, accessible on all devices, PCs, tablets and smart phones. One statistic related to our ranking, our Search Engine Optimization rating is 81%. Our website still ranks high but we maintain our ranking only until the other websites become ‘responsive’ and bumps us down in the ratings, this isles of a problem for NERAASA 2016 since it is a short term presence. Since we were already committed to becoming more mobile friendly, there will be working changes to the Area 31 Website that will bring it into compliance with the new search standard.
- ASL and other Accessibility Needs-A big discussion was had about getting our message to those who have accessibility needs. There was a presentation by a group of hearing impaired where the ASL interpreters interpreted for the hearing. There was also a presentation by a blind member. Upon returning it was realized that while we have a listing of ASL interpreted meetings on our website, it was buried in the Accessibility Committee page. This has been changed. A link to the meetings list at Western Mass Intergroup more prominent and brought them both to the top of the FAQ box on the home page. Out of curiosity ‘western mass asl aa meetings’ was goggled and it was found that our website was top of the list. This is one area where the Intergroup website does not have any listings and as a result we maintain this list. New Translation technology is being developed by both Google and Microsoft. This will translate with high degree accuracy between audio and written and vice versa. Also, language translation on the fly is in development and nearing practical use.

Standing Committee Reports:

Accessibility:

- The purpose of this committee is to diminish or eliminate barriers that prevent anyone from participating in any aspect of AA in Area 31. The committee provides information and coordinates services for alcoholics who otherwise would be unable to participate in meetings, groups or service work because of a disability, difficulty accessing AA meeting places or because of a need for special assistance with communication.
- With the cooperation from PI, we have added a blurb to the weekly radio show. We were able to come up with an information, succinct, statement to be added to the closing on the radio show. Using the platform of the weekly radio broadcast, hopefully we will be heard by members of AA and also by members of the community that may have the need from the Accessibility Committee
- The committee is always looking at adding to and upgrading a list of those willing to be of service and at what level they are available (giving rides, put on temporary meeting, and telephone meeting)
- The last couple of meetings have been great reminder of why we do what we do. Members of the deaf community have been present, giving a face of some of the people that the committee tries to assist.
- In the spirit of cooperation the committee has combined several of our meetings with the NERASAA Special needs committee. This has enhanced both meetings by bringing new ideas and enthusiasm to both committees. This gave the deaf community an opportunity to get involved with NERAASA and allowed input for the wording on the website.
- The committee will be offering assistance to the MSCYPAA committee.

Archives:

- Monthly average of attendance was 8-10 people.
- Archives boards were brought to numerous groups’ anniversaries, groups, and Area 31 functions.

- Ongoing projects included: cassette to CD transfers were put on hold while efforts to move into the digital worked have continued with the donation of a computer and scanner to the Committee. Now the committee hopes to see the real progress begin with the formatting of an archive site which will be both user friendly and informative. Redefining collection policies and developing scanning guidelines.
- Working meeting where members broke into groups and tackled CD inventory, Grapevine inventory general filing and sorting and also inventoried Group Histories, of which we have less than one-third of the groups in our Area.
- Rather than holding an “open house” event this year, the committee participated in a joint venture with Intergroup and young people in AA.
- On 10/9, Archives held a Movie Night featuring the “Days of Wine & Roses” held I the United Congregational Church on Pleasant St. Admission was free to the public and included a concession stand with popcorn, candy and beverages, manned by Intergroup and young people in AA. Nice turnout of 45 guests with positive feedback.

CPC:

- Had a regular attendance of 12 CPC reps at all our meetings.
- Established a position of a contact manager to better manage the CPC contacts and to make sure contact s is being contacted. The list of contacts has grown.
- Several presentations at a local college and at the Western Mass Substance Abuse Profession Associate counselor meeting and are actively searching for new presentation opportunities.
- Regularly fulfilled CPC commitments which include the radio show as well as institutions and intergroup.
- Disbursed sponsor your doctor packets.
- Recently Area 31 CPC co-sponsored with Area 30 and 28 a booth at the New England Association of Drug Court Professions in which we not only made contact with New England Drug Court professions, but also established contact with Area 30 CPC chair. Much knowledge ensued.
- Next 6 months will be spent reaching out to local professions by continuing our email campaign and word of mouth.
- Roundup committee has asked that CPC host a Friday night meeting at the event, with the possibility of inviting professionals to attend to learn more about AA

Grapevine:

- Presented old Grapevines from 1948.
- Talked about the Grapevine challenge.
- The Grapevine boards have been on display at several Home Group Anniversaries and will be going to the Mass State Convention.
- Grapevines can be viewed online and welcome articles for possible publication.

Public Information:

- Reconstructed business meeting format by compiling all pertinent information concerning commitment descriptions and presentation outline formats, thus eliminating cross talk, needless explanation and a general sense of chaos, matters needing attention were address more efficiently as calendar business was streamlined. Unfortunately new standing commitments could not be added to a full monthly schedule due to a decrease in prepared and available committee members; though this did not hinder the committee in accepting short notice invitations to various district, area and local recovery events.
- PI committee will continue to attract new members through exposure at group, district and are levels by making our commitment descriptions and outline format readily available. Currently exploring ways to incorporate newly develop media tools from NY and will stay focused on meeting the directive coming from the GSO. Interaction and cooperation with not only other committees but the Districts, the Area Committee, Institutions Committee and the Western Mass and Berkshire Intergroup offices will continue to be a priority. After updating the radio show format with the CPC Committee to include contact information for the Accessibility Committee we will ensure that the AA message is broadcast with respect for AA’s singleness of purpose.
- 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. The PI committee is very active, focusing on direct communication through presentation 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 objective of PI work while fine tuning the method and format in which AA’s primary purpose is carried out.

Round Up:

- There was a room full of dedicated members, 18.

- Next year, 2016 the plan is to have a 3 day event from May 20-22. Currently there are 20 rooms blocked for the event. The cost is \$115 a night. This offer is good until 4/20/16 while rooms last. Continental breakfast included.
- The members are working on job descriptions for the Round Up.
- The goal for the Round Up is to have a prudent reserve for committee.

Website:

- The Website continues to be a small group-currently only two groups are sending representation monthly.
- The Website now has a live Link to NERAASA 2016 which Area 31 is hosting in February.
- Changed the Pictures on the Website Marquee to include our Area 31 Events
- We are also in the process of making the website Bi-lingual – Spanish translation is in process-we have had some volunteers meeting with us to assist us with translation, beginning with the “Statement of Purpose” –this will be an on-going process.
- Completed and in circulation is the Website Pamphlet- it is hoped to create a Spanish translation of the pamphlet.
- Creation of Website Boards which will be available for the Mass State Convention-they will also be available for anyone wishing for us to bring them to Anniversary’s.
- Moving towards a Mobile Version/Website.

Invited Committee Reports:

Institutions Committee:

- 10 new IGR’s rolled into Institutions committee from their group.
- 35 BTG calls, 15 of which were provided services.
- 17 roll outs and 25 roll in’s and doing well with filling “open meetings” when they become vacant.
- Two big accomplishments in the past six months were 1. The transition with Howard Street and their move to Holyoke and getting their meeting up and running as fast as possible. 2. The starting of a outside escort program at Cybulski Prison in Ct and its going extremely well
- Since May, 2014 we have had \$10,240.48 in donations and have spent \$8, 401.12 on literature less expenses.

Western Mass Intergroup:

- Established in 1953. 300 groups registered in Area 31
- Intergroup office acts as a conduit for communication and information exchange.
- Coordinates AA activities; the annual picnic, Alkathon on Christmas eve/day.
- Most important function is to provide 24 hr. phone coverage to the sick and suffering.
- The office as well as the website (WesternmassAA.org provides an inventory of conference approved AA literature, as well as Non AA items (coins, Hazelton etc.) Income generated is used to meet monthly operating expenses, approximately \$3,200.
- PayPal has been in use and proven to be positive.
- The website provides pertinent info of happenings in Area 31; meeting lists (When & Where’s). “FYI” contains group anniversaries and other events.

Berkshire Intergroup:

- Hosted a workshop/meeting with District 3 on Accessibility with a speaker from the Grapevine, making a presentation.
- Hosting the 7th annual Alkathon in Central Berkshire for Christmas and New Years from 5pm Christmas Eve to 5 pm Christmas day.
- Where and When's are current and the format is being re-worked. The discussion of a web page to host an electronic copy
- Berkshire Intergroup is staffed solely by volunteers.
- First time in 26 years Berkshire Intergroup was able to donate money to Area 31, GSO and Institutions.

WMYPAA:

- Voted to make language in by-laws gender-neutral
- Co-hosted a move night with Archives & Intergroup on 10/9. Intention to make this a regular event, every few months.
- Chairing Sunday 1am mtg @ Mass State Convention
- Dance scheduled for 1/29/16 7-midnight. Theme is related to “They Stopped in Time”, time travel, throw back etc...

MSCYPAA:-Host

- Awaiting advisory to approve the hotel contract which will allow the committee to sign the contract with the hotel. Once approved the committee can meet at the Springfield Marriott for the rest of the year
- As a committee we will be attending CSCYPAA (Nov), NECYPAA (Jan) in NH and EACYPAA (Feb) in NYC. In addition, MA State Convention-YPAA from Area 30.
- Spring/Summer the annual MSYCPAA camping trip will be in Western MA.
- The committee will be asked to participate on the online 5th dimension YPAA meeting this year.

AD Hoc Committee Report

Handbook Committee:

- Ad-Hoc committee had hoped that we would have had the Handbook revision completed and distribute to the Area Committee before this assembly, however, while making the changes it was discovered that there are 3 tabled motions that were missed in the final check.
- The committee will bring the 3 motions to the floor for consideration, discussion and a vote at the December Area meeting. Once finalized it will brought to the printer a few days after the December Area meeting.

Redistricting Committee:

- Met 4-5times this year. Discussed possibilities of redistricting. Decision not to redistrict after reviewing.

NERAASA (Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly)-2016:

- 25th Annual, to be held on February 26, 27, and 28 - 2016 at the Sheraton and Marriot Hotel in Springfield. Fliers available. You can register online at <http://www.neraasa2016.org> This is the first time Area 31 is hosting/chairing this event. The theme, from the 2016 General Service Conference is “Our Spiritual Way of Life: Steps, Traditions and Concepts” Kick off ‘Redball’ meeting on Thursday 2/26 at 8pm. Pre-registration deadline is 1/27/16.

District Reports:

District 1:

- Number of GSR’s attending the District meeting has dropped.
- Intergroup is assisting District 1 with the Hot Line Services for the Spanish Community.

District 2:

- Stated that the meeting focused on bringing information from the Area to the GSR’s so they can then share with their groups.

District 3:

- District 3 covers all of Berkshire County. There are about 70 Active groups in the district. At the beginning of the year, the district had an informal inventory. The only question on our inventory was ‘Are we fulfilling the GSR’s role as described in the Service Manual?’ Many GSR’s thought we were not. So we changed the focus and format of the meeting to match that description. Now the goal is to connect their group to AA as a whole, in particular to the annual General Service Conference. We are seeing a high level of engagement among the GSR’s with this approach.
- Attendance has held steady at around 12, with the same groups represented at most district meetings. So far we’ve been less successful at attracting new groups to participate.
- District 3 hosted a workshop in August called Are we Welcoming Enough to Those Who Need Our Help? About diversity in AA. About 40 people attended and there was lively participation.

District 4:

- Workshop offered by District 4 had about 30-40people.
- Meeting focused on groups and concerns if any from their groups.

District 5:

- Numbers at the meeting have ranged from 10-19 over the past 6 months.
- The members continue to discuss Traditions and topics from the Service Manual (based on the 2 year rotating schedule). Each month the GSR’s volunteer to lead on monthly topics. Topics included newcomers, member involvement, service responsibilities, safety concerns, and singleness of purpose.
- GSR’s have helped in visiting groups to update information and to stress the importance of service positions.
- District 5 held a workshop early in October.

District 6:

- Thirty+ GSR's (fluctuates)
- Because District 6 has members from CT, 2 workshops were scheduled. The next workshop to be held on November 21st in Enfield, CT.
- GSR's provided with information to take back to their groups each month from the Area meeting.
- GSR's are encouraged to ask questions.

Delegate's Report:

- Honored and privileged to have served Area 31 as the Delegate to the General Service Conference.
- Presented members a copy of the Final Conference Report of the 65th General Service Conference. "Celebrating 80 Years of Recovery, Unity and Service – The Foundation for Our Future".
- This report Attention was drawn to specific pages of interest to her.
Pg 3, Highlights, summary of big events,
pg 5, text of Keynote speaker, Past Northeast Regional trustee-Gary L
pg 7, Advisory Actions, past motions. Motions passed at 65th General Service Conference.
pg 16-17, Penciled picture of Anne
pg 25, Conference Inventory over past 3 years 2013, 2014 & 2015. Final phase in April, 2015.
pg 63 Highlights – Area 31 was last year, however on pg 66 Area 30 gave their summary.
Pg 72, Additional Committee Considerations – possible agenda items for the next General Service Conference will come from. These items become the agenda Theme for the General Service Conference, then the theme for the MA State Convention and the Northeast Regional Area Assembly.

Alternate Delegate's Report:

- Mass State Convention planned for November 6-8, 2015. The Convention will be held in Framingham. Based on conference approved agenda items. Connecting with the newcomer, Connecting with each other, Connecting with AA as a whole & Anonymity the Spiritual Foundation.
- AA to be inclusive to everyone. Spoke of two Regional Trustees, Bill N and Bill F and quoted from the literature regarding inclusivity.

Area Chair's Report:

- Thanked everyone for their enthusiasm over the year in their current positions.

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- Elections for Area Officers- (Delegate, Alternate Delegate, Area Chair, Treasurer and Secretary)
53 voting members – Third Legacy Voting
Delegate, Mark N
Alternate Delegate, Paul H
Area Chair, Sue A
Treasurer, Mary M
Secretary, Mike B

Motion to close: Made and seconded. Motion passes unanimously. Close at 4:50pm