

AREA 31

SPRING ASSEMBLY MINUTES

2 APRIL 2017

Area Chair opened the meeting at 1:00 pm with the Serenity Prayer and a reading from chapter 5 of the service manual The Area Committee.

A past Delegate led off the assembly with a 10 minute talk.

Quorum call

54 voting members in attendance at the start of the assembly.

Secretary's Report

Secretary read old and new business from Fall Assembly 2016 and a motion was made to accept the report, seconded and passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Spring Assembly – April 2, 2017

Area 31 Treasurer's Report

This report will capture 6 months activity from the Fall Assembly to the Spring Assembly 2017.

Opening balance for October 2016 was **\$11,279.06**. Contributions for the past six months totaled **\$13,611.32**. In addition we received a donation from The Berkshire Intergroup in the amount of **\$1,318.83** (January 2017), and a donation from the Trustee Dinner ad-hoc committee of **\$105**. Area expenses totaled **\$19,336.84**. The closing balance was **\$6,977.72** plus Prudent Reserve: **\$8,500 = \$15,477.36** total funds available.

**There was a loan of \$1,000 to the ad-hoc committee for seed money to put on the trustee dinner reflected in November 2016 under "Other Charges" and it was returned in February 2017 under "other" (The line beneath Other Contributions).

** In January-the item(\$1000) was moved from the working account to the prudent reserve to increase it to \$8,500 to allow for 3 months of operating expenses.

Our contributions have decreased compared to the same 6 month period of 2015/2016. In addition our, contributions have decreased compared to the same 6 months between Spring 2016 and Fall 2016. Our expenses have increased compared to the prior 6 month period (Spring-fall 2016) and they have increased from the same 6 month time period (Fall 2015-Spring 2016).

Some of the higher expenses' this year are due to increasing the contribution to GSO for the annual conference expenses of our Delegate and the anticipated expenses' of the NERAASA reimbursement. Given where we are in the calendar year, we may not meet our projected goal for contributions this year. We continue to educate our fellowship about the importance of the seventh tradition and the service that is being done at the Districts ,the Area and at the GSO

Over the last 6 months:

- District 1 has 26 registered groups. 10 groups made contributions of \$843.28
- District 2 has 45 registered groups. 16 groups made contributions of \$3,171.52
- District 3 has 69 registered groups. 21 groups made contributions of \$2,177.33
- District 4 has 61 registered groups. 22 groups made contributions of \$2,038.22
- District 5 has 59 registered groups. 25 groups made contributions of \$2,549.40
- District 6 has 43 registered groups. 18 groups made contributions of \$2,179.23
- There were 7 contributions from anonymous or unidentified donors – totaling \$652.34

** (There is 1 pending active new group in District 1 and there is 1 pending inactive group in District 6)

Thank you for your continued support/contributions to Area 31.

Respectfully submitted,
Treasurer Area 31

Registrar's Report

Area 31 currently has 312 groups listed as "active" (an increase of 5 since the Fall assembly). Eight of which are registered groups in correctional facilities.

I had the privilege of attending NERAASA this year and was able to interact with Registrars from around the Northeast Region, sharing my experience with newer Registrars about details with our position and learn best practices from other areas.

From this experience, I have identified two items that have room for improvement:

1. Can we come up with a better way to transmit group information from the DCM to the Registrar? It can sometimes take a number of months from the time a GSR fills out the form till it gets transmitted to me and entered in the database.
 - a. Some areas use a separate database to track group information changes.
 - b. Other areas have an online form that DCM's and GSR's can fill out to send in information automatically.
 - c. I am currently seeking input from the DCM's regarding this issue.
2. Work on a project with our Archives committee using group histories to correct information in the database so that it would be more useful to our area.
 - a. On the group information sheet is a field for "date group first met" and this was sometimes unknown by the person filling out the form, so the registration date was used.
 - b. It may be possible to obtain this information (or at least a better approximation) from Group Histories held by Archives and/or archived Where and When's.
 - c. I plan to begin work on this project over the summer. If GSR's have accurate histories, they can submit them to Archives and let me know as well so I can ensure this data is accurate.

The GSO Records office is currently updating the Regional directories. In order to meet the publishing deadline, I need updated group information by May 10th to get it entered in the Fellowship New Vision Database.

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 mailing address, phone number and e-mail (if they have one). The best method at this point is via e-mail. My e-mail address is registrar@area31aa.org.

In service,

Area 31 Registrar.

Archivist's Report

Once again "Thank you" for the opportunity to be of service to Area 31 as your Archivist, it is a privilege. The Neraasa 2016 documents have been copied, duplicated, scanned and filed. One full set was brought to Neraasa 2017 and added to the Neraasa archives. One copy of all documents will remain in our archives. All of the documents saved....planning committee meeting minutes, treasurers reports, committee meeting minutes, roundtable reports and the most coveted of all the panel presentations were also put on a usb drive that holds all of the Neraasa archives and is passed on to the next Neraasa Chair.

I was given the opportunity to facilitate the Archives Roundtable at Neraasa 2017. The roundtable was well attended and very informative. We in Area 31 are very fortunate to have accessible archives. So many other areas keep their archives in storage units.

Within the past few months I'll have spent some time in the Archives office sorting and filing. Three past delegates have given me all of their conference materials.

Please continue to forward your monthly District and Committee Meeting minutes to me at archivist@area31aa.org or to the area website at area31aa.org.

Yesterday the Archives Chair gave me a copy of "AA TODAY 25" This was a special AA Grapevine publication from 1960 published for the 25th anniversary of AA. The stories in the issue are amazing.

If you have any items you would like to donate to your Archives you can contact me through the email above or use the area directory and call me at home if you wish.

Once again please include who, what, when, where and why is noted on all documents submitted for archives.

Take Care and God bless
Area 31 Archivist

Webmaster's Report

Once again I am found in sunny climes this weekend instead of being there with you for the Spring Assembly. I feel only a little guilty as I bask in the sunshine on the Gulf of Mexico.

Briefly, I will try to give you an update on what has been going on lately and where I see the website in six months or so.

During the last couple of months I have been dealing with a backlog of postings due to recent updates to a number of Microsoft programs and then the subsequent failure of those very same programs. This has led to my inability to edit and convert to PDF many but not all of the items sent for posting on the Area website. I believe that this problem will be resolved shortly after my return from vacation, since I was well on the way already last week.

As for the future, I have set up a server for the development of the new updated website. The basic software is installed and I am in the process of selecting a design for the basic look. This is a good time for any district or committee, whether invited or standing, to have a look at the present page dedicated to you and see if you would like have changes made. All suggestions will be considered for inclusion. The new website software will allow for a mobile friendly website and will also make the inclusion of a Spanish translation much easier.

Thank you for letting me serve.

Respectfully submitted

Area 31 Webmaster

Accessibilities Report

Lowell George's ironically humorous observation of our inevitability, from the song "Old Folks Boogie" by the band Little Feat "You know you're over the hill, when your mind makes promises that your body can't fill" becomes a stark reality when that failed promise is to attend and participate in alcoholics anonymous. Even members with long term sobriety can succumb to the loneliness, isolation, fear and desperate hopelessness that untreated alcoholism creates. These are the alcoholics this committee has the task of reaching out, finding and bringing back into the loving arms of AA.

While there are no special AA members there are many members who have special needs. This would include those who may be hearing-visually or speech impaired, those who are homebound, chronically ill, those who use wheelchairs, walkers or crutches, and those who are developmentally disabled or who suffer from brain damage, stroke etc. Whatever their disability may be it is hoped that they would never be excluded from AA meetings, twelve step work or AA service.(excerpt taken from the Accessibility Workbook).

Of those with special needs the deaf alcoholic faces the greatest challenges in getting sober and being active in service. My frustrations communicating with one of my AA friends who is deaf and an active member of the Accessibilities Committee have given me a deep respect and admiration for the men and women who selflessly provide adult sign language services. Not to be over dramatic but they are the unsung heroes doing God's work void of ego and self-promotion, exemplifying the true essence of humble servitude. Thank you.

Moving forward this committee will continue to help break down the barriers that prohibit alcoholics from participation and service in AA. Please take some flyers and accessibility sign in sheets on the back table. We have a new flyer which was copied from one we saw at Neraasa, and a thank you to the co-chair of the committee for putting this together so quickly for this assembly.

The still suffering alcoholic is easy to spot and reach out to but those detached from the fellowship we here so easily experience, are the focus of this committee. The military slogan "no soldier left behind" serves as a fitting mantra, never to forget those, who have humbly served before or who can't attend meetings because of an accessibility issue. I am an alcoholic.

Accessibilities Chair.

C.P.C. Report

- October-Elms College
- November-AIC and had a booth at New England Drug Court
- December-Visited District 4 and the Dept. of Family and Children in Holyoke and the Behavior Health in Springfield.
- January-met with the Round-up committee
- February-met with the ala-non chair regarding the round-up, visited district 5, brought boards to the district 5 workshop, phoenix house and participated in the round-tables at Neraasa.
- March-table at the substance abuse forum at Westfield state university.
- Upcoming events are participating in the round-up, the Elms College, Dr. Mateen and will be visiting District 1.
- We are working on other potential leads.

Thank you for offering me the opportunity to grow.

Cpc Chair.

Grapevine Report

- The GV committee is willing to bring our display boards to anniversaries and workshops. Contact the committee at grapevine@area31aa.org or refer to the area directory and call. We have received only one call this year so far.
- The "Grow Your Grapevine" contest ended in February. Our committee participated under the name "GVR's of the Golden West"

- We continue to participate in the Audio Grapevine “Record Your Story” and have submitted two more stories. Information/details can be found at aagrapevine.org/audio.
- One committee member submitted a photo of her home group to “If walls could talk” she also submitted a photo of the ballroom at the 2016 Mass State Convention.
- The committee has decided to give monthly reports to Intergroup.
- We voted to do a workshop. We hope to have two speakers and are considering several GV activities for participation and displays to help inform area 31 of “AA’s Best kept Secret”! –Stay tuned. Thank you to the Archivist and the alternate delegate for helpful suggestions and ideas.
- Our committee has also decided to try and improve our grapevine page on the area 31 website. We have explained what we wish to do to the website committee and are waiting to receive permissions and suggestions from the AA Grapevine.
- I would like to remind everybody that there is a grapevine subscription app available. It’s cost is \$1.99 per month. It can be downloaded and archived. Receive a sample audio story and a selected video. The app is available for I pads, iPhones and android.
- An online Grapevine subscription is also available. It includes 8-10 new stories per month and access to the digital archives back to 1944. It includes 6 issues of La Vina as well.
- There is a special offer for gifts. The second print OR online subscription is 57% off. That makes the second print GV only \$13.00!!!!
- The Chair and one group rep attended Neraasa.
- Or grapevine committee is 10+ people strong with a lot of energy and enthusiasm. If your group does not have a GV rep please consider nominating one or volunteer for your home group.

Thank you,

Grapevine Chair.

P.I Report

- New commitment radio show and a DUI course
- Membership challenges are to meet 10-20 monthly commitment’s which are mostly daytime commitments.
- We sponsor a rack.
- We have commitments at Bay state Hospital, several High Schools, Wmccac and an IOP.

- We have a new Co-Chair.

Website Committee Report

The general goals for 2017

- Increasing the number of committees and groups that are actively participating in the area 31 website
- Encouraging committees to take ownership of their page on the website; it's not just posting minutes.\
- Contributing to wider area and regional discussions about AA online.

Since the last assembly

- Put the 2016 handbook on the website, both as a searchable set of web pages, and as a downloadable pdf.
- The website chair made a motion at the area committee to compensate the webmaster for the special project that will require many hours above and beyond the normal duties and it was passed and \$600 was allocated for that purpose in this year's budget.
- Visited several committees and districts to spread the word about the area 31 website.
- We had the grapevine chair attend one of our meetings. They are interested in creating a new look for their website page. We are all excited about exploring new ideas.

We continue to discuss

- Making our section of the website, as well as our brochure accessible to the Spanish speaking community.
- Supporting and advising our webmaster as he continues to work on transitioning the site to the latest version of our content management system(Drupal).

Join Us

The website committee warmly welcomes group reps and committee chairs. Our meetings have a few to none attending. Groups may not be aware that the website committee exists and committees might not think about attending. Technical expertise is not a requirement and our meetings are not generally technical. We welcome the new ideas and thoughts you bring when you join us for our discussions about the steps and traditions, how anonymity and other principals work in the online world as well as how committees can take charge of their page on the area website. We look forward to seeing you on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 7pm at 474 pleasant St. Holyoke, Ma.

Round-Up Report

- June 9,10 and 11th
- La Quinta in Springfield
- CPC will lead it off again in conjunction with al-anon on Friday night
- Hospitality will have it's own room this year.
- The program is in both English and Spanish.
- 4pm Friday registration begins.
- \$15 registration,\$25 banquet and \$5 for the dance.

Ad-Hoc Committee for Area Inventory Report

- Meeting at 6:15 PM before the Concepts Meeting.
- Thank you to the Area Chair for asking me to serve as chair of this ad-hoc committee and I also want to thank the committee members for their contributions. We have lost a few members but those who have remained are a solid group of caring and committed people who love AA. It is an honor to work with them.
- The purpose of the committee is to prioritize the issues that arose from the fall 2015 inventory and make recommendations to the area committee.
- Our 6 member committee consists of an area officer, a standing committee member, a district committee member, a GSR and 2 members at large. We have met 5 times since the fall assembly 2016.
- Last fall I reported that our committee had identified two issues about which we feel we can make recommendations. The first issue we are addressing is:

“Passing it on” Rotation is essential to the health of AA, but sometimes it feels overwhelming when you begin a new service position. You don't know what you don't know.

To help us clarify some of the specific areas of concern for those servants rotating into a new position we developed a questionnaire. Current and immediate past DCM's and standing committee chairs have responded to this questionnaire and we are in the process of analyzing that data .At our next meeting we will be writing a recommendation, maybe more than one to bring forward to the area committee for consideration. Depending on the nature of the recommendations and the decisions of the area committee, these recommendations may be brought to this body for a vote in the fall.

The second issue which we identified and will begin working on in May is:

Job descriptions of the members of the standing committees: Our handbook has job descriptions for the area officers, dcm's and gsr's. The handbook also has descriptions of the work of the standing committees, but there is no description of the responsibilities of the group representative herself, Because the descriptions will vary from standing committee to standing committee, we will again need input from you.

You'll be hearing from us soon.

Berkshire Intergroup Report

BIG Chairperson Report 4/2/17 Berkshire Intergroup continues to function in-service for the groups and Berkshire County. Office operations are going well we have a full staff of volunteers for handling a business Monday through Friday. All positions are filled, and attendance to our meetings has shown a slight increase. There has been recently increased positive communication between our website IT Chairperson and When and Where Chair regarding the formatting of our Berkshire meeting schedules and use of Technology in our office. BIG will continue to look forward to partnering with Berkshire institutions and DCM for the upcoming service days.

Yours in Service

Gratefully submitted Chair and Co- chair Berkshire Intergroup.

Institutions Report

- The last 6 months donations were \$13,101.62 expenses' were \$1553.40 and book purchases were \$10,182.21.
- Approximately 400 meetings per month with 48 being open.
- The past 6 months we have continued to update the master list and asked meeting sponsors to please keep signing in the sign in sheet and checking to make sure we have the correct contact info.
- Few new institutions facilities in Greenfield with Northern Hope and Franklin Recovery Center and Swift River in Cummington Ma.
- Workshop was put on in December to inform more on what we do at institutions, specifically hearing a message from an ex inmate who got sober in prison and continues to be sober 10+ years.
- Berkshire Institutions is planning a workshop.

- Cybulski prison is now allowing guys out on furlough, so we are asking men who are interested to participate to take them to meetings in Connecticut. They cannot leave the state and only men's meetings are they allowed attending. The Prison is also asking for men to work with prisoners through the steps.
- Created an ad-hoc committee to discuss the distribution of books in the Berkshires.

Thank you, Institutions Chair.

Western Mass Intergroup Report

- The end of the year was very busy. The alkathon and children's party were successful and I would like to thank all those who donated gifts and time. Because of the tons of support these events were a success.
- Group representation and group donations have increased over the last 6 months.
- We cancelled our February meeting due to the weather and our office manager reported in march that phone coverage was unable to be assigned and the cost of that is significant and it showed how well the groups do with phone coverage. So keep up the good work.
- As most of you know the when and where's are not printed yet and we are out of them at the office. Please call the office first before heading to get them. They are expected in mid to late April.
- We continue to support groups with making flyers for group changes and events. Information can and does get put on the intergroup website.
- The office manager has also added two new pages to the website. One with information about WM Institutions and one with commonly referred to pamphlets.
- Ideas on how we can better assist you are always welcomed and encouraged. We are here to assist with communication of information to groups, AA members and the still sick and suffering alcoholic.

Thank You WM intergroup chair.

WMYPAA Report

- We meet on the 2nd Thursday at 474 Pleasant St in Holyoke.
- We exist to unify young people's groups and to celebrate sobriety with events and show young people that being sober is also fun and give the newcomer a safe , sober event to go to on a Friday night and to meet other young people who are staying sober.

- We had a Halloween event that was very successful
- We engaged in a group inventory to see where we could be more useful.
- We agreed to put in a bid for the New England Conference of Young People in AA.(NECYPAA)
- We held elections in January and created a few new ones as well.
- We have grown from a 4 person committee to about 23 with hopes of attracting even more.
- We are signing up for speaking commitments, institutions and phone service.
- We are planning our next event for later in April.

Thank you. WMYPAA Chair.

District 1 Report

- We have 2 new groups in the district and they have gsr's.
- We have 26 registered groups
- We filled out the questionnaires given to us by the ad-hoc committee.
- The alternate delegate gave a power point presentation at the district meeting for gsr's to get a better understanding about AA and what their role is.
- I attended Neraasa and learned a lot and participated so much that the joke was that I won the golden mic award.
- The dcm round table was very interesting.
- We are planning a workshop for April 29th. At the Sacred Heart Parish Hal it is tentative still.

Thank you Co-DCM District 1

District 2 Report

- Described the geography of the district and the amount of groups being 46.
- We usually get 10-12 groups represented.
- We have discussions at the meetings so groups can talk about the issues they may be having.
- We also pass on the area and gso information we received at the previous area meeting.
- Attended Neraasa and brought back those topics to add to the discussion at the meetings with the gsr's
- We will be having a gsr presentation given by the alternate delegate.
- We have a commitment at the round-up
- We are working on a workshop.

Thank you DCM District 2.

District 3 Report

- Our LCM has been very active visiting unlit groups
- Planning a workshop in September with Berkshire Intergroup.
- We have been getting 17-18 gsr's at the meeting.
- We discuss the problems and concerns that groups may be having.

Thank you. DCM District 3

District 4 Report

- Since the Fall assembly we elected a new co-dcm.
- We have been working to try and include the gsr's more in the district meeting by trying out new formats and ideas gathered at Neraasa. The changes include asking a volunteer to prepare a short talk on the tradition of the month and then discussing it amongst the gsr's.
- We are also using a group sharing form to help GSR's prepare more concise reports and keep track of group issues.
- We heard from other dcm's at Neraasa some creative ideas to have workshops which spurred us to think outside the box a bit for our own. We have begun brainstorming with the gsr's regarding this.

- We also heard at neraasa how to go about visting the groups that are not represented and encourage them to become active.
- We have visited some groups and are updating our list of group contacts.
- It is sometimes discouraging to see the level of participation but I get encouraged by the level of commitment displayed by the gsr's who do participate and fulfill their commitments to their groups and AA as a whole.

District 5 Report

- Since the last assembly we have been averaging 12-15 GSR's.
- We currently have 72 groups
- Attending Neraasa gave me some good ideas on how to spread the message of the importance of service in AA and how it can and does enhance ones sobriety.
- We have filled out the questionnaires' from the ad-hoc committee.
- We had a gsr presentation from the alternate delegate.
- We are planning a workshop.
- Thank you for letting me serve

District 6 Report

- We are on fire
- 2 workshops in the planning the first on tentative May 20th11-3

Delegates Report

Last year I was attending my first conference and the enormity & responsibility of the information I needed was not delivered well by the mini conference,so I asked that we open up this years conference and I feel as though I have a full understanding how the area feels.

Seeing the new comer go to the mic first showed the spiritual process is to keep an open mind while we hear the collective thoughts of the Area. We need to get a mix of all our ideas. And I feel comfortable with the areas conscience.

Alternate Delegates Report

- I have been to a lot of committees and thank you for letting me attend
- I attended Neraasa and found out how good we in this area have it.

- I attended nerd and was able to feel the pulse of AA
- Please keep doing what you all do.
- Attending Nerf in June and am grateful for it.
- Thank you for the participation at the mini conference yesterday
- As the Alternate Delegate I also have to Chair the Mass State Conventions Program Committee. We are looking for subcommittee chairs and other volunteers.

Area Chair Report.

Reviewed the remarks and thanked those who gave their reports.

Old Business

- None

New Business

Motion to limit district and committee reports to 3 minutes at the Area 31 monthly meetings.
Passed after a minority opinion reconsidered and we took a second vote.

The Assembly ended with the "I am responsible" pledge at 3:42pm.

