

Area 31 Committee Meeting - June 12, 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 5/15/2013 Spring Assembly minutes.
- 🕒 Motion to accept: passes.

Treasurer's Report:

- 🕒 Beginning May Balance: \$2,424.17; Group Contributions: \$2,572.64; Other Deposits: \$0; Total Area Expenses: (\$1,261.98); Closing April Balance: \$3,734.83 plus Prudent Reserve: \$6,000 = \$9,734.83 Total Funds Available.
- 🕒 Motion to accept: passes.
- 🕒 Further comments:
 - Dollar amounts of contributions have increased from May 2012 to May 2013 by \$102.52
 - Number of contributions in May 2013 was 39, 7 more than in May 2012
 - Dollar amounts of contributions YTD have increased from May 2012 to May 2013 by \$1,135.19
 - Average contribution per group in May 2013 was \$66
 - 2 new groups contributed in May 2013
 - Liability insurance on the facility where we meet has been paid
 - Reminder to Committees and Districts – please review the budgets you requested and make plans to spend for the services you want to provide

Registrar's Report:

- 🕒 All DCMs received new data sheets at the Roundup
- 🕒 Several DCMs provided updates to the Registrar at the Roundup
- 🕒 All updates have been entered to the database
- 🕒 Hudson-Mohawk-Berkshire Area 48, GSO and Area 31 Registrar are finalizing the updates to transfer groups from HMB Area 48 to WMass Area 31.
- 🕒 Reminder to all – Registrar will accept updates in handwritten, phoned or emailed communication.

Area Archivist Report:

- 🕒 Attended the Northeast Regional Forum on June 7-9, 2013.
 - 🕒 Heard a presentation on A.A. History given by Michelle Mirza, the Archives Director from our General Service Office. During the presentation she played the DVD "Markings on the Journey". Area 31 has a Video Cassette in our Archives. If anyone has the DVD copy, please contact Archivist. Would like to have it playing during our Open House on Saturday, June 15th.
 - 🕒 We continue file and organize the office. Once again please remember to note **who, what, when, where & why** on all documents that will become part of our Archives.
 - 🕒 Documents related to the inception of Area 31 Intergroup have been found and are available for viewing.

ADHOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Handbook Committee:

- 🕒 Still updating addresses
- 🕒 Including the write-ups provided by Website and WMYPAA as well as the Finance Committee.
- 🕒 Rough draft will be available by September
- 🕒 Meeting again on 6-13-13

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STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Accessibility:

- ⌚ 7 in attendance including 3 members of the deaf community
- ⌚ Good discussion of challenges of deaf AA members.
- ⌚ Co-Chair reported having difficulty with Audio Listening Devices. He is trying to figure out how to use the same unit for language translation and volume enhancement. Former Accessibility Chair announced that the same unit cannot be used for both purposes. Former committee members learned this when setting up for the Mass State Convention.

Archives:

- ⌚ There were 9 people present including the chair, co-chair, archivist and Alt. Delegate.
- ⌚ Ann our Alt. Delegate gave her report including information on the upcoming NERF conference and the fact that Bob Wilcox from our area was elected as U.S. Trustee at large.
- ⌚ The committee agreed that it would bring the Archives boards to the following groups:
- ⌚ Here and now group 6/5/13
- ⌚ Holyoke Women's group 6/18/13
- ⌚ Sheffield 12&12 6/19/13
- ⌚ Sat AM group at Asnuntuck Community College 6/22/13
- ⌚ We discussed the upcoming Archives open house planned for Saturday June 15th from 11AM-1PM. All are welcome and encouraged to stop by.
- ⌚ Tom gave an update on the status of transferring the tapes and he stated that he stopped recording the ones that were just speakers at meetings.
- ⌚ The group discussed ways to get the info on the tapes out to more AA members. The group had a lot of discussion about developing guidelines around distribution/sharing of the archive tapes and the distinction between what would constitute a true archives tape versus a speaker at an open AA meeting.
- ⌚ Also discussed what level of confidentiality would we follow for the sharing of the tapes/CD's. E.G. can last names be kept in the shared tapes/CD's? How can we develop a way to allow people to make copies from the archives office?
- ⌚ We were not able to resolve these issues but will continue to follow up with plans to develop guidelines. The follow up will include more discussion at the next meeting and some follow up with the GSO Archives office to see if they have any documents relating to these topics.

CPC: No report given.

Grapevine:

- ⌚ Small group in attendance at the May meeting, 3GVRs. All in attendance are working hard to move the ball forward, getting new subscriptions ordered.
- ⌚ Calendars and Schedule books are available for sale as are a new book on sponsorship and rereleased Language of the Heart (Bill W's writings in the Grapevine).
- ⌚ Bringing the boards to a few meetings this month
- ⌚ Chair and Co-Chair with the help of some GRVs will be rehabbing the boards. They are a little worse for wear a present.

Public Information:

- ⌚ Discussed the 11th Tradition and the social media topic. This drew comments from very many committee members.

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- ⌚ Monthly commitments were filled, including chairperson and “shadows”, with an explanation of what each commitment entails. Commitments are Radio Show, Phoenix Academy (program for 14 to 18 year olds) and IOP.
- ⌚ PI Chair chosen to conduct Roundup Meeting on Willingness. Group suggested he take excerpts from literature concerning willingness (*Big Book, As Bill Sees It, 12&12*), write these on paper, have attendees pick them out of hat and discuss what they have picked. Jim W. spoke on most recent Somers Commitment and ways to reach new schools
- ⌚ 120 schools were sent letters offering PI presentation to their students and staff. No responses have been received. PI Chair asked group if he can follow up with contacts. The group conscience was “yes” and we should target middle and high schools. PI Chair will call the addressees and ask if they received the letter and if so, should the request be directed to another official in the school e.g., guidance counselors, psychologists.
- ⌚ Paul P and Garrett gave brief demonstration of how to give a school presentation.

Website Committee:

- ⌚ Attending: Bob (web-master), Carl (co-chair), Sally, Onawa (The Step Group), Sarah (The Step Group), Mark (Area Chair)
- ⌚ The meeting was spent re-evaluating materials that were sent to the Handbook/ Guidelines Ad-hoc committee. We are clarifying definitions of the web-site, web-master, committee, and committee chair. We refined the 1st draft of the definitions for the site, and web-master. A 2nd draft will be brought to the committee next month.
- ⌚ We also discussed materials presented to the Webmaster for inclusion on the site from WMYPAA.
- ⌚ Going forward we will finalize the draft for definitions of the web-site, web-master. We will then proceed with definitions of the committee, and committee chair.
- ⌚ Our next priorities in order will be
 - ⌚ to establish policies/procedures for submission of materials to the site.
 - ⌚ to bring these policies and procedures before the Area Committee for approval.
 - ⌚ to focus on tutorial for the purpose of assisting the Webmaster.

Round Up:

- ⌚ 15 people in attendance at June 12th meeting.
- ⌚ Chair thanked all who attended, donated or helped.
- ⌚ Reviewed the Roundup of May 18 and 19 2013.
- ⌚ 352 registrations
- ⌚ Revenue: \$5,134.29 Expenses: \$2,713.78 Income: \$2,420.51
- ⌚ Reviewed critique forms
- ⌚ Motion passed to reserve 2 dates (May 17 & 18 and May 31 & June1).
- ⌚ Motion passed to form a subcommittee to look at other hotels
- ⌚ Mary C (speaker at the Roundup) will submit her expenses to the Area treasurer. Roundup committee budget will cover that expense.
- ⌚ Next meeting will take place on Sept 11 at 6pm. Betty N will roll into the Chair position and a new Co-Chair will be elected at that meeting. New committees will be formed at that meeting as well.

Webmaster:

- ⌚ 1360 unique visitors with an average of 1.8 visits per visitor in the first 12 days of June
- ⌚ Many hits originated from bookmarks, a good sign that many visitors will revisit.

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- ⌚ aa.org leads the list of links from an external page.
- ⌚ Webmaster was asked what maintenance is done on emails on our area website. He said that the options are to purge or archive. Decision on these options will require discussion. For now the space allocated is small and can be expanded, so there is no need for an immediate decision.

Invited Committees

Institutions:

- ⌚ 5 New Institutions Reps (IGR's) received Institutions Committee handbook - The Guidelines and Job Descriptions. \$1,040.37 Available for A.A. General Conference Approved Literature
- ⌚ BTG - Total # of calls 2 1 Man 1 Woman
- ⌚ New Business: - Brief report on Committee work
 - ⌚ Diane F. has accepted the Non-Officer Service Position of Liaison. She will serve as the face of Alcoholics Anonymous and coordinate as well as communicate with the facilities and the individual Sponsors and or Alternates of the individual meetings.
- ⌚ Our Area 31 Bridging The Gap Coordinator is no longer able to continue with this service commitment. We thank Mike for his dedication and hard work. Danette A. has accepted this appointed Non-Officer Service Position. She will be responsible for coordinating the process of individual AA members leaving facilities (treatment or incarceration) and returning to the general AA community.
- ⌚ The Round - Up 2013. We thank the Institution Committee members who were asked and able to share their experience, strength, and hope on the Panel Topic: Love and Tolerance is our code.
- ⌚ Thanks for the anonymous 1 yr. gift subscription to the Grapevine. Our Librarian, Paul, will put it to good use.
- ⌚ Opportunities for Service: Please consider becoming a Bridging The Gap Volunteer: This is important 12th step work. The Western Mass Institutions Committee needs AA members with at least 1 year of sobriety as temporary contacts in the Area BTG program. Sign up forms are available as well as a pamphlet describing the BTG program.

Western Mass Intergroup:

- ⌚ Please ask your group Intergroup Reps to attend the monthly meeting. We need phone coverage for the Hot line and groups not represented at the meeting cannot be assigned coverage.
- ⌚ As a result of the work of the Ad Hoc committee which is continuing its review of Intergroup Guidelines, 2 additional positions on the Intergroup Steering Committee have been established.
- ⌚ Annual Intergroup Picnic will be held at the Moose Family Center in Chicopee on August 18th. We're always looking for donations which along with raffle and soda sales help defray the cost of this free event.
- ⌚ Area 31 Intergroup will host the Literature table at the Mass State Convention this year.
- ⌚ Hand of Hope Group which meets on Sat at 10 am has asked Intergroup to attend their meeting on June 22nd at Asnuntuck Community College. Intergroup is happy to visit any AA group in the area that wants to learn about what Intergroup does.

Berkshire Intergroup (BIG):

- ⌚ Meet second Monday of each month at 7PM, at 152 North Street, Pittsfield, MA. Fourteen people in attendance, ten voting with five groups represented.
- ⌚ All BIG office days were covered; however, volunteers are needed for Wednesdays 1:30 PM to 5 PM. Volunteers to have six months of sobriety.
- ⌚ Volunteers needed for the Alkathon committee.
- ⌚ Ad Hoc Committees and/or open action items:

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- ⌚ Committee formed to review groups that contribute and/or attend the committee meeting in order to determine groups to visit. First meeting at BIG on Thursday June 20th at 5:30 PM.
- ⌚ Service Workshop final report given by Joan (District 3 DCM). Over budget by under \$6.10.
- ⌚ Where & When: Lost flash drive, cannot find on computer. Changes have been hand written in. Patti will update the oldest one on her computer and get it to Larry.
- ⌚ Action Items Completed:
- ⌚ Information flier about BIG's purpose and thanks for group support completed.
- ⌚ Motions/Approvals:
- ⌚ Group contributions continue to be down. Motion to not make decision to use prudent reserve or literature fund until next month.

WMYPAA:

- ⌚ Postponed regularly scheduled meeting from 6-8 to 6-15
- ⌚ Held 3 speaker dinner on Sunday 6-2. Small turnout due to weather but event went well.
- ⌚ Next event is a Bonfire which will be held on July 6th at 65 East Street in Easthampton. The event begins at 4 pm. It includes a Potluck Dinner (bring your favorite dish to share) as well as a two speaker meeting and 2 bands.
- ⌚ Bus tickets for the GSO trip are still available at the Intergroup Office. Trip will leave Kmart in Holyoke at 6am on Friday September 6th and will return around 9pm the same day.
- ⌚ WMYPAA is coordinating a softball tournament to be held at the Intergroup Picnic. A team entry fee is being discussed to help support the event and the volunteers at the facility.

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DISTRICT REPORTS:

District 1:

- ⌚ May meeting was attended by DCM, Co-DCM and 7 GSRs
- ⌚ Original Downtown Group and After Dinner Group reported need to increase membership/member participation.
- ⌚ District 1 secretary had to step down. A new secretary will be voted in at the June meeting.

District 2:

- ⌚ District 2 participated strongly at the Roundup chairing 3 meetings one on the Home Group, one on Step 6 and one on Step 9.
- ⌚ Meeting attendance included 1 new GSR and a returning GSR.

District 3:

- ⌚ Co-DCM ran the May 17th meeting as DCM had previous service commitment. There were 3 GSRs present (which wasn't surprising as the Round Up was the next day).
- ⌚ Congratulated the Dalton Young at Heart Group for the great job they did performing a skit about the 12 Traditions at the Roundup.
- ⌚ Pointed out the blue book, "Anonymity: Our Spiritual Responsibility in The Digital Age." It is suggested as a GSR's responsibility to read.
- ⌚ Announced the open Area Committee Positions needed to be filled and encouraged anyone interested to let him know. Open positions are:
 - ⌚ CPC needs Chairperson
 - ⌚ Website Chair needed
- ⌚ Also announced 2 new books from Grapevine:
 - ⌚ One on One
 - ⌚ 25th Commemorative Edition of "Language of the Heart" (ALL of Bill W's writings on Grapevine)
- ⌚ Also announced that Bob W. from Western MA / Past Delegate was elected a Trustee at Large. He will be traveling the world carrying AA's Message for 4 years.
- ⌚ There was no new or old business.
- ⌚ Sheffield 12 & 12 will celebrate their 38th anniversary on Wed June 19th with a spaghetti dinner from 6 – 8 pm and a two speaker (AA and AI Anon) meeting from 8 – 9:30 pm.
- ⌚ South Berkshire Group will do a Group Inventory on Friday 6-14 (facilitated by Past Delegate, Sally).

District 4:

- ⌚ A subcommittee of 3 GSRs was formed to work on plans for the service workshop about Sponsorship and Reaching out to the newcomer. Date has not yet been established. It will depend on availability of the facility we can afford.
- ⌚ Elected a new Co-DCM, PJ, to replace Melissa who had to step down.
- ⌚ Thanks to the District 4 GSRs who chaired Roundup Alcathon meetings.

District 5:

- ⌚ Number of registered groups: 69. # of groups represented at June meeting: 14 including 1 new GSR & 1 new Alternate GSR. Co-DCM Pauline chaired the meeting.
- ⌚ Continued discussion of the Service Manual/Tradition, which is taking place monthly at our meetings based on a 2 yr. rotation schedule. Concept VI and Tradition 6 were June's topics. Bob - GSR led that discussion. Service Manuals continue to be provided to new GSR's along with our beginner's packet.
- ⌚ Needs / Concerns / Ideas for outreach:

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- ⌚ Cold Springs Group will be celebrating their Anniversary on June 13th ~ food/fellowship @ 6:00PM ~ Meeting @ 7:30PM.
- ⌚ Last Way Group has recently changed their format to allow for new people with less than a year of sobriety to share first, then the rest of the group shares ~ time permitting.
- ⌚ Keep It Simple Group has been struggling financially ~ they had to go into their prudent reserve for rent and may have to find a new site as the rent is being raised ~ they really need support.
- ⌚ South Hadley Group will stay at the same site for the time being ~ they will be completing a Group Inventory soon.
- ⌚ South Hadley Step Group is moving to The Methodist Church (around the corner) in July.
- ⌚ Thanks to our GSR's who participated/chaired our Round-Up meeting commitments (Angie, Bob, and Gabriel). District 5 GSR's continue to be enthused and motivated ~ several are consistently showing up at the Concepts meeting to gain a better understanding of the service structure. We have begun to reach out to our District's dark groups, updating information. Plan to visit some of their business meetings this month.

District 6:

- ⌚ 10 GSRs attended the last meeting
- ⌚ Three groups displaced by a fire in the church where they were meeting are back at that church.
- ⌚ Two Westfield groups are doing a weekly meeting on a Unit at Noble hospital.
- ⌚ One group added the position of Shepherd as one way of attracting newcomers.
- ⌚ Discussion topics included
- ⌚ Conducting business meetings
- ⌚ Roberts Rules of Order (i.e., how to make group chairperson accountable for conduct at the business meeting)
- ⌚ Group Inventories
- ⌚ Decision to explore holding a service workshop on the Home Group that would address above listed topics.

Delegate's Remarks:

- ⌚ Northeast Regional Forum was last weekend @ The Crowne Plaza in Cromwell, CT. If you didn't get a chance to attend, consider this as a recommendation or encouragement to go to the next one and learn more about the services and meeting some staff of your General Service Office. A byproduct may be that some misconceptions get resolved and you learn more about The Traditions and Concepts. The Forums are every other year.
- ⌚ Applications are once again being sought for a GSO staff member. GSO staff are members of Alcoholics Anonymous who rotate through the various assignments such as Corrections, Public Information, Treatment Facilities/Special Needs, Literature, Conference, etc. They also correspond with AA's on all aspects of recovery and service. Additionally, they represent the General Service Office at AA functions throughout the US and Canada and provide the primary staff support for the General Service Board and the annual General Service Conference.
- ⌚ An application, which is due by 1 August 2013, will be forwarded to you if interested. Fluency in French or Spanish is desirable as is relocation to New York City. Six years sobriety is required.
- ⌚ There will be a vacancy for Non-trustee Director on A.A. World Services, Inc. Board due to the rotation after next year's Conference. Applications are asked to be completed, signed and submitted

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by 15 July 2013. Some qualities most desirable in the individual who will fill the Corporate Board Director vacancy are: a) Sound business or professional background in such areas as finance, management, publishing, legal or information technology, relevant to the work of A.A. World Service, Inc. b) Leadership qualities and the ability to work within the committees structure and with others in a group conscience setting. C) Activity in A.A. Service d) A minimum of seven (7) years' continuous sobriety in the A.A. program and e) Availability to commit to the time and energy required. See me if interested and I can share more details.

🕒 Contract negotiations with the Sheraton and Marriott in Springfield are ongoing and almost complete for NERAASA 2016. This is a tremendous opportunity to get involved in a regional event we're hosting and reap the benefits of service! See me if interested in joining the NERAASA 2016 Committee!

🕒 Terry Bedient, Class A Trustee, past A.A.W.S. Treasurer and current A.A.W.S Chair reports that Area 31 had a group participation rate of 48.25% for contributions to GSO. This is an increase of 2.22%.

Alternate Delegate Remarks:

- 🕒 DCMs have asked for the distribution of the Important Dates list to be continued. Therefore Alt Delegate will send to the Secretary to forward to the Area distribution list.
- 🕒 50th Mass State Convention will be held this year from November 9 – 11. There is still time to get in on the planning of the event. The next meeting of the Planning committee will be held on July 30th and will be an envelope stuffing Pizza Party. If you want to attend, meet to car pool from Plantation Inn in Chicopee between 4:45 and 5:05 on Tuesday July 30th.

Area Chair Remarks:

- 🕒 Service Commitments
 - 🕒 Chair read from the Area 31 p.31 "Area Service Commitments" to remind the Committee of the purpose and importance of this service responsibility as well as to remind those participating to place emphasis on how their service experience has helped them to stay sober.
 - 🕒 Next commitment is Friday 6/14 Southern Berkshire Group, Senior Center, 909 Main St., Great Barrington at 8pm. Attendees who want to car pool should meet at 474 Pleasant St in Holyoke by 6:30 pm on Friday.
 - 🕒 July commitment will be on the 22nd at Young at Heart Group Dalton at 8pm.

Old Business:

- 🕒 Fall Assembly planning the subject of Workshops: Should we do Area inventory?
- 🕒 Ideally it should be done on a regular basis (e.g. every 2 years)
- 🕒 If we want to do this, get GSRs and Committee members thinking about what is working and not working now to make the day as productive as possible
- 🕒 Area Chair has recommendations from last inventory for review this year to see if all recommendations have been addressed
- 🕒 Archivist suggested that such a follow up mechanism is essential for the inventory to be worthwhile.
- 🕒 District 3 DCM reported that such a review was recently done in District 3 and the results were very positive. All issues from previous inventory had been addressed.

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- ⌚ Also possible for Districts and Committees to do inventories anytime.
- ⌚ Alt Delegate said that when she was DCM for District 5 and they did a District inventory the attendance at District meetings “skyrocketed” afterward. It was a powerful experience with very concrete results.
- ⌚ Formats can vary. Past Delegate or Trustee facilitates breakout sessions which can be organized so that each breakout group addresses a different subset of Area service (e.g., PI, Grapevine, etc.) or each breakout group addresses a different set of questions on the Inventory checklist or another way the facilitator suggests.
- ⌚ Roundup was resurrected as a results of a recommendation coming out of our last Area inventory and the last 2 years have been phenomenal.
- ⌚ Also want feedback on whether inventory or another subject is preferred by Area. Another suggestion is to organize breakout sessions according to topics that will be addressed at the next General Service Conference in the spring of 2014.
- ⌚ Fall Assembly planning: Should we hold elections on Saturday to give time for 3rd legacy voting? Need feedback on this as well as question of workshop topics. Please discuss with GSRs and Committee reps and report back at the next Area meeting.

New Business:

- ⌚ At both NERAASA and NERF the subject of purchasing insurance against loss of Area Treasury was raised. Chair said emphatically that he is raising this not as any lack of confidence in the integrity of our current Treasurer but as insurance against financial loss should anything happen in the future. Discussion ensued.
 - ⌚ Other Areas have experienced loss of Treasury due to theft by Treasurer. In one case this resulted in a loss of over \$30,000.
 - ⌚ A member commented that a loss of that magnitude might bring into question why such a large balance was being kept in that Area’s treasury to begin with.
 - ⌚ Insurance can be purchased that covers the loss of the balance in the Area account. It is not bonding of the person acting as Treasurer and requires no background check of any individuals.
 - ⌚ The question was raised whether or not the Insurer would pursue prosecution of the person responsible whenever a claim is made. The answer is yes. This led several members to object since (citing the spirit of Warranty Five related to the actions of the Conference) the Area should not pursue any action which could be punitive to an individual.
 - ⌚ Someone suggested we should consult GSO and was told by another who attended NERF that GSO’s position is that the local group is within their rights to prosecute an individual who has stolen from their Treasury.
 - ⌚ One member expressed a concern that the idea of being bonded against loss might scare someone new to service away from standing for a position with financial responsibility.
 - ⌚ Another member answered that the insurance is against fraud not honest mistakes and shouldn’t have any chilling effect on potential candidates for the position of Treasurer.
 - ⌚ Several members objected to the idea of insurance as not being in the spiritual tradition of AA and pointed out that the Areas that experienced those losses came back to financial solvency and are still up and running.
 - ⌚ Others expressed the idea that insurance against loss is sensible and inexpensive. As one member put it, “Trust in God but tie up your camel.”
- ⌚ Chair asked if the body agreed that Dave (former Trustee and Delegate from Hawaii) and Tanya (former Delegate from Hawaii) who are now living in Area 31 should be listed in the Area Handbook

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under "Other". The group expressed a preference to review all changes to the Area Handbook at once and not a change at a time. Chair warned that a review of all changes when they are completed (most likely in time for the September meeting) may delay the publication of the Handbook.

Meeting closed at 9:40 pm with the Responsibility Declaration.