

AREA 31
FALL ASSEMBLY MINUTES
16 OCTOBER 2016

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

Quorum call

43 voting members in attendance.

Secretary's Report

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

Treasurer's Report

Spring Assembly – April 3, 2016
Area 31 Treasurer's Report

This report will capture 6 months activity from the Spring Assembly to the Fall Assembly 2016.

Opening balance for April 2016 was **\$4,142.84**. Contributions for the past six months totaled **\$17,712.15**. Area expenses totaled **\$10,785.50**. The closing balance was **\$11,279.16** plus Prudent Reserve: **\$7,500 = \$18,779.16** total funds available.

Our contributions have increased compared to the same 6 month period of 2015 and contributions have increased over the last 6 months between spring 2016 and fall 2016.

Our expenses have decreased compared to the prior 6 month period(spring to fall 2016) and they have decreased from the same 6 month period of 2015.

Some of the higher expenses last year were due to contributions made to Neraasa

We 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 may meet our projected goal for contributions this year if there continues to be a significant push by individual groups to collect and /or contribute more to Area Services.

Over the last 6 months:

- District 1 has 26 registered groups. 8 groups made contributions of \$836
- District 2 has 45 registered groups. 19 groups made contributions of \$3,719.57
- District 3 has 69 registered groups. 20 groups made contributions of \$2,465.48
- District 4 has 61 registered groups. 24 groups made contributions of \$4,471.56
- District 5 has 59 registered groups. 28 groups made contributions of \$3,264.33
- District 6 has 43 registered groups. 14 groups made contributions of \$2,164.28
- (There is one pending active group new group in District 1 and there is 1 pending inactive group in District 6)
- Contributions from anonymous or unidentified donors=\$640.43
- Contribution from 1 group that I was not clear which District they belonged to=\$150
- A 6 month financial report and list of groups of group contributions is available for any member.

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

Respectfully submitted, Treasurer Area 31

Registrar's Report

No report.

Archivist's Report

- Once again "Thank You" for the opportunity to be of service to Area 31 as your Archivist. It is a privilege.
- Since our last Assembly three of our past delegates have donated all of their General Service Conference material to our Area 31 Archives. The task with these documents will be to sort and save all pertinent papers.
- There are also several boxes of documents donated from the most recent and past Round-up's.
- The major task that I have worked on in the past six months is sorting, scanning, copying and filing all of the documents from Neraasa 2016. There is a Neraasa Archives that is kept and updated by the committee and then travels to the next Neraasa committee to do the same. Hopefully the task will be completed before the end of the month and given to the 2017 Neraasa committee in Area 30.
- The Archives Committee is very enthusiastic and a pleasure to be of service with them.
- Please continue to forward your monthly District and Committee Meeting minutes to me at archivist@area31aa.org.
- If you have any items that you would like to donate to your Archives you can contact me at the e-mail above.
- Once again please make sure **who, what, when, where and why** is noted on all documents being saved in our Archives.

Take Care & God Bless

Archivist Area 31

Webmaster's Report

Good afternoon! I have a few notes I want to share with you today. Area Handbook - I want to inform you that the Area Handbook is now online and can be found at area31aa.org/handbook or under the 'Area Documents' menu heading and choose 'Area 31 Handbook & Guidelines'. The online handbook is

formatted as closely to the printed document as possible but deviates occasionally due to the need to keep it simple. This new handbook will be updated in real time as the need arises. There is also a PDF version included for download. Committee minutes – I have received and posted a great number of your minutes and I want to encourage all of the committees, whether standing, ad hoc, or invited to please continue doing so since it allows anyone interested to find out what is going on in the Area through one access point, our website. The committees not present sending their minutes should consider doing so in the future. Reminder that content for the website needs to be emailed to the Webmaster to insure that it gets added to the website. Do not assume that announcing it at the Area meeting will do the job. I base my 'to-do' list on my email inbox! Email – I want to point out that the Area email addresses are a point of contact for your committees from AA members, and the general public and as such should be monitored. If you have any questions or concerns about using these addresses please contact me and I will help to get you comfortable accessing your account. This may be a bit esoteric but there is another feature of the website that may be of interest to you, our website has an RSS feed which can be accessed with a news reader program. Basically, any new posting on the home page is automatically downloaded to your news reader program on an automated schedule with out you having to load your web browser. Here again, if you have any questions contact me and I can help you find and setup the necessary software. Thank you all for your service.

Respectfully submitted Webmaster.

Accessibilities Report

We as a committee started being responsible for having the Where and When printed in large print which has gone over very well locally, and the Berkshire Intergroup has shown an interest in doing it also.

We are involved with bi-weekly meetings and have contacted short & long term rehab facilities.

The committee has been involved in setting up Asl and hearing assist services at Neraasa and the fall assembly

We are looking forward to the Mass state convention where we will have Communication Access in Real Time (CART) services at the big meetings.

Moving forward we will continue to reach out to the District and Area as well as to provide assistance for the deaf community in AA and also the hearing impaired and Spanish speaking translation equipment.

Flyers pertaining to that are available on the website and through the committee..

Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Accessibilities Chair.

C.P.C. Report

- Commitments outside AA.
 1. AIC Cournotes Hall April 20th
 2. Summit Elder Care May 19th 3:00 pm
 3. Springfield Sober High School
 4. Presentation on June 28th @ 12:30 pm with Baystate workers
 5. Mercy Life-Brightside in West Springfield presentation July 20th 3:00 pm

- Upcoming
 1. Elms College October 26th 4:15 pm
 2. AIC November 7th 1:00 pm
 3. NEADCP Conference in Marlboro Ma. November 16th-17th 7:15 am
 4. Dcf Holyoke December 2nd 10:00 am

- Inside AA
 1. Opening meeting of the 2016 Round-up May 20th 7:00pm
 2. Round table discussion May 21st "Staying relevant to the Professional community"
 3. District 5 meeting
 4. Boards to the Enfield Groups anniversary September 10th
 5. Boards to District 2's workshop September 17th
 6. District 2 meeting October 10th
 7. CPC presentation at the Fall assembly.

- Upcoming

1. District 6 October 17th
 2. District 1 possibly October 20th
 3. 2017 Round-up opening meeting.
- Standing Monthly commitments
 - 1Institutions committee
 - Intergroup
 - Radio Show

New Co-Chair in April and again in September

New contact manager in April

Business cards are being printed.

Thank you for allowing me to serve.

CPC Chair.

Grapevine Report

- Grapevine boards have been requested and displayed at several anniversaries, district workshops and the round-up.
- The Co-chair sent a photo of a grapevine she found and received an acknowledgement from AA grapevine
- The committee has been keeping their monthly commitment to the Area meeting
- I would like to make a special thank you to the Co-Chair for all her help and support she has given to the committee and me. Thank you also to the GV committee for their services to AA as a whole.
- The “Grow Your Grapevine Contest” continues through February 2017. Grow your Grapevine cards suggest activities for groups to promote the sale of a subscription. Five prizes will be given out with a total worth of \$2500 by the AA Grapevine Inc. Information regarding the contest is available at aagrapevine.org.
- The Grapevine committee has submitted four “Record Your Story” to the AA Grapevine.

Information on how you can submit your story can be found at aagrapevine.org

- There are new subscription options available. Information regarding these options can be found at aagrapevine.org.
- The Grapevine Committee has voted to order 4 subscriptions and send them to recovery programs in Area 31.
- If your group does not have a Grapevine rep we encourage that you nominate one to join our exciting committee.
- To contact us go to grapevine @area31aa.org.

Thank you,

Grapevine Chair.

P.I Report

- Low participation so I have been filling in.
- Anonymity workshop to outline what AA is and isn't /7th tradition.
- Discussing whether to bring in outside people to tell story.
- Q/A How do I know/sponsorship and do you provide pamphlets
- How to do different languages at commitments.
- Looking into a Ad care commitment twice a month.

Archives Report

- Co-Chair stepped down
- On pace for 28 anniversaries this year for the boards to be brought to.
- Looking into upgrading the boards. And getting Spanish speaking AA's involved.
- Outreach to districts to have group history forms filled out.
- Question regarding can members go to the service days and listen to cd's.

Website Committee Report

The general goals for 2016.

- Increasing general awareness of the existence and purpose of the website.
- Increasing submissions of minutes, event flyers and calendar items from committees and districts
- Contributing to wider area and regional discussions about AA on line.

Since our last Area Assembly we have:

- Developed a flyer for committees, districts and area officers explaining how to get material posted on the site and answering some frequently asked questions about formatting and content.
- Visited several committees and districts to spread the word about the Area 31 website.
- Discussed ways of supporting the work of our Webmaster, under two headings
 1. Providing help with routine tasks like making sure everything we post adheres to the AA traditions.
 2. Considering compensation, as several other Areas provide, for projects and hours that go well beyond normal service work.
- Worked with the Webmaster on putting the 2016 handbook on the site, both as a robust and searchable set of web pages, and as a downloadable pdf. We have also developed a format to show any changes made in the Handbook by the Area Committee or the Area Assembly.

We continue to discuss.

- Making our sections of the website, as well as our brochure, accessible to the Spanish speaking community.
- Supporting and advising our Webmaster as he works on transitioning the site to the latest version of our content management system(Drupal 8).

Join us.

The Website committee **warmly welcomes group reps.** Our meetings have had as many as six and as few as zero. We usually have one or two. Groups may not know that the Website Committee exists, or may think that it's work is fairly cut and dried and usually not technical at all. Our discussions are about AA Steps and Traditions and about how anonymity and other principles work in the online world that is increasingly important to our area and our fellowship as a whole. Our best discussions happen when a new rep comes in with fresh eyes and fresh ideas.

Enormous thanks to the Webmaster, Committee Co-chair and to the group reps who help carry the message of service online. Come join us.

Round-Up Report

- June 9,10 and 11 2017
- Save The date and program being put on the website
- Audio is all set.
- Created job descriptions
- The program is in both English and Spanish.
- 4pm Friday registration begins.

Institutions Report

- 375 meetings a month in 35 facilities about 15 open commitments 5 of which are correctional institutions
- Northern Hope in Green field, Liberty Preparatory Academy in Springfield and Swift River in Cummington
- Reviewed guideline and made a couple of changes in regards to voting privileges and job descriptions
- BTG and Librarian resigned
- BTG is down to about 1/3rd of the calls received making it to meetings. The remaining calls were unreachable or looking for information. Even had one that was looking for a job. I think it's clear that we need to do a better job at explaining and promoting the BTG program.

- Donation are up by \$2400 since the spring assembly bringing total donations over the past 6 months to \$13,280.52
- 3 members have been working on putting together an Institutions workshop

Western Mass Intergroup Report

Thank you to the groups. Donations have increased and it helps make possible all the things WMIG does!

- May- sold literature at round-up and held discussion about conference approved literature

June

- July - District 4 workshop on 7th traditions and how donations to intergroup are used.

- August- sold literature at Myscypaa

Super awesome picnic with awesome participation with groups to the raffle

- September - the treasurer stepped down due to lack of time to dedicate to the position and a new treasurer Ron was elected

The office Manager was able to renegotiate contract with Crocker Communications to lower the phone service monthly fee by \$25. Our goal is to try and find ways to cut costs to better make sure we are getting literature into the hands and answering the phones for people who need it! Thank you to the groups for doing well with phone coverage to make this possible.

Quick announcement that next month we will be selecting Christmas alcathon slots and a rep from your group needs to be in attendance. Also the Christmas kids party is going to be on December 17th from 1-3pm at 474 Pleasant.

Thank you!

Berkshire Intergroup Report

- We welcomed a new office Manager.
- We planned a service workshop at the Lenox community Center with district 3. Our topic for the workshop was the importance of Sponsorship. We had around 70 AA's and was a great success.
- We've had discussions about reducing our total funds. No decision has been made yet.
- Our new website(berkshireaa.intergroup.org) went live in April.
- 2 of our officers and others attended the Round-up in may.
- At the June meeting we didn't have a quorum. We're asking for support from all Berkshire groups.
- Berkshire When and Were was updated.

- We have been discussing how to get unlit meetings to participate in AA service. We have visited some meetings and found little or no interest in participating.
- Berkshire Institutions also needs support.
- In September we replaced our copier with a reconditioned one which includes a service contract.
- I attended the District 3 September meeting to discuss how we might work together to inform the unlit meetings about the advantages of service participation and how that benefits AA as a whole.
- Since April participation at our monthly meeting has been down.
- At our last meeting we approved funding of the Christmas and New year's Alkathons in Pittsfield.

Gratefully submitted Chair and Co- chair Berkshire Intergroup.

WMYPAA Report

- Some events since the Spring assembly.
- We had a movie night that was not self supporting.
- We had a bonfire that was self supporting.
- Doing outreach to groups.
- Putting on a dance October 21st. at 474 Pleasant st.
- 6 people at our last meeting
- November 19th will have a group inventory.

Ad-Hoc Committee for Area Inventory Report

Thanks to the Area Chair for asking me to serve as chair of the Area Inventory Ad Hoc Committee. I also want to thank all the committee members for their contributions. It is a joy to participate in this thoughtful group.

The purpose of this committee is to:

1. Prioritize the issues that arose from our Area's inventory last fall, and

2. Make recommendations to the Area Committee to address the issues.

We meet at 6:15 the first Thursday of every month at 474 Pleasant St before the “What a Concept” meeting. Our committee is composed of an Area Officer, an Invited Committee member, a Standing Committee member, 3 District Committee Members, 2 General Service Representatives and 2 members at large. We have met six times since the Spring Assembly.

We began our work with a discussion of the purpose of the Area. After all, our primary purpose is to stay sober and help others to achieve sobriety. How does the Area structure do that? Certainly service to AA in the area has helped me stay sober! As for helping others, the area provides services that each group couldn't do on its own. The area fills PI and CPC commitments, coordinates services that help members access meetings that they wouldn't otherwise be able to attend, maintains our history and a website with essential service information. It also provides a place for all the area's service bodies to communicate so we can cooperate carrying the message. For example the Institutions committee and CPC collaborate to serve both the staff and clients at various facilities. The Area committee also helps us connect to AA as a whole whether by the essential Group to GSR to DCM to Delegate to GSO two way communication chain, or the distribution of the Grapevine. We also provide a place to learn more about the Traditions and Concepts. The area does a lot! How can we do it better? “[Omitted from the report because of time]

We got to work. We have identified the overarching issues and concerns that were identified last fall.

Our area's strengths are:

- Enthusiasm: Service is attractive at every level.

- Participation: The area supports the activities of the districts and committees. District workshops provide opportunities for members in their districts to get active
- Cooperation: Important information is shared at the monthly meetings. The spirit of rotation is respected. The 7th tradition is discussed.

Opportunities for improvement in our area are:

- Communication: It is one way, not enough, too much, the wrong kind, and it's all alphabet soup!
- Confusion about events: How does it all work together? What's the difference between the Convention and the Conference, between NERAASA and NERF, and how do workshops fit in?
- Workshops: What is a workshop? How do you host it?
- Things get dropped panel to panel: The focus of the various committees changes. District formats go missing, or are used inconsistently. How do we "Pass It On"?
- Lack of training for positions: The "learn as you go" model takes time and there is a lot of turnover. There is a lack of clarity regarding the commitments required by various positions. How do you know what's "important" for a report?
- Too many groups: This creates a lack of representation in service bodies and reduces participation in 7th Tradition.
- Respect time: It takes time to get the work done. We need to limit distractions, off-topic discussions, and reduce redundancy

From this our committee has identified two issues about which we feel we can make recommendations.

These recommendations will be brought to the Area Committee for consideration as they are developed.

Depending on the nature of the recommendations and the decisions of the Area Committee, they may or may not be brought to this body for a vote.

The issues we are going to tackle are:

1. "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. We will be developing a questionnaire for the area committee members so we can develop and recommend a procedure that can help.
2. Job descriptions of the members of the standing committees. Our Area Handbook has job descriptions for the area officers, DCMs and GSRs. There are descriptions of the standing committees, but there is no description for the group representative herself. Because the descriptions will vary from standing committee to standing committee, we will need input from you.

So you can expect to hear from us soon!

District 1 Report

No report.

District 2 Report

- Averaging about 10-15 GSR's and Alt's at the meetings.
- GSR volunteers summarize the concept and service manual chapter of the month at each meeting.
- Our Co-DCM chaired the round-up commitment which he said went very well.
- We spent a lot of time planning and hosting a workshop on participation, in September, which was a great success,

- Our last meeting the CPC Chair held an information session on the CPC committee, and we would like to say thank you to him for that, it was very informative.

Thank you DCM District 2.

District 3 Report

- We learned at spring assembly that some districts are self-supporting (pass the basket).
 - Our district presented (4:00p.m. meeting on 21 May) at the Area31 Roundup on the topic "The AA Traditions And What They Mean To Us". Three GSR's stepped up to the plate to put this together!
 - Our attention was drawn to absence of DCM from Berkshire Intergroup monthly meeting. There was also a reminder that home groups would benefit by having a representative at this meeting.
 - Someone suggested it might be helpful to have a bullet list of support from the area committee to the district and groups.
 - Considerable interest in copy of Area31 treasurer's report:
 - Plug for access to information available on our Area31 web page (area31aa.org)
 - Co-DCM elected. Welcome!
 - There were three service reps mentioning problems with cell phones in their meeting.
 - In cooperation with Berkshire Intergroup, District 3 held a service day on September 10 in Lenox. (Agenda topics: sponsorship, importance of home group). Well attended and went off smoothly – everyone there helped carry the AA message. Thank you to speakers and all who helped out.
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District 4 Report

- I would like to thank the Co –DCM for his support and dedication

- I would also like to thank and recognize the GSR's from district 4 (Please Stand) this is your district, you make it what it is and your service is much appreciated.
- I'm happy to say we were able to organize a service workshop held at the Grapevine in Greenfield on August 13th.The topics were our 4th and 7th traditions. I would love to see workshops held here as Greenfield is centrally located to the relatively large geographical District. The participation from Greenfield groups could be greater also and perhaps that would help.
- Speaking of the 7th tradition contributions, I've been keeping an eye on the area treasurer's reports each month and there has been significant increases in donations compared to last year, so thanks to the GSR's for carrying the message back to the groups.
- Members of the District also stepped up to chair meetings at Neraasa and the Round-up.
- Some things we have tried to do well are keeping a consistent agenda, and picking an interesting or pertinent reading and keeping the meeting on track.
- Our meeting typically lasts about 1.5 hours which feels more manageable than in the past.
- We've struggled a bit with the secretary position after ours stepped down, but once again several GSR's stepped up to take minutes at each meeting and send them to the website afterwards.
- We have also visited most of our unknown groups and have been able to get them reconnected by submitting new contact info to the Registrar.
- We are having elections next month by way of third legacy voting which is always a blessing to be a part of. We will be looking to elect our next Co-DCM as I am rotating out.
- It has been an honor to serve and I have learned a lot and grown from the experiences so I hope the GSR's who are here will consider standing for the job next month.
- Thank you!

District 5 Report

- In the last 6 months the District has experienced a few changes and also something's have remained the same.
- In May we sponsored a workshop titled "Recovery, Unity and Service" and held it at our monthly District meeting. It was well attended with 14 GSR's in attendance,2 of which were from groups that previously did not have A GSR and they are still attending. We also had area service folks there and AA's who came to learn about AA service. We had many pamphlets and other related literature along with birthday envelopes to give away.
- To make our monthly meeting more about dialog friendly rather than a monologue meeting we have implemented some changes to the format.
 1. We have a more enthusiastic agenda.
 2. We have invited various committees to join us and talk about their committees work.

3. Along with the reading from the service manual we do a question of the month as well.

These questions have brought back great discussions at the next meetings.

We use the traditions and concepts checklist at the meeting and asked the GSR's to bring them back to their home groups.

- Our Co-DCM stepped down over the Summer and the LCM stepped up to fill the vacancy.
- We have added 2 new GSR's that came from previously inactive groups from Brimfield.
- We had 2 groups ask for and receive service commitments from the Area committee.
- We are posting all of our documents on our page on the website.
- We encourage all GSR's to bring their alternates if they have one and reminded the GSR's to have their group Treasurers to put their group number on the checks they send in when they PIE out there contributions.
- We are also working on a workshop for some time in January.
- While we tried to increase the amount of GSR's and groups that participate in the District we did not add any but we did keep working on reachout to the groups that are not represented.
- The enthusiasm of our GSR's and committee members is high and a pleasure to be involved with.

Thank you

District 5 DCM.

District 6 Report

- There are 42 groups in district 6 and roughly 15 were represented by GSR's this year. That is about 37%.
- We have created an outreach plan that allowed us to visit 9 new groups with 14 left to visit.
- Combining groups that came to district meetings and those we visited we have connected with 60% of the groups.
- While there is more to be done, the District all participated in outreach which is and continues to be unifying.
- We now have a momentum that we can continue.

Delegates Report

- The results of the Conference Inventory are in and on the back table. Please peruse through it and see the 3 years of work and effort that was put into helping to keep our fellowship healthy.

- The conference report is also on the back table , so please take a copy with you and DCM's please take back to your districts for the GSR's who may not be here.
- There is also a Neraasa flyer for the 2017 Neraasa.
- 37% of groups from Area 31 contributed \$14,000
- Receiving questions from Delegates about what past delegates roles are here in area 31.
- Shared our handbook with the Delegate from area 57 Oklahoma
- There are 11 items on the agenda for the April conference including reducing lavina printing.

Alternate Delegate Report

- The handbook is out and I have used it for my position
- The Area sponsors the Traditions and Concepts meeting each month because we cannot do this alone and we all need to be involved and they are a great help for me.
- If you are rolling out of a position let the Area Chair know so you can rotate in somewhere else and stay involved and active.
- The mass state convention is coming up
- The young people in the area have helped me change my thinking by looking at things differently, so support WMYPAA whether you are young or young at heart.

Area Chair Report

- Acknowledged and thanked the Districts and Committees for all their hard work and service to the area and AA the past 6 months
- Expressed the gratitude that fills her heart when she sees the dedication of the people of the area and their efforts to pass on the message through service and to help those who are suffering from this deadly disease.

Old Business

- None

New Business

- Election of a nominee from Area 31 for the position being vacated this April by the Trustee at Large US.
- 2 of our past delegates stood for it and the voting went to the Hat as they received almost an equal vote total each round.
- The area voted unanimously to support a letter from a member of area 31's deaf community who submitted background information to GSO in support of a pamphlet for the AA deaf community.

The Assembly ended with the "I am responsible" pledge at 4:05pm.