

AREA 31

SPRING ASSEMBLY MINUTES

28 APRIL 2019

Area Chair opened the meeting at 10:03 AM with the Serenity Prayer, and a reading from chapter 5 of the service manual.

Quorum call

45 voting members in attendance.

Secretary's Report

Secretary read old and new business from Fall Assembly 2018 and a motion was made to accept the report, seconded and passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

This report will capture 6 months activity from the Fall Assembly 2018 to Spring Assembly 2019

Opening balance for Oct. 2018 was **\$4,579.52**. Contributions for the past six months totaled **\$16,028.88**. Area expenses totaled **\$18,132.43**. The closing balance was **\$2,407.76** plus Prudent Reserve: **\$8,500** = **\$10,907.76** Total funds available.

Our contributions have increased compared to the same 6-month period of 2018 (\$13,087.33). Our expenses have decreased from the same 6-month time period of 2017 (\$18,239.64). Given where we are in the calendar year, we will not meet our projected goal (\$30,000) 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 District/Area and GSO levels.

Over the last 6 months:

- District 1 20 contributions for a total of \$1,621.96
- District 2 30 contributions for a total of \$3,577.75
- District 3 35 contributions for a total of \$2,187.17
- District 4 33 contributions for a total of \$3,204.44
- District 5 27 contributions for a total of \$2,541.85
- District 6 27 contributions for a total of \$1,728.83

Contributions from anonymous donors - partially or unidentified groups = \$1,616.71

****Attached to this report is the 6-month financial report and a list of contributions to the Area for the last 6 months.**

Thank you for your continued support/contributions to Area 31, and thank you for this opportunity to serve Area 31

Respectfully submitted,

Treasurer Area 31

Registrar's Report

I will summarize the definition of what a Registrar does from Handbook,

Regularly updates area group information with the help of the DCMs and GSRs in a database of group information that is managed by GSO called FNV-fellowship new vision-provides current and updated info on groups to the DCMs/GSRs-collects and updates Area Committee officer and member info reports monthly and at spring and Fall Assembly

My main objective is to keep group information current

I also connect regularly with the Records Department at GSO

We currently have 303 Active Groups in Area 31, Groups with current and updated contact info and are presumably still meeting, both with and without GSR's

1 -pending active group- it is a new group.

11 unknown groups-groups with invalid contact information either because they are no longer active or have outdated info. This information has been passed onto DCM's for verification purposes- It is the districts responsibility to find and update these groups appropriately. We had 12 in January and now have 11 thanks to district verification.

7, merged group-2 or more groups that has joined to form 1 group

0 new groups

My goal this year is to continue to co-ordinate with Districts and GSRs in keeping the Database known as FNV (Fellowship New Vision) updated. I hope to smooth the transition for our Area as we go live with the new database – ERP (Enterprise resource planning) system that will be called the Customer Relationship Management system-C.R.M. –that is replacing the old FNV we currently us-The GO Live date is currently pushed to an unknown date.

Area 31 registrar

Archivist's Report

During the last weekend of February, it was my privilege to attend NERAASA and represent Area 31 at the Archives Roundtables that met on Friday and Saturday evening. There were Archivist and Archives Chairs from several areas in the Northeast Region. Most of the topics are the same every year.

Topics Discussed:

- Each Area has to decide if it wants to be a just collection or a history of our past.
- Take the value out of your display by making copies.

- Digitizing archival material continues to be ongoing.
- There are guidelines of questions that you might ask when taking an oral history. It is also recommended that the history be written. Paper is still the longest lasting archival material
- Don't forget to make copies.
- It is recommended in the Archives Guidelines that the Archivist not rotate every two years. Most of the Archivists at the roundtable were appointed. Some to be reappointed every 2 or 4 years by the incoming chair. Some have a vote at assemblies and some do not. Experience varies but knowledge of AA in your Area is essential.
- Old documents should not be photo copied. The light will damage the paper. There is a process called contact copying that does not use a light or scanning and will not damage documents.
- Don't forget to make copies.
- The date your group was started can be determined by the group number.
- The date your group registered is probably around the time it started.
- Leave group histories out at assemblies. If there is missing or incorrect information someone will correct it.
- Don't forget to make copies and give one back to the group.

In November I was given an AA Big Book from someone at the MA State Convention. This is the perfect example of something that would be listed as part of a collection.

Last month I was given a First Edition/Eleventh Printing of the AA Big Book from a member in Area 31. This is a perfect example of archival material from Area 31. The difference between the second and the eleventh printing is amazing.

Sorting and filing archival material is an ongoing and never-ending challenge.

We have a very enthusiastic Archives Committee and it is a joy to be of service with them.

Respectfully Submitted

Take Care & God Bless

Area Archivist

Whenever a society or civilization perishes there is always one condition present; they forgot where they came from. — Carl Sandburg

Webmaster's Report

Over the past six months there has been very little of significance to report but discussions are ongoing on the topic of updates to the website. As a result of the fact that Drupal 8 still doesn't have a calendar of the type we need I am leaning in the direction of moving the website software to Wordpress.

With the cooperation of Intergroup I created a sub-domain for the Area 31 meeting list and this allowed for Area 31 to be represented on the 'Meeting Guide' app for your smart phone. It also added map and directions capabilities for the Intergroup meeting list.

Last but not least, I experienced a hard drive crash at the end of March. If you had submitted minutes or flyers only to the webmaster email address and they are not posted on the website, please resubmit them, sending them to webpost@area31aa.org.

A reminder, please stick to the submission guidelines when submitting minutes and flyers, no last names, personal phone numbers or personal email addresses can be posted on the area website

Thank you for letting me serve.

Respectfully submitted

Area 31 Webmaster

Accessibilities Report

- Through the first four months of 2019, the Accessibilities Committee has received input from 14 members, responded to 4 referrals and conducted 2 Big Book meetings at the home of a bed-ridden member.
- Three initiatives have been undertaken:
 - 1 Make it easier for people to “access” Accessibility services when going online
 - 2 Expand outreach to enlist more volunteers, a sign up sheet is available
 - 3 Spread the word through our literature by way of updating the flyer, the services offered has expanded since the last revision and the language describing the barriers is pejorative

Area 31 Accessibilities Chair

Archives Report

- The committee has added content to the Area 31 website including meeting minutes and group history forms
- The committee is working on group histories and has a goal of listing all groups that currently have a history on the Area 31 website
- The committee is working with the Mass State Convention planning committee
- The archives boards were displayed at the Agawam Big Book meeting, the Amherst Monday night Group, the Pioneer Valley Group, the Randall group, and the Singleness of Purpose Group
- The committee is working on a bus trip to GSO, tentatively in September
- The committee is working on a painted history tree as well as the possibility of a digital one on our website
- The Archivist is compiling a spreadsheet of all the groups that we have a history of so that groups will know if a history exists. Currently there are approximately 50 histories and 400 groups

C.P.C. Report

- Added group members, could still use more

- Preparing for the round up, found speaker, sending out invitations
- Discussed LinkedIn report
- Waiting to hear back from DCF
- Hoping to reach out to local nursing programs

CPC Chair

Grapevine Report

Good afternoon. I'm currently serving as Chair of the A31 GV/LV Committee since Jan 2019. Honored to participate at this level during the BB's 80th year and the GV's 75th year. We meet monthly for an hour on the first Tuesday of the month at 474 Pleasant St. in Holyoke at 730p. During the last four meetings, we mostly greeted 13-14 new GV Reps and oriented them about their roles and responsibilities in order to serve their groups. They have been empowered with the notion that the monthly magazine is our contemporary tool in the spiritual tool kit. They also know that they each represent both GV Reps and La Vina reps to attract subscriptions and foster sobriety for members who speak another language, namely Spanish.

Myself, the co-chair and two other committee members attended NERAASA 2019 in MD in a van pool organized by our Area Committee. It was a great chance to meet and interact with other area chairs and co-chairs interested in serving GV & LV then and going forward. Our own Committee members have been informed about all that was discussed there at both nights of the Round Tables and we are constantly learning more thanks to the ongoing conversations we are having about the GV/LV as well as from our exposure to the vast aagrapevine.org website.

2019 is the 75th anniversary of the GV. Committee members have been made aware of the possibilities of planning an event to commemorate this historic occasion. We have no plans to share at this time however, more will be revealed as ideas and venues come into focus. Please feel free to email us at grapevine@area31aa.org with your ideas. We will be focusing on those efforts in the upcoming months.

As always, we invite your home group members' participation on the committee not only as GV LV reps but also for their contributions, especially this 75th anniversary year. Please share in your home groups that our committee is looking for a Secretary who can take the minutes once a month during the meeting which is ultimately sent out by the Chairperson from the committee's email account (grapevine@area31aa.org) for our committee members' records as well as to A31's Secretary and Webmaster. We continue to monitor our Area 31 grapevine email account for requests from Home Groups to carry & display the GV/LV boards to their Anniversaries. So far, we have visited 4 group anniversaries with them.

The Committee continues to discuss the idea of using the weekly radio show in the context of Tradition 11 – weighing the value of attraction not promotion in order to draw awareness to the Grapevine & La Vina.

The idea has also been presented at the March 2019 Area 31 meeting to the PI Chair & Co-Chair.

I'd like to thank our committee members and our co-chair, for their support & service because I don't have to be alone in this!

Any questions?

Thank you for your service & your sobriety. Kind Regards,

Grapevine Chair

P.I Report.

- Attended NERAASA and came back excited, Area 31 is doing well and is the only area that has in person commitments
- There are 15 active members
- Started a commitment to the Section 35 program at the Mill St facility

- Started a commitment to the Section 35 program at the Hampden County house of Corrections in Ludlow
- Continue to put on the radio show "People Helping People" on WHLL 1450 AM
- Continued Commitments at Adcare (3 groups), Mill St. Recovery Theater, the Northampton IOP and the Second Offender's Class
- Added commitments to Easthampton High School and the Michael Smith Middle School in South Hadley
- Continue to maintain literature racks around the area, filling them with AA pamphlets
- Working on getting an AA Public Service Announcement on the radio and WHLL 1450 AM has agreed to air the PSA
- Looking for AA members living in the Berkshires (District 3) to join the committee and assist in getting commitments there

Website Committee Report

Since Oct., Outgoing chairperson rolled out and the incoming chairperson rolled in. We started the year with a new Co-Chair but are now in search for a new one. Meetings have averaged about 3-5 attendees, me, the Webmaster and our new Group Rep from Belchertown Saturday Night. The handbook editor frequents about every other to give us updates and find out about any changes to the handbook. The area officers have been doing their jobs – rotating each month between the three of them. We have had some visits from the accessibilities committee that resulted in the accessibility hotline becoming front and center on the area website page as our primary purpose is to help the sick and suffering alcoholic find sobriety.

So far, the website committee has updated their boards, reprinted the pamphlet, and discussed becoming less dependent on paper. Both Bob and I are planning on attending the NAATW in September. We both attended NERAASA and I found out that most areas don't have a separate area website but we are all using technology to spread the message.

Thank you for allowing me to serve,

Website Chairperson

Round-Up Report

- The 50th Area 31 Round Up is on track
- The committee has met 4 times
- The Round Up will be held at the Clarion Hotel located at 1080 Riverdale Rd West Springfield MA
- The Round Up will begin at 4 pm on Friday
- The CPC committee will open the Round Up
- There will be two performances of the Twelve Traditions skit
- Alanon will participate
- Contributions of AA literature, coffee, and snacks are still being accepted

- Volunteers are still welcome
- The committee meets every second Wednesday of the month at 6 pm at 474 Pleasant St Holyoke MA
- Registrations are available today for \$15, dinner is \$25, and the dance is \$10

Combining GSO and Grape Vine Ad Hoc Committee

- Met in January
- Past trustee visited and discussed the “plan”
- Met in March and was visited by another past trustee who answered questions
- The next meeting will be in May

Berkshire Intergroup

- There were five intergroup representatives at the last meeting
- Things are going well
- The office is increasing the number of volunteers and there are two new volunteers now
- Sales are good
- The office is in need of a new computer
- Contributions were down last month
- The prudent reserve for the office may be increased
- The Berkshire Institutions Committee is doing well but missed a few commitments and has five open commitments
- The Berkshire website will continue for another year at a cost of \$168

Institutions Report

Over the past 6 months your contributions have purchased \$9,929 of literature for those who cannot get out to a meeting due to institutionalization, hospitalization, or other treatment or circumstances.

While each month we on average take a meeting or two off the open meeting list there are still 41 open meetings available and you can help us.

Crucially, bridging the gap connects those who are coming out of these locations where we take meetings and volunteers to get people introduced to meetings in their area.

Western Mass Intergroup Report

The Western Mass Intergroup Provides the following services:

1. Fully Staffed bookstore
2. 24 hour informational and crisis hot line
3. Updated website with online meeting list now using the meeting guide format
4. Monthly intergroup meeting on the second Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm at 474 Pleasant St in Holyoke
5. Area 31 Meeting List
6. Bookie exchange meeting to allow groups to set up incoming and outgoing commitments
7. An FYI newsletter
8. Free Annual picnic at the Moose Family Center on Fuller Rd in Chicopee on August 25th from 11am to 5pm
9. Sponsor of the Christmas alcathon and the Children's Christmas party with Santa and gifts for the children
10. The Intergroup is in the black financially thanks to your generous donations
11. New AA book "Our Great Responsibility" by AA World Services Talks by Bill W should be out in May

WMYPAA Report

- Lost NECYPAA bid, rebidding for next year
- Poetry slam was a success, cookout next event tentatively in May at Stanley Park
- Hoping to host kickball with Rhode Island
- Went to Rhode Island for a commitment
- Hosting 3 commitments (hope center, providence, McGee)
- Meet last Sunday at 3 and 2nd Saturday at 3 providence hospital
- Have around 25 members

District 1 Report

- Attendance down at the district meeting from 12-14 to 4-5 GSRs
- Voted in a new Co-DCM and alternate chairing the district meeting
- Groups are reporting that they are doing well
- Four groups report that they make contributions as recommended in the PIE chart in the Area Handbook on a monthly basis
- One group reports that they make contributions as recommended in the PIE chart in the Area Handbook on a bi-annual basis
- A meeting in the district has moved and reported improved attendance
- DCM and Co-DCM attend non-represented groups and are looking for ideas to attract GSRs

- Planning on a district workshop in September

District 1 DCM

District 2 Report

- 12-15 GSRs attend the district meeting
- Co-DCM gathers GSR information quickly
- The tradition and concept of the month are summarized at the meeting
- Enthusiastic discussion about group issues most recently Safety and the Yellow card

DCM District 2

District 3 Report

- District has implemented a suggestion from the NERAASA roundtable to increase meeting attendance by serving refreshments at the district meeting
- The district had a lively discussion about inclusiveness, the group conscience regarding people who come to AA but do not express that they have a desire to stop drinking, and AA's singleness of purpose at the April meeting, the discussion is expected to continue at the next district meeting
- The district is working with Berkshire Intergroup to develop a speaker meeting exchange with the idea of promoting participation and unity
- The district is hoping to coordinate with Berkshire Intergroup to improve Bridging-the-Gap, which the district feels could be redesigned in Berkshire County to really be effective in helping people get to meeting right out of an institution

District 3 DCM

District 4 Report

- Attendance is approximately 8-10 GSRs and alternates with about 5 groups in the district represented depending on the month
- Beginning in January, the district started having a member discuss their experience with the tradition or concept of the month
- The GSRs are bringing healthy question/discussion topics such as:
 - Can someone who doesn't identify as an alcoholic chair a meeting?
 - Why have meetings become less welcoming to the newcomer?
 - Is a simple majority/close vote a group conscience at a big meeting?
 - How to handle children at meetings?
 - How can existing GSRs help new groups if they should at all?
 - Should new groups check in with nearby groups before they start?
- The groups are contributing as recommended by the PIE chart

Co-DCM district 4

District 5 Report

- The district has 30 active GSRs with 9 to 19 in attendance
- Most groups reporting that they contribute as recommended by the PIE chart quarterly
- Most of the groups have the group positions filled but not the committees
- There is a lack of participation in service positions
- Service sponsorship seems to be down
- Some groups are struggling to pay rent

District 5 DCM

District 6 Report

- The district has an LCM and a secretary
- There are 43 active groups, 8 to 9 GSRs attend the district meeting
- The DCM, Co-DCM, and LCM are working to improve this turnout
- Groups have good attendance, positions filled, and commitments met
- The workshop location and time are to be determined probably in June or July
- Will ask the GSRs about donations

DCM District 6

Delegates Report

- Honored and privileged to serve as your delegate
- Service is not convenient but it is rewarding
- There have been questions about the mini-conference format
- Frequent complaints about it to the delegate
- The percent of self-support at the General Service Office will be down this year due to paying bills ahead of time including the new computer system
- There has been a 2.2 % increase in contributions so far in 2019

- The Northeast Regional Forum (NERF) often called the AA roadshow will be held in Tarrytown NY from May 31st to June 2nd
- A new AA book "Our Great Responsibility" will be available soon, it is the first new AA book in 30 years
- The "Meeting Guide" app is up and running and Italy and France are on board
- New section of the AA app called "News" used for the General Service Office to communicate directly with AA members
- Preparation for the General Service Conference is underway and attendance at the "What a Concept" meeting helps
- See you at the Round Up on June 15th

Alternate Delegate Report

- Privileged to be here
- GSO says there is an urgent need to write to people in corrections correspondence service
- Serving as the "Chair of the Program Committee" for the Mass State Convention
- There is a feeling that the Mass State Convention is too structured and has too much focus on the General Service Conference, past topics made the convention too much like NERAASA, there should be recovery topics rather than service topics, recovery can come from the heart, the entertainment committee has been expanded to increase options at the convention
- The Mass State Convention Planning committee has reached out to the Spanish language community for feedback
- Looking into an alternate activity during the old timer's lunch
- Offer food in the Worcester room for early arrivals
- Will research other state or area conventions for ideas
- The Mass State Convention planning committee meets on the last Tuesday of every other month, the next meeting is on June 4th, the committee would like information from the delegate on the theme for the July 30th meeting
- Carpools meet at the bowling alley on Burnett Rd in Chicopee at 6pm.

Area Chair Report

The Area 31 Committee has been doing its work these last 6 months. We set up an ad hoc committee to look at the GSO consolidation issue. Our Committees and Districts have been busy carrying out their responsibilities to help ensure the next sick and suffering alcoholic has a place to go.

We rented a van to bring members to NERAASA and had a comprehensive look at the new bridge over the Hudson. Area 31 had a tremendous showing at NERAASA especially considering the distance. NERAASA is a valuable resource for our growth both in our current service positions and our future positions. I would like to thank the groups for their generous contributions that allow us to assist area servants in this endeavor each year as well as keeping the committees and districts funded for all of their activities.

These past months have also brought about much discussion regarding our assemblies and how the locations are decided. This is our 3rd assembly outside of Holyoke and prior to that Chicopee in the last 15 years or more. We had an opportunity for change created by a fire in the facility in Holyoke last year and we decided to rotate the assemblies throughout the districts. While this is not a requirement, I will be looking to District 6 for the fall assembly. And a big thanks to District 3 for hosting this assembly. They did a great job with enthusiasm and vigor. For informational purposes, the past 2 Mini conferences had attendance of 99 and 102 respectively. Yesterday we had 132 participants and an astounding 51 from the host District 3. I think it is clear that continuing the practice of rotating our assemblies through the districts is something we should embrace.

Area Unity has been a recurring theme in this panel and rotating the assemblies has helped to be sure. We are also discussing the possibility of having a Skype style concept meeting with district 3 more to be revealed on that one.

The concept meeting hosted by the area on the first Thursday of each month is experiencing an increase of participation and is a terrific place to read, share and listen to learn about what the concepts are and how they apply to our service in AA.

The Area also hosts a service manual meeting on the third Wednesday of the month and that could use some support. Both meetings meet at 7:30 PM and are at 474 Pleasant St in Holyoke.

If your group would like to do a group inventory and is looking to contact one of our many past delegates to facilitate it, I can help with connecting them.

Also, if your group would like to have a service commitment brought into your group by the area committee, I would be the contact for that as well.

My contact info is.....

I would like to thank all of you for coming out this weekend and to thank you for my sobriety and the opportunity to serve. This position of area chair is a great honor and privilege as is everything I have the opportunity to do in AA. So, thank you all!

Area 31 Chair

Recount for voting =57

Old Business

- None

New Business

- Question: Do we need a motion to continue to rotate the location of the assembly?
- Motion was made to “Amend the area guidelines so that we continue to rotate the area assemblies throughout the districts”, seconded and discussed
- The motion was amended as follows “Amend the Area Handbook where necessary to encourage the Area Chairperson to rotate the location of the Area Assembly throughout the districts”
- The question was called and carried with substantial unanimity, the minority opinion was requested and no votes changed, the motion carried
- The motion will have to be voted on again at the Fall Assembly
- Motion to close the meeting, seconded and carried at 1:04 pm

The Assembly ended with the “Declaration of Unity”