

AREA 31
FALL ASSEMBLY MINUTES
13 OCTOBER 2019

Area Chair opened the meeting at 1:05 PM with the Serenity Prayer, and a reading from chapter 4 of the service manual "The Area Assembly.

Quorum call

52 voting members in attendance.

Secretary's Report

Secretary read old and new business from Spring Assembly 2019 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 Spring Assembly 2019 to the Fall Assembly 2019

Opening balance for April 2019 was **\$2,407.02** Contributions for the past six months totaled **\$14,040.40**. Area expenses totaled **\$12,104.25**. The closing balance was **\$4,343.91** plus Prudent Reserve: **\$8,500 = \$12,843.91** 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 11 contributions for a total of \$1,283.08
- District 2 21 contributions for a total of \$3,460.19
- District 3 15 contributions for a total of \$1,602.58
- District 4 17 contributions for a total of \$2,353.99
- District 5 22 contributions for a total of \$2,506.48
- District 6 12 contributions for a total of \$1,894.48

Contributions from anonymous donors - partially or unidentified groups = \$939.92

****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

My name is Sonja and I am the area 31 Registrar. I am responsible for registering AA groups in Area 31 with our General Service Office, GSO, in New York. I keep this data updated with the help of District Committee Members, DCM's and Group Service Reps-GSR's. I also provide group information to the DCM's and GSR's so they can in turn keep their groups and districts updated. I register the GSR's and Area Committee members. I keep Area information updated in cooperation with the Area Secretary.

There happened to be a time of data base restructuring as I entered this position. My time in this position has been both exciting and character building. I am honored to serve Area 31 in this way as we begin our transition into bigger and better technology. The hope is that we will be better able, and faster, to serve those in need of us.

The old Data Base formerly known as Fellowship New Vision or FNV, will be taken off line next week on October 18th. I will still be keeping all the information updated through the Records Department until the new data base goes live sometime in the first quarter of 2020. Then I will have access to the new system. GSO and the Records Dept. are implementing online training for all 93 Area Registrars at some point in the meantime. I gratefully await access to the new technology being provided because our old system was so old and lumbering that I can safely say anything will be a great improvement. I am confident many other Area Registrars around North America feel the same way.

I would like to briefly answer a question that is most often posed to me in this position. Why should I register my group? As a note to myself from last Spring Assembly I wrote to speak on unity and the service structure that I am part of as our legacy and then, our very kind Area Chair reminded me, the very heart of everything we do is to reach the still sick and suffering alcoholic. He also mentioned brevity. So I will leave you with some snippets of information I gleaned from the Alcoholic Anonymous website, aa.org, and then state some of our data. I will then let you do your thinking, yourself, because honestly that is what works best for most of us.

I connect Groups, through GSR's ,to GSO-

Our Twelfth Step-

G.S.O.-

To best speak about the concept of unity and its importance within our movement I will read our Declaration of Unity;

We currently have in Area 31

303 groups listed as active, This means groups with current contact information

161 groups now listed as inactive. This means Groups reported as no longer meeting.

7 Merged groups. This means Groups of 2 or more that have merged to to make 1 group as a whole.

12 unknown groups- This means groups with contact information is no longer valid for various reason.

There is no real mic drop here, I will simply invite you to make the connection between our basic service, carrying the message, fellowship unity and registering your home group. What I most visualize as I

perform this keyboard service work, is someone somewhere walking into an AA group and finding what they so desperately need.

Archivist's Report

As always, I would like to "thank you" for the opportunity to be of service to you in Area 31.

In the past six months the Archives Committee has met twice at an earlier time on the first Tuesday of the month. The purpose of these meetings was to gather flyers, registration forms, minutes, programs and any other pertinent information from two of our area events and put them in protective binders.

The first meeting was spent sorting archive material from the annual Area 31 Round Up. This past year was their 50th. When completed these binders would be able to be presented as part of the Archives Committee display at the events.

The second meeting was spent sorting archive material from the Annual MA State Convention. We are going to meet at an earlier time again in November. Hopefully with the help of the Archives Committee to binders for the MA State Convention will be ready for this year's convention. My intentions are to continue to come to the meeting earlier.

I would like to thank Frank our Archives Chair for his commitment to the Archives Committee.

Respectfully submitted

Archivist Area 31

Webmaster's Report

Issues addressed or investigated in the last 6 months:

Meeting Guide participation

It has now been over a half year since we helped get the Intergroup meeting list on the Meeting Guide app. It appears to be going smoothly with Kevin still responsible for the upkeep. This app has been very useful to me personally as I travel and hopefully the same is true for those who live and visit our western Mass area for meetings. Thanks to Intergroup for their cooperation in this endeavor.

Website update

I will be transferring the website financial obligations over to the Area Treasury before the next annual hosting bill comes in. At that point the website will obtain the long overdue security certificate.

Website Committee

Yesterday in our inventory it was brought up that many felt that the website committee needs to be meeting monthly. I just want to point out that while it has been a big help to me in previous years the fact remains that it has been over two years since they have had any useful things to do, the creation of a pamphlet and the display boards are done. The group representatives that have come to the meetings don't feel they are getting anything useful to take back to their groups and do not stay for more than a few meetings. We are not getting any feedback from these members even they do come. So, I think that the committee has outlived its usefulness, I would greatly appreciate help with the technical portion which includes posting minutes (the most time consuming part of the job for me) but there does not need to be committee for that purpose. I realize that there may be other opinions about this I hope we can start a dialog at a future area meeting.

Reminders

First, I want to reiterate that committee and district minutes need to be sent to **webpost@area31aa.org**, calendar updates, events and commitments need to be sent to **webmaster@area31aa.org**. And I know

that many of you are rotating out or on to other committees but I want to remind the present and incoming chairs, if they are here today, that there are email addresses provided through the website and they need to be monitored. This is also true for the districts. Present chairs or DCM's please pass this information to your incoming chairs and DCM's.

Thank you for letting me serve.

Accessibilities Report

Since the Spring Assembly, there have been a total of 23 attendees to the Accessibility Committee monthly meetings. There was one call for Accessibility services from Agawam that was delegated to a member who had pledged to service that area. A second call was serviced by another committee.

The committee had the contributions of many members that yielded an updated brochure that identifies the website, hotline phone number and range of services that the committee has identified as appropriate referrals. The brochure has been available for distribution among the districts and is available in some quantity at the assembly. One member constructed an Accessibility tri-fold poster board that will be displayed at roundups, assemblies and the state convention.

The committee would like to add to the list of members who would be available to chair and/or attend a meeting of members who are unable to get to meetings because of accessibility issues.

Earlier this week, the chair and the co-chair communicated with District 9, Area 04 (Little Rock, Arkansas). An ad hoc committee had been formed to study how their district might best provide services for the deaf and hard of hearing.

The Accessibility Committee has been working on the services that are being offered at the state convention, too. Those services include: Spanish translations of the registration and Old Timers' Luncheon registration, CART services and ASL interpreters.

Area 31 Accessibilities Chair

Archives Report

We presented the boards to the Joy of Living Group, the Ludlow group, Chapman Group in Greenfield, Making progress Group in Hadley and The Suffield Monday Night Group.

We have a new co-chair John G, our former co-chair, Sue S. has moved to Florida.

We had two working meetings where we assist the archivist Bobby P to organize material from area 31

C.P.C. Report

- There were not a lot of professionals at the Round up CPC meeting
- Presented to a nursing class at American International College
- The committee continues to reach out to college nursing programs
- The committee has a presentation coming up at Elms College
- Will be putting on presentation at facilities located in district 3
- Attended the Dept of Children and Families on the last two Fridays in September
- The committee needs support, there are only two groups sending representatives

CPC Chair

Grapevine Report

In the Past 6 months, the Comm. Members who are GVRs, worked on attracting home group members to the magazine as a resource in the recovery tool kit, its numerous attributes via the website, aagrapevine.org. We have consistently used a meeting AGENDA, an easy to follow meeting format that members have come to expect & become familiar with how the meeting will proceed & what will be discussed. It kept us on topic for the hour. As the chair, I invited input and feedback from all members including the Co-chair on all matters prior to finalizing topics or decisions.

We attended the 2019 round up and facilitated a heavily attended 50min workshop on how the GV is an important tool in our spiritual tool kit. I use it heavily as a Sponsor myself. We are aware of the resources available to us Whether that's the Wall calendar, the free daily quote emailed to us, the latest book of cartoons, the pocket diary, the sobriety calculator or the sober birthday card printable off the site. Members can send in photographs for the calendar & magazine following the guidelines. For example, My Wednesday HADLEY Language of the Heart home group's photo was featured in the If Walls Could Talk section of the March 2018 issue.

The La Viña & GV Boards accompanied us to all Area 31 events this year. They are here even today and we are next headed for the Ma State Conv. in Nov.

The most efforts were directed to the 75th Anniv of GV in D3, Becket at the site of the 7p Saturday evening Grapevine mtg. using only a \$500 budget. Attendance for the Anniv pot luck and raffle event, was close to 65. 2019 Committee invited a past GV board member, David E., as the keynote speaker. There was a question & answer session. Afterwards, Not only did we cut the cake but we also sang happy birthday together. Then, we proceeded with the writing workshop facilitated by the GV writing workshop guidelines. About 20 people participated in the writing works and out of them, about 7/8 people read their works out loud to us. It was a peaceful & validating way to close out they had awaited event.

Future: my vision for the committee would be to encourage hosting writing workshops in Spanish and English; both in the general body of their home groups & districts as well as at jails & institutions, perhaps best done in collaboration with the area institutions committee and the frequency of the workshops can occur on an ongoing basis.

Thank you for letting me be of service during this historical year for the Grapevine's 75th & the Big Book's 80th birthdays. I am open to questions.

P.I Report.

- The committee has 14 monthly commitments and several schools have annual or biannual commitments
- There are 12-18 active committee members
- September was busy due to events associated with recovery month. The committee was invited to events in Springfield, Greenfield, and Pittsfield. We did not attend the Pittsfield commitment because it was an outdoor event and it was raining
- Went to High View nursing home and no one at the facility knew why the committee was there
- Thanks to the co-chair and the members for their assistance

Website Committee Report

No report.

Round-Up Report

- The committee started meeting in September
- There were 462 people in attendance at the 50th Area 31 Round Up
- The treasury had a balance of \$3,218.86 at the end of June 2018
- The treasury has a balance of \$6,178.18 at the September 2019 meeting
- The committee has elected a new Chairperson and Co-chairperson
- The Co-chairperson of the 50th Round Up has stepped down
- The next meeting is on November 11th. 2019 and every second Wednesday after that

Combining GSO and Grape Vine Ad Hoc Committee

As a result of much discussion at the Area 31 Fall Assembly 2018 regarding a perception expressed by our Delegate that there may be a merging between AAWS and AA Grapevine Inc. by the General Service Board, and that there may be a conflict with A.A. principles. Specifically Concept 8 and parts of Concept 11 that pertain to this. An Ad-hoc committee was formed to look into, and to evaluate if necessary, an agenda item to present to the 2020 General Service Conference. The committee was formed which included Sue S., Suzanne L., Tom L., John S. and Carl G. as members.

We held three meetings on January 8, March 12, and May 14, 2019. We reviewed a considerable amount of background materials from various sources including Concepts, a past Delegate's presentation on "The Plan", materials provided from GSO Archives, and General Service Board minutes.

At our first meeting Bob W. past Trustee at large U.S. gave a presentation sharing his experience and thoughts involving his service on the General Service Board as well as other committees which were post 2013 General Service Conference where "The Plan" had not passed. He later provided the committee with a written summary of his presentation as well as a copy of the 14 initiatives, which were one of the proposed solutions to the issues raised as a result of an inventory taken by the General Service Board. Another solution that was proposed was an "Interlocking Directorate" a.k.a. "The Plan".

For our second meeting David E. past Trustee serving on the Grapevine Board presented his experiences and thoughts pertaining to the topic. Bob W. was also present at this meeting as an observer. Both David and Bob were available for questions and answers following David's presentation.

Our third and final meeting was held in May with 4 of the 5 committee members present. Our focus was around discussion of the information that we had gathered to date. There was some sentiment that there may have been some leanings in the direction of the concerns that had been expressed, however that those leanings hadn't gone to the point beyond necessity by the Board. The largest of these concerns was around the consolidation of the retirement plans. It was felt that that action was in fact in the best interest of employees of both companies and

was generally standard business practice. It was the general unanimous consensus of all those in attendance that there was no cause to recommend any agenda item requesting the General Service Conference to take any action regarding the issue at hand. That the entities A.A.W.S and the A.A. Grapevine Inc. have been kept sufficiently segregated both physically and from a structural business sense. That the General Service Board and the Trustees are acting in the best interests of A.A. That they are acting within their designated authority and have been open in communicating the ongoing process of implementing the initiatives through the various sub-committees created to address solutions to these specific initiatives, and that they clearly understand the principals involved. That they very clearly heard the voice of the Fellowship to *NOT* implement The Interlocking Directorate a.k.a. "The Plan".

There will be a folder provided to Area 31 Archivist and all background materials that we used will be available to the fellowship to review.

Thank you from the committee for the opportunity to serve.

Berkshire Intergroup

No report.

Institutions Report

Hello everyone my name is Jimmy and I am an alcoholic. I'm grateful to be serving as the Western MA Area 31 chair of the Institutions Committee. We meet on the 1st Wednesday of each month @ 7pm in the conference room on the first floor at Providence Hospital in Holyoke. Over the last 6 months we've averaged 42 + attendees per month, this typically consists of the committee members past and present, IGR's, meeting sponsors and co-sponsors. As of the October meeting, we have 263 meetings on the active roster that we are responsible for, 219 are currently filled. That means we are meeting about 83% of our obligation. However, that also means there are 44 open meetings, additionally there are 131 alternate sponsor positions still open. We also provide free literature purchased with group donations For the most part we purchase Big Books, 12&12 step books and some other conference approved prints. During the last 6 months we've received \$9,353.29 from group donations averaging \$1,558.80/ month. This money is used to purchase books and cover operating expenses. Our rent and operating expense for the same period was \$1,157.72, or \$192.95/month, or about (12%) of donations. \$8,195.57, was spent on books averaging 1,365.57/ month or (88%) of all group donations went to purchase literature. We provide the service of bridging the gap. BTG has been receiving on average, 10 calls / month, 60% men, \$40% women. In closing, I would like to say, As a whole, the committee and members are doing a great job carrying the AA message to those behind the wall or confined in some way who otherwise might not get a meeting. That being said, there are still many openings unfilled and countless opportunities to give back. If anyone here is interested in institutions service, please see me afterwards or join us at the next meeting. Thank You for this opportunity to serve

Western Mass Intergroup Report

- The Intergroup has two new pamphlets available: "The God Word" and " AA for Alcoholics with mental Health Issues (and their sponsors)"
- There are two new Grape Vine books available: "One Big Tent" which talks about atheists, agnostics, nonbelievers, and, secular alcoholics in AA and "Take Me to Your Sponsor" which are jokes and cartoons from the Grape Vine
- Also available is the new book from AA World Services: "Our Great Responsibility" consisting of a selection of Bill W.'s general service conference talks from 1951 to 1970

- The Intergroup picnic was a success
- Intergroup will hold elections in November
- The Christmas Alcothon meeting selections will be held at the November meeting and a group representative must be present to get a slot
- If your group wants phone coverage you must send a representative to accept the phone coverage

WMYPAA Report

- About half went to the International Committee for Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous
- The committee is working on the contracts for the 2021 NECYPAA
- Will co-host a talent show on November 2nd with area 11 at the United Congregational Church in Holyoke
- Will host a "Friends Giving" event on November 27th at the United Congregational Church in Holyoke
- Will be having a haunted hay ride
- The committee has multiple commitments
- The committee is having an issue with qualifications for speakers
- WMYPAA will be going on a camping trip to Vermont
- WMYPAA will be holding a slip and slide kickball event
- Attended a beach event on the Connecticut shore
- WMYPAA has shirts and bracelets for sale
- There are 15 to 20 members at this time

District 1 Report

- Attendance has fluctuated from a maximum of 8 GSRs to a minimum of 1 GSR at the district meeting
- The district officers have visited many of the groups in the district and hope to have visited them all by the end of December 2019
- The groups report no significant issues and that attendance at their meetings has been consistent
- The district is putting on a workshop with district 2 at Providence hospital on December 14th
- The DCMs continue to advocate for group participation at the district level
- The district has elected a new secretary

District 1 DCM

District 2 Report

- The district meeting averages 15-17 GSRs and Alternates

- A chapter in the Service Manual and a Tradition are read each month
- The Co-DCM has reached out to groups in the district and attendance has increased
- Co-DCM is quick to get GSRs registered with the General Service Office
- The district is putting on a workshop with district 1 at Providence hospital on December 14th
- Group issues were frequently brought up at the district meeting, resulting in a lively discussion and many ideas about how to deal with the issue being passed on

DCM District 2

District 3 Report

- The district meetings have 12-15 GSRs in attendance
- The district is holding a joint workshop with the Berkshire Intergroup with a topic of Cooperation with the Professional Community at the Lenox Community Center from 10 am to 1pm
- New business for the Area is a motion for AA World Services to develop literature regarding "Relocating in Sobriety", the item passed unanimously at the district level
- Provided background information about the item

District 3 DCM

District 4 Report

- The district has 5-8 GSRs in attendance at the meeting with 3-5 regulars with new GSRs at each meeting
- The district has elected a new DCM
- The district is planning a workshop with a topic of "safety" at the Grape Vine in Greenfield on December 7th The Grape Vine club in Greenfield requires building updates urgently and is trying to raise the funds to perform them, if the funding falls short the club may close

Co-DCM district 4

District 5 Report

- The district meeting attendance has fallen to 12-13 SGRs from 18-20 GSRs, some new GSRs have attended the district meeting
- Most of the groups that attend have group commitments and donate to the service structure financially
- Some of the groups report low business meeting attendance
- The district held a workshop at the Hitchcock Academy on September 21st and had 25 people in attendance
- The LCM had to step down in July and the district voted to replace the LCM with two people

- The district held elections on October 7th and a new DCM and Co-DCM were elected, the LCMs are staying on and no one stood for the secretary position

District 5 DCM

District 6 Report

- The district has 7 GSRs that consistently attend the meeting
- The groups that attend report no issues except for low business meeting attendance
- The LCM has been visiting meeting in the Connecticut portion of District 6
- The district held a workshop in June with the topics of "Group Conscience and Inventories" with 23 people in attendance
- The district will have elections on October 21st

DCM District 6

Delegates Report

- Honored and privileged to serve as your delegate
- Thank you for having elected me to the position
- Thank you to the Area and the Area Committee
- Felt like a "deer in the headlights" when elected, experienced excitement combined with fear, asked for help, made use of a service sponsor
- Invited the past delegates out for lunch and decided "If I'm paying, I asked what they wish they knew and what they took away from the conference
- The Big Book manuscript litigation was a learning experience
- Much more at ease during the second year
- The Meeting Guide App has been available
- Removing "Berkshire" from Area 48 Hudson, Mohawk, Berkshire must be done at the area chair level and is underway
- The 2020 International Convention in Detroit is open for registration, sign up at www.aa.org
- NERAASA will be held in Nashua NH on February 21st through the 23rd

- While on the Literature Committee at the General Service Conference wrote a floor action to oppose a policy change that would allow GSO to change literature at will without the conference's approval
- The Public Information desk is considering accepting a \$25K grant from Google, why can't we be self-supporting and not accept the grant?
- Request that the alternate delegate give the GSR presentation
- The General Service Conference agenda is available as soon as the delegate receives it. It is available on a flash drive
- Please have an agenda at your districts and committees, a suggestion
- Bring excitement to struggling committees
- Outgoing delegate chairs the Mass State Convention next year
- There is a North East Regional Delegate weekend coming up in Sturbridge
- Will be chairing the Area's Concept meeting
- Highest position in AA life is servant

Alternate Delegate Report

- Thank you to Area 30 for their assistance with the Mass State Convention
- The focus of the convention will be "Fun, fellowship. And Recovery", the General Service Conference topics were too focused on service, the convention should not be a service event
- Focus on recovery, tools for every stage of recovery, searching and fearless, cleaning the wreckage, overcoming obstacles in all our affairs
- There will be 3 comedians with recovery themes
- There will be an hour long meeting on Saturday morning about enthusiasm for one's home group
- There will be a game room
- The final Mas State convention planning meeting will be on October 29th at 6 pm, the carpool leaves the bowling alley on Burnett Rd in Chicopee at 6 pm
-

Area Chair Report

- Would like to thank the Area

Recount for voting =59

Old Business

- Second vote on a motion made at the Spring Assembly to “Amend the area guidelines so that we continue to rotate the area assemblies throughout the districts”, motion passed with substantial unanimity

New Business

- Area elections
- Results Paul H. elected delegate, Mike B. elected Alternate Delegate, Steve M. elected Area Chairperson, Ray M. elected Treasurer, Renee K. elected Secretary

The Assembly ended with the “Declaration of Unity”