

WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL SERVICE STRUCTURE

AREA 31 HANDBOOK & GUIDELINES



JANUARY 2022 UPDATE TO THE 2016 EDITION
area31aa.org/handbook

AREA 31 WEBSITE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

area31aa.org

The Area 31 website is maintained by the A.A. General Service Committee of Western Massachusetts (Area 31) for the purpose of enhancing unity by providing information pertinent to the General Service structure and functions within Area 31, as well as providing a communication platform for Area committees, members, officers, districts, interested A.A. members, and the general public.

webpost@area31aa.org

Material for posting should be sent to the webpost address above.

1. The items below should be sent in an editable format (not PDF). Please remove personally identifiable information (last names, personal email addresses, personal phone numbers).
 - Area, Committee, and District meeting minutes
 - Calendar changes
 - Other service-related announcements and documents
2. Flyers for events, in both English and Spanish, can be sent as PDFs to preserve formatting, but must not contain last names, personal emails, or personal phone numbers.

Email addresses

Area 31 Committee Officers

Delegate: delegate@area31aa.org
Alternate Delegate: altdelegate@area31aa.org
Chair: areachair@area31aa.org
Secretary: secretary@area31aa.org
Treasurer: treasurer@area31aa.org
Registrar: registrar@area31aa.org
Archivist: archivist@area31aa.org
Webmaster: webmaster@area31aa.org

Area 31 District Committee Members (DCMs)

District #1: district1@area31aa.org
District #2: district2@area31aa.org
District #3: district3@area31aa.org
District #4: district4@area31aa.org
District #5: district5@area31aa.org
District #6: district6@area31aa.org

Area 31 Standing Committees

Accessibility: accessibility@area31aa.org
Archives: archives@area31aa.org
Cooperation with the Professional Community: cpc@area31aa.org
Grapevine: grapevine@area31aa.org
Public Information: pi@area31aa.org
Round-Up: roundup@area31aa.org

Area 31 Invited Committees

Institutions: institutions@area31aa.org
Western Mass Young People in AA: wmypaa@area31aa.org

A.A. Preamble

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

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WELCOME TO AREA 31 WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS!

The Area 31 Handbook describes the service structure, annual calendar, history, and organization of Western Massachusetts General Service Area 31 of Alcoholics Anonymous. This seventh edition of the Handbook includes the Guidelines for Western Massachusetts Area 31, adopted at the Spring Assembly in 2004. Area 31 adheres to the principles and the traditions of A.A.. As a general rule, we follow the suggestions in the *A.A. Service Manual*. Over the several decades of our existence, however, Area 31 has developed practices, procedures, and guidelines appropriate to the specific needs of Western Mass.

The purpose of this Handbook is to collect all this information in one place, and to share it widely with all those involved in carrying the message in our Area.

This handbook is a work in progress, subject to change as our Area continues to grow and flourish. Our aim always is to find better ways to carry out our primary purpose: to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

We are grateful to all the GSRs, DCMs, Area Officers, and A.A. members who gave their time and led the way in making this Area Handbook possible.

Western Massachusetts General Service, Area 31, Inc. was officially incorporated and granted 501(c)3 (tax exempt) status on November 3, 2006. The incorporation of Area 31 provides protection for the individual members from legal liability as well as helps to facilitate our application for tax exempt status with the Federal Government. Our Corporate name is Western Massachusetts General Service, Area 31, Inc. and the official address is 30 Carew Street, South Hadley, MA. Our mailing address is PO Box 6818, Holyoke, MA 01041.

I AM RESPONSIBLE.

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.
And for that I AM RESPONSIBLE.

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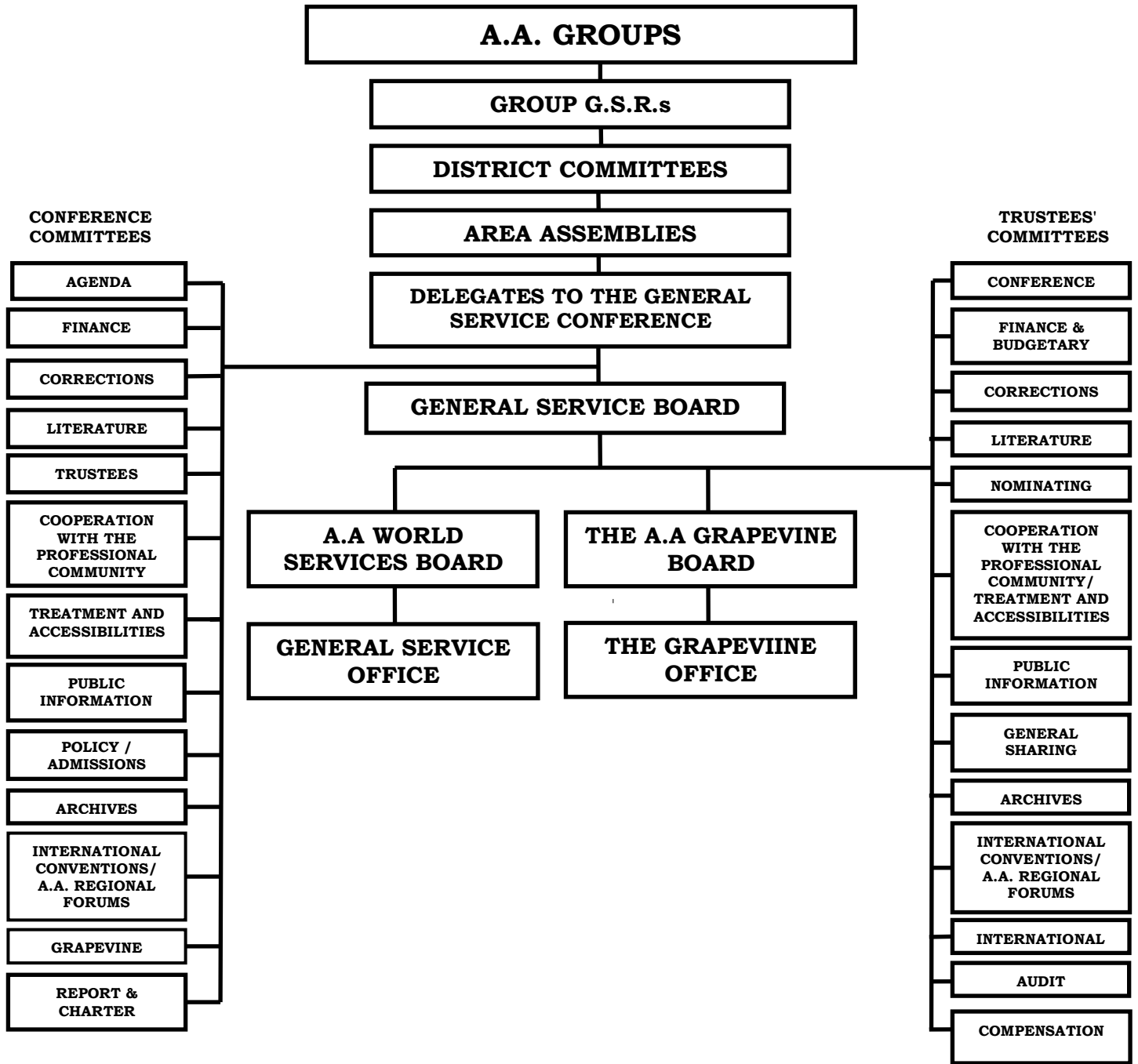
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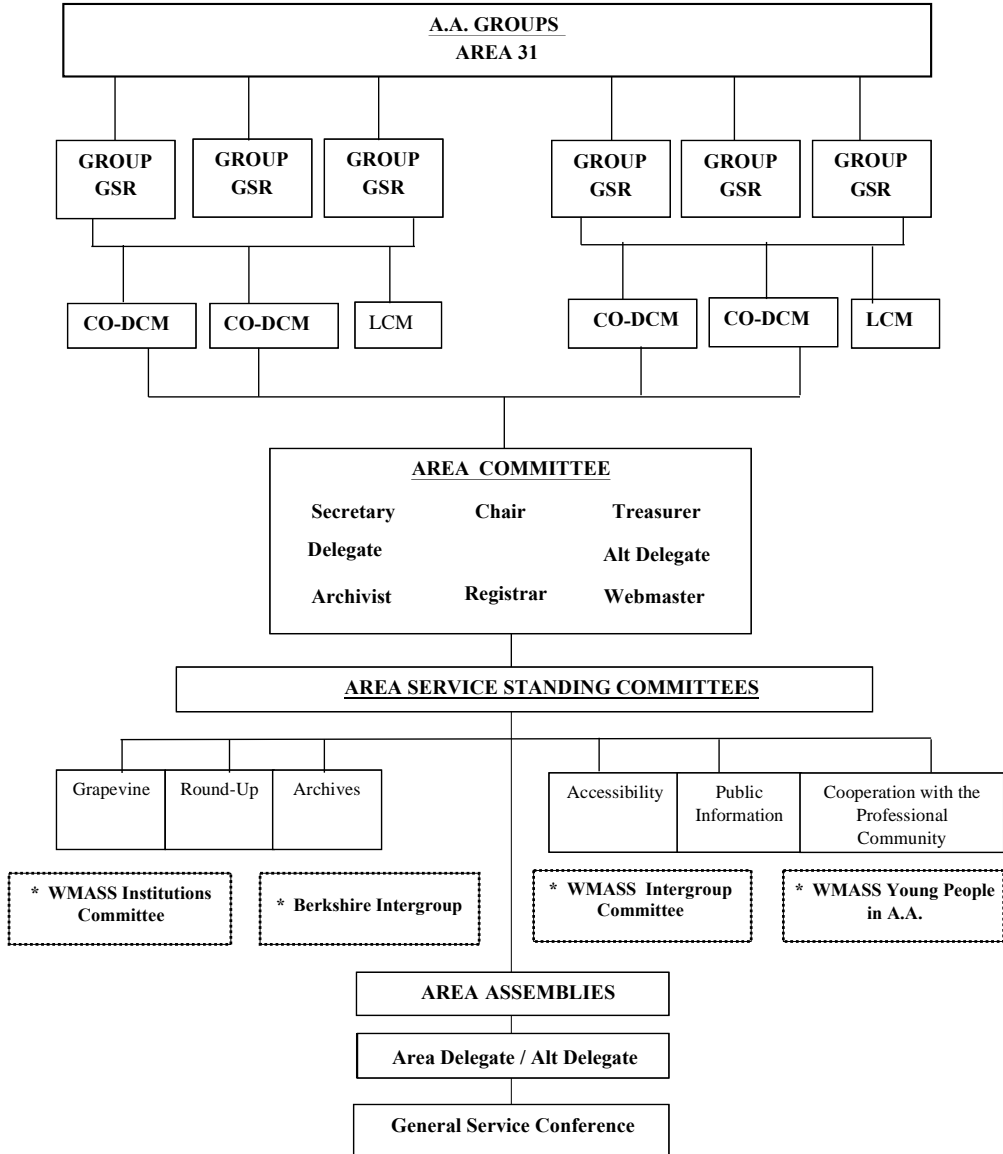
31st Update, January 2022

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**THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE STRUCTURE
(U.S. AND CANADA)**



* In Area 31, the two Intergroups, the Institutions Committee, and the WMASS Young People in A.A. Committee are invited committees which cooperate with the Area Committee Structure. They are self-supporting.

SCHEDULE OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Check <https://www.area31aa.org/calendar> for latest information on physical, virtual, and hybrid locations.

COMMITTEE	WHERE?	WHEN?	TIME	WHO GOES?
Area	30 Carew Street South Hadley	Second Wednesday of each month	7:30 PM	All Area Committee Officers, Service Committee Chairs, the Western Mass. & Berkshire Intergroup Chairs, the Institutions Chair, the Delegate, DCMs, and any member of A.A. interested in how service works.
Accessibility	30 Carew Street South Hadley	Fourth Wednesday of each month	7:00 PM	Group representatives to the Accessibility committee, and any A.A. member who is interested.
Archives	30 Carew Street South Hadley	First Tuesday of each month	7:30 PM	Group representatives to the Archives committee, and any A.A. member who is interested in A.A. history.
Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC)	30 Carew Street South Hadley	Second Tuesday of each month	6:30 PM	Group representatives to the CPC committee, and any A.A. member who is interested in, or just curious about, service with the professional community.
Grapevine	30 Carew Street South Hadley	First Tuesday of each month	6:30 PM	Group representatives to the Grapevine committee, and any A.A. member who is interested or curious.
Institutions	474 Pleasant Street Holyoke	First Wednesday of each month	7:00 PM	Group representatives to the Institutions committee, and any A.A. member who is interested, or just plain curious!
Berkshire Intergroup	on Zoom	Second Monday of each month	7:00 PM	Group representatives to the Berkshire Intergroup committee, and any A.A. member who wants to go.
Western Mass. Intergroup	Intergroup Office 300 Appleton Street Holyoke	Second Thursday of each month	7:00 PM	Group representatives to the Western Mass. Intergroup committee, all Area Committee Chairs, the Institutions Chair, the Area Chair, the Delegate, and (you're right!) any A.A. member who wants to go.
Western Mass. Intergroup Steering Committee	Intergroup Office 300 Appleton Street Holyoke	Last Thursday of each month	7:00 PM	Members of the Steering Committee., and any A.A. member who wants to go.
Public Information (PI)	30 Carew Street South Hadley	Second Tuesday of each month	7:30 PM	Group representatives to the PI Committee, and any A.A. member who wants to carry the message about what A.A. is.
Round-Up	30 Carew Street South Hadley	Second Wednesday of each month (except July and August - no meeting)	6:00 PM	Group representatives to the Round- Up committee, and any A.A. members who would like to help.
Western Mass Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (WMYPAA)	Serenity Club Monkey Wrench Building 143 Main Street Springfield	Second and Fourth Sunday of each month	3:00 PM	Group representatives to the WMYPAA committee and any A.A. member who wants to get involved.

SCHEDULE OF DISTRICT MEETINGS

Check <https://www.area31aa.org/calendar> for latest information on physical, virtual, and hybrid locations.

DISTRICT	WHERE?	WHEN?	TIME	WHO GOES?
District #1	Sacred Heart Church 35 Everett Street Springfield	Third Thursday of each month	7:30 PM	GSRs, DCMs, LCMs, an area officer, and any interested A.A. member
District #2	Alano Club 36 King Street Agawam	Second Monday of each month	7:00 PM	GSRs, DCMs, LCMs, an area officer, and any interested A.A. member
District #3	Old Lee Court House – Lee Town Hall 32 Main Street (Park Place entrance) Lee	Third Friday of each month	7:00 PM	GSRs, DCMs, LCMs, an area officer, and any interested A.A. member
District #4	Holy Family Parish Center 29 Sugarloaf Street South Deerfield	Third Tuesday of each month	7:00 PM	GSRs, DCMs, LCMs, an area officer, and any interested A.A. member
District #5	Union Church of Christ 51 Center Street Ludlow	First Monday of each month	7:30 PM	GSRs, DCMs, LCMs, an area officer, and any interested A.A. member
District #6	Hazardville United Methodist Church 330 Hazard Avenue Enfield, CT	Third Monday of each month	7:00 PM	GSRs, DCMs, LCMs, an area officer, and any interested A.A. member

The Area Chair, Alternate Delegate, and Delegate rotate attendance at all committee meetings and district meetings, so that one of the three is present at every meeting to give a report.

It is suggested that Committee Chairs visit district meetings to give reports about their committees.

WESTERN MASS AREA COMMITTEE EVENTS CALENDAR

MONTH	EVENT	HOW OFTEN	WHERE	WHY	WHO GOES	COST
JANUARY						
FEBRUARY	North East Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (NERAASA)	ANNUAL	Varies in the Northeast Region	For members to learn more about service, meet people from other areas, and to share their experience, strength and hope in service.	Open to all A.A. members. The Western Mass Area Committee (WMAC) pays for the Delegate, Alt. Delegate and Area Chair to go.	Varies - We find out when we get the fliers, usually 3 - 4 months in advance.
MARCH	North East Regional Delegates' Meeting (NERD)	ANNUAL	Varies in the Northeast Region	This weekend provides the opportunity for second year Delegates to share their Conference experience with new Delegates and Alternate Delegates before the upcoming Conference in New York.	Only the present Delegate, Past Delegates, Trustees, and current Alternate Delegate attend. Present Delegate and Alternate are paid by the WMAC.	Varies - We find out when we get the fliers, usually 3 - 4 months in advance.
APRIL	Western Mass. Area 31 Spring Assembly	ANNUAL (usually the first weekend in April)	TBA	Saturday is a mini-conference to inform the Delegate of our group conscience about upcoming agenda items at the Conference, and Sunday afternoon is the Area Business Meeting.	Open to all A.A. members. It is STRONGLY SUGGESTED that all GSRs, LCMs, DCMs, Committee Chairs & Co-Chairs, and Area Officers attend.	There is no cost for individual registration. The WMAC pays for the space and coffee.
APRIL	General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous	ANNUAL (usually the third week in April)	New York, New York	The annual meeting of all North American General Service Conference Members (i.e. Delegates, the General Service Board, AAWS Directors, and GSO Staff) to carry out the business of A.A. in the United States and Canada.	Only the Delegate goes from Western Mass. (If the Delegate cannot attend, the Alternate Delegate goes)	The current suggested contribution for each area set by GSO is \$1800, however, this does not meet all the expenses of the Conference. GSO covers the balance of the expenses, with any additional contributions greatly appreciated.
MAY or JUNE	Western Mass. Round-Up with Al-Anon participation	ANNUAL (usually last weekend in May or first weekend in June)	TBA	This weekend of fellowship is specifically centered around the Delegate's report of the Conference in April. There also are workshops each day, a dinner / GSO speaker on Saturday night followed by a dance.	All A.A. and Al-Anon members are welcome. It is strongly suggested that Area Committee members attend. The Delegate's and the GSO speaker's travel expenses and the dinner/dance cost are paid for by the Round-Up committee.	Varies - There is usually a small registration fee to cover expenses, plus separate charges for the dinner and dance on Saturday night.

WESTERN MASS AREA COMMITTEE EVENTS CALENDAR

MONTH	EVENT	HOW OFTEN	WHERE	WHY	WHO GOES	COST
JUNE	North East Regional Forum (NERF)	BI-ANNUAL (odd year)	Varies in the Northeast Region	A weekend for all A.A. members involved in service to learn about, exchange information with, and share experience with representatives of the General Service Board, AAWS, A.A. Grapevine, and the General Service Office.	Open to all A.A. members. The Area Officers and, if funds permit, DCMs have their expenses paid. GSRs are urged to ask their groups for support.	GSO picks up the tab on this one. The only expenses the WMAC pays for are the hotel and gas expenses for Committee Members.
JULY						
AUGUST						
SEPTEMBER						
OCTOBER	Western Mass. Area 31 Fall Assembly	ANNUAL (usually the first or second weekend in October)	TBA	Saturday is a day of sharing in Service. Sunday afternoon is the Area Business Meeting. (Note: on odd years elections of all WMAC officers are held (Area Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Delegate & Alternate Delegate)	Open to all A.A. members. It is STRONGLY SUGGESTED that all GSRs, DCMs, LCMs, Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs, and Area Officers attend.	There is no cost for individual registration. The WMAC pays for the space and coffee.
NOVEMBER	Massachusetts State Convention	ANNUAL (usually around Veterans Day weekend)	Varies in the State, but usually is centrally located.	A chance for the two areas in Massachusetts (Area 31, Western Mass. and Area 30, Eastern Mass.) to get to know each other better, and have a weekend of sharing and fun.	Open to all A.A. members. The Delegate and Alt. Delegate are always reimbursed by the WMAC, and in odd years one representative from each of the standing committees are funded to provide displays. Archives is funded annually.	Varies. There is a registration fee plus cost for hotel and meals.
DECEMBER						

PAST DELEGATES, YEARS SERVED, AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

(* asterisk marks deceased delegates)

<p>William C. * <i>unknown</i> 1952 & 1953</p>	<p>John M. * <i>Grapevine</i> 1978 & 1979</p>	<p>John F. <i>Trustees</i> 2004 & 2005</p>
<p>James S. * <i>Grapevine</i> 1954 & 1955</p>	<p>Gerald P. * <i>Public Information</i> 1980 & 1981</p>	<p>Bobbi P. <i>Conference Agenda</i> 2006 & 2007</p>
<p>J. Anthony S. * <i>unknown</i> 1956 & 1957</p>	<p>Betty R. * <i>Trustees</i> 1982 & 1983</p>	<p>Sally S. <i>Public Information</i> 2008 & 2009</p>
<p>John F. * <i>Literature</i> 1958 & 1959</p>	<p>John S. * <i>Grapevine</i> 1984 & 1985</p>	<p>Chip K. <i>Literature</i> 2010 & 2011</p>
<p>Helena S. * <i>unknown</i> 1960 & 1961</p>	<p>Paul D. * <i>Trustees</i> 1986 & 1987</p>	<p>Brian O. <i>Policy & Admissions</i> 2012 & 2013</p>
<p>Clarence H. * <i>Report and Charter</i> 1962 & 1963</p>	<p>Gerry O. * <i>Report and Charter</i> 1988 & 1989 <i>Trustee 1995-1998</i></p>	<p>Anne F. <i>Treatment & Accessibilities</i> 2014 & 2015</p>
<p>Leo B. * <i>Trustees</i> 1964 & 1965</p>	<p>John O. * <i>Policy & Admissions</i> 1990 & 1991</p>	<p>Mark N. <i>Literature</i> 2016 & 2017</p>
<p>Roger L. * <i>Finance</i> 1966 & 1967</p>	<p>Tom L. * <i>Correctional Facilities</i> 1992 & 1993</p>	<p>Mike S. <i>Conference Agenda</i> 2018 & 2019</p>
<p>Wilfred M. * <i>Public Information</i> 1968 & 1969</p>	<p>Linda B. <i>Literature</i> 1994 & 1995</p>	<p>Paul H. <i>Treatment & Accessibilities</i> 2020 & 2021</p>
<p>Margaret C. * <i>Literature</i> 1970 & 1971 <i>Trustee 1974-77</i></p>	<p>Jack B. * <i>Trustees</i> 1996 & 1997</p>	
<p>Dick D. * <i>Conference Agenda</i> 1972 & 1973 <i>Trustee 1980-83</i></p>	<p>Billie B. <i>Report and Charter</i> 1998 & 1999</p>	
<p>Robert T. * <i>Policy & Admissions</i> 1974 & 1975</p>	<p>Tracy F. <i>CPC</i> 2000 & 2001</p>	
<p>Colette R. <i>Trustees</i> 1976 & 1977</p>	<p>Bob W. <i>Public Information</i> 2002 & 2003 <i>Trustee 2013-2017</i></p>	

WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS AREA HISTORY

- 1935 Shortly after meeting Bill W., Dr. Bob has his last drink on June 10. That day, June 10, has become known as the official start date of Alcoholics Anonymous.
- 1940 The first sign of any A.A. happenings in Western Mass. comes from a letter written on Springfield College stationery. The letter, dated December 13, 1940, was addressed to "Little Guy" in Syracuse, NY. It was sent from Doris and Bob W. in hopes of finding a meeting there when they visited Syracuse over Christmas. A reply came on December 18, 1940 stating that there were no such "animals as sober people" in Syracuse and that if you wanted a meeting you would have to start from scratch.
- 1941 February 15. A letter is sent to Bill W. from a man named Bob F. of Empire Stationers which was located at 305 Bridge St., Springfield, MA. Bob is inquiring about meetings in Waterbury, CT. He hopes to get help for a prospect down there, someone he was told about by the prospect's relatives who live in Springfield. Bob mentions that "it has been a long time since hearing from any of the A.A. crowd (in New York) which is doubtless my own fault." A reply dated February 27, 1941, apparently from Ruth Hock, Bill W.'s secretary, was received by Bob stating that there were no meetings yet in Waterbury, CT; however, she would refer the matter to members in Greenwich, CT to see if they could help. Ruth also mentions the *Saturday Evening Post* article that is to appear in the March 1, 1941 issue. She asks that if she should receive inquiries from Bob's vicinity could they refer them to Bob.
- 1942 This was a big year for Western Mass. A.A.. Much correspondence took place in the first half of the year between Springfield and the New York Alcoholic Foundation Offices (now the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous). A man named Frank S. began to show an interest in starting a group in Springfield. That interest led to the first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous in Springfield on June 3, 1942. The meeting was held in Bob F.'s office at 305 Bridge St. and was attended by Bob F., Frank S., Kelita (Clyde) W. and Jim B. The group obtained a "Big Book" and received some publicity from articles in the Springfield Union. However, as it turned out, this group disbanded before the year was up.
- 1943 As the year began, there were still some of the 1942 A.A. members around. These people, Frank S., Bob F., Bob M., and George D. enjoyed lunch with Bill W. and Margaret B. at a Springfield hotel. This visit took place on February 3, 1943. They came from a visit in Hartford and proceeded to Boston.

Later in the year, as a result of his wife reading an article written by sportswriter Bill C. of the Boston Herald on Rollie H.'s involvement with a new organization called Alcoholics Anonymous, one H.O. D. of Monson, MA went into a Boston hospital to dry out. During his hospital stay he was put in contact with Boston A.A.. Upon returning home he continued to travel to A.A. meetings in Boston twice a week, returning in the middle of the night via the milk (delivery) train. Tiring of traveling such distance to meetings he wrote to New York asking about any Springfield area meetings or at least contacts.

On November 5th, Margaret Burger from the New York office responded that none of the 1942 group members were around; the only one who had stayed sober had moved to Canada. She cited the great need for a group in Springfield, and asked if Doc D. (as he was known) could help start

one. She enclosed the names of three Springfield people asking for help.

Doc D. immediately began carrying the message of A.A. which would result in the founding of the "Springfield Group" (now known as the Original Downtown Springfield Group) and the permanent beginning of Alcoholics Anonymous in Western Massachusetts.

1944 The first meeting of the Springfield group took place on January 1, 1944, in the lobby of the Worthy Hotel. In attendance were Dr. D., two men from Hartford and two men from Boston. The group was then registered with the Central Service office in New York on January 11, 1944. In a letter dated June 29, 1944 to New York, Doc D. says that the Springfield group is "an assured fact" with some twenty members in attendance at their last meeting.

The first institution work in Western Mass. A.A. occurred early in this year. A Springfield judge had released a woman named Myrtle (Pat) C., who had been residing in the York St. Jail, into the custody of Doc D. and fellow member Clarence H. Myrtle was listed in August of 1944 through February of 1946 as the secretary of the Springfield group. She was also the first woman A.A. member in Western Mass.

1945 There are now 44 A.A. members in Western Mass., according to the Alcoholic Foundation records.

1946 By now other groups have begun to spin off from the Springfield Group to other local communities throughout Western Mass. Groups listed in the directory from this year are Greenfield, Holyoke, Turners Falls, Pittsfield, and Springfield. Total membership in Western Mass. by the end of 1946 is 156.

1947 Several of the women members of the Springfield group started the first "A.A. Club." There was an understanding that the Springfield Group would continue to hold its regular meetings there on Wednesday nights and Sunday afternoons. This club, located at 221 Dwight St., Springfield, was called the Alano Club. (Today, clubhouses are distinctly separate from Alcoholics Anonymous according to A.A. tradition.)

1948 The telephone answering service was in full swing by now with Ken and Ruth F. taking all calls at their own home. Although they were unaware of it at the time, it seems as though the groundwork for a future service structure within Western Mass. began taking place. Around the country at that time there was little knowledge of the "Traditions" which Bill W. had written in the mid-1940s in response to the proliferation of group problems. An example of this was when certain members of the Springfield group, which had a Steering Committee by now, felt that the concept of rotation should be more strictly practiced as it seemed certain members developed a "concentration of power."

1950 The first International Convention is held in June of 1950 in Cleveland, Ohio. At this convention the "Twelve Traditions" of Alcoholics Anonymous were unanimously adopted by the fellowship.

Dr. Bob Smith, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous passed away on November 16, 1950.

1951 Florence D. became the first full-time A.A. telephone operator, working out of her own home, providing 24 hour-a-day phone coverage. She was paid a token amount of \$65 a month by the Springfield Group.

1952 The first meeting of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous, which was to take

the burden of leadership of A.A. from the founders and place it in the hands of the collective conscience of all the A.A. groups, took place in 1951. The Western Mass. groups were not strong enough to send a delegate to that first General Service Conference. However, in 1952, area members interested in sending a delegate to the second conference gathered at a special meeting to elect a delegate. The meeting was conducted in a very awkward manner in that members were simply asked to write the name of the area person whom they felt should be delegate on a piece of paper. Every single person wrote the name of William C.! So, William C. became the first Delegate to represent Western Mass. at the General Service Conference. Membership in Western Mass. was now listed as 318.

- 1953 As A.A. grew in Western Mass., some members recognized the need for a means of coordinating communications between the groups. Western Mass. Intergroup came into being as a result of this need. The original primary functions of this Intergroup were to provide meeting schedules, meeting swaps, and probably most importantly to handle the telephone service which led to the majority of Twelfth Step work back then. Groups elected representatives to Western Mass. Intergroup and began contributing toward the costs of telephone coverage. Over the next couple of years the Articles of Purpose for Western Mass. Intergroup were written with the late John F. of the Forest Park Group generally being credited as the “primary architect” of those Articles.
- 1954 James S. became our second Delegate from Western Mass. to the General Service Conference, serving in 1954 and 1955. He was followed in 1956 and 1957 by Tony S. of the Ware Group, who was involved in deciding that the symbol “A.A.” within a triangle, within a circle, be used on all A.A. conference-approved literature. It is believed that Tony suggested the circle be used to represent the whole world.
- 1955 The second International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous is held in St. Louis, Missouri. At this convention it was unanimously decided that the General Service Conference, which was in a trial phase since 1951, was a success and that it would continue meeting annually.
- 1957 A.A. growth in Western Mass. fluctuated during this decade as is shown by Alcoholic Foundation records which list 21 groups with 416 members for 1957 and then in 1960 there are 24 groups with 338 members.
- 1960 Helena S. was elected to represent us at the General Service Conferences of 1960 and 1961. She followed our fourth Delegate John F. There was still no Area Committee. Delegates found it difficult to find a time or place to report back to the area the important things that were happening in A.A. all over the United States and Canada. Oftentimes the report was given during the intermission at an “A.A.” dance. During the period of 1950-1960 there was an increase in A.A. groups from 11 groups with 207 members to 24 groups with 338 members. A.A. growth in our area was slow.

This year the third International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous took place in Long Beach, California.

- 1963 John A. of the Northampton Group had been attempting to form an Institution Committee without success. A few individual members had been going into the prisons, notably, John F. had been bringing A.A. meetings into the Osborne Prison in Connecticut. It was actually John’s death and a letter from the prison to Western Mass. Intergroup requesting that the meetings be continued, that finally got things going. Several members of various area groups met at the Amherst Monday Night meeting to “strategize.” The result was the formation of the Western Mass. Institution Committee. Finally the Western Mass. Area began carrying the A.A. message into correctional

facilities in an organized way.

Early on, the Institution Committee was a Western Mass. Intergroup “sub-committee,” but very soon changed to a separate entity. This committee was such a success that many other areas across the country have used it as a model to start their own Institution Committees.

- 1964 In the fall of 1964, a very small group of people (about a half dozen), including Gladys M., Mickey “The Barber” from the Westfield Group, Dick D. of the Randall Group, Gene A. of the Springfield Group, and Bob A. of the Amherst Group, got together to establish an Area Committee. Bob A., who had moved to Massachusetts from another state, talked about the “third legacy procedure” for voting and the Third Legacy Manual with which no one was familiar. A manual was ordered from our A.A. General Service Office in New York and our Western Mass. Area Committee became a reality! The first meeting, as such (only a couple of people present), took place at the South Hadley Group’s meeting place over the South Hadley Fire Station.
- 1965 This year the Fourth International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous took place in Toronto, Canada. This is where the “I Am Responsible” declaration came into being. It was recited in unison by the entire body of the convention.
- 1966 By now the Western Mass. General Service Area Committee (commonly referred to as the “Area Committee”) was meeting quarterly after the Western Mass. Intergroup meeting which took place at the Holyoke Group’s meeting place on the second floor on the corner of Dwight and Main Streets in Holyoke.

A momentous action was taken by the General Service Conference this year. The Conference voted to approve the recommendation of the General Service Board of Trustees to restructure the board. The plan called for an increase to 21 trustees; 7 non-alcoholics and 14 alcoholics. Although the trustees had suggested in the past that the ratio be changed to have the number of alcoholic trustees greater than the number of non-alcoholic trustees, the conference had always voted to maintain the existing ratio. There will always be a need for our non-alcoholic trustees who have done so much for us, but A.A.s would now carry the majority of votes on our General Service Board.

- 1967 By the end of 1967 the Area Committee was meeting monthly. Our delegates to the General Service Conference at that time covered part of their own expenses; the General Service Office in New York covered the rest of the expense. Recognizing that financial constraints might make it impossible for some A.A.s to serve as Delegate, the Area Committee wrote to all the groups asking for a \$25 contribution to set up a “Continuing Responsibility Fund.” About 18 groups responded contributing a total of \$200 (some gave less than the \$25). The door was now open for any Western Mass. A.A. member to serve as Delegate.
- 1968 This was the year that the first Massachusetts State A.A. Convention was jointly planned by both the Eastern and Western Mass. Area Committees. It was actually the 6th Mass. State Convention sponsored by the Eastern Mass. Committee, but the first to be held within the state, with others having taken place in New Hampshire. The new location was in Western Mass. at the Eastover resort in Lenox, which served as the home of this event for the next ten years.
- 1969 According to minutes of the General Service Area Committee of this year, the Public Information Committee was in existence by now. They met on a quarterly basis with most of the work being carried out by only a few. Inspired by a visiting Young People’s Group from the Boston area, Jim N. began the Springfield Young People’s Group.

1970 This was a year of many events and “firsts.” Early in the year the Area Committee began planning for the first area-wide Round-Up. Of all the 90 General Service Conference Areas in North America, Western Mass. was the second smallest (only Hawaii was smaller), so even though other areas which many times encompassed a whole state, were holding conventions and round-ups for fellowship and service purposes, it had been felt by many that we did not need such an event to knit us together. BUT even the objectors agreed that we needed a way to present the Conference report to the area at a round-up which could also include local participation in workshops, out of town speakers, fellowship, and refreshments. One of the doubters made a bet with our Delegate, who was pushing for the event, that we wouldn’t even have 25 people there. The first Western Mass. Round-Up (a half day event) was held at Trinity Church in Springfield with 125 A.A.s in attendance. Dr. Jack Norris, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Alcoholics Anonymous, was our keynote speaker. The Round-Up was a great success and has been an annual event since 1970.

Bill W., our co-founder, who was in seriously failing health, attended his last General Service Conference. Western Mass. Archives has a picture of Bill leaving the Conference for his last time. This picture taken by our Delegate is the only such photo in existence.

Our Western Mass. Delegate, Margaret C., was elected to serve as the first female chair of the 90 North American Delegates for the 1971 Conference. Dr. Jack Norris, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, appointed her to represent all of the delegates on an A.A. Long Range Planning Committee.

The International Convention of A.A. (held every 5 years since 1950) was held in Miami, Florida on Fourth of July weekend. Bill W. spent most of the weekend in the hospital, but finally was brought onto the stage in a wheelchair with his oxygen tank beside him during the closing Sunday morning spiritual meeting. Most A.A.s present knew that he was saying “good-bye.” Of importance at this convention was the adoption of A.A.’s “A Declaration of Unity.”

The General Service Conference elected the first United States Trustee-at-Large. Unlike regional trustees who are elected by the delegates from the particular region, the United States Trustee-at-Large is elected by all the delegates of the North American General Service Conference.

1971 Bill W. passed away on January 24, 1971.

In April, at the opening of the 21st General Service Conference, our Western Mass. Delegate spoke, representing all the North American Delegates, at the memorial service opening the conference. Bill, Dr. Bob and the other early A.A.s and non-alcoholic trustees had laid a solid foundation, and A.A. at its 21st General Service Conference had truly come of age.

During the course of this year the Public Information Committee temporarily went defunct as a result of lack of attendance.

1972 The Public Information Committee is back. Newly organized and well attended meetings are taking place with immediate past Delegate Margaret C. serving as the chair. This committee has met ever since on a monthly basis as a service committee of the Area.

Dick D., the primary architect of Area 31’s service structure, took office to serve as Delegate for the 1972 and 1973 term.

Towards the end of the year the Area Committee voted to endorse the nomination of Margaret C. to the post of Trustee-at-Large from the United States, to serve on the A.A. Board of Trustees, for

4 years.

- 1973 Margaret C., of our small Western Mass. Area, was elected General Service Trustee-at-Large to serve from 1973 through 1977. In this trustee position emphasis is placed on representing the entire fellowship rather than a geographic region.

In 1973 A.A. growth, which had increased slowly, now began a rapid increase perhaps due to increased education about our illness and the number of newcomers arriving from Honor Court and new treatment programs and halfway houses for alcoholics.

- 1974 Brief discussion was held at the December 1973 Area Meeting regarding the possibility of establishing the Committee for Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC). In February 1974 a motion was made and passed at the Area Meeting to establish such a committee. Past Delegate Dick D. became the first chairman of this committee. This committee has met on a monthly basis ever since as a sub-committee of the Area Committee.
- 1975 A committee was formed in December of this year to investigate the establishment of a Western Mass. Intergroup Office. The office was in place within a few months. The new Western Mass. Intergroup Office undertook the task of providing its groups with the option of purchasing A.A. literature directly from their area. This eliminated the need to buy from other Intergroup offices or from the General Service Office in New York.
- 1976 January of this year saw the beginning of yet another service committee of the Area, the Grapevine Committee. Although it did not start out as a committee, the seed was planted with the appointment of James P. to serve as the Area Grapevine Representative. This representative would report on a monthly basis at the Area Meeting.
- 1977 Districting of our Area was finalized this year. The districting story begins back in 1975 when Bob T. was serving as our Delegate. Worcester had just redistricted the groups in their location and the districting of Area 31 was on the lips of our Area Committee. After much discussion it was voted that Western Mass. begin districting its area. Bob T. appointed Collette R. to chair an ad-hoc committee responsible for mapping out the area into districts. After more than a year of discussion, the area was mapped into four districts. The districting plan was activated in May of this year with two District Committee Members (DCMs) per district and District Committee meetings being held monthly. It is interesting that, as well as the District meetings, one General Service Representative (GSR) per A.A. group also continued to attend the Area Meeting along with the DCMs therefore creating a monthly Assembly. By October of this year the Area had been redistricted into five districts.
- 1978 Another year for A.A. firsts in Western Mass. The first official meeting of the Grapevine Committee was held on May 31, at the Western Mass. Intergroup Office. In attendance were five Grapevine Representatives (GVRs) from various groups in Western Mass. This committee has met on a monthly basis ever since as a sub-committee of the Area.

Since the districting plan was activated, the Area Committee meeting/Assembly had become too large with more and more GSRs turning out. So in order to simplify matters, the GSRs began attending only the District meetings, where they would relay and receive information from the DCMs. The DCMs would then attend the Area Meeting and, on behalf of the GSRs, they would convey the individual groups' activities. This created the need for a place where the Area Committee and the GSRs could meet to take care of the area's business. This became the Area Assembly. The first official semi-annual Western Mass. Assembly took place on June 3 of this

year at the Mittineague Church in West Springfield. It was a successful one-day event which featured committee reports, a brief conference report by Delegate John M., the election of John S. to the position of Area Treasurer and inspiring comments by past Delegates Dick D. and Margaret C.

- 1979 Dick D. was elected at the General Service Conference of this year to serve as the North East Regional Trustee for the next four years. During his term as trustee he served as Chairman of the Alcoholics Anonymous World Services (AAWS) Board.
- 1980 At the January Area meeting this year a motion was made and passed to create an Area Archives Committee. Immediate past Delegate John M. was appointed the first chairman of this committee. As with most matters in A.A., it took most of this year to get things organized. The first meeting of this committee took place on December 10, 1980 at the Western Mass. Intergroup Office with seven representatives present. This committee has met ever since as a sub-committee of the Area.
- 1984 The first Western Mass. Young People's Conference took place at Westfield State College during the second week of June. It was a huge success.
- 1990 In February, the Berkshire Intergroup was formed. Towards the end of the year another service committee of the Area was formed. The Treatment Facilities Committee met for the first time at Holyoke Hospital on November 29. Rick D. was appointed the first Chairman of this committee.
- 1991 As a result of the growth in A.A. in District 2 it was voted to split the district. This action created a new district, District 6. District 6 covers part of northern Connecticut and southern Massachusetts. Their first meeting took place in February of that year.
- 1993 A motion was made and passed at the fall 1991 Area Assembly creating a new position on the Area Committee. The position of Area Registrar was first held by Jack O'D. that year. It is an appointed position with a vote on the Area Committee. This was amended to a non-voting position at the 2001 Spring Assembly.
- 1995 A motion was made and passed at the spring Assembly this year to create a new position on the Area Committee. The position of Area Archivist is a non-rotating, appointed, non-voting position. This position was held by Jerry B. Also this year our Area 31 was honored to host the Northeast Regional Forum in West Springfield.
- 1996 A.A. continues to grow by leaps and bounds in Western Mass. There are now approximately 270 groups/meetings and over 5000 members in our area.
- 1997 This year marked the first annual Spring mini-conference/assembly. The idea resulted when our current delegate Jack B. realized at his first General Service Conference (1996) that he didn't feel as though he had as much input from the area as he would have liked. The mini-conference was established as a way for the delegate to receive feedback from the area on how they feel on certain agenda items.
- 2000 At the Spring Assembly, the Area considered but decided against setting up a committee to study the feasibility of combining District 1 with another District. Support was given to District 1, and at the Fall Assembly the DCM reported that the District was alive and well. Also at the Fall Assembly, the Treatment Facilities Committee was dissolved and its functions were taken up by the Institutions Committee.

- 2001 A motion was made and passed at the Spring Assembly this year to separate the Area Chair and the Alternate Delegate position on the Area Committee, thus creating a new position of Alternate Delegate.
- 2002 In January, John F. started his term as the Area's first Alternate Delegate.
- 2003 An ad hoc committee to determine if there is a need for an Hispanic District in Area 31 was formed. The findings of the committee were presented at the 2005 Spring Assembly.
- 2004 At the Spring Assembly, the Guidelines for Area 31 Western Massachusetts were passed unanimously. An ad hoc committee was formed to look for a new space for the Western Mass Archives, which never really had a home since the Triangle Club disbanded in 1996.
- 2005 A new space was found for the Western Mass. Archives at Cabotville Industrial Park in Chicopee, MA. The Area Committee and all standing committee meetings moved to this new location. There were 250 registered groups and 440 meetings in Area 31. After more than two years of fact finding, the ad hoc committee to determine if there is a need for an Hispanic District decided at this time that they are not ready for another district, and have recommended to disband the committee for at least one year. Area 31, for the first time, hosted a Hospitality Suite at the 2005 International Convention in Toronto, Canada. The Western Mass. Young People's Conference took place in Chicopee in August. The 2005 edition of the Handbook was published. At the Fall Assembly, the Accessibility Committee was established.
- 2006 At the Spring Assembly, a new system for committee chair rotation is approved: the Area Chair appoints a new co-chair for each standing committee every year, and the existing co-chair rolls into the chair. In November, Area 31 is incorporated and granted 501(c)3 status.
- 2007 On July 29th Dick D. passed away. He was the primary architect of Area 31's service structure and served as Panel 22 Delegate in 1972 and 1973. In 1979 he was elected and served as the Northeast Regional Trustee for four years.
- At the Fall Assembly Jerry B. turned over the Archivist position after serving for 12 years. With the approval of the Area Committee Bobbi P., Area 31's Panel 56 Delegate (2006-2007), was appointed as the new Archivist.
- 2008 In the spring the Area 31 Archives moved to the Grace United Church, 474 Pleasant Street, Holyoke, MA. The Area Committee meeting and all standing committee meetings also moved to this location.
- The Fifth Edition of the Area 31 Handbook & Guidelines was published.
- 2009 In January, Area 31 members met to develop a New England Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (NECYCAA) bid committee for the purpose of hosting the annual 2011 Conference in Area 31.
- The Fall Assembly voted to create an Area 31 website.
- 2010 In January the ad hoc committee to determine if there is a need for a Spanish language District in Area 31 was reestablished.

In January, the Area 31 Committee began exploring the need and scope of creating a Finance Committee. In June of this year a motion was made and passed to establish an Area 31 Finance

Committee.

In February the NECYPAA bid committee was added to the monthly Area 31 Committee meeting Agenda as an invited committee.

The 2010 International Convention, celebrating A.A.'s 75th Anniversary, was held in San Antonio, Texas. It was the first time that Western Mass, Area 31, and Eastern Mass, Area 30, in order to foster unity, successfully co-hosted a hospitality suite.

In August an ad hoc committee was established to determine the content of the Area 31 website, and in November they delivered a detailed content proposal.

At the Fall Assembly the ad hoc committee for a Spanish language District did not recommend forming a new district but instead recommended that Area 31 support a bilingual Unity Day.

Western Mass Young People's Conference Committee (WMYPCC) voted to disband itself.

In December the NECYPAA bid committee won the bid to host the NECYPAA XXII in Springfield, MA in December of 2011.

2011 In January Area 31 hosted a bilingual Unity Day. It was well attended.

May brought another first. Again Area 31 and Area 30 worked together to co-host the Northeast Regional Forum (NERF) in Sturbridge, MA. Volunteers from both Areas were of service in unity.

In December, the Sixth Edition of the Area 31 Handbook & Guidelines was published.

The first meeting of the Area 31 Finance Committee was held in December of this year.

2012 The Area 31 Website went live in March. It was the final of 93 Area Websites to be registered with the General Service Office.

The Website Committee was voted in as a Standing Committee and the WMYPAA as an Invited Committee. These were adopted at the Fall Assembly.

A GSR presentation was passed at the Fall Assembly. The presentation was adopted and used at the 2014 Fall Assembly.

The Archives Committee donated excess Grapevine Magazines to Area 48 Archives after a flood destroyed their archives.

2013 In April, Area 31 was awarded the NERAASA 2016 bid at the General Service Conference.

Also at the Conference, Bob W., past Panel 52 Delegate, was elected to serve as Trustee-at-Large U.S. for a four year term.

At the Fall Assembly the Area 31 Webmaster was voted in as a non-voting, non-rotating, position appointed by the Area 31 Chair. The first Webmaster was Bob B.

2014 In August, the Accessibility Committee hosted a Speech-to-Text meeting. CART (Communication Access Real Time) technology was used.

2015 A cap on donations of \$3,000 was put in place to mirror GSO guidelines.

A redistricting ad-hoc committee that was formed in 2014 at the request of the Area 31 Registrar reported at the Fall Assembly that they had met 4-5 times during the year and that it felt that there was no need to redistrict the Area.

2016 In February, Area 31 hosted the 25th annual Northeast Regional A.A. Service Assembly (NERAASA) in Springfield.

The Seventh Edition of the Area 31 Handbook & Guidelines was published.

2017 In January a dinner was held at the East Mountain Country Club in Westfield, attended by 115 people. Bob W. shared his experience as Trustee-at-Large U.S. for four years.

2018 A fire at the Second Congregational Church in Holyoke caused the relocation of meetings and assemblies.

2019 The Keynote Speaker for the Round-Up was the Executive Editor of the Grapevine.

The Guidelines were amended to rotate Area Assemblies between districts.

2020 In January, the Concepts Meeting held its first Virtual Meeting with the Berkshires.

Area 31 was able to pull together both virtual and phone meetings during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

2021 The process to dissolve the Area 31 Website Committee began at the onset of the year and was passed by the Area Assembly in the spring. Responsibility for the website content was turned over to the Area 31 General Service Committee.

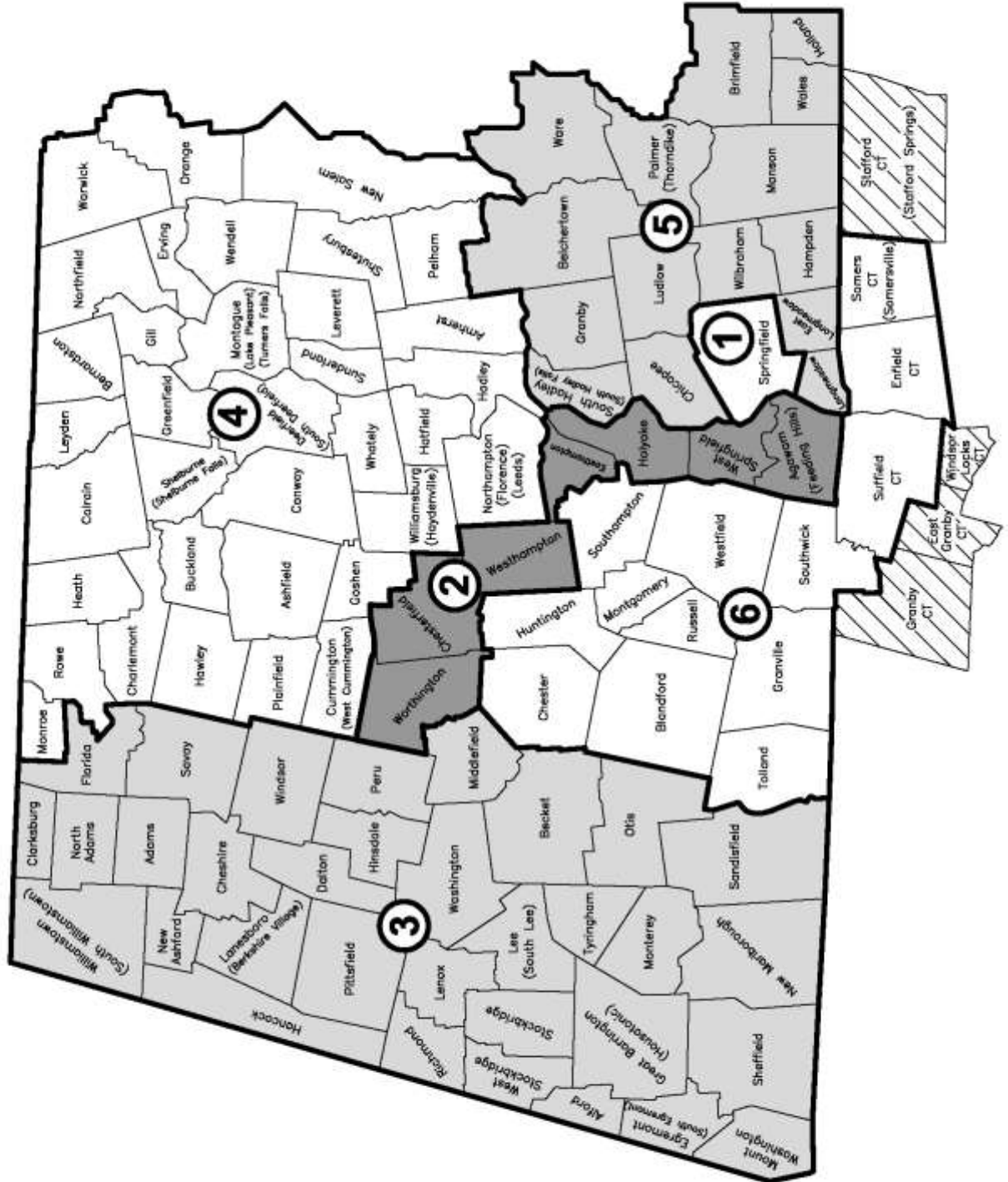
Mid-year on June 1, Bob W., Area31 Panel 52 Delegate and Trustee-at-Large U.S. 2013-2017, became the General Manager of G.S.O. New York.

July saw the Area Committee as well as all Standing Committees return to in-person meetings from Covid virus pandemic (in-person meeting) closures, which had been in effect since the spring of 2020. All meetings also continue to be held on-line as a “hybrid” format. Most District meetings have also gone “hybrid.”

In the fall this year two non-voting Area Officer positions changed hands. Sonja P., who served as Area Registrar 2018-2021, rotated and was replaced by Sally S. Bobbie P., Area 31 Panel 56 Delegate who served as Area Archivist 2007-2021, rotated and was replaced by Carl G.

December of this year saw the Area 31 General Service Committee, as well as the Area 31 Archives and most of the Standing Committees, move from its location at 474 Pleasant St, Holyoke MA, where it had been since 2008, to 30 Carew St., South Hadley MA.

Western Massachusetts Districts Area 31



Towns by District

This is a list of all towns and villages in Area 31 where AA meetings are held. AA groups meet in a total of 85 towns and villages in Area 31.

District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
Springfield	Agawam Easthampton Feeding Hills Holyoke Westhampton West Springfield Worthington	Adams Becket Berkshire Village Cheshire Clarksburg Dalton Great Barrington Hinsdale Housatonic Lanesboro Lee Lenox Monterey Mt Washington North Adams Pittsfield Richmond Sheffield South Egremont South Lee S. Williamstown Stockbridge West Stockbridge Williamstown	Amherst Bernardston Buckland Charlemont Conway Cummington Deerfield Florence Greenfield Hadley Hatfield Haydenville Lake Pleasant Leeds Leverett Montague Northampton Northfield Orange Plainfield Sheburne Falls South Deerfield Sunderland Turners Falls Williamsburg	Belchertown Brimfield Chicopee East Longmeadow Granby Hampden Longmeadow Ludlow Monson Palmer South Hadley South Hadley Falls Thorndike Ware Warren West Brookfield Wilbraham	East Granby, CT Enfield, CT Granby, CT Granville Huntington Russell Somers, CT Somerville, CT Southwick Stafford, CT Suffield, CT Westfield Windsor Locks, CT
1	7	23	24	17	13

The villages that appear in parentheses in the map are either official or unofficial villages in the towns below which they are listed.

The towns in Connecticut with diagonal lines have had registered Area 31 groups in the past, but don't currently. There are still meetings in these towns that are involved to some extent with Area 31 service.

WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS AREA 31 SERVICE STRUCTURE

AREA COMMITTEE

There are approximately three hundred groups in the Western Massachusetts Area. Each group may, if it wishes, register with the General Service Office in New York and elect a General Service Representative (GSR) who will serve as the link between the local group and global A.A.. GSRs represent their group at monthly district meetings and at Fall and Spring Assemblies. From the district meetings and the assemblies, the GSR brings information back to the group. GSRs in each district elect two District Committee Members (DCM) to represent their district's concerns to the Area Committee, and to bring information back to the district meeting from the area. Some Districts also have Local Committee Members (LCMs) who assist the DCMs in contacting and visiting groups, updating lists, and in any other way that may be needed. Both GSRs and DCMs are usually elected for a two-year term.

The Western Mass. Area Committee consists of all Area Officers (Delegate, Alternate Delegate, Area Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Registrar, Area Archivist, and Webmaster), all DCMs, and Chairs and Co-Chairs of each of the following committees: Accessibility, Archives, Cooperation with the Professional Community, Grapevine, Public Information, Round-Up. The Area Committee also includes the Chairs of the following committees: Western Mass. Institutions, Western Mass. Intergroup, Berkshire Intergroup, and Western Mass. Young People in A.A..

The Area Committee meeting is held monthly at 7:30 PM on the second Wednesday of each month unless the committee members agree to an alternate time and date. For example, the area meeting may be held at the Spring and Fall assemblies in place of those months' meetings.

The Area Delegate, Alternate Delegate, Area Chair, Secretary and Treasurer are elected at a Fall assembly by those eligible to vote at an assembly (see Guidelines VIII.C. for voting eligibility and procedures). They are elected in odd-numbered years for a two-year term, beginning January 1. The Area Archivist, Area Registrar, and Webmaster are non-rotating, non-voting positions and are appointed by the Area Chair when that post is vacated.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

This committee shall act in an advisory capacity to the Area Treasurer for the Area Committee. The purpose of the Finance Committee will be to oversee the mix of spirituality and money in the right proportion in an effort to achieve real prudence. We shall also protect harmonious and effective functioning by outlining the respective responsibilities and corresponding authorities. The delegated authority's first characteristic is the ultimate authority and final responsibility resides in the A.A. groups themselves. We shall forever use the guiding principles of Alcoholics Anonymous as written in our Three Legacies—The Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts.

1. Composition
 - a. The Finance Committee will be chaired by the current Treasurer, co-chaired by the Area Chair, and include Delegate, Alt Delegate, Secretary and anyone the Area Chair decides to appoint, not to exceed 7 total members.
 - b. All members of the Finance Committee get one vote and where possible substantial unanimity is required.
 - c. A quorum is required for motions to be stated and passed, and the quorum should be defined as 2/3rds of the current membership of the Finance Committee.
2. Meetings / Schedule
 - a. The Finance Committee will meet twice a year, in the Spring, prior to the Spring Assembly and in the Fall, prior to the budget meeting, and whenever called upon by the Finance Chair.
 - b. Chair of Finance Committee can choose how frequently we meet, especially if an issue arises.
3. Duties and Responsibilities
 - a. Finance Committee will assist the Area Treasurer in any aspect of that job she/he requests, including but not limited to support in the preparation of the annual budget.
 - b. Provide education and support in Area 31 for 7th tradition activities.
 - c. Consider ways of carrying A.A.'s message not already being met; for example, encouraging and supporting the work of Districts and Committees within their budgets.
 - d. Facilitate the transfer of responsibility from treasurer to treasurer.

STANDING COMMITTEES

The Area Chair appoints a new co-chair for each standing committee every year, and the existing co-chair rolls into the chair. An exception is the Round-Up Committee, which elects its own co-chair, who rolls into the chair the following year. The general responsibilities of the standing committees are:

Accessibility: The purpose of this committee is to diminish or eliminate barriers that prevent anyone from participating in any aspect of A.A. in Area 31. The committee provides information and coordinates services for alcoholics who otherwise would be unable to participate in meetings, groups, or service work because of a disability, difficulty accessing A.A. meeting places, or because of a need for special assistance with communication.

Archives: Collects and stores items of significance to the history of A.A. in Area 31. The committee arranges to record the stories of ‘old-timers’ to preserve the oral history of A.A.. Additionally, the committee arranges displays of archive items at Area Assemblies, the Area Round-Up, and area group anniversaries.

Cooperation with the Professional Community: Seeks to create mutual understanding and cooperation between A.A. and the professional community. Makes general information about A.A. available to those in fields such as health care, education, law enforcement, and social work. Provides schedules, pamphlets, videos, etc., to professionals.

Grapevine: Encourages groups and individuals to subscribe to the Grapevine and La Viña (Spanish language edition) and to have Grapevine items like books and CDs available at meetings. Promotes awareness of the Grapevine website, including the Audio Grapevine and Digital Archives as tools of recovery. Encourages members to submit articles, letters, drawings, anecdotes, and jokes for publication. Provides displays of Grapevine materials for conferences, assemblies, and group anniversaries.

Public Information: This committee works closely with A.A. volunteers to instruct them how to effectively carry the message to the general public. Using the A.A. guidelines on P.I., and training gained from attending monthly P.I. meetings, the A.A. member may then be scheduled to speak to the public. This includes schools/students, senior citizens, church groups, alcohol education programs, parent groups, health fairs, radio shows, Boy/Girl Scout troops, DWI schools, or anywhere we are asked to come to explain what A.A. is, does, and doesn’t do. The P.I. Committee also helps provide literature and pamphlets to libraries and visitor’s centers and public service announcements to local TV and radio stations.

Round-Up: Arranges a forum for the Area Delegate to give a report on the General Service Conference. This can be a weekend of workshops, A.A. meetings, skits, videos, speaker from General Service Office and Al-Anon participation. The committee can hold a banquet and dance in order to defray the cost of the Round-Up.

INVITED COMMITTEES

These committees cooperate with but are not a part of the Area Committee structure. They are independent and self supporting.

Western Mass. Institutions Committee: The purpose of this committee is to coordinate the work of individual A.A. members and groups that are interested in carrying our message to the incarcerated alcoholic unable to attend outside meetings. Additionally, the committee oversees regular A.A. meetings held in facilities and treatment centers where people are receiving help, usually for substance abuse. The committee also makes connections between people leaving treatment programs and people in the A.A. fellowship through a national program called “Bridging the Gap.” Nearly all donations to the committee are used to purchase conference approved literature for direct distribution to newcomers in institutions. The officers of this committee are elected by the Institutions Committee.

Western Mass. Intergroup: Coordinates A.A. activities among its various groups, maintains 24 hour telephone coverage, publishes regularly updated schedules of group meetings in the area, maintains a website (westernmassaa.org) encourages a program which will promote regular visits between groups (bookie list), provides an inventory of A.A. literature for the area and acts on suggestions from group representatives that would be of potential benefit to all groups. Western Mass. Intergroup also puts on a family picnic every summer and sponsors an Alkathon at Christmas. The officers of Western Mass. Intergroup are elected by the Intergroup.

Berkshire Intergroup: Meets the needs of Berkshire County. Responsible for the local A.A. hotline in the Berkshires, for maintaining a website (berkshireaaintergroup.org), for publishing a Berkshire County meeting list, for keeping a supply of literature and pamphlets, organizing local Alkathons and other events, and for communicating with the Berkshire County Institutions Committee. The officers of Berkshire Intergroup are elected by Berkshire Intergroup.

Western Massachusetts Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (WMYPAA): The committee is comprised of men and women who combine their experience, strength, and hope in order to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. All alcoholics are welcome and encouraged to participate, enhance their sobriety, and to be of service to Area 31. WMYPAA’s primary goal is derived from A.A.’s three legacies. We strive to:

- a. Support young alcoholics in their recovery
- b. Promote unity among alcoholics of all ages
- c. Encourage young members of A.A. to participate in A.A.’s General Service Structure

Any member of Alcoholics Anonymous is welcome to attend WMYPAA committee meetings. Anyone in attendance at a WMYPAA committee meeting may consider himself or herself a member of WMYPAA, and therefore may participate in discussion and voting procedures.

AREA OFFICERS' DUTIES

The Delegate: Represents the area at the General Service Conference, prepares for and serves on a General Service Conference committee, effectively reports back to the area fellowship the issues and actions of the General Service Conference. The Delegate serves on the Area Committee and also attends the following area and state service meetings: Western Mass. Area Spring and Fall Assemblies, Western Mass. Round-Up, Massachusetts State Convention, North East Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (NERAASA), North East Regional Delegates' meeting (NERD), North East Regional Forum (NERF), and the International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Delegate attends all committee and district meetings on a rotating basis with the Alternate Delegate and the Area Chair. The Delegate serves as a committee member the first year and as treasurer the second year of the Massachusetts State Convention. The immediate past delegate serves as chair of the Mass. State Convention.

Suggested qualifications for this two-year commitment:

- Several years of active participation in local and area affairs, as a G.S.R. and as a committee member.
 - Time available, not only for the week-long Conference meeting in April but for all the efforts needed before and after the Conference.
 - Five or six years of continuous sobriety.
 - The ability to make and take suggestions—and criticism, too.
 - Experience in chairing meetings.
 - Knowledge of A.A. affairs, and of where to find the correct information when they do not know the answers.
 - Thorough familiarity with the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts and how they apply to local problems.
 - The ability to be open-minded, to sit down with A.A.s in the area and with other delegates to discuss and act on matters vital to A.A.
- © A.A.W.S. 32-34

The Alternate Delegate: Works closely with the Area Delegate, attending the same service events as the Delegate, except the General Service Conference, and is prepared to serve as Delegate if necessary. The Alternate Delegate attends all committee and district meetings on a rotating basis with the Delegate and the Area Chair. The Alternate Delegate also serves on the Massachusetts State Convention Planning committee as program co-chair in the first year, and as program chair in the second year. The Alternate Delegate may perform some special functions of the Area Committee.

Suggested qualifications:

- The Alternate Delegate's qualifications are the same as those for the Delegate.
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The Area Chair: Prepares the agenda for and chairs the monthly Area Committee meeting and the Spring and Fall Assemblies, and appoints an Area Registrar, Area Archivist, and Webmaster as those positions become vacant. The Area Chair also appoints co-chairpersons (and chairpersons when necessary) of the following service committees: Accessibility, Archives, Cooperation with the Professional Community, Grapevine, Public Information, and Website. The Area Chair attends all committee and district meetings on a rotating basis with the Delegate and the Alternate Delegate. The Chair attends every Western Mass Intergroup meeting. The Area Chair also communicates with area service committees and district meetings and is responsible for arranging meeting times and places for the Area Committee, the standing committees, and the Fall and Spring Assemblies. The Area Chair attends NERAASA.

Suggested qualifications:

- The Area Chair should have a solid period of sobriety (minimum three to five years), and experience in group, intergroup, institutional, and/or area affairs. Area chairs need a sound understanding and appreciation of the Steps, the Traditions, and the Concepts, along with a good fund of experience gained through applying these guides successfully to local problems.
- Communications skills, leadership qualities, and sensitivity to the wishes of the local area are also important.

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The Secretary: Records and distributes minutes of monthly Area Committee meetings and the Area Spring and Fall assemblies, highlights business from previous meetings and announces any business requiring action, keeps a record of Area Committee Actions and Assembly Motions, and assists other area officers in formulating assembly agendas.

Suggested qualifications:

- The secretary should have a reasonable period of sobriety, some service in group or Intergroup work and some background in general office work. Computer knowledge is helpful, but not necessary. An effective secretary has a sense of order and the ability to capture the essentials of what is happening at a meeting. This is a time-consuming job and needs to be carried out in schedule, and any secretary needs to be sure that ample time is available.

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The Treasurer: Receives and records all contributions sent to the Area Committee, pays all area bills (rents, committee members' approved expenses, mailing costs, etc.), compiles and presents a monthly treasurer's report to the Area Committee, compiles and presents a bi-annual treasurer's report to the Spring and Fall assemblies, develops an annualized budget (see Guidelines IX.B.), assists all other area officers as needed, and works with an accountant to file appropriate tax and corporate paperwork annually as required.

Suggested qualifications:

- The Treasurer should be a responsible person with a solid period of sobriety. He or she should be organized enough to keep good records, and some accounting or bookkeeping experience is useful. If not, the person elected may need help in setting up a system, and possible some clerical assistance. Persuasiveness, firmness, and diplomacy will help the treasurer do the job.

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The Registrar: (i) Regularly updates area groups' information with the help of the DCMs and GSRs in a database of group information that is managed by the General Service Office called Fellowship Connection, (ii) provides current and updated information on groups to the DCMs and GSRs, (iii) collects and updates area committee officer and member (ACM) information as it changes (ACMs are officers such as Delegate, Area Chair, Secretary, as well as DCMs and chairpersons of the various committees) in Fellowship Connection, (iv) exports ACM info to a form usable by the Secretary in creating the Area Service Directory, (v) generates mailing labels on request for the Area Secretary, Delegate, Area Chair and each district (vi) reports at monthly Area Committee meetings and at the Spring and Fall Assemblies on the number of registered groups and members in the area, and (vii) cooperates with Intergroups in Area 31 to keep group information current.

Suggested Qualifications:

- A reasonable period of sobriety, area service experience, good organizational and follow-up skills, and computer literacy.

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The Archivist: Collects, organizes and preserves material of historic interest and is responsible for both the physical and the intellectual integrity of the collection. The Archivist reports regularly to the Archives Committee and at the Fall and Spring Assemblies. The Archivist sits on the Area Committee, but does not have a vote.

Suggested qualifications:

- The Area Archivist should have a solid period of sobriety (minimum three to five years), and experience in group, intergroup, institutional, and/or area affairs, with some Archives Committee experience.

- Avid interest in Area 31's history. Knowledge of or willingness to learn preservation and acquisition skills as they relate to material in the Area Archives.

The Webmaster: Provides maintenance of the Website, including updating information and implementing changes in the presentation of information posted. The Webmaster assigns and maintains user ID's and passwords for e-mail and secure access to the website. The Webmaster registers the site's domain, shops for the best value of services provided for the Website, and ensures that the information provided on the site is by A.A., for A.A. and about A.A..

Suggested Qualifications:

- The Area 31 Webmaster should have a reasonable period of sobriety (suggested minimum 3 years), Area service experience, and good organizational skills.
- Strong computer skills are essential to this position including experience setting up and maintaining Websites.
- The Webmaster should have a strong understanding of A.A.'s Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts for World Service, and good judgment about what constitutes appropriate material for the Website.

DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBERS' and LOCAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS' DUTIES

The District Committee Member (DCM) is the vital link between the group's GSR and the Area service structure. A DCM is an A.A. member who usually has served as a GSR and whom the other GSRs wish to make responsible for their district activities. An able, experienced GSR makes a good DCM provided he or she has the time and desire to work closely with groups within the district. In Area 31, two DCMs serve each district for a two year term. Ideally, one co-DCM is elected in the fall of each year. Election should take place before the Fall Assembly and is set up by the DCM who is finishing up his or her term.

Suggested qualifications for this two-year commitment are:

- Background in A.A. service work including GSR and perhaps experience with Intergroup affairs.
- Enough sobriety (at least four to five years) to be eligible for election as Delegate.
- The time and energy to serve the district well.

The duties of a DCM are:

- Chair monthly district meeting.
- Attend and report at monthly area committee meeting.
- Participate in the Spring and Fall Assemblies and the Round-Up.
- Receive information from groups through GSRs and by visiting groups in the district.
- Assist the Delegate and Area Registrar in obtaining group information for our Eastern United States Directory.
- Keep GSRs informed about Conference and Area activities.
- Acquaint GSRs with the *A.A. Service Manual* and service structure.
- Strongly encourage all GSRs and alternates to attend area assemblies and the Round-Up.
- Regularly attend groups in the district, encouraging groups that have no GSR to elect one and send him or her to the monthly district meeting.
- Exchange ideas with other DCMs on how to improve communication between DCMs and GSRs.
- Inspire GSRs to effectively pass information between their groups, the district and the area.

By maintaining active contact, both with the groups in the district and the Delegate, the DCM is a key link in ensuring that all the A.A. groups are aware of the importance of their total participation in local, district, area and world services.

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The Local Committee Member (LCM) If a large district chooses to divide itself into smaller areas (sometimes called subdistricts or local districts), an LCM may be elected to serve that local district. The LCM may be a past GSR, outgoing GSR, or even a past or outgoing DCM. Each district is autonomous when deciding whether to have LCMs, the number of LCMs they will have, how long the LCM will serve, and whether to follow the same guidelines as suggested for election to a DCM position.

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What our LCMs do:

- Assist DCMs in the effort to visit all meetings/groups in their districts in hopes to inspire greater involvement, cooperation and unity.
- Attend monthly district meetings and is encouraged to attend the Area Committee meetings.
- Attend Spring and Fall assemblies and the Round-Up.
- Be a voting member at their district meetings.
- Possibly stand in as alternate DCM.
- May assume voting rights of either DCM if they are absent from either area meetings or assemblies.
- Gain experience for a future service position.

GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE (GSR) DUTIES

The GSR “. . . may be the most important job in A.A.. By choosing its most qualified man or woman as GSR, a group helps secure its own future – and the future of A.A. as a whole.” -Bill W.

The General Service Representative has the job of linking his or her group with A.A. as a whole. The GSR represents the group at the district and area levels, bringing the groups' thought, news and problems to the District committee member and to the Delegate, who then passes them on to the conference. In return, the GSR brings back to the group the information and remedies that affect A.A. unity, health and growth. To the extent that a GSR keeps the group informed, then expresses the group conscience, only then can the Conference be assured it is acting for A.A. as a whole. Ideally, all groups should make every effort possible to have an alternate GSR.

Suggested qualifications for this 2-year commitment are:

- Has the confidence of the group.
- Is an active member of his or her group.
- Has 2 to 3 years of continuous sobriety.
- Has experience in service work and has held group officer positions.
- Has learned that A.A. offers growth through service work and has become aware of the meaning of our Traditions.

The duties of the GSR are:

- Serve a 2-year term, often beginning on January 1.
- Attend the district meetings with other GSRs and DCMs, the Spring and Fall assemblies, and the Round-Up.
- Be a voting member at their district meetings and area assemblies.
- Serve on special committees as a bonus of being a GSR.
- Become knowledgeable about A.A. material available from GSO.
- Learn everything they can about the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts and become familiar with the *Service Manual*.

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AREA 31 COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

(sample)

Opening – Call to order

- Moment of silence, Serenity Prayer
- Reading from the *A. A. Service Manual* on “The Area Committee”
- Welcome to new members and visitors

Area Officer Reports

- Secretary
 Roll Call
 Report
- Treasurer’s Report
- Registrar’s Report
- Archivist’s Report
- Webmaster’s Report

Standing Committee Reports

- Accessibilities
- Archives
- Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC)
- Grapevine
- Public Information
- Western Mass Round-Up

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

Invited Committee Reports

- Berkshire Intergroup
- Western Mass Institutions Committee
- Western Mass Intergroup
- Western Mass Young People in A.A.

District Reports

- District 1
- District 2
- District 3
- District 4
- District 5
- District 6

Delegate’s Remarks

Alternate Delegate’s Remarks

Area Chair’s Remarks

Old Business

New Business

Closing: I Am Responsible – When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there, and for that, I am responsible.

AREA ASSEMBLIES

Area 31 holds two two-day Area Assemblies, one on a weekend in the spring and one on a weekend in the fall. The Area Chair is generally responsible for organizing assemblies. The Area Chair is encouraged to rotate the Area Assembly throughout the districts. All GSRs and Area Committee members are responsible for attending assemblies. All A.A. members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

On the Saturday of the Spring Assembly, the Area holds a mini-conference organized by the Alternate Delegate. This is held prior to the General Service Conference in New York, and the format is set to closely resemble the same committee process. Reports are given from each mini-conference committee, thereby giving our Delegate an opportunity to gather a sense of the Area's conscience concerning conference agenda items.

The Area Chair sets the agenda for the Saturday of the Fall Assembly which may include an area inventory. That day also may include workshops, sharing sessions, fellowship, and "ask-it-basket" questions from the membership to our past delegates, so that they may share their collective experience.

In both Fall and Spring, the second day of the Area Assembly, a Sunday afternoon, is the area's semi-annual business meeting where members hear reports from the Delegate and other area officers, service committee chairs, any existing ad hoc committees, and district committee members. Members also consider and vote on any old or new business. At these business meetings the membership may charge the Area Committee with certain tasks and directions to perform before the next Assembly. Section VIII (page 39) of the Area 31 Guidelines describes and governs the business meeting portion of the Assemblies.

The election of Area Officers takes place during the Fall Assembly in odd-numbered years.

THIRD LEGACY VOTING PROCEDURE FOR AREA 31

The A.A. Third Legacy procedure is a type of voting procedure established to elect an Area's Delegate to the General Service Conference. In Area 31 the Third Legacy procedure is also used to elect area officers, except the Registrar and Archivist.

- All members of the Assembly stand. As qualifications for the position are read, unqualified members sit. The names of all those that remain standing are listed on the board of candidates.
- After nominations for the office are closed, the candidates' names are posted on the blackboard.
- All voting members cast written ballots.
- The tally for each candidate is posted on the blackboard. The first candidate to receive TWO-THIRDS majority of the total vote is elected. (Two-thirds majority vote is based on the total votes cast at each ballot.)
- If no candidate receives two-thirds of the vote at the first ballot then a second ballot is taken.
- After the second ballot, if no candidate received two-thirds majority, any candidate who received less than one-fifth of the vote is automatically withdrawn.
- After the third ballot, candidates with less than one-third of the total vote will be withdrawn automatically, except the two top candidates remain. (In case there are ties for second place, the top candidate and all runners-up remain as candidates.)
- After the fourth ballot, if no candidate has two-thirds majority of the total vote, the chair asks for a motion, second, and majority show of hands on conducting a fifth and final ballot.
- If the motion fails, the two top candidates go into the "hat." (If there is a tie for second place, then the two second-place names go into the hat with the top as well.) The first name drawn from the hat is elected.
- If the motion passes, a fifth ballot is taken. If no candidate gains two-thirds of the majority vote, then the two top names go into the "hat," where the first name drawn from the hat is elected.

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To see a chart illustrating the Third Legacy procedure, go to your *A.A. Service Manual*, 2021-2023 edition, page 111.

GROUP INVENTORY

A group inventory meeting is held periodically to allow groups to evaluate how well they are carrying the A.A. message, as well as fulfilling their primary purpose: to help alcoholics recover through A.A.'s suggested Twelve Steps and Traditions of recovery. A group inventory is not designed to settle a controversial issue. No voting takes place. Its purpose is for the group to see that its actions and conduct are within A.A.'s trusted framework, to identify areas for improvement and to allow the group to become informed on A.A.'s Traditions. Sometimes, suggestions are carried back to the group business meeting for consideration and action. This is where the collective conscience of the group membership is achieved, and actions taken now are based on an informed group conscience.

Many groups ask the Area for assistance in arranging a group inventory by asking an experienced A.A. to chair this meeting for the group. We are grateful to our past delegates, current delegate, and other area officers and A.A.s who help out. One way of conducting a group inventory is to examine the Twelve Traditions and see how well the group is following these guidelines. Another successful method is to have the outside moderator ask the questions, compiled from the A.A. shared experience, found in the section "A.A. group inventory" in the pamphlet *The A.A. Group*. It has been the long-time opinion that an annual group inventory not only maintains the group's general health, but can actually revitalize the group's health!

AREA SERVICE COMMITMENTS

An Area Service Commitment takes place when a group invites the Area Committee to speak at its meeting. Area Committee members share their experience, strength, and hope as it relates to their sobriety in general, as well as to how their service experience has helped them stay sober. Newcomers and A.A.s at the meeting get to hear first-hand about different service positions, and get to meet some of their local trusted servants. Area service commitments also provide a good opportunity for the area committee members to visit groups and be more in touch with the area conscience.

CONFIDENTIAL AREA DIRECTORY

The Area maintains a confidential directory of Area Committee members, including current Area Officers, chairs and co-chairs of standing committees, chairs and co-chairs of invited committees, DCMs and co-DCMs, and living past delegates.

CONTRIBUTIONS – WHERE DOES YOUR MONEY GO?

Why does my group contribute to A.A. services?

How did you *first* hear about A.A.? Did you get introduced at a treatment facility or a jail? Did you read a pamphlet at your doctor's office? Did you hear about it at school or on the radio? Did your neighbor suggest that you might try it? Did a former drinking buddy suddenly turn up looking healthy, happy and sober? However you heard about A.A., it was probably a result of sober people doing some kind of A.A. service. Group contributions to A.A. service keep the cycle of passing on the gift of sobriety alive.

Where does my group send contributions?

Locally, there are *four* groups that serve the Western Massachusetts Area. These separate, but vital, service structures function in the Western Massachusetts area in mutual cooperation and understanding to the benefit of the entire Fellowship.

The Western Mass. Area 31 Committee, which includes the six districts of Area 31, provides an important link between our local groups and A.A. as a whole. Group contributions to the Area Committee support Public Information (PI), Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC), Round-Up, Grapevine, Accessibility, and Archives committees within our area. (A description of the function of these committees can be found in the section on Standing Committees.) Expenses for each service committee and District, such as rent and postage, are paid from Area Committee funds. The Delegate's, Alternate Delegate's, and Area Chair's expenses to conferences and other A.A. functions are reimbursed by the Area Committee. Finally, the Area Committee holds monthly meetings and funds two assemblies a year (Spring and Fall). In addition, a detailed list of events that committee members attend, along with the costs, can be found in the Calendar of Events. The Area Committee is funded by voluntary contributions from the A.A. groups it serves in Western Massachusetts and Northern Connecticut.

For more information on the Area Committee finances, please refer to Section IX of the Area 31 Guidelines.

The Western Massachusetts and Berkshire Intergroups operate offices as a service and information center for local A.A. groups, individual members, the alcoholism treatment community and the general public of Western Massachusetts. A more detailed description of what each Intergroup office does can be found in the section on Invited Committees. The Intergroup Offices are supported by local group contributions and income from the sale of A.A. literature.

The Western Massachusetts Institutions Committee carries the message by putting on meetings and bringing books and literature into prisons, halfway houses, detoxes, and treatment facilities. The Institutions Committee uses nearly all donations for purchasing literature to be distributed to individuals and groups at the institutions that request it, and is supported by local group contributions.

The General Service Office of A.A. (also fondly known as "GSO", or "New York") nationally and internationally develops all A.A. literature, provides for GSR and DCM materials, registers groups, organizes the General Service Conference, Forums, and International Convention, and supports activities of the A.A. service committees. The GSO also provides confidential directories of group contact members for all of A.A.. The Alcoholics Anonymous website (aa.org), in English, Spanish, and French, offers information for anyone interested in A.A., including newcomers, professionals, and students, and provides services for members, lists of U.S./Canada central offices/intergroups and international general service offices.

A.A.'s Self Support System: The Seventh Tradition in Action

When a member drops money into the meeting basket, that person is actually carrying out the Twelfth Step of the A.A. program. Before passing the basket at a meeting, be sure to explain its purpose. Because all A.A. activity is self-supporting, the money will ultimately be spread in many directions to help carry the A.A. message.

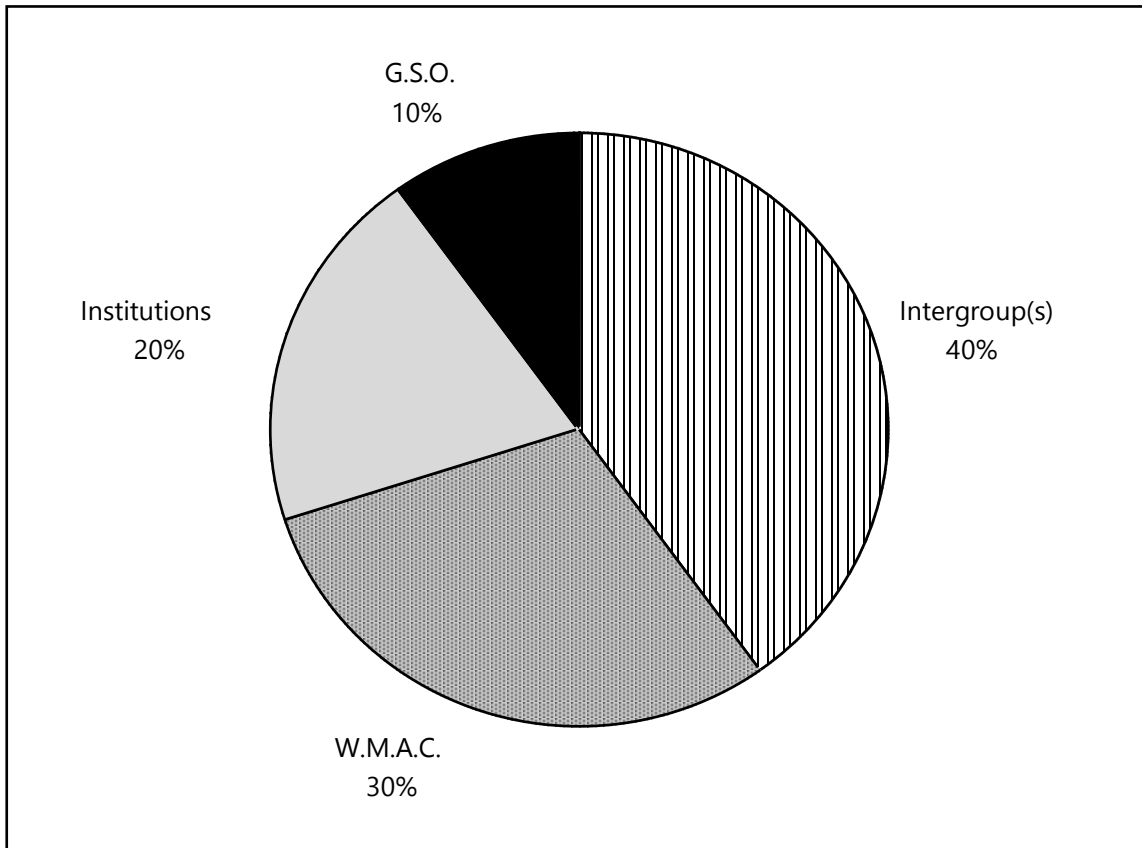
Each group must first be responsible to its members by collecting enough money to cover group expenses such as rent (first and foremost) then coffee, literature, and a prudent reserve. This is expressed by the First Tradition, "Our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends on A.A. unity."

The second responsibility of each group is to contribute to the other levels of service in A.A.. Without this continuing Twelfth Step support, our service offices would soon close and the alcoholic seeking help would have nowhere to turn.

SUGGESTED CONTRIBUTION GUIDELINES

In Western Massachusetts an example of suggested distribution is:

- 40% to WESTERN MASS. INTERGROUP in Holyoke, and/or to the BERKSHIRE INTERGROUP in Pittsfield
- 30% to WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS AREA COMMITTEE
- 20% to WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTIONS COMMITTEE
- 10% to the GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE in New York



When you send your check, please remember to write your GROUP SERVICE NUMBER on the face of the check so your group will be properly credited with the contribution!

Mailing addresses:

Make checks payable to: **Western Mass. Area Committee**, and mail to **PO Box 6818, Holyoke, MA 01040-6818**

Make checks payable to: **Western Mass. Intergroup**, and mail to **300 Appleton St., Holyoke, MA 01040**

Make checks payable to: **Berkshire Intergroup**, and mail to **152 North Street, Suite 30C, Pittsfield, MA 01201**

Make checks payable to: **Western Mass. Institutions** and mail to **PO Box 1391, Holyoke, MA 01040-1391**

Make checks payable to **General Service Board**, and mail to **General Service Office, Post Office Box 2407, James A Farley Station, New York, NY 10116-2407.**

THE THREE LEGACIES OF A.A.

A.A.'s First Legacy is Recovery, which is embodied in the Big Book, in the Steps, and in person-to-person Twelfth Step Work.

A.A.'s Second Legacy is Unity. This Bill realized when he said, "We can do together what I cannot do alone" – it was vital that A.A.s stay together. To ensure A.A. Unity, Bill has written the Twelve Traditions.

A.A.'s Third Legacy is Service. The General Service Conference is the means by which the Fellowship is autonomous, operating through the instrument of a truly democratic, *representational*, elected form of self-government.

As defined by Bill, "...an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer – ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.'s General Service Office for national and international action."

Pass It On, p. 347, © A.A.W.S.

GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE - OUR CONNECTION

Once a year, usually in April, all the delegates from the U.S. and Canada and all the trustees (alcoholic and non-alcoholic), directors of AAWS and the Grapevine Board, and the staffs of both the General Service Office and the Grapevine, come together in New York City for the General Service Conference. All Conference members have received advanced material, preparing them for the week of work ahead. The Conference spans six days and is packed with all kinds of A.A. related business, including Conference Advisory Actions. By utilizing the committee system, a remarkable amount is accomplished.

EVOLUTION OF A CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTION

1. An idea, suggestion, question, concern or subject comes from A.A. members, GSRs, DCMs, Area Committee members, Delegates, Trustees or GSO/GV staff, and may be shared or discussed at the group, district and Area Assembly and sent to the **GSO Conference Coordinator**.
2. The idea is reviewed by the GSO/GV Staff and forwarded to the appropriate **Trustees' Committee**,
3. which then may refer the matter to the appropriate **Conference Committee**,
4. which meets during the General Service Conference week and makes **recommendations** that are presented in the Committee Report to the **General Service Conference**.
5. If a Conference Committee recommendation is approved, after full floor discussion, it becomes a **Conference Advisory Action**, which becomes binding when approved by the **General Service Board**.
6. Conference Advisory Actions may also come **from the floor** of the Conference.

More details of the actual General Service Conference are found on various pages of the *A.A. Service Manual*.

Why do we need a Conference anyway?

The late Bernard B. Smith (nonalcoholic, past chairperson of the board) answered that so well:

“We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We do need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined for alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth that brought us back to life.

“We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must ensure can never invade A.A.. We need it to ensure A.A. against government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing overintegration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all of its services.

“We need it to ensure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all A.A., and not of any few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of A.A. never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is.”

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In Western Mass. It is the Area Delegate’s responsibility to attend as many area functions as possible, ever ready to listen to the concerns of A.A. members. In our local structure, we have the Spring Assembly put in place specifically as a sounding board for all area concerns, enabling the Delegate to be in touch with the Western Mass. Group conscience. However, the Delegate is a “trusted servant” and will at times during the Conference process have to use his or her own judgment—the right of decision (Concept III)—and be trusted that it will be used for the good of A.A..

Also in Western Mass. We are very fortunate to have in place the Annual Round-Up. This is held after the Conference (usually in May or June) and provides a central location for the Delegate to report back to the Area what went on at the Conference. However, this is not the only forum for the Delegate to give his or her report. The Delegate may also go to Districts, Committees, and home groups. Reporting back to the Area is as important as attending the Conference.

GUIDELINES FOR WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS AREA 31

Preamble

These Guidelines describe the procedures by which Area 31 conducts its business. They cover the Area Committee and its officers, the standing and ad hoc committees of the Area, the Area's districts and DCMs, Area Assembly procedures, and Area finances. Because Area procedures will inevitably change over time, the last guideline is a procedure for amending the Guidelines.

The Guidelines were first drafted by an Ad Hoc Committee on Guidelines during the fall of 2001 and the spring of 2002. In June 2002 they were presented to the Area Committee, where they were discussed and revised for over a year. In December 2003 the final document was given to Area Committee members for circulation to districts, GSRs, and groups. The Spring 2004 Area Assembly unanimously approved the adoption of these Guidelines and their incorporation into the Area Handbook.

Guidelines for Western Massachusetts Area 31

I. Name

Our name is Western Massachusetts General Service, Area 31, Inc.

II. Area Committee

A. Role

The Area Committee is the body that acts as the collective conscience of the Alcoholics Anonymous groups in Area 31, Western Massachusetts and serves as their connection to the Alcoholics Anonymous general service structure.

B. Composition

The Area Committee is composed of area officers, service committee chairs and co-chairs, and district committee members (DCMs).

III. Area Committee Officers

A. Composition

The officers of the Area Committee are: Delegate, Alternate Delegate, Area Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Archivist, Registrar, and Webmaster. Their duties are spelled out in the Area Handbook.

B. Election

Elections of Area Officers, except the Webmaster, Registrar, and Archivist, are held every other year during the fall assembly. Elections are conducted according to the Third Legacy procedure. The Webmaster, Registrar, and Archivist are appointed by the Area Chair and are non-voting, non-rotating positions.

C. Vacancies

Delegate: If a Delegate resigns during his or her term, the Alternate Delegate immediately assumes the position of Delegate and appoints an Acting Alternate Delegate until a new Alternate Delegate can be elected at a subsequent Assembly.

Alternate Delegate: If an Alternate Delegate resigns during his or her term, the Delegate appoints an Acting Alternate Delegate until a new Alternate Delegate can be elected at a subsequent Assembly.

Area Chair: If an Area Chair resigns during his or her term, the Delegate or his or her designee serves as Acting Area Chair until a new Area Chair is elected at a subsequent Assembly.

If the positions of Delegate, Alternate Delegate, and Area Chair all become vacant, the Treasurer becomes the Acting Area Chair and appoints an Acting Treasurer. The Acting Area Chair also appoints a new Delegate, preferably a past delegate, whose appointment is approved by the Area Committee. All acting positions except the Delegate will be elected at a subsequent Assembly. If all Area Officer positions become vacant at once, the area's past delegates are asked to step in to reconstitute the Area Committee.

Treasurer and Secretary: If the Treasurer or Secretary resigns, the Area Chair appoints a replacement until a new officer is elected at a subsequent Assembly.

If any area officer does not attend Area Committee meetings for two consecutive months and does not communicate with the Area Chair during such time, it will be considered a resignation and he or she will be replaced by following the procedures above.

IV. Standing Committees

A. Purpose

Standing committees are established for purposes requiring the continuous attention of the Area.

B. The Committees

Current standing committees are: the Accessibility Committee, the Archives Committee, the Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) Committee, the Grapevine Committee, the Public Information (PI) Committee, and the Round-Up Committee. For a description of each committee's duties, see the Area Handbook.

C. Creation

Committees are created by the Area Assembly. Creation of a committee requires the approval of the Area Committee and the approval of a two-thirds majority of an Area Assembly.

D. Chairs and Co-Chairs

The Area Chair appoints a new co-chair for each standing committee every year, and the existing co-chair rolls into the chair. An exception is the Round-Up Committee, which elects its own Co-Chair, who rolls into the Chair the following year. Committee chairs carry out the assigned duties of their committee by holding a meeting at least monthly, reporting to the monthly Area Committee meeting and to the Area Assemblies, and other appropriate actions as outlined in the Area Handbook.

E. Vacancies

If a service committee chair or co-chair resigns during his or her term, the Area Chair will appoint a replacement. If a service committee chair or co-chair does not attend Area Committee meetings for two consecutive months and does not communicate with the Area Chair during such time, it will be considered a resignation and the Area Chair will appoint a replacement. The Round-Up Committee replaces its own chair.

F. Dissolution

Dissolution of a Committee requires, first, the vote of a majority of the Committee's current membership, second, the approval of the Area Committee, and third, the approval of a two-thirds majority of an Area Assembly.

V. Ad Hoc Committees

A. Purpose

Ad hoc committees are temporary committees established to accomplish a specific task or project. An example is the Area Handbook Committee.

B. Creation

The Area Chair can appoint an ad hoc committee or be directed by the Area Committee or Assembly to do so.

C. Dissolution

An ad hoc committee is dissolved when its specific task or project is accomplished.

VI. Districts and District Committee Members

A. Districts

The Area is divided into six geographical districts, each consisting of varying numbers of A.A. groups.

B. District Committee Members

Each district is represented on the Area Committee by two District Committee Members (DCMs) elected by the General Service Representatives (GSRs) of the District. The DCM serves as a link between the Area Committee and the GSRs.

If the DCM or co-DCM is absent from the Area Committee Meeting or the Assembly, the LCM may vote in their place.

Although districts are autonomous, it is suggested that if a DCM fails to attend, without communication, three or more District or Area Committee meetings in succession, the GSRs in the District may elect another DCM on their own initiative, or the GSRs may elect another DCM by the request of the Area Chair.

C. Redistricting

The Area may consider redistricting (1) if a district becomes large and unwieldy, or (2) if a district is so small that there is not enough participation to fill positions, or (3) if a linguistic district (such as Spanish-speaking) would help carry the message throughout the Area.

The Area Chair appoints an ad hoc committee to investigate the reasons for redistricting and to report its findings and make a proposal to the Area Committee.

In accordance with Section VII, subsection D, redistricting is a matter of a structural nature requiring a 2/3rds majority of the Area Committee (at least 2/3rds of the votes cast) for approval. Upon approval of the Area Committee, it is placed on the agenda of the next Area Assembly. In accordance with Section VIII, subsection E, redistricting requires a 2/3rds majority of the Area Assembly (at least 2/3rds of the votes cast) to pass.

VII. Area Committee Meetings

A. Agenda

The agenda for the Area Committee is set by the Area Chair. Members wishing to place items on the agenda of the Area Committee Meeting are encouraged to submit them to the Chair. Motions from the floor may be made by any member of the Area Committee.

B. Voting Members

Delegate	1
Alternate Delegate	1
*Area Chair	*1
Treasurer	1
Secretary	1
P. I.: Chair & Co-Chair	2
C.P.C.: Chair & Co-Chair	2
Archives: Chair & Co-Chair	2
Grapevine: Chair & Co-Chair	2
Accessibility: Chair & Co-Chair	2
Round-Up	2
Institutions	1
Western Mass Intergroup	1
Berkshire Intergroup	1
Western Mass Young People in A.A.	1
District 1 – DCMs	2
District 2 – DCMs	2
District 3 – DCMs	2
District 4 – DCMs	2
District 5 – DCMs	2
District 6 – DCMs	2
TOTAL VOTES	33
*The Area Chair only has the option to vote if it either creates or breaks a tie.	

C. Quorum

A quorum is a majority of the voting members (17). Business cannot be voted on without a quorum.

D. Voting on Motions of Old and New Business

Motions generally need a simple majority (more than half of the votes cast) to pass.

Motions of a structural or policy nature (e.g., creating or dissolving committees, redistricting) require a 2/3rds majority (at least 2/3rds of the votes cast) to pass. Structural or policy matters passed by the Area Committee are automatically placed on the agenda of the next Area Assembly meeting.

The Chair may call for abstentions but will not count them as cast votes. The Secretary serves as a Motion Keeper, keeping a separate and distinct list of all motions passed.

E. Parliamentary Procedure

To be sure that the meetings run smoothly, the Area Committee follows the general suggestions contained in the *A.A. Service Manual* as well as generally accepted parliamentary procedure.

VIII. Area Assemblies

A. Role

Any meeting of area GSRs and the Area Committee is an assembly. The Area Assembly is the mainspring of the Conference structure—the democratic voice of the movement expressing itself. Assemblies are the responsibility of the Area Committee, and are conducted by its chairperson.

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The Assembly's role in the area is to handle structural and policy issues including but not limited to: matters of redistricting, adding area committee positions, adding or dissolving committees, conducting elections and holding workshops.

It is the custom of Area 31 to hold two Assemblies each year, one in the Spring which is combined with a Mini-Conference, and one in the Fall which is combined with workshops and sharing sessions. The Area Chair is encouraged to rotate the Area Assembly throughout the districts.

Elections of Area Officers are held at the Fall Assembly in odd-numbered years.

B. Agenda

The agenda for the Area Assembly is set by the Agenda Committee, which is composed of the Area Officers. Members wishing to place items on the agenda of the Area Assembly are encouraged to submit them to the Area Chair. Motions from the floor may be made by any member of the Assembly.

Matters of a structural or policy nature are typically brought to the Assembly agenda by a 2/3rds vote of the Area Committee.

C. Voting Members

The voting members at Area Assemblies are the Area Committee members who are listed in the chart above, plus all GSRs present. If a GSR is not present, the Alternate GSR can vote in his or her place. Each group has only one vote.

D. Quorum

At the beginning of the Area Assembly, the Area Chair should explain eligibility to vote and count those eligible. A quorum for an Assembly is the majority (half plus one) of those present at the beginning of the meeting who are eligible to vote. A quorum is required for voting items of old and new business, so that the Assembly will reflect the informed group conscience of the Area. Elections are conducted according to the Third Legacy procedure and do not require a quorum.

E. Voting on Motions of Old and New Business

Motions of a structural or policy nature (e.g., creating or dissolving committees, redistricting) may be proposed at an area assembly, and if seconded will be voted on at the next area assembly. Such motions require a 2/3rds majority (at least 2/3rds of the votes cast) to pass.

All other motions need a simple majority (more than half of the votes cast) to pass.

The Chair may call for abstentions but will not count them as cast votes. The Secretary serves as a Motion Keeper, keeping a separate and distinct list of all motions passed.

F. Parliamentary Procedure

To be sure that the meetings run smoothly, the Area Assembly follows the general suggestions contained in the A.A. Service Manual as well as generally accepted parliamentary procedure.

IX. Finances

A. Checks and Balances

The Area's books and procedures will be reviewed at the time of rotation by the outgoing and incoming Treasurers.

B. Budget

The Area Committee will meet each November, in place of the November Area Committee meeting, to discuss the next year's budget. Based on input from committee chairs, DCMs, and financial information from previous years, the Treasurer develops an annualized budget and presents it at the December meeting. A suggested format is attached to these Guidelines.

C. Expenditures and Reimbursement

Each Area Committee member submits routine expenses (Conference-approved literature, postage, supplies, copying) to the Treasurer on a regular basis. Receipts are required. Budgeted money may be disbursed by the Treasurer in advance. If there is a fiscal crisis, the Treasurer has the right to send Area Committee members to the Area Committee for a motion to approve expenditures.

Mileage, tolls, and other routine expenses incurred by the Delegate, Alternate Delegate, and Area Chair will be reimbursed. The Area Committee will set a mileage reimbursement rate at the annual budget meeting.

In an emergency, non-budgeted expenditures may be made with the approval of both the Area Chair and the Treasurer.

D. Prudent Reserve

The Area should have a prudent reserve of three to six months of annualized expenses, to be kept in an account separate from the operating expenses. A 2/3rds majority vote of the Area Committee is required to access the prudent reserve.

X. Amending the Guidelines

These Guidelines may be amended by proposal to an Area Assembly, followed by a two-thirds majority vote at the next Area Assembly.

Area 31 Treasury - year	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Year to Date	Budget	% of Budget	Actual \$ +/-
Opening Balance:																
Group Contributions:																
Other:																
Total:																
Operating Expenses																
Bank Charges																
Liability Insurance																
Printing: Area Handbook																
Printing: General																
Corporate Filing																
Federal Tax Filing																
State Tax Filing																
Utilities																
Postage / P.O. Box																
Other Charges																
Total Operating Expenses																
Committee Expenses																
Accessibility																
Archives																
CPC																
Grapevine:																
PI																
Ad Hoc Committee Expenses																
Total Committee Expenses:																
District Expenses																
District 1																
District 2																
District 3																
District 4																
District 5																
District 6																
Total District Expenses:																
Events:																
International Convention																
General Service Conference:																
Mass State Convention:																
Spring and Fall Assemblies																
Round-Up																
NERD																
NERAASA																
NERF																
Website NAATW																
Archives NAAAW																
Total Event Expenses:																
Rents																
Area																
District 1																
District 2																
District 3																
District 4																
District 5																
District 6																
Total Rents:																
Area Officer Expenses																
Delegate Mileage																
Alt. Delegate Mileage																
Area Chair Mileage																
Total Officer Mileage																
Total Area Expenses:																
Balance Adjustment:																
Closing Balance:																
Prudent Reserve:																
Total Funds Available:																

THE TWELVE STEPS

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol -- that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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THE TWELVE TRADITIONS
(Short form)

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority -- a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose -- to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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THE TWELVE CONCEPTS (Short form)

1. Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.
2. The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.
3. To ensure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A. -- the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives -- with a traditional "Right of Decision."
4. At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.
5. Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.
6. The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.
7. The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.
8. The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and the constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.
9. Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.
10. Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.
11. The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.
12. The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

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PASS IT ON - ROTATION IN SERVICE

As members of A.A. we learn the importance of the slogan "Pass It On." If this lifesaving fellowship is to be here for our children and our children's children, it is imperative that we not only maintain the integrity of the message Bill W. and Dr. Bob intended, but that we take time to pass on the many workings of our A.A. home groups. Our survival depends upon the "carrying of the message to the alcoholic who still suffers" AND maintaining our singleness of purpose. By utilizing our Steps, Traditions and Concepts we will be in good hands.

We are also fortunate to have the practice of rotation in our service structure. Within the framework of Tradition Two, rotation is the main method we A.A.s have to prevent power, prestige and personal recognition from distorting our best intentions. It also is an essential reminder to place principles before personalities.

However, rotation or stepping down from office does not mean running out or disappearing! The group, indeed the whole Fellowship, is enriched when the persons who are rotating out make the effort to pass on their experience, strength and hope to the incoming servants. Take just a little bit of time to "lovingly" explain to the new trusted servant the responsibilities that particular position entails, what that group or committee might expect from that position and any other special attentions that have worked most effectively for our common welfare. It is as simple as telling the "new kid" where the coffee pot is stored, telling the GSR where the district meeting is, or the new treasurer the name of the bank where the account is or who gets paid what, etc. Since all groups are autonomous, the job descriptions will vary and therefore it's even more important to pass on the "past experiences" unique to that group. Rotation is practiced not to put someone out of a job but to ensure that others will have a chance to serve.

We need to remember the value of the experienced trusted servants who no longer hold office. As Tradition Two states, they can "become the voice of the group conscience; in fact, they are the true voice of Alcoholics Anonymous. They do not drive by mandate, they lead by example."

We can ALL take the time to "PASS IT ON."

*Thoughts put to paper by Linda B.
Delegate, Panel 44, Area 31 Western Mass*



A.A.'s Legacy of Service

Our Twelfth Step - carrying the message - is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die.

Hence, an A.A. Service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer - ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.'s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service.

By Bill W.