



Area 30

Alcoholics Anonymous
General Service Committee
of Eastern Massachusetts



THE MESSENGER

“A.A. in a Time of Change”

Theme of the 71st General Service Conference

Welcome!!!

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Welcome to the Kick-off Assembly for 2021!

I am excited to serve as the Area 30 Panel 71 Delegate and for us to begin this journey together.

As challenging as 2020 was, there was much to celebrate: groups moved to virtual platforms and continued to spread AA’s message of hope, districts continued to meet and do outreach to their groups, the Area conducted its business and held Assemblies virtually, Area committees found new and creative ways to perform their Twelfth Step work, and our Panel 69 Delegate attended the first virtual General Service Conference. Over the past nine months, we have seen that while circumstances change all around us, our message, our commitment, and our work as trusted servants of AA remains constant.

This Assembly marks the first meeting of Panel 71. The baton has now been passed. We’re off! And there is a lot of work to do!

The Twelfth Step work done at the area level is performed by our committees. Our committee members perform outreaches to professionals in the legal, healthcare, educational, and religious fields. They bring meetings into Correctional and treatment facilities. They raise awareness of our literature and Grapevine / LaVina within our Fellowship, and help to identify and remove obstacles that keep individuals from fully participating in AA.

In this issue of the Messenger, there are several articles written by Area 30 members about their experience serving on various Area committees. There is also a brief overview of each committee’s work and their meeting day / time. I encourage you to read these and think about becoming a member of one of our committees.

Area 30 committees are open to all members of AA. You do not need to be, or have been a GSR or DCM to serve on an area committee. Nor are you excluded from committee work if you currently serve as a GSR or DCM. Being part of an area committee while serving as a GSR or DCM can help inform your service to your group or district.

There is no suggestion that committee participation be limited to a single 2-year term such as there is for GSR, DCM, or Area Officer. Many people find committee work to be their passion and remain on a committee for many years.

I encourage you to visit our committees and explore a new avenue of service!

In Love and Service,
Jan W.
Panel 71 Delegate

IN THIS ISSUE:

Welcome

Why Service

Members Share Their Service
Experiences

Area 30 Committees

Potpourri for \$1

Why Service?

The following excerpt is from Dr. Bob's final message delivered at the first International Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous at Cleveland, Ohio in 1950:

I get a big thrill out of looking over a vast sea of faces like this with a feeling that possibly some small thing I did a number of years ago played an infinitely small part in making this meeting possible...There are two or three things which flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis. One is the simplicity of our program. Let's not louse it up with...complexes and things that...have very little to do with our actual A.A. work.

Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words 'love' and 'service'. We understand what love is and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two things in mind.

Reprinted from *Pass It On: The story of Bill Wilson and how the A.A. message reached the world*, ©1984, pp. 339-342, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.

Traditions in Action

By Catherine RM

Serving on the Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) Committee has enhanced my sobriety by showing me how AA's 12 Traditions can be applied in real-time, during presentations to professionals. I have chosen three Traditions—1, 10, and 12—to illustrate what I have learned as an interested AA, alternate chair, and chair.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

The first piece of literature I was given at a CPC meeting was the pamphlet, "Speaking at Non-AA Meetings." It describes how AAs may approach presentations (for example, those given by Public Information or CPC Committees) to non-alcoholic audiences. Receiving this pamphlet took away all of the pressure to make AA appealing; all I had to do was, in essence, talk about the preamble—what AA is, what AA isn't, what it can do, and what it can't do—and turn the result over to my Higher Power! I didn't have to be creative or unique; I merely had to be unified with the preamble as a tool to describe our fellowship and program of recovery.

10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Many medical professionals frequently ask, "what does AA think about medication-assisted recovery?" I've heard this question, and many variants thereof, throughout my tenure as a CPC member. Having witnessed *private* discussions of this question devolve into heated volleys, I'm immensely grateful that we don't have to entertain this debate in CPC presentations. I can attend a presentation with any committee member, regardless of how their opinions jive (or not) with mine. As CPC members, we carry the message of AA, regardless of our personal opinions. From a practical standpoint, turning to Tradition 10 has saved a lot of time in CPC presentations so that we can focus on other topics, too!

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

AA literature tells us that humility and anonymity are intrinsically linked; I cannot have one without the other. Often times, in CPC presentations, a question will come up to which I don't have an answer. *Me? Not have an answer?!* For this alcoholic, placing principles before personalities gives me (and my ego) a safe space to practice saying, "I don't know, but I can try to find out for you."

Thank you for letting me be of service!

How Serving in Area 30 Committee Work Serves Me

By Jenny T

In November 2019, I let the Area 30 Chairperson know that I was available for service to Area 30 and offered to be placed wherever he thought I was a good fit. I ended up as the Accessibilities Committee Chairperson, to which I thought: “Sure...wait! What does *accessibilities* mean?” Ultimately, like every other service position in AA, I needed no specific personal or professional background to be able to serve in this role—all I needed was honesty, open mindedness, and willingness. My job, therefore, was to try to learn about accessibilities concerns in AA and consider—with a committee—what might be helpful for Area 30. I was given a notebook of AA accessibilities materials and found the AA.org website rich in AA accessibilities content. I started my journey of discovery!

At that time, there was 1 committee member and 1 interested AA attending the committee meetings each month, but no committee standards from which to start. Therefore, we started over; leveraging the AA traditions, we developed our committee’s primary purpose. We thought we might be more attractive to potential committee members if we had a virtual meeting option, so we started a Zoom monthly meeting just prior to March. How fortunate! We were able to not miss our monthly committee meetings despite the sudden quarantine. We created a website and developed standing agendas for our monthly meetings. We decided we would grow slow, but steadily, and try to accomplish some “small wins” along the way.

With our primary purpose, website, and our virtual meeting established, we attracted other committee members, all of whom were increasingly enthusiastic about contributing. Throughout 2020, we spent most our time establishing committee norms and goals. We accomplished a lot—incrementally. We focused on our foundation, so that our committee would be sustainable for years to come. Towards the end of 2020, we were able to accomplish some real goals and establish plans for 2021. Success!

One of the challenges we face in our committee is the scope of the term “accessibilities.” We took it to mean that anyone, anywhere, might experience barriers to attending Area 30 AA meetings that our committee might help eliminate. For example, some may consider physical disabilities to be barriers, while others may consider age, gender, or sexual orientation to be barriers. There are many more barriers to attending AA. Many of these are sensitive topics and, while we do not always agree with one another, our committee’s and AA’s primary purposes help us to focus on unity, and our recovery helps keep us mutually respectful. We also agreed our job is not to change anyone’s mind but rather to provide information—we think most barriers to AA are created inadvertently and, through information, we might help eliminate barriers organically.

My sponsor mentioned many years ago that service in AA is unique—to be AA service, it needs to serve me and those I serve. I found a great fit this past year working on the Area 30 Accessibilities Committee for a variety of reasons. The first is that I now know way more about accessibilities concerns and, perhaps more importantly, how I can be part of a solution rather than continuing the barriers. Another major benefit to me is that, like so many others, I was devastated by being unable to attend in-person meetings and witnessing the sadness, fear, and uncertainty brought on by the pandemic. I will always be grateful that I had this steady service job during the pandemic, which allowed me to feel useful and connected to AA in my community and the world. Despite the fact that I am now rotating out of my service job to this committee, there will always be a special part of my heart thankful for the gift that I was named to the Area 30 Accessibilities Committee.

Committee Work

By Theresa N

My first committee was Correctional Facilities, usually shorted to Corrections. I joined the committee as a member because the literature budget of the committee at that time provided literature for people behind the walls. What a deal for my ladies at South Middlesex Correctional Center (SMCC). I found out about the Corrections committee literature fund while trying to cadge Big Books from meetings I attended. A woman at a business meeting was incensed that I wanted to use the meeting's funds when the Corrections Committee was not using its full literature budget. Big Books! I was on it! The committee spends very little time on the literature budget, though in my years on the committee, they did question people very carefully about their intentions for their budget. Where are you going behind the walls? Are you willing to show your commitment by showing up at the Corrections meeting? Does your facility clear your speakers in advance? The simple answer to that last question is, of course. But back in the good old days, speakers accompanied by a cleared AA liaison could enter some prisons with a driver's license for clearance on the spot. The old-timers said just about everyone who went in was able to leave. (Clean up the wreckage of the past.) The committee no longer prefers prisons that do not require prior clearance.

We put on a workshop like no other committee; a workshop that invited corrections and treatment professionals to come tell AAs what they could do or say that would be of service to the community. What can be talked about, what cannot. I had not heard so many rules since I left high school. I got to watch AAs develop tolerance. Amazing. I got to watch Cooperating with the Professional Community (CPC) members field questions from a room full of corrections staff. Wow! In the committee meetings we shared what was going on in our various locations. The good, the bad and the heart-breaking. I was asked to become Alternate Corrections Chair for the area. I accepted without knowing anything. And I did not train for chair the way I wished I had. Amends to George L. By the end of my rotation as chair, I knew enough to do the job. Yes! Rotate on!

Alternate Secretary and Secretary, Resolve: whether to report minutes that can be read in minutes --- or the other --- capture the historical record showing thoughts and alternatives considered by all --- and the people who are passionate about each. As an officer, please attend those last-minute officer meetings. Get to see how the sausage is made! Develop an aversion to sausage! Wait until you want a particular flavor made. Many 10th Steps (11th if you belong to BBSS) later, I arrived at a better understanding of our true democracy. Rotate on!

Literature Alt and Chair: I never did read every single pamphlet in every single iteration over the life of a piece of literature. Someone on the committee did attend every AA event in Eastern Massachusetts during that rotation. Shout out to Suzanne S. and her capacious car trunk that carried a whole separate display deployed time and again. Don't neglect going to district meetings with a short (yes, short) talk about how literature is created and changed in the conference. Shout out to Mark B. for giving me his display and notes. Remember to sell literature at the convention in alternate years. I did meet the unsung heroes in the districts that did the work year in and year out. It's humbling. Rotate on!

Wait a minute, you mean I should have been a DCM first? Go back to the district. Do not pass Go. DCM, the only way I found to get AAs into service was to use every bit of "Working with Others" in the Big Book. It works, it really does. Carry on the events that the district has done before. Then consider new events. Many of you can write this section very well. Please share your experience and hope. Rotate on!

Alt and Registrar --- React quickly to requests. Focus on the person in front of you. Provide badges and pens and paper and computers, as needed. I am praying there is not another system change for another 20 years. Rotate with love!

Committee Meetings in Area 30

All face-to-face Committee Meetings are suspended until further notice. Please see the Area Calendar at aaemass.org or contact Committee Chairs to inquire about virtual meetings.

We welcome anyone with an interest!

General Service Area Committee – chair@aaemass.org

8pm - 4th Wednesday of the month **Note:** 3rd Wednesday in November & December

Accessibilities Committee – accessibilities@aaemass.org

7:15pm - 4th Wednesday of the month **Note:** 3rd Wednesday in November & December

Some alcoholics experience barriers to participating in AA due to cultural, geographic, mental, physical, or social factors, or other reasons. This committee is working toward a future where all who want to participate in AA meetings (and other AA services) in Eastern Massachusetts are in fact able to fully participate.

Archives Committee – archives@aaemass.org

7:15pm – 3rd Wednesday of the month

The Archives Committee is charged with collecting, preserving and presenting materials of historical interest to Alcoholics Anonymous. We invite you to join us as we continue our efforts to discover and celebrate the history of AA in Eastern Massachusetts.

CPC Committee – cpc@aaemass.org

7:00pm – 2nd Thursday of the month

Members of C.P.C. committees inform professionals and future professionals about A.A. — what we are, where we are, what we can do, and what we cannot do. They attempt to establish better communication between A.A.s and professionals, and to find simple, effective ways of cooperating without affiliating.

Joint Correctional Facilities Committee – corrections@aaemass.org

7:00pm – 4th Thursday of the month

Responsibilities include working with the correctional facilities in Area 30 to assist in bringing the AA message behind the walls. We currently offer a service helping inmates who are being released from prison connect with AA members in their communities called the Prerelease Contact Program. AA's who are interested in corresponding with an inmate by mail or being included on a 12-step call list to serve as contact points for those getting out of prison should contact Boston Central Service for particulars.

Grapevine Committee – grapevine@aaemass.org

1:00pm – 4th Sunday of the month

One of the Grapevine Committee's primary goals is to let the people and their groups in Area 30 know all we can about our "meeting in print." Like our meetings, the monthly Grapevine magazine is as diverse as each of us. Its 64 pages, written by friends and members of AA, have become the voice of AA today. Through the Grapevine, members share their Experience, Strength, and Hope, always striving to carry the message of Recovery -Unity -Service to all who read it.

Literature Committee – literature@aaemass.org

7:30pm – 1st Monday of the month

In addition to our committee's purpose and goals listed on the CONTACTS page of this website, we use the time at our meeting to review current conference-approved and locally developed literature in order to be

able to let the membership know what is available and to assure that the message is consistent with the principles of our Steps and Traditions. We answer inquiries requesting information on various topics and provide possible sources of information. Our goal is to inform the membership of the tools available for our own recovery as well as to carry the message to others.

Joint Public Information Committee – pi@aaemass.org

7:00pm – 1st Thursday of the month

Public Information (P.I.) in Alcoholics Anonymous means carrying the message of recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic by informing the general public about the A.A. program. We carry the message by getting in touch with the media, schools, industry, and other organizations which can report on the nature and purpose of A.A. and what it can do for alcoholics.

Joint Treatment Facilities Committee – treatment@aaemass.org

7:00pm – 3rd Friday of the month

The purpose of the committee is to coordinate the work of individual AA members and groups who are interested in carrying our message of recovery to alcoholics in treatment facilities, and to set up means of “Bridging the Gap” from the facility to the larger community. The JTFC provides information about AA as well as literature and guidelines for setting up AA meetings in treatment and outpatient facilities. Its objective to make sure all treatment facilities wanting AA meetings to participate is serviced.

Website Committee – website@aaemass.org

7:15pm – 4th Wednesday of the month **Note:** 3rd Wednesday in November & December

Thank you to the Website / Technology team for your dedication and service in making our first virtual Election Assembly happen!

Joint Committees: In the spirit of cooperation, the Boston Central Service Committee and the Eastern Massachusetts General Service Committee (Area 30) work together on these committees whose purposes are to carry the message of experience, strength, and hope to those who may be interested in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Declaration of Unity

This we owe to A.A.'s future: To place our common welfare first; to keep our fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives and the lives of those to come.

Declaration of the 35th Anniversary International Convention, 1970, Miami, Florida

➤ **Road Shows**

The Area Committee is available to speak at your commitment meeting! While we cannot reciprocate with an outgoing commitment for your group, we would love to visit your speaker meeting and share our experience, strength, and hope. If you think your group would like an Area 30 Road Show, please contact our Area Alternate Chair at altchair@aaemass.org.

➤ **Service Seminar**

If your group or district is interested in an outreach, or conducting a group conscience or inventory, please contact our Service Seminar chair at serviceseminar@aaemass.org.

➤ **NERAASA 2021**

NERAASA 2021 will be held virtually February 26th thru the 28th. A committee is hard at work to create an experience that mirrors in person NERAASAs as much as possible. Registration is now open at neraasa.org.

➤ **Massachusetts State Convention 2021**

Jean K., who will be our Immediate Past Delegate in 2021, will serve as Chair of the 2021 MA State Convention. Planning meetings for the 2021 convention will begin after the first of the year.

➤ **YPAA Links**

Information about YPAA committees and events can be found at the following:

www.msypaa.com	Massachusetts Conference of Young People in AA
www.necypaa.org	New England Conference of Young People in AA
www.icypaa.org	International Conference of Young People in AA

➤ **Next Assembly**

Our next Assembly will be our Pre-conference Assembly tentatively scheduled for April 11th. We will gather to share the voice of Area 30 with our Delegate so that she will be fully informed to attend the General Service Conference.

➤ **Massachusetts State Convention 2021**

Jean K., our Immediate Past Delegate, will serve as Chair of the 2021 MA State Convention. The first planning meetings for the 2021 convention is scheduled for Tuesday, January 26th.

The Area 30 newsletter, *The Messenger*, is published five times a year. It is available at all Area Assemblies and through the service structure at the many, varied committee meetings, schedules for which are found in this edition and posted on aaemass.org. *The Messenger* contains news, stories, and special events going on in Eastern Massachusetts. Suggestions and submissions are welcome and may be emailed to messenger@aaemass.org. Please include your confidential contact information.