

Spring Assembly 2022

Active Area Committees Workshop

May 28th, 2022

The Active Area Committees workshop began at 6:00 PM with our Alternate General Delegate Gerry W sharing generally about his experience with the various committees that he has served on throughout his time in AA and how that participation had helped him grow in his recovery. Gerry talked about the importance of strong sponsorship and the leadership shown by his sponsor during his formative years in Alcoholics Anonymous. “The three legs of the Recovery, Unity and Service tripod were always considered to be equally important to my sponsor Frank. Frank didn't talk these principles so much as he demonstrated them. He applied them to his daily life. As a direct result of Frank's early guidance, the three legacies have always been a seamless whole in my program.”

After retirement in 2017, it became feasible to take longer term commitments at the District and Area 82 levels. I have served as DCM for District 15, Chair for Area 82 and am currently serving as Panel 71 Alternate GSD for Area 82.

Two of the roles filled by the Alternate General Service Delegate are quoted below as they are found on Page 9 of the current Area 82 guidelines (Version 4). They seem most pertinent to this workshop tonight.

- ***The Alternate Delegate is the chair of Cooperating with the Professional Community (C.P.C.), Public Information (P.I.), Treatment, and Corrections committees and the Grapevine representative for the Area. There shall be a Co- Chair elected from each Province for these 5 Committees that the Chair liaises with throughout the year.***
- ***Plan and Chair the Saturday evening Active Area Committee Workshop held at the Assemblies***

At present Mark Z is the co-chair of the Public Information committee for Nova Scotia while Boyd B serves as the co-chair of the PI committee for Newfoundland and Labrador. John W has taken on the Corrections co-chair position for Nova Scotia. Their role, as co-chair, is to help develop committees within Districts that do not currently have one, and to liaise with and support existing committees. The co-chair positions for CPC (Cooperating With the Professional Community), Treatment, Grapevine Representatives and Corrections for Newfoundland and Labrador are currently vacant.

A regular meeting is held on the last Monday of each month via a virtual platform, chaired by the Alternate GSD. The purpose of the regular monthly meeting is to share our combined experiences in Committee work so that it can help newly formed committees or to pick up a few tips from more experienced folks that might be useful to themselves. To that end, attendance by any members who are involved, or who would like to be involved, with any of the various District and Area level Committees around Area 82 is strongly encouraged. We have picked up, and in turn shared, valuable tips and support on topics ranging from Website design, Area Archives, Remote Communities, Telephone Committees as well as the more expected PI, CPC, Treatment, Corrections and GV / LaVina areas.

When Gerry had finally wound down, there followed a general sharing session with a great deal of give and take. Many members shared their personal experience with Committee work at various levels within AA and we compiled a list of helpful suggestions which can bring added energy to these committees.

- Jocelyn B. suggested that we bring a guest speaker to the monthly meeting to address (for 15 minutes) a specific aspect of Committee work that they have a passion for. (***eg. Tandy from Area 02 Alaska to talk about Remote Communities***)
- Michael H suggests that we discuss / Present on such topics as; “Leadership by Example” , “ Service Sponsorship” Introducing new members to Service early in their Recovery
- Gary O shared on his experience with “Bridging the Gap” as he works with clients leaving the Crosbie Center
- Leah C. talked about the upcoming ServicePalooza being hosted by District 1&2 on June 18th, 45 Connolly Road, Lower Sackville. All of the Central Services Committees have a display to explain what they do and how to get involved. She also talked about being part of an active home group that finds ways to get new members involved. Usually Service commitments are handled by one experienced member accompanied by a new member.
- Blaise S emphasised the personal approach with newcomers. Take them for coffee and talk about the benefits of Service.
- Ann P shared her experience with trying to get positions filled within her Home group. She took a proactive approach that they either called or texted the members of her group in advance of the Election meeting and asked if they would be willing to serve. this allowed most of the group positions to be filled. The results were somewhat mixed as two ladies had to step down from the position they had accepted but they fill that

position in the short term by asking for a volunteer to take notes at the business meeting.

- Bill P started with three points followed by a plan he proposed last year for an Area wide PI / CPC Media Blitz;
 1. His sponsor was a strong service worker and he just assumed that's part of sobriety
 2. AA's membership is rich in skill sets which can be applied to our service work. We need to take the time to find those skill sets within our membership and ease them into committee work.
 3. A members and leadership roles need to be ever mindful that newer members are watching them and that they have to accept the slings and arrows that are part of the job with grace and humility.

Bill P. continued with "This is in the category of a bright idea. The media tends to select a particular month to highlight a particular not for profit organization for some publicity. I would suggest that we select a month such as September 2023 where we (as Area 82) conduct a coordinated media blitz to saturate all available media with the message of AA. This would stay within established AA guidelines of "attraction rather than promotion"" (Possibly involve one or more of our Class A Trustees in this effort ?)

- John W. spoke to his passion for Corrections and to his experience with the somewhat "chancy" way he was mentored into Service. He was given jobs that he felt he wasn't ready for but grew into them.
- Kathy S-C talked about her introduction to Service. She talked about the word "Active" in the Active Area Committees Meeting". Can we be more dynamic? Can we display our enthusiasm more around newcomers? Show them it is fun.
- Blair A asked the question "Are we over complicating the way we do things ?"
- Garnet E spoke to his early experience in Service without guidance and his realization of the need for a Service Sponsor as he grew in Recovery. He also spoke to the mentoring process in both his group, Fresh Start and in the Back to Basics Group.
- Barry spoke about Gratitude is tied to Action. As new members we were always encouraged to participate in Service but it was a natural outgrowth of the Recovery inherent in the Steps.
- Samaira G talked about the influence we can have on new people. If I focus only on the negative experiences in Service and communicate that , the new person will not be

attracted. She also talked about the necessity of providing a job description for vacant Committee roles.

- Gary O talked about how he “lucked” into Service early in his Recovery and how it has been integral to his AA life ever since. He also provided a cautionary note about the negative affects of gossip.
- Paul B started his Service career as a greeter at an AA convention and continued in Service as mentored and encouraged by his sponsor. Keep the process simple. Keep my ego out of the way and maintain an open Mind.
- Mary was steered into Service by her sponsor and her Home Group. It was vital to her own Recovery as well as AA as a whole. She cautioned against putting people into positions which will not enhance their sobriety but will in fact, jeopardize it. She talked about screening folks who will potentially fill our Service positions and properly mentoring them.
- Mike C talked about how glad he that he changed his vote on an issue earlier in the day. He realized that he had voted from a selfish point of view. He also talked about personal growth through Service and the power of the Minority Voice.
- Frank E spoke to the affects of the pandemic on his ability to carry the AA message and the adjustment he had to make having moved from an AA environment in an urban area to a rural one.
- Diane H talked about the power of the welcoming nature of AA. Her group showed her how to express Gratitude through Service.
- Pete L reflected on the blessing of virtual meetings. Many of his local groups have older members who do not have good computer skills. He also spoke of the new Reality of smaller face to face groups being less capable of the financial support necessary to send a GSR to face to face gatherings.
- Garnet E talked about the importance of getting the Guidelines right so that we don't keep making the same mistakes over and over.

Closed at 8:10 pm Atlantic time with the Responsibility Statement

JW