

Area 53 Assembly June 7, 2020

Virtual meeting via Zoom

1. Opening of Meeting (Ed A.)

- A. Ed called us to order at 10:06 AM with the *We Version* of the Serenity Prayer
- B. Roll Call – at this time we have 50 attendees logged into our very first Zoom assembly!
- C. Today's Agenda - Review & Approval
 - We accepted this by raising hands in Zoom. Unanimous**
- D. December Assembly Minutes (*Martha C.*) **Chris moved, Joe seconded to accept as written; unanimous**

2. Officer & Standing Committee Reports

- A. Delegate (*Stephen S.*)
 - a. Stephen presented information about his experience with the virtual General Service Conference. He will be holding three topical reporting Zoom sessions for end of June beginning of July. Get the word out for attendance.
 - b. There are documents he has created with details and updates available. If you haven't received this, email Stephen at delegate@area53aa.org. Also to get all information be sure to join the Area 53 GSR email list on the Area website
 - c. GSO operations have had a lot of problems with new registration software My Portal which has had a lot of problems. More information is supposed to be coming on this.
 - d. Financially, the 2019 audit of GSO books has not been finished; this was delayed due to COVID-19 problems.
 - e. General Service Office financial stability is very shaky. AAWS, Grapevine and La Vina are seriously in the red; all three showed a loss in 2019. The pandemic in 2020 has made this deficit even worse. The board has been tapping into the General Service Reserve funds which exist for this purpose but won't last forever.
 - f. See document "Best Practices For a Digital 7th Tradition" for how to practice 7th Tradition during this time of virtual meetings. Stephen will be sure that these documents are shared with GSRs if they have not been already.
 - g. Questions:
 - i. On AA.org the link to contribute has many fund options. Which one is most valuable? How can we contribute just to general fund? **Stephen will put together information on how to contribute to each entity and share this widely.**

- ii. Was virtual format of General Service Conference valuable? **Stephen said yes and no. Problem was lack of general sharing session. Did the business of the Conference but didn't do a good job representing the concerns of the Fellowship.**
- iii. Your report made it sound as if the Conference was "Trustee directed" rather than "Delegate directed". Was this what you were saying? **Sort of.**
- iv. Do you agree that the delegates did not get a chance to share as much as they should have? **Stephen shared that yes, that was his personal experience. Part of the problem was the time limits on debate and too many people wanting to share. All that said, though, he believes "God Bless Em for doing something."**

B. Chairperson (*Ed A.*) o

- a. REMINDER – September is our Elections for *Panel 71 Officers* unless we decide to postpone. See New Business.
- b. Attended pre-conference Area Zoom meetings. Also attended these from several other Areas.
- c. GSO recommended our Area as an example of getting more people engaged in service.
- d. Yesterday attended virtual picnic held at Stepping Stones (Bill W's home). Heard many speakers, including Ebby T's grandson.
- e. Working on places for in-person meetings.
- f. Questions
 - i. Do we have any progress on finding a location for meetings next year? **That will be up to next panel, but Ed has some suggestions. He is still hoping to have in-person meetings for sometime this year and is working on location.**
 - ii. Can we have blended Assemblies so that people can participate virtual or in-person? **That decision will be up to the Area Planning Committee but that's a good suggestion and is important.**

C. Treasurer (*Diann N.*)

- a. Balance is \$14,540. Very similar to last year. The Area is flush; we have plenty of money. We are not doing a lot of spending.
- b. Contributions have slowed considerably since meetings have stopped meeting in person.
- c. Get word out to Groups that they can continue sending contributions to P.O. Box
- d. **Bill F moved to accept the treasurer's report as written; Chris J seconded. Unanimous vote.**

D. Secretary (*Martha C.*)

- a. Please send copies of all of today's reports (GSR, DCM, committee) to secretary@area53aa.org.
 - b. It's fine to send them as text within an email; you don't have to fill out the form.
 - c. Questions/Comments:
 - i. Should we include Zoom meeting info on GSR report? **You can if you want to but you don't have to. These reports will become part of our Area Archive.**
- E. Web Administrator (*Ann B.*)
- a. Ann stressed the importance of sending in updates for the calendar, particularly for Group online meetings, district meetings, committee meetings, etc.
 - b. Ann explained more about the GSR email list. Some have subscribed but never confirmed their email, which is a necessary step. Subscribe online and then **be sure to confirm your email by responding to the confirmation email.**
 - c. Questions/Comments:
 - i. Thanks for hard work of keeping things updated.
- F. Registrar (*James C.*)
- a. Not a lot to report due to slow progress on new GSO My Portal website. Registrars only have Read Only access so they can't update Group or District information
 - b. GSO is doing Beta Testing on My Portal right now.
 - c. James has reached out to DCMs regarding "unknown" meetings based on GSO registration lists. He got good responses from that and has sent the information to NY to update their records.
 - d. Registration Numbers for this Assembly: 47 people originally representing 9 service positions. These include 1 Delegate; 1 Alternate Delegate; 10 Area 53 officers; 1 DCMC; 14 GSRs; 6 DCMs; 6 Interested AAs; 6 Past Delegates; 5 Standing Committee Chairs
- G. Archives/Archivist (*Teri G., Archives Chair.*)
- a. The newly organized Archives Committee has been holding regular meetings. They have met 5 times since last Assembly.
 - b. There are 8 members of the committee
 - c. Teri has established a Has list of upcoming "next steps" of what to do
 - d. Committee is looking for input about what members would like to see happen with Archives. Members can contact the committee chair or attend a committee meeting. **GSRs should inform their groups about this and give group feedback to the committee.** You can email Teri at archives@area53aa.org
 - e. The committee is working on avenues of communication with Area 53 AA members about Archives

- f. Comments/Questions:
 - i. What types of things are in the archives? **Record of Area meetings. Array of pictures, schedules, meeting flyers, etc from past delegates, etc. Part of the work is to decide what the Area wants to keep in the collection.**
 - ii. Hooray that we have Archives Committee back in action! Can't thank you enough
 - iii. We should encourage past delegates to submit papers they have presented at regional forums, etc. to Archives.
 - iv. The State Convention Committee archivist has interest in some of our documents. Ed will send them Teri's contact information.
- H. Cooperation with Professionals Committee/Public Information . *Nita S., Committee member*)
 - a. Nita reported in the absence of the chair
 - b. The committee has had some problems holding their meetings in a virtual format
 - c. Most of the in-person professional events they were scheduled for have been cancelled
 - d. The committee is trying to figure out how to function in digital age
 - e. They are looking into mailing information to professionals
- I. Correctional Facilities Committee (*Jeremy R., Alt. Chair*)
 - a. Committee met yesterday in person for quarterly meeting
 - b. Prisons are still completely locked down so no one can go in or out. Also they are not allowing literature to be sent in. The committee is working with the prisons to try to resolve some of these issues.
 - c. The committee is trying to figure out how to carry message virtually into the facilities
 - d. The committee has requested that the rest of their line item funds (\$450) be released
 - e. Questions
 - i. Any considerations to just dropping off literature to institutions we usually serve if we can't take meetings in? **No, corrections facilities are not allowing this.** *Stephen added that nationally no one is going into prisons until 2021. GS committee is working on how to get virtual information into prisons. He will collect this information and get it to committee*
 - ii. How many people came to meeting yesterday? **10**
 - iii. Chris J. clarified difference between line item funds from Area 53 budget and the "jug" money collected directly from AA members. The line item funds are used the expenses of the committee, such as rent, etc. The expenditures on literature for

the incarcerated members are from direct “jug” contributions from members.

- J. Grapevine Committee (*Joe M., Committee Secretary*)
 - a. The committee met pre-conference in person.
 - b. They are coordinating a literature drive with Treatment Facilities committee. If you are collecting literature for this, just hang onto it.
 - c. There is still free access for Grapevine up until July on Grapevine website.
 - d. All committee positions are filled except alternate treasurer and alternate secretary. Groups should consider sending a rep and getting involved.
 - e. They will have an upcoming Zoom meeting with Stephen to hear about the General Service Grapevine Committee’s work
 - f. Comments/Questions
 - i. Stephen shared that the Grapevine Delegates Committee at the conference has been changed to “Grapevine and La Vina committee” **Joe says “All right!”**
- K. Group Services (*Dan H, Chair*)
 - a. Trying to figure out Zoom
 - b. Working on putting together GSR school.
 - c. Comments/Questions?
 - i. GSRs have asked for more microphones at Assembly. Ed has obtained some and will try them out at our next in-person assembly
- L. Inter-group Liaison (*Barbara M.*)
 - a. Barbara held an Intergroup Zoom meeting last week and 4 of the 5 intergroups in the Area were represented.
 - b. Central Ohio Group Fellowship (COGF) and the Lancaster Intergroups were able to stay open during the pandemic. The Marion Intergroup was available by request.
 - c. Department of Health met with COGF with specialized guidelines for safe operation during COVID-19. They have reopened to the public on Monday. They are taking COVID precautions very seriously. Patty (COGF) will forward the guidelines if requested. Contact COGF.
 - d. COGF is trying to keep their meeting list updated; remember to let your intergroup know if your group changes and begins meeting again in person. All Area groups should keep COGF meeting information updated because that is what is shared with the Meeting Guide app. In addition, groups should also update the Area 53 registrar with changes as well.

- e. Barbara expressed a concern about the disconnect between groups keeping Intergroups and GSO updated. There is some tension there, historically speaking.
- f. Remember group autonomy even for groups not complying with safety guidelines. The job of Intergroups is to provide information on safe operation but groups can make their own decisions.
- g. Questions/Comments
 - i. Ed will make sure the Columbus Dept of Health information will be shared

M. Mini-Conference (*Donna K., Chair*)

- a. The Mini-Conference was cancelled due to Coronavirus
- b. All funds have been refunded as far as she knows. If you did not receive a refund, please let Donna know.
- c. The committee has a balance of \$2400.68 to be held over for next year
- d. The contract has now been signed for reserving the Deer Creek facility again for next year (2021). They were very accommodating. They held the deposit and the contract has been signed.
- e. The Deer Creek facility will not be available for our date in 2022, so the new Mini-Conference committee will have to find a different location.
- f. The committee held its final Mini-Conference meeting. Meetings will start up again Area 53 elections when we will have a new Alternate Delegate who will serve as Mini-Conference chair for Panel 71.
- g. Comments/Questions
 - i. Thank you to Donna for prompt notification and refunds. ***Donna thanks Diann and Tom who jumped on communication and refunds immediately.***

N. Accessibilities Committee (** OPEN **)

- a. Ed reported that the committee is still open. Plan has been to have an adhoc committee similar to what we did with Archives but with coronavirus it has been quite difficult.

O. Treatment Facilities (*Erica C, Chair*)

- a. The committee held an in-person meeting in February and a Zoom meeting in May.
- b. Due to COVID there have been cancellations of face-to-face meetings in detox and rehab centers. The Bridging the Gap program has also had to suspend operations temporarily.
- c. The Literature Drive between Grapevine and Treatment Committees is ongoing. **GSRs please notify group members that they are accepting the donations** There are three ways to donate:
 - i. Notify Erica (Treatment) or Erin (Grapevine) committee chairs. Their contact information is on Trifold and on Area 53 website under "Contacts".

- ii. You can donate new literature by ordering it through COGF. Call and they will send it to the committee.
- iii. Or you can bring contributions in person to a face-to-face Assembly in 2020
- d. The committee's next meeting in August 15. May be in person or Zoom.
- e. Questions/Comments
 - i. Will this be a blended meeting? **Making decision in beginning of July.**

Sharing Session (Donna K., Alternate Delegate)

How and Why to Have a Group Conscience.

Note from your secretary: This was extremely valuable sharing! These sharing sessions are fantastic reasons to attend Assembly and bring this type of information back to your Groups

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

- A. Should we delay the September Election until December? Discussion:
- a. Stephen S: We can't wait to have election in December because must submit name of delegate by November or early December
 - b. Nita S: We can use the polling function which allows for anonymous voting. We should definitely go ahead and have elections now.
 - c. Bill Y: We should commit that September Assembly should at LEAST be a hybrid assembly so that members who are not willing/able to attend in person can still vote. Otherwise it won't be a representative vote.
 - d. Bill S: We should have election anyway to keep continuity, whether it is online or in person.
 - e. Frank: Do we have a place picked out to meet in person? If we're allowed to meet in person we need a location. **Ed said that he has a location in reserve but we have to decide if we are willing to commit to it.**
 - f. Much discussion followed about how to manage social distancing etc.
 - g. Bill called the question. But there isn't a question. There was never a motion so we can't vote on it and we don't need to call it so we are moving on. Okaaaaayyyy.... 🙄

GSR Reports (Marcia H, District Committee Member Chair). Marcia postponed her report to give DCMs and GSRs priority.

- District 8 & 9 **Katie W., DCM.**
 - Currently having meetings at Central Office. Unable to meet in person. Zoom is difficult for DCM meetings but typically have 10 active GSRs
 - **Beth R., GSR Johnstown Tuesday Night Grp.** We are having hybrid meeting for those without in-person meeting but meeting is now opened up in church. Masks are required, no coffee, maintain social distancing. Went well and was a newcomer!
 - **Karen, GSR Granville Here & Now Friday Night.** Zoom meetings published on Area 53 website. Some home group members couldn't make it due to technology issues but have had new people from all over the place.
- District 10, **Bill Y., DCM**
 - Delaware Co. has had some successful Zoom meetings. Including attendees from all over the world.
 - GSRs aren't meeting as a district. Bill is fielding questions from members about how to reopen face-to-face meetings safely
 - **Chuck, GSR Westerville** having meeting face-to-face with social distancing and masks.
- District 11, **Barbara P., DCM**
 - District is meeting regularly on Zoom with 11 active GSRs. Trying to decide what to do about planned workshop in October. Due to feedback from groups, the event will not go forward on Zoom, but they are waiting until there are changes to state guidelines on
 - **Cheri B. GSR. Rise and Shine Group** Group has been collecting contributions via Venmo. Treasurer has been making online distributions of Group contributions to entities. Some members are making donations in Group's name. Started Zoom in April with 32 at first meeting, and average 20 people in attendance.
 - **Mikayla, Alternate GSR Marysville Way Out.** Started Zoom meetings in April. Have had two group consciences since started. Averaging 12-15 meetings. Have contacted church about policies regarding in-person meetings
- District 12, **Tom Past DCM**
 - Past delegate Frank made huge effort to help two AA clubs to get re-opened. Coordinated with Clark Co. Department of Health.

- Have a newsletter ready to go out in June offering assistance to groups that want to reopen and need help with that.
 - Working to provide information about what groups are meeting and in what format.
- District 15
 - **Kerry K., GSR Woodsfield Group**, having Zoom meetings because they meet in a state-operated facility. Quarterly contributions the Group decided to contribute where most help was needed which was Intergroup and GSO.
- District 17 **Stan B., DCM**
 - Meeting first Sunday via Zoom. Cancelled workshop scheduled for May. District used funds set aside for mini-conference as contributions. One group has been meeting by Zoom. Several groups are moving to face-to-face meetings. No in-person lead meetings right now, but some literature. There is a challenge for some groups to meet with social distance because they meet in small rooms.
- District 18 **Barbara M., DCM**
 - Continuing monthly district meetings on Zoom. A good number of Groups are back to in-person meetings. Only one regular Zoom meeting. GSRs have expressed concerns that these groups are not following COVID precautions. Not able to continue jail meetings.
- District 21 **Don GSR**
 - Continued to have District meetings on Zoom. Some groups are having face-to-face meetings following precautions. Some are holding Zoom meetings. District has been updating a list of meeting locations with Zoom information. They've been distributing these at meeting locations, drug courts, etc.
 - **Don, GSR, Nooners Group** is meeting on Zoom. They've been offered a space for an open-air meeting. Some group members showed up for this and they held a hybrid in-person/Zoom meeting. This is planned to continue in future
- District 22 **Jillena R., DCM**
 - Meeting monthly on Zoom due to their location not allowing meetings anymore. Planned a June picnic but that was cancelled. Not ready to reschedule because of not knowing what the future will hold about these issues. Prior to shutdown their district had been investigating online meetings. One issue was that there was confusion when some groups started Zoom meetings at the same time as other existing groups in Hilliard which created some conflict. Also seen "bootleg meetings" happening in church parking lot where church objected. That

- meeting has been relocated. A number of Groups are now transitioning to parking lot or in-person at facilities.
- **Greg GSR Into the Solution Group.** Church provided guidelines for starting back to meetings. One issue was church wanted names and phone numbers of attendees for contact tracing purposes. They discussed with church and asked the chair/secretary to keep up a record of this. Obviously an issue with anonymity. Not at stage to go into building yet.
 - **Mary Kate, GSR Dublin Big Book Group.** Have been having hybrid meetings in group member's back yard. Appreciate the ideas about holding Group Conscience.
- District 26
 - **Julie, GSR After Work Group.** Meeting via Zoom. Having good attendance
 - District 28 **Andy U., DCM**
 - Postponed event with Treatment Facilities Committee. 11 Active GSRs. Concerns expressed about reaching newcomers. Sending contributions to COGF and GSO since had excess funds above prudent reserve. Meeting monthly on Zoom.
 - **Lodestar Group** (Andy U. reporting). Church is closed until September. Meeting on Zoom at least until then and after that will be hybrid.
 - **Kelly, GSR Plug in Jug Group** Ditto what Andy said. Meeting virtually for foreseeable future. Church is off limits.
 - **Kerry McG. GSR Children of Chaos Group.** Meeting virtually right now. Group conscience coming up to investigate possibility of moving back into church.
 - **Chris J., GSR Clintonville Big Book GSR.** Meeting on Zoom since March with help from OSU area groups for technology. Now having two meetings, one a beginners meeting, which in face-to-face situation is usually a breakout situation. Several new members have attended beginner's meeting. Making contributions. Not all members have been attending online meetings and there are concerns about how they are doing.
 - **Kayla GSR Grant Us the Laughter Group.** Strong Attendance on Zoom. Transitioned to a complete beginner's meeting instead of normal breakouts. Steps 1, 2, and 3 and a speaker rotating by week. Get a lot of newcomers, and have been working hard to reach out to them. Some problems with their Zoom information showing up on a website that the group did not officially share information with.
 - **District 30 David F, DCM**

- Had in-person District meeting last Wednesday. 4 in attendance. Meetings being held in person “down on the river”. Other meetings happening on Zoom.
- **Don L., GSR Simply Sober Group.** Been having Zoom meetings since start of pandemic. Most members are in high-risk categories. Average attendance 25. Better attendance than previously. The church is allowing meetings starting next week. So group will be talking about that and planning. Probably also continue Zoom meetings even when Face-to-Face resumes.
- District 33, **Nicholas B. DCM**
 - Have met on free conference call meeting once. Library is opening back up and will be meeting at end of this month. 3 active GSRs.
 - **Margie, GSR Lincoln Literature Group.** Started with Free Conference Call meeting. Some members have started meeting at Topiary Garden as a blended meeting. Group will be starting planning in-person meetings.

Nita moved, Erica seconded to adjourn at 1:34 PM. Meeting adjourned with the Responsibility Statement.