

Area 53 Assembly December 13, 2020

Virtual meeting via Zoom

1. Opening of Meeting (Ed A., chair)

- Ed called us to order at 10:08.
- Donna led us in the Serenity Prayer
- Matt P. read Twelve Concepts, short form.
- Since we were a Zoom meeting, the roll call was skipped.
- September Assembly Minutes (Martha C., secretary). Martha presented the minutes. There were no corrections. **The minutes stand as submitted.**
- Treasurer's Report (Diann N.)
 - Diann presented the treasury details from the last quarter of 2020.
 - The Area treasury is flush. Contributions are down but expenses are down more than that. We have a larger balance than usual at the end of the budget year.
 - **Questions:**
 - **Dan** asked what the projected bank balance was at this point? A: \$29,600
 - **Martha** asked was the \$27,000 a projected balance for the end of the year 2020? What was our original budget for 2020 and how does this compare? A: Projected \$29,600. \$18,000 in P.O. Box Contributions and the rest as PayPal. At the end of the year we'll have \$20,000 in bank.
 - **Teri G** asked whether contributions reflected annually or quarterly? A: the quarterly figures are presented as cumulative.
 - **Chris J** asked whether the income could be divided by individual and group. Diann said this is up to the Assembly if they ask for it.
 - **Nita asked us to vote to accept the treasurer's report as presented. There was no second requested. Passed unanimously.**

2. Officers Reports

- Delegate (Stephen S.)
 - Rotation of panels is going well for the GSC
 - There was a multi-region forum last week (for Eastern US and Canada). The Western one will be Dec. 19 if you missed it. Lots of good updates and information from GSO.
 - Requesting that standing committees send name, address, phone number & email of incoming Panel 71 chairperson. Needed ASAP
 - **Questions:**
 - **Brenda:** as incoming alternate registrar she also needs this information. She asks Stephen to please send to her. A: will do.

- **Diann:** has there been any request from GSO for additional funds? A: No, there is no special appeal. Just a general reminder to everyone that groups and individuals should keep up contributions. For now, GSO finances are stable. They have cut expenses stringently.
- Chairperson (Ed A.)
 - Acting chair for Accessibilities Committee
 - Serving on Mini-Conference Technology Committee
 - Looking forward to continuing service as Panel 71 Web Admin
 - **Questions:**
 - **Diann:** do we have a location for Assemblies if we are able to go back to in-person or hybrid? A: Not at this time, but Ed is happy to work with Ann on this.
- Web Administrator (Ann B.)
 - Website is up to date.
 - Ann and Dan have met twice with incoming Panel 71 Web Administrator and Alternate Web Administrator
 - Sent out three email newsletters since past assembly.
 - 341 subscribers to Area Newsletter, including 43 GSRs and 2 DCMs
 - Has included links to online Intergroup of AA and the Meeting App have been added to bottom of Home page and the page “Seeking Help for a Drinking Problem”.
 - Most viewed pages over last 30 days: Online meetings; District Map; Correctional Facilities Committee; Contact Page; Area Assemblies; CPC/PI Committee Page; Online Contributions; Group Services; Seeking Help for a Drinking Problem
 - Ann thanks the Area for the privilege of being able to serve and for the role played by Dan, the Alternate Web Admin
 - **Questions:**
 - **Diann:** thanked Ann for an exceptional job
 - **Chris J:** Website has been greatly improved for those like himself who have a visual disability. Rockstar job!
- Registrar (James C.)
 - 57 people attending. *See attached Registrar’s Report at the end of the minutes for the details*
 - Forms are available on website to update group or district information.
 - He will forward to GSO; they are still running behind
 - **No questions**
- District Committee Member Chair (DCMC) (Marcia H.)
 - Been participating on various subcommittees of Mini Conference Committee
 - Has sent out helpful suggestions to incoming Panel 71 DCMC and Alternate DCMC, plus current and incoming DCMs

- At last DCM committee meeting, the committee elected Nicholas B Panel 71 DCMC and Barbara P Panel 71 Alternate DCMC. Martha C will be secretary for the committee. Welcome Panel 71 committee members!
- **No questions**

3. Standing Committee Reports

- Archives Committee /Archivist (Teri G., Chair)
 - Continuing to meet once a month
 - Information is up on website, including meeting access information
 - Purchased some archive workbooks for committee members
 - Are planning a new project for oral history from Area AA Old Timers, to be spearheaded by committee member Chris J.
 - **No questions**
- Cooperation with Professionals/Public Info. Committee (Stacia Y, incoming chair)
 - Stacia was just elected.
 - Past experience as CPC/PI chair in Las Vegas
 - Working with Dave C to get up to speed
 - Working to get out information to committee members
 - Working to plan how CPC/PI can do its work virtually
 - **No questions**
- Correctional Facilities Committee (Brandi V., Chair)
 - Quarterly meeting past Saturday for elections with hybrid format
 - Filled some positions and are going to hold rest of positions until March
 - Franklin Co. Jail received a donated Zoom account and they will allow Zoom meetings with outside sponsors
 - One county facility administration has directly requested literature be dropped off. The committee decided, during this time only, to fulfill this request with the understanding that once meetings are allowed back in, literature requests will be filled through the outside sponsors of the meetings.
 - State prison facilities are still not allowing any meetings or literature in. Committee is ready to fulfill requests when they are allowed.
 - Requesting \$450 for first half of next year operating expenses
 - **Questions:**
 - **Frank** asked about whether quarterly donations have dropped off. A: Contributions have ebbed and flowed. Donations this quarter were \$3,060. Orders have been placed to stock up shelves, so literature is ready to go when it is requested.
 - **Frank** asked whether, since prisons are not allowing literature, could committee provide literature for rehabs instead? A: No, because it is widely known that jug money is for jails & prisons. Committee is happy to fill any requests if other county facilities are willing to accept dropped-off literature.

- **James** shared that West Central in Marysville is holding Zoom meetings with outside sponsors. A: Brandi was glad to hear that!
- **Mark C** asked about group jug contributions and how those work in a virtual meeting environment with virtual collections. There was a lengthy discussion of various options.
- **Diann** asked if disbursement could wait until after first of year. A: yes
- **Diann** shared a medical study about coronavirus survival on various surfaces. She suggested that if the facility quarantines the literature for a few days it would be free of the virus.
- **Ed:** is committee considering having their workshop in 2021? A: haven't discussed this yet. Fortunately, workshop can be put together on relatively short notice. Will wait and see what happens
- Grapevine Committee (Taffy J, incoming Panel 71 Chair)
 - Met in November and December
 - Held elections for officers. Susan K alternate chair, Ken treasurer, Joe will continue as acting secretary but looking for another one when they get new members.
 - Discussing a plan for a virtual workshop
 - **Questions**
 - **Bill F:** Grapevine has special subscription rate right now. Buy one full-year gift subscription for \$28.97, get a second gift sub for \$13. Call 1-800-631-6025 to order at special rate. Subscriptions to Grapevine are down 30%
 - **Stacia** asked whether these could be sent to prisons? A: Brandi says they can be sent into prisons as soon as prisons allow literature to be sent in. Some prison correspondents send Grapevine magazines in. Bill added that District 15 sends 6 subscriptions to county jail and they accept these in the sealed envelopes.
 - **Chris J:** It is important to recognize that prison staff who would normally receive subscriptions are not working onsite right now. Doubtful they would get to recipients right now.
 - **Mark C:** Central Ohio Group Fellowship Central Office puts all Grapevine items on sale at Christmas time
- Group Services (Stephen S., incoming Panel 71 Chair)
 - Going to try to do things with DCM and Web Admin committee.
 - Wants to make a resource page on Area Website for Groups, including an online GSR school
 - Holding an organizing meeting in January with interested people who will work on various projects
 - Will be attending DCM meetings quarterly to ask for services.
 - **No questions**
- Inter-group Liaison (Barbara M.)
 - Did not submit a report

- Still going to chair Intergroup Liaison committee for Panel 71
- Anyone interested in working on this, please contact Barbara.
- Online meetings have been going on since 1986. There is an Online Intergroup. Called “Internationalists” for loners, those confined to home, etc.
- All five Intergroups in our Area are up and running
- Licking Co. Intergroup has recently reopened on Fridays
- COGF went to curbside literature sales until Dec. 21
 - Due to COVID infections in office
 - Everyone is doing much better
- Lancaster moved to new space that allows for meetings in the office; this helps them pay the rent.
- AOIO moved to Lighthouse
- Marion Co. office is open with some in-person meetings
- Many Intergroup Offices are fundraising
- Marion Co. is having an Alkathon over Christmas
- Committee holds quarterly Zoom meetings; will have one in February
- **Questions:**
- **Sharon** shared information from Intergroup Panel at Regional Assembly. Intergroups are really on firing line right now. Huge amount of work due to COVID. They need contributions. Barbara would like to talk to Sharon about this more.
- **Diann:** where can we get info about Alkathon? A: We could post it on Area website as Area event. Barbara will ask for the information.
- Mini-Conference Committee (Diann N. incoming P71 Alternative Del and Chair of Mini-Conference Committee)
 - Will be virtual in 2021
 - 6 Active sub-committees meeting independently:
 - Action Items
 - Program
 - Preregistration
 - Tech
 - Polling
 - Registration
 - Meets fourth Tues of month (Dec 22) at 7:30 PM. Zoom ID is on the website.
 - Have some really exciting plans!
 - Sub-committee chairs be sure to put meetings on Area Calendar...All committees and sub-committees are open to anyone who wants to help
 - **Questions:**
 - **Ed** noted that all four Areas in Ohio are having virtual meetings this year. The Ohio Convention will also be virtual.
- Special Needs Committee (Kathy B., Acting Chair)

- Kathy just started to serve in this capacity; professional experience working with people with disabilities
- Recruiting members for committee
- Has drafted communications about the committee to be posted on website, etc.
- Hoping to start having committee meetings by February.
- Asking Ed what next step is? Ed says that once you have a committee you hold an election and they can elect you the chair.
- **No questions.**
- Treatment Facilities Committee (Erica C. Chair)
 - Held final meeting for the panel. Did an assessment of accomplishments, items tabled, items hoped for etc. Created a handoff package for service rotation
 - Allison B was elected incoming chair for Panel 71 in August.
 - No Bridging the Gap requests right now
 - Have received applications for new volunteers for Bridging the Gap
 - Two North Columbus facilities have expressed desire for services. Erica has requested that they provide protocols for COVID safety.
 - Meetings will continue on same schedule. Organizational meeting in January for anyone interested in committee. First quarterly meeting will be held in February.
 - **Questions:**
 - **Stephen:** thanks for a great job. Please email him Allison's full name, address, phone number & email.

Lunch Break: 12:00 until 12:40

4. Sharing Session (Donna K., Alternate Delegate)

“What is the Future for AA Meetings” including: How do we do hybrid meetings? How do we help the newcomer during this time of Zoom meetings? How to make virtual donations to District? Etc.

- How do we do hybrid meetings?
 - Some groups are holding hybrid meetings. Need to have a good internet signal in your meeting place.
 - Meetings are evolving. This coming year groups will need to make plans as circumstances change.
 - Some groups are meeting face to face, with smaller numbers and physical distancing. Some face-to-face groups have been required to stop meeting because they have exceeded the state guidelines.
 - We will probably need to have lots of different types of meetings as situation changes. Some members will want or need Zoom meetings for a long time.
- How do we help newcomer?
 - Our constant thought must be of others!

- We will need lots of different types of meetings, including face to face. Not every newcomer can attend virtual meetings.
- Area Committees can really make a difference with this!
- Best thing about the virus is that people are being creative and thinking outside the box.
- How do we make virtual contributions?
 - GSO has guidelines for this
 - Zelle, Venmo, Apple Pay, PayPal
 - Can make contributions virtually through group checking account
- **Sharing:**
- **Becky** shared: her home group has had newcomers. Put phone numbers in the chat and ask if they will share their email to keep in touch. Another way to help newcomers is word of mouth and sobriety social media groups (Facebook and Reddit).
- **Stacia** shared experience about her Las Vegas home group which has done hybrid meetings. Stacia likes to be present on Zoom with her old home group. For her, this has worked very well. She feels that this is a great opportunity for newcomers to see and understand “Going to any lengths” and dependence on a Higher Power.
- **Diann** shared: we need to go to any lengths to protect each other. Virtual/hybrid meetings are here to stay. The Area can help groups learn how to do this. Remember the science on aerosolization. Virus lives in air for several hours.
- **Sharon** shared: virtual meetings are really good for those in parts of the Area that are farther away. Hope we will consider that Zoom meetings (or hybrid) reaches out to all parts of Area 53 and facilitates participation
- **Martha** shared that there are a lot of YouTube videos etc. about how to hold hybrid meetings on Zoom. This can be shared via the Group Services committee.
- **Becky** has a list of suggestions about Zoom meetings from her home group. She will share
- **Erica** shared a reminder that Free Conference Call is also a resource for virtual or hybrid meetings
- **Heather** (DCM) just had a hybrid district meeting. She wanted to have a variety of options. She is putting together “Sober Saturdays” once a month mostly outdoors and/or indoors in larger spaces.
- **Joe** shared that he was diagnosed with COVID-19 and hasn’t had to miss a beat due to virtual options.

5. District Committee Members (DCM) & GSR Reports (Marcia M, DCMC)

- District 1: no reports
- District 2 vacant
- District 3: no reports

- District 4: Crystal D. (DCM) was present earlier but had to leave due to emergency. No other reports
- District 5: vacant
- District 6:
 - Paul reported that District 6 is now dark.
 - Paul's home group voted to join another district (District 15).
- District 7: no reports
- Districts 8 & 9
 - Katie DCM could not be here
 - Beth GSR reported district meetings are happening. They are attempting to have a virtual workshop. Attendance is low
- District 10: Delaware County
 - Bill Y, DCM. In between dark and lit up. Some meetings are happening face to face. But other meetings are happening on Zoom. Bill has been in contact with representatives for groups. District is not having regular meetings
- District 11: Union and Madison Counties
 - Barbara P, DCM
 - District meeting via Zoom
 - steady attendance around 10 GSRs
 - Recently updated their meeting schedule
 - Most meetings are happening in person but have a good number meeting virtually also.
 - Cherie GSR Rise & Shine
 - Very active on Zoom; meeting location only allows 10 people and they have 30-35 attendance face to face
 - Have about 20 people attending virtually
 - Donations to COGF, District, Area 53 & GSO
- District 12:
 - Ken (DCM) is not feeling well today
 - Frank reported that they are planning a meeting next week with a few people who said they are planning to attend
 - Has connected a local doctor with AA Newsletter for Medical Professionals
 - District has a few zoom meetings
- District 13/14: No reports
- District 15:
 - Ty (DCM)
 - Just had elections to switch officers
 - Majority of meetings are on Zoom. A few are hybrid
 - Shawn, GSR: Bring Your Own Big Book
 - Currently in-person with masks and wiping everything down
 - No cases in group

- Are discussing going hybrid due to rise in cases in area
 - Paul F, GSR
 - Having live meetings (2 meetings per week)
 - Between 8-12 people
 - Matt, GSR Belpre GPS Group
 - Meeting live, attendance is 15-20 people
 - Spread out 6 feet or more, cleaning
 - 12 & 12 meeting
 - Group also holds a Zoom meeting
 - Kerry, GSR Woodsfield Group
 - Has been meeting on Zoom
 - Now starting Friday night face-to-face with masks (providing these) and sanitizing
 - Two nights a week book meeting
 - In-person Friday night meeting has changed location and time. Now Woodsfield Church of Christ on Route 78 at 7 PM.
- District 16: No reports
- District 17:
 - Stan DCM had to leave
- District 18:
 - Barbara M, DCM
 - Monthly district meeting on Zoom
 - Had 3 people at last meeting; studying the concepts
 - All meetings are happening in Chillicothe; Circleville only has two meetings happening
- District 19: Clinton/Fayette/Highland Counties
 - Bob S, DCM
 - Clinton County: Some live meetings, some Zoom; Attendance fluctuates. There are meetings every night of the week.
 - Highland County: every meeting is live
 - Fayette County: most meetings are happening
 - No District Activities or workshops in 2020 due to COVID
 - Patrick, GSR Put it Together Keep It Together
 - Meeting via Zoom
 - Still paying rent in good faith
 - District website: aadistrict19ohio.com
 - Highland County Christmas Alkathon 24th 6 PM through 25th midnight. In-person. See information on website.
- District 21: No reports
- District 22:
 - Heather R, new DCM

- Moved from Parkersburg WV and was active in that area **Welcome Heather!** 😊
- Now Meeting at Dublin Community Church
- 15 meetings on Zoom, 19 live, 6 that are not being held currently
- Looking at ways of safely carrying the message during COVID
- Has CPC/PI rep for District, Secretary, etc.
- Is working hard on getting district more connected and involved
- Greg, GSR Into the Solution
 - Group has a Zoom meeting and an in-person meeting.
 - Not much connection between the two
 - Excited to work with Heather
- District 26:
 - Julie, GSR After-Work Group
 - Meeting on Zoom; successful, getting new people
 - Conference approved literature
 - Deborah, GSR Women's Sobriety and Serenity
 - Incoming DCM
 - Group only does Zoom meetings for now with good attendance
 - Looking for a new location
 - Contributing to AA entities
 - Last District meeting was November 21. Next meeting is next week. Have some positions filled
 - District is open to idea of doing some kind of Alkathon but will not be in-person
 - District has money set aside to have District meetings via Zoom
 - **Question: Ed** asked whether Westerville is doing their Alkathon? A: don't know; **Marcia** says she heard they are not due to COVID
- District 28
 - Kelly C, GSR Plug In The Jug and District 28 Treasurer
 - District financials are good because of very low expenses
 - Sent contribution to GSO
 - Plug in Jug is a virtual meeting, 60-70 people average including some people from recovery houses
 - Has informally discussed possibility of hybrid meeting once this is possible. Probably will be audio only for anonymity. Even that has raised some concerns about reaction of newcomers
 - Treasury of group is doing great. Have made donations on regular quarterly basis.
 - Ben ran unopposed to continue on as District DCM
 - **Chris J** shared that Travis was elected alternate DCM

- Chris J, GSR Clintonville Big Book
 - Big Book Group meets on Zoom.
 - Expanded to two nights a week, so that beginners meeting will have its own night.
 - Attendance 12-15 at beginners meeting and 20-25 at regular meeting.
 - Requested that COGF make a provision on meeting list for beginner topics meetings. COGF was willing to do this, and Chris expressed his gratitude.
- Nita S member of Meditating Peacocks (not GSR)
 - Meeting on Zoom with 30-40 people
 - Open and close with 5 minutes of meditation
 - Church can only accommodate 10 people, so they decided to stay on Zoom to set a good example for others.
 - Also paying rent in good faith and a storage fee because they are storing their stuff there
 - Tabled discussion of meeting in person until March at earliest
 - Making contributions to all entities
- Kayla K, GSR Grant us the Laughter
 - Still up and running on Zoom because church is not open to live meetings
 - Have not elected new GSR so group will continue to work on that
- District 30
 - David F, DCM
 - Has District meeting once a month
 - Low attendance
 - Appreciates the information via email and forwards this to GSRs
 - Handful of meetings that meet live, but many meeting on Zoom.
 - Jo, GSR Simply Sober
 - Open-discussion meeting via Zoom
 - Decided to do hybrid once return to in-person for those with physical or mental health challenges
 - Liz, GSR Women's Serenity
 - Continues to have Zoom meetings
 - Group consciences have continuously voted to keep Zooming; has older population
 - Paying a reduced fee to church for storage
- District 33
 - Nicholas outgoing DCM
 - Elected Margie J. new DCM
 - Has four GSRs
 - Working with Margie to have a smooth transition
 - Beckey, GSR Bexley Beginner's and Discussion Group

- Meeting on Zoom, some have asked for in-person
- Created new service position to send out Zoom text notifications for meetings
- Need a new GSR; would like help with how to get someone to volunteer for the position
- District 34: No reports
- District 37: No reports
- Tony GSR UALC Morning Fellowship Group
 - Zoom version of Spiritual Awakenings
 - District 33 Worthington
 - Meets M-F at 7; S at 8
 - Rotating format with literature and a lead meeting
 - Averages 60-80 per meeting
 - Group has applied for a new GSO number

6. Unfinished Business

- None

7. New Business

1. 2021 Budget Proposal (Diann N., Treasurer)
 - Challenges with budgeting for 2021. See attached proposal
 - Some items have been removed that are not needed anymore
 - There will be a new item called “Digital Meeting Tools” that pays for Zoom, Poll Everywhere
 - Finance Committee decided to go ahead with 2021 budget as usual assuming the level of expenses as a typical year, even though it is expected that expenses will be lower than budgeted
 - Line items (such as officer travel to Mini Conference) that will not be needed are still there as place holders
 - Still keeping line item for three in-person assemblies if needed.
 - **Questions/Comments:**
 - **Kathy B:** requested an increase for Special Needs to \$500 especially for interpreters and other accommodations. Diann agreed and increased the amount. She also told Kathy that the item can be increased as needed.
 - **Donna** asked about cost of Zoom and Poll Everywhere. A: Zoom is \$67.80 per month. Poll Everywhere charge is annual.
 - **Dan moved to accept proposed budget as amended for Special Needs Committee. Nita seconded. Passed unanimously 40 yes, 0 no.**
2. “Special Needs” Standing Committee Name Change (Kathy B., Acting Chair)
 - “Special Needs” is an old phrase in this arena. The term may be offensive to some people with disabilities

- Proposes a name change to “Accessibilities”
 - General Service Office and General Service Conference have both changed their terminology to Accessibilities, so it is the term used in General Service Structure.
 - Is a broad and inclusive term
 - **Question:**
 - **Nita:** Does this mean we need a guideline change? A: Ed said he checked on this and was told that it doesn’t need to be changed. Donna added that we probably need to update the terms in the printed guidelines, but this isn’t an actual guideline change
 - **Diann moved to accept this change. Deborah seconded. Passed unanimously. 44 yes, 0 no.**
3. Practice Polling for Poll Everywhere
- Bill led us through a review of Poll Everywhere to keep up our skills.
 - Planning to use this technology at Mini Conference and other meetings.
 - Bill presented a sample poll. Most attendees were able to vote on it.
4. Contribution of \$3,000 (Diann N., Treasurer)
- Diann, Treasurer suggested we contribute this to 6 entities: \$500 each of 5 intergroups we work with plus \$500 for GSO
 - Rationale: We have extra money and these entities need it
 - There was considerable discussion:
 - **Donna** asked whether the intergroups need this money
 - **Ann** asked whether there was a conflict of interest with Area donating to Central Office.
 - **Frank** asked whether there would be a comfortable amount left beyond our prudent reserve. Diann answered there would be \$17K left after this donation
 - **Marcia** asked whether the \$500 increase for Accessibilities would be enough; will there be enough money left over after this donation to fund interpreters and other accommodations?
 - **Bill S** said he doesn’t feel good about this donation to Intergroups. He thinks it is not following the tradition about not financing outside enterprises.
 - **Stephen** said we should be careful not to set a precedent of sending money that groups and individuals have contributed to the Area to anywhere beyond the Area. The message is that we are overriding these group conscience decisions.
 - **Greg** said we are still in uncertain times and may need these funds
 - **Donna** shared that GSO is not going to ask for amount we will normally be contributing for GS Convention. There will be an amount. She suggested we just wait on this

- **Chris J** pointed out that we have a discussion without a motion. He says this is an important point to send back to the groups. They may be operating on a habitual decision about donations and not be aware of changing circumstances.
- **Diann** said she would like to have GSRs weigh in on this. She thinks it's a bad idea to tell groups that they should not donate to Area 53.
- **Bill S** says that we should just vote on a budget change, that the groups who elect us elect us to do this.
- **Chris J moved that this item be tabled. Eric C. seconded. Motion passed 20 to 17. Motion passed by a simple majority. Topic is tabled.**

8. Upcoming Events

- **January 10, 2021:** DCM Meeting (10 am) & Area Planning Meeting (1 pm) .
 - LOCATION: Area 53 Zoom Meeting Room
- **March 12-14, 2021:** Area 53 Mini-Conference
 - LOCATION: Area 53 Zoom Meeting Room
- **August 20-27, 2021:** 65th Ohio State Convention – Hosted by Area 55
 - LOCATION: Zoom Meeting Room (TBA)

9. Ask-It-Basket

- **Frank** reminded us all that we have a lot of work out there to educate the professional community about AA's purpose and
- **Bill F** wanted to thank Panel 69 and Area Delegate for doing very hard work in some really trying times.

10. Close Meeting – Responsibility Statement

Greg G moved to close. Erica C seconded. Meeting closed at 3:27 PM with the Responsibility Statement

We forgot to say the Responsibility Statement. We must NEVER be organized! Great work everyone. Keep Zooming Back!