

Ad Hoc report on Communications

Committee Members: Bill, Geene F., Dave T., Michele M., Tom F., Gerry M., Lupita YM.

After extensive discussion, a survey, research which included a trip to the archives & several phone calls to past trusted servants our committee has concluded its business. We are willing to meet & continue should this body determine more work is needed.

Survey: 127 members participated in the survey. To give you some round number perspective roughly 1200 groups contribute to the area, if each of those groups had 10 members that would be 12000 members in the area. A participation rate of .01%

We asked questions about the newsletter and other printed materials. 85% were aware of the monthly printing of the newsletter. 39% do not read the newsletter each month. 63% feel the newsletter should be printed monthly While 54% felt that a newsletter w/ minutes printed quarterly was sufficient. 42% prefer electronic versions of printed materials, 23% paper & 34% both electronic & printed materials. 51% would opt out of hard copy if given the option and 75% felt that electronic media was an effective way to carry the message in service. 64% would utilize an online forum for communication if one was available.

In regard to the current quality, frequency, transparency, effectiveness & clarity of communications between the area and the members it serves we asked participants to choose from a 0-10 scale zero being the lowest & 10 the highest, the average rating was an 8. Lastly, we inquired about length of sobriety & service positions, we do this in an effort to provide some context to the respondents' answers. Someone who had been around for 25 years is likely more comfortable with our procedures and lingo vs. someone w/ 6 months & new to service. All ranges of sobriety & service positions were well represented, those with 2-10 years of sobriety made up the majority of participants.

We Recommend that the frequency of Newsletter printing and how it is distributed be discussed at the October assembly

What's in a name?: Getting to the bottom of the actual name of the area was much more difficult than one would think it should be! Our current name as registered with the IRS is ***“Western Washington area of Alcoholics Anonymous”***. There was some questions surrounding how we came to this name.

I decided that a trip to the archives would get us the answers we were seeking, so last month, I spent the day at the area archives in Lakewood. AL was a huge help and it was really cool to check out our new space and have access to our past! I went through all our 1994-1996 documents to find the minutes or some “official” document providing the newly created area’s name., NO JOY!!!

We made a copy of the 1995 Assembly recordings, which I took home w/ me for review. I got to listen to the 95 assembly! Good news everyone... they talked about pretty much the same stuff we are still discussing today! “any NEW information?” could be heard, as similar comments, by different people came to the mic.

The naming of the Area was not a motion, it was an order of business that was on the agenda, suggestions were taken from those in attendance, voting held place & the 2/3rds majority name was accepted. This all occurred sometime after dinner on Saturday night!

Recordings

F205 #20A from 1:29 - 16:54 talks about all the suggested names, then business continues

F205 #20AB 4:01 - 4:46 The results are read & the name of the area with in excess of 2/3rd 276 votes
"Western Washington Area"

I also spoke w/ Burke D., who was the Chair of the transition committee & attended this assembly & his recollection is consistent w/ all the documentation

& subsequent result. He thought that the Alcoholics Anonymous had been there all along.

Currently the area newsletter is printed by requesting an “exemption” because our name has “Alcoholics Anonymous” & by the USPS requirements must be printed in full on the cover of the newsletter. Is this breaking anonymity at the public level? Is our newsletter “press”. Is requesting special exemptions from the post office each printing, controversial (we avoid it). It seems that it may be perceived this way, there are strong feelings on both sides of this issue. If we were to avoid the perception of breaking anonymity & avoiding controversy

Our recommendation would be to change the name of our Area to “Western Washington Area 72.”

The other items we considered were cost of printing, which initially fueled this discussion but quickly dissolved as a non-issue. Our area exists to elect a Delegate, the areas primary function is communication. It will always be our largest cost as it is imperative that communication from the top down and from the bottom up is available to all. It’s better to have too many copies than not enough. I think we all realize that we could be doing a better job, of managing our printing costs.

I’d like to tell you that personally as a DCM I have tried to limit my paper output, but my, duty will not allow it. I have no right to exude my will of electronic media on groups who want paper and at my homegroup it is much more unifying to have a document to look at rather than the sometimes, vague, recollection of my GSR.

What to do when the chain of communication is broken (absent DCM/Alt DCM). Sometimes this happens and we feel that it is the responsibility of the districts to hold their electeds’ accountable. However, the members should not be penalized as a result of this & the information should still be made available. Initially we thought a message board might work but the idea of having two-way communication unmonitored & free flowing is probably not fertile grounds for healthy discourse.

We recommend that any member of the area be able to sign up to receive all area communications & the newsletter via the @area72aa.org email system. This would be a one way communication that cannot be replied to but will allow information to get to members who desire to have it.

Thank you for the opportunity to be of service & thank you to all who participated in assisting this committee.

Yours in service

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Committee Chair