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My name is Bridget- I'm an alcoholic

I got sober in Alaska in 1986. I was 19. A heavy percentage of our members were Native Alaskans. The only way into or out of the island was by boat or plane. We didn't have cell phones or the internet back then, a literature order from GSO could take many weeks to arrive.

Many of you know Our past Delegate from Utah, Keith M. When he got sober in Utah, he had to travel 80 to 120 miles just to attend a meeting. You see, in remote areas, you have to go to extra levels of effort just to get to meetings.

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A remote community is generally defined as anything that makes attending regular, face to face meetings on a consistent or regular basis challenging

A member may be faced with travel or geographic challenges. He or she may face barriers such as language, cultural considerations or anything else that could separate a person in need from attending or accessing AA.

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Specifically, but not limited to Elderly populations, Language barriers, Native Communities and Islanders (which happens to be my experience) Military, LGBTQ+, homebound, Loaners & Internationalists, Transient & Homeless populations, Remote locations that don't have internet capabilities, First Responders, and many more.

Since the end of 2019, there's been a lot of discussion within our standing committees about how effectively we're handling our responsibility of reaching out to the still suffering alcoholic in our remote communities in Area 72

Our standing committee chairs have been attending each other's quarterlies. We've had a number of guest speakers in to share their experience and involvement in their particular remote communities. And we have discussed the rolls of each of the standing committees.

We know that no committee is ever in competition with one another, and that each committee experiences some overlap in services. And we know for certain, that communication between the committees is imperative. What we've found thus far, is that although our Standing Committees are doing excellent work, nothing is perfect, and there are a few communities that do fall through the GRIDDLE no matter how hard we try.

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Our Public Information or PI committee is primarily responsible for informing the public about AA's existence, what AA is and isn't, what we can and cannot do. As well as informing the media about our tradition of anonymity.

Our CPC committee, Cooperation with the Professional Community is on top of informing professionals who come in contact with alcoholics through their work. Letting them know that AA is a reliable and readily available resource.

Our Accessibilities committee is tasked primarily with seeing to it that our disabled and chronically ill, brain injured and homebound members are having their needs met. Mostly, that committee meets the needs of people already in AA.

Over the past few months, a number of our Standing committee chairs, as well as a few DCM's and myself, have been meeting regularly to explore and identify any other challenges that might exist within our area and possible solutions to best serve our particular area needs.

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Within Area 72, we've identified a huge number of clearly remote communities. JBLM, Naval Air Station Whidbey and the San Juan Islands. We have begun reaching out to our outlying communities up towards the Cascades, and for the past 3 years or so, Keith has been working closely with the Native American populations up around Neah Bay and the Olympic Peninsula. A number of us also have been carrying the message of AA within the Lummi and Nooksack tribes, Tulalip, and the Swinomish Nation as well to name a few.

As part of our research, we would like to gather further, detailed input from each of the districts regarding specific remote communities within our area, and any challenges you may face in reaching out to those communities. We'd like to hear about your successes also. Things you are doing or have done to reach the still suffering alcoholic in your remote communities.

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Very soon, a survey will be provided regarding your district's particular needs and areas of concern. We welcome any input you may have regarding these issues, and invite your participation in our discussions as we explore this topic in the months to come.

Again, thank you to all of our trusted servants in Area 72. And thank you for allowing me to be of service.

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