

Remote Communities Communicator

2019 Pre-Conference Remote Communities Meeting

“Cultural Challenges in Reaching Remote Communities”

Greetings,

The theme for this year’s Pre-Conference Remote Communities Meeting before the 69th General Service Conference is “Cultural Challenges in Reaching Remote Communities.” This theme was discussed immediately after last year’s Remote Communities Meeting. One of the Meeting’s Co-Chairs is from an area (02) that has an Area-level Remote Communities Committee and their focus tends to be on the geographic challenges of remote communities. This year’s Meeting Co-Chair is from an area (92) where the focus is often on challenges related to language (Spanish). Remote communities can be defined as those that are difficult to reach because of geography, language or culture. We decided to split the difference and focus on culture and felt this was a broad enough term that both our areas could easily address the theme. We were also inspired by the renaming of a pamphlet to read, “Access to A.A.: Members Share on Overcoming Barriers.” We think this theme dovetails nicely with the request from the Trustees’ Committee on the General Service Conference for sharing on the following question:

In your area what do you believe are the different underrepresented populations of suffering alcoholics that the area could focus on carrying the A.A. message to?

Thank you to all the areas who contributed to this year’s meeting—02 Alaska; 06 California Northern Coastal; 09 Mid Southern California; 15 South Florida; 18 Idaho; 26 Kentucky; 34 Western Michigan; 44 Northern New Jersey; 49 South Eastern New York; Area 73 West Virginia; 78 Alberta/Northwest Territories; 79 BC/Yukon; 80 Manitoba; 82 Nova Scotia, Newfoundland & Labrador; 83 Eastern Ontario International; 91 Saskatchewan; and 92 Washington State East--as well as GSO’s Treatment and Accessibilities Conference Committee staff support. Please share what you learn here today with your area!

In Love and Service,

Co-Chair
Alizon W.
Panel 68 Delegate
Area 02 Alaska

Co-Chair
Allen D.
Panel 68 Delegate
Area 92 Washington State East



A.A. Member in Utqiagvik Alaska
Photo courtesy of Area –02 Remote Communities Comte.

It is Our Responsibility...

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AREA SUBMISSIONS

Service Material from the General Service Office

AREA MAP OF US AND CANADA This map represents a general outline of Areas.



Rev. 10/14 SM F-146

- ◆ Area 02, Alaska
- ◆ Area 06, California Northern Coastal
- ◆ Area 09, Mid-Southern California
- ◆ Area 15, Southern Florida
- ◆ Area 18, Idaho
- ◆ Area 26, Kentucky
- ◆ Area 34, Western Michigan
- ◆ Area 44, Northern New Jersey
- ◆ Area 49, South Eastern New York
- ◆ Area 73, Western Virginia
- ◆ Area 78, Alberta/Northwest Territories
- ◆ Area 79, BC Yukon
- ◆ Area 80, Manitoba
- ◆ Area 82, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland & Labrador
- ◆ Area 83, Eastern Ontario International
- ◆ Area 91, Saskatchewan
- ◆ Area 92, Washington State East

AREA 02—ALASKA

2017 Annual 12-Step Trip to a Remote Community in Alaska

We had 10 joyful AA members fly from Anchorage to the very tip of Alaska, **Utqiagvik** (formerly known as Barrow).

As we know from experience, our initial plans for the weekend would change and that happened our very first day, when the Mayor declared it a holiday because the weather was good for whaling. We had to re-arrange most of our meetings for other times. We have learned to be flexible when we are doing these types of trips and doing the next right thing always seems to work.

Our accommodations were in the new Homeless Shelter. We were all very grateful that it had heat and plenty of room to spread out our sleeping bags. There happened to be one person in the shelter with us, and he hung with us the whole weekend participating in our open AA meetings.

Saturday morning, we were invited to the community's pancake breakfast. There were many questions about why we were there, and we explained that we were spending the weekend in Barrow to talk about alcoholism and how the program of Alcoholics Anonymous has worked for us to stop drinking. We were well received.

Our goals for the trip were simple:

- Carry the message of AA to the community
- Support the local AA groups
- Be the positive face of AA recovery

Our final night, the local AA group hosted a dinner for all of us which consisted of pizza and whale blubber or muktuk, which is the traditional Inuit and Chukchi meal. We all flew back the next day with our hearts full of gratitude and that we have been given this new way to live without drinking.

Tandy W.

Area 02 Remote Communities Committee Chair

SERENITY PRAYER IN YUP'IK

UMYUAQEGCITMEK PIICAUN
AGAYUTMA CIKIQRNGA UMYUAQEGCITMEK
AKURTUUMANIARANKA CAT
CIMIRCIIGALKENGANKA, PINIUTMEK CALI
CIKIQRNGA CIMIRNIARANKA CAT
CIMIRYUK'NGANKA, CALI-LLU USVINGUTMEK
CIKIQRNGA CAT CIMIQAINAUCIIT CAT-LLU
CIMIRCIIGATELLRIT NALLUNRIRNIARANKA.

AREA 06—CALIFORNIA NORTHERN COASTAL

The Voices of our Sisters - Spanish-Speaking Women as a Remote Community

"Women were silent for so long. I want to be a free woman. I want to be and feel like you."

"Some Spanish-speaking men don't believe women can be alcoholics. Culturally, women are regarded as saints, or the exact opposite: prostitutes. So, you have to understand that for a Spanish-speaking woman to identify as an alcoholic and seek recovery invites shame on her (and her family). This culture of machismo—shaming women for seeking recovery and keeping them dependent on men—is the biggest obstacle to Spanish-speaking women seeking recovery, who may feel unable to come to A.A. in the normal way."

I have noticed how the men have changed their behavior around how to welcome women newcomers. Women have changed their minds too. We have to change our mentality—it's a consciousness-raising based on empathy."

One way this was addressed in Area 06 was by supporting the participation of our sisters in the 2nd Annual Hispanic Women's Workshop (HWW) in 2017 in Pasadena and then by hosting it

in San Francisco in 2018.

"The HWW is a catalyst for organization and awareness: a venue to convene, share experience, gain strength, find hope, and build sisterhood. We returned to our communities no longer as isolated voices, but connected and able to start building something together for the next woman who walks in."

"What's next? Spanish-speaking women's groups are emerging. The decision to create the pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women affirms their belonging to our fellowship, but how do we foster and nurture this progress?"

"I hope groups use the new pamphlet to inform themselves and have it there on the literature rack waiting for the woman when she walks in, to know that she is not alone."

"The HWW united women in the districts, but we need to go to the next level and have a committee in each and every district that supports remote communities."

"Sponsorship is an issue. There is a lack of women who are able to sponsor. An Accessibilities committee can play a role connecting English-speaking and Spanish-speaking women."

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AREA 06—Continued

“The 2020 International Convention in Detroit represents an amazing opportunity for allies to support their sisters as they step into the light.”

“The HWW plays an important role in ensuring that the message is carried, the importance of step work, the Traditions, unity, and sponsorship. It’s about finding each other, yes, but also finding a solid base in recovery rooted in the Big Book and transmitting that to other women.”

The role of allies is key.

“It’s important not to do it *our* way and respect that we are guests, yet also a part of. With that attitude, I have felt very welcome when visiting Spanish-speaking meetings.”

“Service sponsorship is helpful too. Spanish-speaking women are newer to service, but we must be careful not to direct an English-speaking way of doing things.”

“It’s helpful to explain that we’re doing what was done for us, recognizing that we all need help in order to stay sober, working with others, sponsoring and fellowship.”

“Authenticity, integrity, clarity of motive, love, compassion, and empathy are the hallmarks of an effective ally who grasps the cultural framework, but who understands their sister is first and foremost just another drunk and tries to make her feel at home.”

“At the heart of all this is unity and creating a safe place for anyone that needs us. This is just one aspect of that.”

The voices quoted are of Spanish-speaking women and, where the context indicates, their allies.

Submitted by Teddy B-W
Panel 69 Delegate

AREA 09—MID SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

In thinking about my community as a remote community, I thought about how it is that we are still somewhat remote inside the community at large. I’ll begin with a quote from a Spanish Speaking member from my area who said this when the Hispanic-Women’s Movement took-off in the Pacific Region; “Why do women want to start their own women-only meetings? Do they want to divide A.A. or what? The Spanish speaking culture and Mexicans specifically tend to be patriarchic and some would say macho in their way of thinking. Therefore, our meetings are dominated by about 99% men including my homegroup in Long Beach, California. We tend to focus more on who is in charge rather than who gets the help they need.

One definition that resembles my culture is: (**Patriarchy** is a social

*system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. Some **patriarchal societies** are also patrilineal, meaning that property and title are inherited by the male lineage. Wikipedia).*

This one from Webster’s Dictionary: In a dominant patriarchal society with heavy Catholic influence, Mexico’s women were expected to follow traditional gender roles.

You can take the person out of the small town, but you will not change their small-town mentality. I know I will not be liked by this because I’m breaking the rules. There are things we don’t talk about even if that very thing is hurting our family. Reminds me of my denial that alcohol is not the problem, or it is not that bad. If only I drink less. If only I will conform and live by the family’s rules. Then, everything will be fine. We

will get by and that’s what matters. It could be worse. On and on and on we justify our behavior because it is so ingrained in our culture and customs and in our way of life. It’s always been this way. Nobody cares what happens to us anyways.

I believe Mexicans or Hispanics are only one example of this way of living or should I say; surviving. I see it in the inner city where I work. We have thousands of people who barely survive every day. I see it in other minorities, as well. Alcoholism is very prevalent along with other societal problems that we don’t care to mention or address because we are too busy trying to survive. Places of Mexico I have visited prove this point as well. In January of last year, my wife and I travel to Jalisco, Mexico to visit her family. It’s a small city or big town and people work very hard to get by.

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AREA 09—Continued

I myself grew up in a farm in Mexico when I was young and would not believe that parents give alcohol to their kids at a very young age. I'm told that my father gave me a shot of Tequila when I was 4 years old. I do not remember a thing, so I tend not to believe it. At least, I didn't believe it until I saw it with my own eyes. I usually help my in-laws with farm work; feeding and milking cows. It is very common for the men to drink coffee and sugar with milk right out of the cow when they are milking the cows first thing in the morning. Close to 99 percent of the time they will mix a squirt of alcohol with the coffee because they believe alcohol will kill any bacteria in the milk.

I've drank the coffee without the alcohol it's called a virgin (pajarete) or cappuccino without alcohol. If you don't add the alcohol, it's a sign of weakness and you are not very

masculine or macho. Unfortunately, that mentality still abounds. I witnessed first-hand when the father of a 6-year old fixed him a cup of coffee with six drops of alcohol. They don't use a dropper either. This man was still drunk from drinking the night before so I'm pretty sure he put in more than six drops of alcohol in the kid's coffee. He was pouring right out of the bottle. Needless to say, the little boy said he wanted a refill once he finished it and he ask for more alcohol please. I said to these grown men; don't you think he's a bit young even for 6 drops? They laughed and told me how they had all grown up this way. I thought to myself: no-wonder you're still drinking like you are.

Thank you for the opportunity to share.

Submitted by Jesus O.
Panel 68 Delegate

AREA 15—SOUTH FLORIDA

In our brief time with Panel 69, we talked to former members, chairs, and others still active in our Remote Communities Committee. Over the years, Area 15 has identified many communities that are considered "remote." We quickly realized that there are no "remote possibilities" or "remote opportunities" but real possibilities and opportunities in identifying those communities that actually exist but are not the easiest to reach with just talk. However, they are not hopeless.

This isn't much different from our personal experience and stories when we, individual alcoholics, may have been considered hopeless at some point. For some, it took years, but it also took the patience and love of our fellowship. It also took a sponsor who was conveniently close by and understood our customs as well as program literature written in our language.

Area 15 Remote Communities Committee's mission is to serve A.A. in places where it is challenging to carry the message because of Language (linguistics and dialect), Culture (customs and beliefs), and Geography (distance and locale). Breaking down these barriers can help serve their needs. We asked ourselves "are these folks, groups, and loners being visited and helped?" (from Chapter 5 of the Service Manual). Were we reaching that alcoholic in isolation? Although we realize many other service committees have an opportunity to assist in carrying the message to those identified as "underserved", Remote Communities work fills a specific need. By reaching out to various "inaccessible" communities that might not fall within the vision of other committees, we, in essence *build bridges and fill gaps.*"

Therefore, the first challenge was defining what a "remote community" is and conversely what it's not. Places considered

remote by some are not considered remote by those who live there. We like to say for example, "Know that 'far' or 'distant' does not necessarily equal 'remote'". This opens the door to a world of service opportunities.

Creating awareness of our mission within our Area, Districts, and Groups remains the biggest challenge and a must. We started by defining our mission and what we do. We then identified remote groups, members, and potentials. We developed service pieces within the Area and then showed others in the Districts how to do it autonomously.

We began a specific Area 15 kit in 2012 by identifying the language, culture, geography, demographics, and history of the Caribbean Islands Area 15 serves (along with others). Then we continued with a draft comprehensive kit through 2018. We hope to put it before the body soon, then integrate with what comes from the Conference.

Continued next page . .

How can I help or know more?

If you wish to find out more or help carry the message of A.A. by helping to locate members and groups who may need to be found and they have visited anywhere...

You can be contacted by a member who will help you posted about our activities. Please use the form and photo, name, or type it to: remotecommittee@area15aa.org

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Address: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____
Check one: Member or Loner
Language spoken: _____
Do you live in, travel to, or know of a remote community? _____
Does your Sponsor/Chair have an RCC Chair? Yes No Don't Know

More effectively connect remote persons and groups with ongoing "fellowship".
Find more effective ways to connect people remotely to remote communities for treatment and recovery services to AA.

We invite all of you to join us. Opportunities for service are anywhere and everywhere. There are many opportunities to serve.

**Be Involved
Be Inspired
Be of Service**

We fill gaps and build bridges.
There are bridges to build. But we need the builders!

¿Dónde puedo encontrar una reunión de AA?
Как можно найти собрание AA?
Ki kote reunion Alcohol Anonime?

REMOTE COMMUNITIES
remotecommittee@area15aa.org
Area website - <http://area15aa.org>

Our simple **Vision** for the Remote Communities Committee is to foster unity and offer all A.A. groups and emerging groups an opportunity to understand and utilize the available services of our Fellowship. We do this to help the alcoholic who still suffers by offering an invitation to become part of the whole.

Remote Communities Committee

Remote Communities serves A.A. in places where it is challenging to carry the message because of:

- Language – linguistic, dialect
- Culture – customs, beliefs
- Geography – travel, locale

AREA 15
SOUTH FLORIDA,
BARBADO, VIRGIN ISLANDS,
ANTIGUA, ST. MAARTEN,
CAYMAN ISLANDS

What to help or know more?

Let us see who suffers from the message of hope and recovery that AA has to offer. If you are interested in being a part of the Committee or simply want to know more, please email or call. Please print or fill out the info, on back, and send to: remotecommittee@area15aa.org

Are new groups and loners being visited & helped? (Chapter 5 of the Service Manual)

For your consideration, there is a need to:

- Reach some alcoholics living in small communities concerned that they will be "left" as AA members.
- Address concerns that cause people to be reluctant to start groups and/or attend AA meetings.
- Address concerns regarding real and/or perceived prejudice, racism, and exclusion due to cultural and/or religious differences.
- Reach people of cultural groups reporting stigma associated with Alcoholism in their community as a barrier to seeking AA's help.

Know that "far" or "distance" does not necessarily equal "remote". Places considered remote by some do not identify themselves as remote.

Share Ideas ▲ Temporary Sponsors
Outreach ▲ Providing Services
Loner Int. ▲ Conducting Workshops
Literature ▲ Online Working List

If you are reading this, you are lucky to be in an AA room. Some are not so lucky...yet.

Area Website - <http://area15aa.org>
remotecommittee@area15aa.org



AREA 15—Continued

Culture is one aspect in which carrying our message of recovery is difficult. Three Districts continue to express challenges reaching the Haitian Community, considered a large underserved segment. We are addressing concerns regarding real and/or perceived prejudice, racism, and exclusion due to cultural and/or religious differences. We are trying to reach this and other cultural groups reporting stigma associated with alcoholism.

We try to connect *remote* persons and groups with ongoing “sponsorship” more effectively. There are folks who want to get sober but there seems to be very little if any effective materials and translated A.A. approved literature in Creole to attract or bring in these endeavors. We are willing to help create it if need be. There is much more work to be done. We are hopeful that developing a pamphlet in the Creole language will attract the alcoholic that wants help. Perhaps one day the Conference will approve such. We understand that literature carries the message.

Geography can be an obstacle. One of our island communities in Area 15 receives speaker CDs and has a lending library.

Another district sends Big Books and other literature to the Virgin Islands. There are 6 meetings per week in Grand Cayman now. The meetings started last year on Cayman Brac continue. Conversely, meetings in the Virgin Islands all but petered out since Hurricanes Irma and Maria yet their DCM came to our last quarterly assembly asking for help. Anyone easily accessing Wi-Fi / Internet may not realize that some places still don't have access to technological resources, some since those storms. Online meetings and video calls or chats are not possible.

Although our focus is on geography, culture, and language being the prime obstacles, we have discussed others such the military, those living in nursing homes and ALFs, and those individuals that are a part of LIM. We also discussed simply write letters or notes, provide audio material and, if possible, “drop by for a cup of coffee.” Finally, quickly we saw that our new attitude toward remote communities has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes!

~ Area 15 Remote Communities Committee

AREA 18—IDAHO

There are many in Idaho Area 18 who have had the opportunity to carry the message of sobriety to our smaller remote communities in Idaho and have been faced with the cultural challenges. More specifically, our Native American communities in Idaho Area 18. The town of Owyhee, Nevada is a remote community in the Duck Valley Reservation and is home to the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes. Today, they have several A.A. meetings. But, A.A. wasn't always available nor was it always welcome. It has taken a lot of perseverance and commitment by fellow A.A. members to bring the message to this small community.

The non-Natives arriving to carry the message of A.A. were viewed with doubt and suspicion. The main reasons are because of perceived traditional difference and a history of lack of follow-up on commitments. A.A. in this community was considered a part of the justice system and the local meetings were just a place to meet and get court cards signed. In the first attempts to bring A.A. meetings to the Duck Valley

Reservation, fellow A.A. members were met with extreme prejudice. But, when the principles of A.A. were applied and an assurance that A.A. was not there to change their traditional and cultural way of life, they were more welcomed.

It has also helped to learn their specific traditional ways of spirituality and then to demonstrate that A.A. is only going to support and strengthen those traditions. One way to introduce A.A.'s 12 step program to the culture is to incorporate the teachings of the culture. By applying cultural tools, language and sacred traditions along with the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, the message can be brought to our Native American communities.

As our remote groups in Duck Valley continue to grow, a district in Idaho Area 18 has agreed to pay for the GSR's gas to commute to district business meetings. This has enabled the groups in the small town of Owyhee, Nevada, to become a part of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. Their

attendance at Idaho Area 18's assembly/conventions has been welcomed and passionately supported. Our brothers and sisters in recovery attend the business meetings, roundtables and panels. They experience and add to the ever-growing diversity of the fellowship of A.A. in Idaho.

On the eastern side of the state, between Pocatello and Idaho Falls, we have the Fort Hall Reservation.

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Photo courtesy of Shannon C.

AREA 18—Continued

Our Idaho Area 18 CPC/PI East Chair is not only a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, but, is also a member of the Shoshone Bannock Tribe that call Fort Hall their home. With her assistance and dedication to serving the fellowship, outreach activities to the Native American Community in Idaho is flourishing.

In 2016, the Idaho Area 18 Fall Assembly/Convention was held at the Shoshone Bannock Hotel & Event Center on the Fort Hall Reservation. With passion and commitment, we carried the message to the Native Community “Our Spiritual Way of Life” and the many paths to spirituality. The turnout was tremendous, and many spoke of having had a “Spiritual Experience” at this event. We are excited to report that planning is in the beginning stages for the 2020 Idaho Area 18

Spring Assembly/Convention to be held at the Shoshone Bannock Hotel & Event Center again.

There are currently three meetings held weekly at Fort Hall. The treatment center in Fort Hall, transports their clients to the A.A. meetings in Pocatello and Blackfoot, with several native members now involved in service and sponsorship activities – Carrying the Message.

All-inclusive and never exclusive. We must ensure that the doors of A.A. remain open for those who have not found the rooms yet and those who suffer. Many natives of all ages continue to struggle. We want the hand of A.A. always to be there, and for that, we are responsible.

Submitted by Shannon C., Panel 68 Delegate

AREA 26—KENTUCKY

Historical Flight Inspires Remote Community Efforts

Sometime while Bill and Ebby were still drinking they “chartered a plane to complete a jag”. Following a night of drinking they hired a plane and flew to Vermont. As the first flight to ever land at this new airfield, a high school band and complete fanfare greeted them. They both got out of the plane and fell flat on their faces too drunk to even stand up.

In January, a very different historical flight occurred. The Area 26 Quarterly Meeting was held at Rough River State Park, Kentucky. The park includes an airfield for small planes. Two men from Hazard, Kentucky arrived for the Area 26 meeting, the first time in known history that anyone arrived at an Area 26 event by air! Showing their willingness to go to any length to participate in General Service they were greeted by their fellow AA members with excitement but no band.

This fantastic event followed our October Area Assembly where the DCM Roundtable discussion focused on how to reach the remote communities of our Commonwealth. The October Assembly laid the groundwork for this flight and two successful workshops in Eastern Kentucky. Our visitors from Hazard made quick friends with many trusted servants. Based on the previous DCM Roundtable, the agenda included a workshop topic, “How to Reach Dark Districts.” Their presence and participation were truly God inspired.

By the end of the weekend connections were made and seeds planted for two workshops in the rural Appalachian Region of Kentucky. In Hazard, Kentucky Area 26 members and local AA’s planned an awesome event centered on our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service. Members representing nine other districts travelled as far as five hours to participate. The long drive gave me a new appreciation and perspective on the willingness required to participate in General Service. It was a firsthand look at what we expect from any DCM or GSR from this region to be of service.

It is truly a commitment.

This trip to Hazard was followed by a workshop in Grayson, Kentucky. The theme was, “A Society of Alcoholics in Action” and that is exactly what I experienced at this workshop. Local members were introduced to general service and how they are connected to AA as a whole when they participate. Area 26 committee chairpersons shared various ways they coordinate action to help the suffering alcoholic.

Distance is a barrier and one that we can overcome together if we share experience and become willing to try different ideas. I have been thinking about how to serve remote communities. Can technology play a role in keeping AA groups connected? Can we all commit to such travel and go meet people where they are? What can we do to make service more inviting and maximize our time together?

I am extremely happy to report that all this activity bore fruit. At our recent April Area Meeting all three of the furthest Districts which we were focused on with these workshops were present and reported on the enthusiasm going on now. It is my hope and prayer that we continue building the relationships that have been started and the momentum continues to grow.

The right of participation is essential to the health of our movement and sometimes the hand of AA must stretch a little further out to overcome the barrier of distance and invite those not present to fully participate. Once they see the value and that they are welcome, we can build a bridge over all the barriers.

Submitted by Roger W.
Panel 68 Delegate



Photo courtesy of Roger W.

AREA 34—WESTERN MICHIGAN

After attending the 2018 Pre-conference Remote Communities Meeting and serving on the Conference Treatment and Accessibilities Committee I became much more aware of barriers to accessing the message of hope and recovery that Alcoholics Anonymous offers. That there are communities in our Area that because of language, geography, or culture could be considered remote or underserved. This is a concern that we have rarely discussed or explored. The northern portion of our Area is mostly rural and somewhat remote. A.A. meetings and the District service structure have existed for many years, and it's common for significant travel time to attend. The accepted norm is going to any length (pun intended) to attend. The southern portion of our Area is still mostly rural with communities ranging from small town to mid-size city.

Because of the Remote Communities Meeting, I became interested in finding out how well our Native American community is served. There are areas that are well organized and some not as well. By organized I mean regular scheduled and well attended A.A. meetings. Native American owned Casinos have had an impact. Better resources and facilities have resulted. Relations within our service structure have improved as many of our Area Assemblies and workshops are held in Tribal owned facilities. Whites trying to carry the message to natives still face trust issues. I have learned that it takes consistency and long-term commitment. Another challenge for whites is to practice inclusion, that means having an open mind toward Native American traditions and sacrificing many of our Christian traditions.

The language barrier exists with our Spanish speaking groups, though they are very active and well organized. We have interpretation at our State Conventions and intermittent participation at our Assemblies. Our most recent Area

Secretary was bilingual. What a benefit, all minutes were translated, and interpretation was readily available. We experienced good communication between our Area and our Spanish speaking linguistic District during that term. Unfortunately, that level of communication did not rotate in with our most recent elections.

Our biggest concern is for our Black/African American Community. We have recently identified this as an underserved community. There is roughly a 17 percent population of Blacks in the southern portion of our Area, yet less than 2 percent of Blacks attend A.A. meetings at Alano Clubs. Outside of Clubs that percentage drops to a fraction of a percent. We have not been able to locate Blacks only A.A. meetings in our Area, although it's possible they exist. I attend an A.A. meeting at a state correctional facility in our Area where the percentage of Black attendees varies between 55 and 75 percent.

We have just begun to consider solutions. Our hope is to cooperate with County Probation Departments and Black Clergy to help establish and support A.A. meetings in locations that Blacks may be more likely to attend. We are also facing the reality that a barrier exists. Within our Area service structure, we understand and practice inclusion. Communicating the spirit of inclusion inherent in our 1st, 3rd, and 5th Traditions regarding all barriers throughout our service structure needs to be an ongoing focus. In the rooms where those who normally would not mix share love and the lifesaving message of recovery, this is an especially difficult and sensitive issue to address. It's encouraging to see support build as we continue to discuss this. Hopefully, we can report on progress next year.

In Unity, Rick P., Panel 68 Delegate



AREA 44—NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

Remote communities have been defined in Area 44 as any community where it is difficult to carry the A.A message because of language, culture, geography or life conditions. Our committee has taken an initiative to spend the last two years on the life condition aspect. Currently, we have focused on reaching the senior community inside our Area and Districts that might have difficulty reaching Alcoholics Anonymous. In our committee, we have realized that the senior communities that are placed in living facilities or nursing homes can face struggles that prevent them from seeking help and the solution that Alcoholics Anonymous provides. Along with unforeseeable difficulties some might include becoming aware of the Alcoholics Anonymous, reaching A.A due to living conditions or treatment restrictions, or mobility issues.

To reach the alcoholic in these communities, the committee has completed several tasks including building a master list of all nursing homes and living facilities in northern New Jersey and Area 44 broken down by District, building an informational packet's for the staff, a letter to each District in hopes of obtaining help in the necessary 12 step work, and a

remote communities pamphlet to help provide all options to reaching Alcoholics Anonymous and a meeting.

After completing the master list of all the facilities, members of the committee continued to reach out to the districts which in return brought in remote community representatives on the district level who now attend the meetings and continue to reach out to the facilities. Many of the districts have visited the nursing homes with the informational packet which includes a cover letter to the staff which asks, "Do you have a resident who might be in recovery or suffering from alcoholism?" and provides our purpose for the visit along with pamphlets. A few pamphlets that are including in the folder are: AA at a glance, Problems other than alcohol, A brief guide to A.A as a resource for the Healthcare professional, AA. for the Alcoholic with special needs, How A.A members cooperate with professionals, Open speaker meetings, Frequently asked question, and our area's remote community trifold. In the remote communities trifold that the committee developed, it provides different options to reaching alcoholics anonymous meetings telephonically, online, chat (text), audio and visual, postal and options for loners and internationalist member. District

members have had a lot of success going to these facilities while being confronted with difficulty.

District visits to the facilities and the communities have shown a need to reach the senior community. They have been able to provide contact to A.A, bring meetings into the facilities and connections to bring members to outside meetings when possible. One difficulty that has been raised is the concern for anonymity within the nursing home community however, other options have been provided to make sure no alcoholic becomes inaccessible to the message.

Our remote communities committee has obtained great participation from the district members that we are currently finishing this project and exploring other options on how we can expand this vital 12 step work to other remote communities in our area in hopes of carrying the A.A message to those who are faced with the barriers of language, culture, geography or life conditions.

Submitted by Kelly T.
Area 44, Remote Communities Area Chair



Photo courtesy of Area 18—Sunrise Gathering-A.A. meeting at sunrise

AREA 49—SOUTH EASTERN NEW YORK

The Transgender Alcoholic in AA

The Third Tradition comes to mind when thinking about the transgender alcoholic, who is becoming more visible in our Area's AA community. The purpose of this short article is to share some thoughts and experience.

According to a recent study, nearly 1.5 million American adults¹ identify as transgender². New York State might be expected to have an especially high percentage of transgender people relative to its population, but that is not the case. We rank 29th out of 50 states. As with many marginalized communities, transgender people have a high rate of alcohol abuse. Research suggests that it could be 2.5 times higher than for the general population³.

When meeting a transgender alcoholic, the vocabulary may be unfamiliar to many AA's. Transgender is an "umbrella" term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex that they were assigned at birth. They may also describe themselves as Trans, Non-binary or Gender Nonconforming⁴.

Some AA's find themselves feeling uncertain, anxious even, about what transgender names and pronouns to use. Here are some suggestions⁵:

1. Use any person's chosen name. If you knew them by one name, but now they go by another, they are more likely to feel welcome in an AA meeting if their chosen name is respected.

2. When a person identifies as a certain gender, use the pronouns appropriate for that gender. If you're not certain which pronoun to use, ask: "What pronouns do you use?" 3. If there is need to use a pronoun, and it's not possible to ask a person which pronoun they prefer, consider using they/them in place of he/him or she/her.

Some transgender alcoholics have met with resistance when they come into the rooms of AA seeking our help. Here we can practice Traditions 3 and 5. Some also encounter resistance to allowing them to participate fully in our program, including taking service commitments in groups or general service, and being welcome at fellowship activities. The principle embodied in Concept IV is especially helpful here.

In Area 49, transgender AA's are being elected GSRs. At our 2019 Delegate's Day of Sharing, two transgender GSRs felt welcome enough to pose questions "at the mic." At the recent Area 49 convention, a transgender woman served as Volunteer Coordinator and read the Preamble at the opening meeting. The planning committee had also worked with the hotel to designate a gender-neutral restroom.

The transgender alcoholic may feel more anxious than most about acceptance in the rooms of A.A. Providing reassurance seems especially important. Fortunately, we AA's already know how to do that:

"Welcome to AA." "Is this your first meeting?" "What's your name?" "Can I introduce you to a few people?" "Can I help find you a seat? "Would you like a cup of coffee?"

Submitted by Jane E.
Panel 69 Delegate

- 1) *The medical journal Lancet quotes estimates that "suggest there are around 25 million transgender people worldwide." Lancet, 6/17/16*
- 2) *How Many Adults Identify as Transgender In The U.S.? The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law, June 2016, pg.3*
- 3) *Center for American Progress, 3/9/2012*
- 4) *GLAAD, see www.glaad.org/reference/transgender*
- 5) *Interview with a healthcare professional*

AREA 73—WEST VIRGINIA

For years District 10 has been trying to take AA meetings to McDowell County WV. They have never been attended well (if at all). There are many theories as to why this is. I believe that part of the problem is a trust thing. A lack of trust of "outsiders". I am deeply rooted in McDowell. My mother was born and raised there. Her father, a hard-working coal miner, an extremely wise man of solid character and much respected in the community, could not quit drinking until late in life when he had, as Ebby put it, a "religious experience". Now

that I'm sober, I can remember my grandmother mentioning AA to him and telling him that a "couple of guys" were willing to come talk to him about his drinking but he would have none of it. In fact, I have a copy of "24 Hours at A Time" that was given to him by an old friend in 1967 who had moved to Detroit and was obviously in AA. It's one of my most cherished possessions!

McDowell County is "the heart of the Pocahontas Coalfield", the richest coal seam in the world. "Outsiders" came in,

stripped the land and the people of their coal and their dignity respectively, and pulled out when the coal was no longer profitable creating a generational distrust of anyone not from there. I believe this is a major factor in why AA just doesn't "take" there. It is an extremely cliquish part of the world and it takes a while to get to know the people, but once "you're in" you have friends for life.

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AREA 73—Continued

We have a Women's prison in Alderson, WV who use to allow meetings to be taken in regularly. There has been a regime change and since that time they are citing that it costs too much money for them to allow 12 steppers in. We have not been able to take meetings in there for about two years. We keep checking in with them.

About five times last fall I went to a meeting in Preston Co. to provide support. It's only about 30 miles, but 45-50 min trip, so not sure that counts as remote. It was a decent meeting, I guess, they didn't say or do anything too crazy, not the worst meetings I've ever been to. But it was boring, the same people saying the

same things. I don't know that I have a point here, other than there are plenty of people in Morgantown who have the resources to support the meetings in the District not in town and people do not choose to do so. And I understand why to some extent.

One meeting became a three-hour time commitment. The best trips were the ones when someone went with me and we stopped for dinner in Kingwood, so it's the fellowship piece that made it most enjoyable.

Submitted by Susan V.
Panel 69 Delegate

AREA 78—ALBERTA/NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Meeting Cultural Challenges in Remote Communities

At our January 2019 Area Committee Meeting, two members attended who were from Yellowknife (1,484 kms north of our meeting place). One, a DCM; the other a young Indigenous woman who is the Alt GSR for the Young Peeps Group, Co-chair of the Social Committee and Chair of District 35 Remote Communities Committee. She was able to come with financial assistance from our Area's Remote Communities "We Can Coffee Can" action.

For our Area, this is where Spirituality, Finances, Culture and Primary Purpose all came together. Members from our many remote areas asked for financial support to participate in AA as a whole. They wanted their members to be able to attend Area Assemblies. Their cost can be anywhere from \$600 to \$2,500 to just **travel** to one Assembly. Just reading the minutes afterwards or being 'Zoomed in' does not carry the fellowship, sharing, making friends, discussions, excitement, enthusiasm, inclusiveness or God Consciousness. They want their people to 'experience' AA, so they come home with more 'strength' when carrying the message of 'hope' of one alcoholic to another within their culture.

The Area did not have the extra funds to financially support such high travel costs. So, the "We Can' Coffee Can" started. From March to November 2018, members, groups and Districts supported our remote members, graciously contributing \$3,350. The effect? Members are more interested, engaged and enthused. Service positions are being supported, a little more money is going into the 7th Tradition and the members attending have a stronger program. To make it possible for just 2 remote people to come to an Area meeting once a year it could cost as much as \$4,000. This year (2019) has been given by members enough to support this cause. For future years, a motion is being put forward to allocate \$4,000 per year into ongoing budgets. Also, around funding, the Area put into this year's budget \$2,000 for the RCC chair to travel north to meet/share with local support services such as health centres, treatment centres, corrections facilities, etc.

to help support alcoholics going through these facilities and into their home communities. And, to support efforts of members in remote areas.

RCC uses zoom.us for video access in these ways:

- a. Hosting two online video meetings called Spirit of the North - Sundays and Wednesdays at 8:00 pm MST.
 - * We have members join in from the north, USA, other countries
 - * Have new people come into the meetings.
 - * The meeting is used for accessibility to AA meetings: elderly, can't drive, weather, babysitter difficulty, sick, no/few meetings in area, traveling, working remotely, difficult work schedules, prefer online, etc.
 - * We give information cards to GSRs to take to their home groups for people to know about the meetings and how to sign into the meeting.
 - * For anyone wanting to join in, here is how: In your browser type: www.zoom.us/j/8864590234 (may have to download the free Zoom app.)
- b. Piloting an idea to stream regular meetings into online so we can offer accessibility to a variety of meeting times and types every day of the week. This may help small

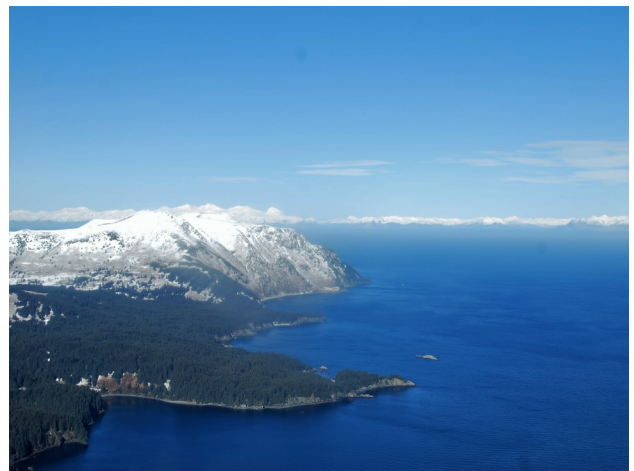


Photo courtesy Area 02 Remote Communities Member

AREA 78—Continued

remote meetings to have online members come into their meetings.

- c. The RCC Chair uses it to keep in touch with support services/facilities in remote areas (health & treatment centres, etc.)
- d. DCMs can use it to 'meet' online with their remote GSRs or other DCMs
- e. Area Table Officers or Committee Chairs to be invited to a District's business meeting to answer questions or share about happenings in the area.
- f. Sponsorship or supporting one another through online chats
- g. About to use it for the Inter-Area Remote Communities Group meetings
- h. For one cost, the use is limitless. Can have up to 50 people per meeting.

Other activities and ideas we have or are putting into place:

- Sign up Sponsorship list - members sponsoring members in remote areas
- Literature being shared from members or groups with groups/individuals in remote areas. Books, CDs and Grapevines or subscriptions
- Some very preliminary discussion about translating the Big Book into Cree (not sure which dialect)
- Redoing our page on the Area website to be more 'attractive' and informative

When we speak about cultural challenges in remote communities, perhaps we see the cultural disparity when we look around the room at Area meetings. Compared to the effects of alcoholism in our First Nation, Inuit and Metis communities, especially in remote regions, we do not see a similar representation. So, we focus on supporting members from remote communities into AA as a whole.

Submitted by Becky P., Panel 68 Delegate

AREA 79—BC YUKON

British Columbia/Yukon Territory: Area 79 includes the Yukon Territory, most of British Columbia and one small section of Washington State. At 1,431,210 square kilometers (approximately 889,000 miles), it is the second largest delegate area in the US/Canada structure. Area 79 has 48 districts and include some that are equal in size to the states of Mississippi and Maryland combined. From the southernmost tip of British Columbia to the northernmost tip of the Yukon Territory is a staggering 2,540 km or 1,587 miles. Some statistics I found on the Welcome BC website quoted below:



“British Columbia alone is the most ethnically diverse province in Canada. Almost 30 percent of British Columbians immigrated to BC from another country. Just under one-quarter of the people in BC are a visible minority. Another five percent of the population is Indigenous.

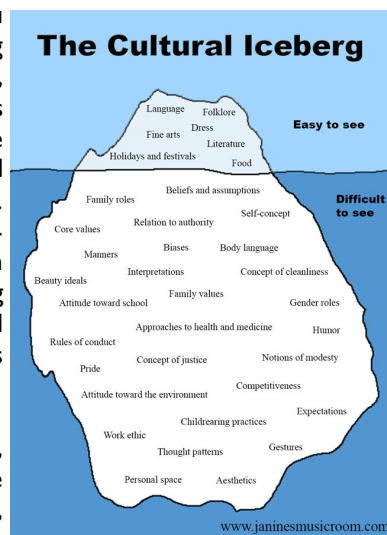
Indigenous people have lived in the area now known as BC for more than 10,000 years. They developed their own societies, cultures, territories and laws. When European explorers and settlers first came to BC in the mid-18th

century, the province was home to thousands of Indigenous people.

Today, there are approximately 200,000 Indigenous people in British Columbia and include First Nations, Inuit and Metis. There are 198 distinct First Nations in BC, each with their own unique traditions and history. More than 30 different First Nations languages and close to 60 dialects are spoken in the province.”

From the Yukon Bureau of Statistics: “According to the 2016 Census, 23.3% of Yukon’s population in private households identified themselves as Aboriginal. This was the third-highest percentage in Canada, following Nunavut (85.0%) and Northwest Territories (50.7%).”

In the image at right, cultural differences are often easy to see, however there are many



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AREA 79—Continued

more “difficult to see” differences that we need to know about and understand.

In Alcoholics Anonymous, we in Area 79 are tasked with being able to overcome some of the cultural challenges in outreach to remote communities.

In Area 79 we have in place something called a “Micro-Forum” and the purpose is:

- A one-day event put on by the Area 79 General Service Committee.
- To provide sharing and informational sessions designed to help the Committee stay connected with A.A. members in our area.
- To enhance communication and participation by offering a meeting place to ask questions, share experience and spark new ideas.
- To help carry the A.A. message of hope to the still suffering alcoholic.
- To provide a tool for reaching out to Districts or communities which have been unable to participate in general service.

The first Micro-Forum *ad hoc* committee was struck in Panel 61 (2011) and our first micro forum was held in November 2013 and since then, there have been seven more. Reports and statistics have been kept from the various events and results have been mixed. In a couple of cases, there has been much success – albeit slow. In one case, the district had had the same DCM for many years. After the micro-forum, it took a couple of years but once the rotation took

hold, there was new enthusiasm and interest in area service. That district is now very involved in area service and is well represented at our quarterlies and assemblies.

I was talking with another member of our General Service Committee in Area 79 and discussing why we seem to have difficulty attracting First Nations or aboriginal members and she said something that truly resonated with me and that was that there is a “shyness of structure” to them. And while we like to think of ourselves as not being organized, we do have a service structure and that service structure is fairly organized.

In my early days on the general service committee, I attended a rally in Kitimat (about 18 hours by car and 6 hours by plane - north of where I live in Victoria on Vancouver Island) and met a woman who lived in New Aiyansh (almost parallel with Ketchikan, Alaska). She had been going weekly to her meeting and would spend the hour by herself, reading the big book. Occasionally someone would join her but mostly she was there alone. I met her again at an Assembly two years ago and there are now a few members of that group. I know that she is grateful that she didn't give up. Sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly!

There are other stories of success and seeming failures in Area 79. We do have a standing committee on Remote Communities in our area and that committee is available for guidance and assistance whenever requested. As well, we are continually working together to come up with ways to reach out to our remote communities and ensure that they are connected to A.A. as a whole.



To wrap up, it is my belief that we need to be open minded and willing to understand the various cultural differences if we are to be of aid to the still suffering alcoholic in our most remote districts and even in some of the not so “far away” districts. We can attend wherever we are invited and be available to carry the message if it is requested that we do so. We need to know how they would like us to work with them. It is my hope that in years to come Alcoholics Anonymous will be, in the US/Canada structure, very diverse and well represented by a truly cross-section of ethnicities and cultures.

Submitted by Gail P., Panel 69 Delegate

AREA 80—MANITOBA

Culture (ekusi isi pimatisiw) Cree word

The civilization of a given people or nation at a given time; it's customs, arts, conveniences and behaviours.

Culture is a way of life. In the north resources are limited. The effect on carrying the message and the power to bring about a result, influence or accomplishment is very difficult. The patterns of human behaviors include thought, speech and actions and therefore depend upon man's capacity for learning and carrying knowledge to succeeding generations. The customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of a racial, religious or social group will not change and will be here forever.

In our indigenous culture we have belief systems of faith which keep us going. Living conditions are different than urban centers. There is a strong connection to the land (Mother Earth). The elders are very important people with a lot of wisdom and vision. They have passed on their knowledge and taught the seven teachings to our people for generations. Each teaching not only gives us the meaning but represent birds or animals!

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Honesty (martin) | 4. Humility (wolf) |
| 2. Respect (moose) | 5. Courage (bear) |
| 3. Wisdom (beaver) | 6. Love (eagle) |
| 7. Truth (owl) | |

In the 1930's Indigenous people in Northern Manitoba were living happy lives and lived off the land. They were avid hunters, fisherman and trappers. They travelled by the water system in the summer and by dog teams and horses in the winter.

In the early 1940's travel changed; trains, planes and highways became a way of transportation. Hotels and liquor stores sprung up and with them booze and drugs. Changes began to happen, Government policies, regulations and rules were introduced in Northern Manitoba. Indigenous people were allowed in bars and liquor stores. Alcoholism became a problem on the reserve. People went to jail, there were marriage break-ups and the children were neglected. Deaths by drowning increased and people were found frozen to death due to the misuse of alcohol.

In the mid 1960's Alcoholics Anonymous was introduced in northern Manitoba. Indigenous people started to join A.A. and stayed sober by applying the program to their lives. There were A.A. groups holding clubroom meetings on most reserves. GSRs and DCMs were elected and people attended District and Area meetings.

In the mid 1980's and early 1990's A.A. groups started to peter out in the communities, a few still hold A.A. clubroom meetings but they do not have GSR's. The DCM was still active at Assemblies.

A sharing session took place in Gimli, Manitoba in October of 2009. Bob B. from Quebec shared how Remote Communities

worked in his area. The people that attended this workshop agreed that it would be a good idea to try something similar.

We formed a workgroup (Remote Communities Workgroup), and our main task is to bring help and support to Northern Manitoba. Our mission statement states: To carry the message of A.A. to Remote Communities of the north as defined by Language, Culture and Location. The Remote Workgroup consists of a chairman, secretary, liaison person and 12 members. The workgroup travels during the winter months when the winter roads are open in the north. The communities were visited by invitation and trips were taken on the following dates:

1. Feb. 28-March 4, 2010 (Thompson, Gillam, Fox Lake, York Landing)
2. Feb. 23-27, 2011 (Thompson, Leaf Rapids, York Landing, Nelson House)
3. Feb. 6-9, 2012 (Leaf Rapids, Split Lake, Thompson)
4. March 18, 2013 (Powerview)
5. August 29-Sept. 1, 2014 (Berens River)
6. Feb. 16-20, 2015 (Leaf Rapids, South Indian Lake, Split Lake)
7. March 4-7, 2016 (Leaf Rapids, Thompson, Cross Lake, Nelson House)
8. Feb. 14-21, 2017 (God's Lake, The Pas)
9. Nov. 16-18, 2018 (Berens River)

The Remote Communities Workgroup was also invited to make a presentation on drug and alcohol abuse to the High school students at the Frontier School in Leaf Rapids. The younger members of the Remotes workgroup participated in the presentation and were invited back 3 years in a row.

With the Computer age and modern technology upon us, the doctors in Northern Manitoba use Telehealth monitors for patient appointments. A couple of A.A. members asked the telehealth provider if it was possible to use these machines for an A.A. meeting and Manitoba Telehealth agreed. The first A.A. meeting on Telehealth took place on January 21st, 2010 with Thompson and Leaf Rapids; and to date 42 communities have joined in! Meetings are scheduled for 8 p.m. Thursdays and the first Thursday of every month is a speaker meeting. Miracles happen and as a result of these telehealth meetings a few communities have started clubroom meetings.

The 12 Steps and 12 Traditions represent the core principles and values of such groups. They define these values as: surrender, faith, acceptance, patience, honesty, openness, willingness and humility to examine one's character defects. They use slogans such as "One day at a time" and "Keep it simple".

The Remote Community Workgroup in Manitoba is defined by Culture, Language and Location (3 Barriers) and it started in January of 2010, almost 10 years ago. A.A. is a wonderful gift, it works if you work it.

Submitted by Walter H.
Remote Community Workgroup Member

AREA 82—NOVA SCOTIA, NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

The R.C. Committee in Area 82 continues to hold phone/Skype meetings on a fairly regular basis with communities on the southeast coast of Labrador and along the Northern Peninsula. Attendance at this meeting continues to be good and the meetings themselves are generally on a topic selected from the AA literature.

Our member in Plum Point continues to keep the meeting open in his area, although this can be very lonely service work during the long winter months. We are going to try having him join the phone meetings 2 Fridays a month and attending the Plum Point meetings on the other Fridays.

Since the new year I have been busy trying to contact people in the Labrador East part of our Area. This has proved to be quite challenging but, in the end, I was able to connect with one member in Happy Valley and another in Sheshatshiu, as well as some people in the community. All these people welcomed a visit from someone outside their area who could perhaps look at things from a different perspective.

I attended their Wednesday night meeting and listened to the 3 members who attended. It became clear that anonymity is a big concern in the area, as it is in many small communities. The doors are being kept open primarily by one individual with sporadic help from one or two others. They do host 4 meetings a week, but they are difficult to find due to ineffective communication and PR. Due to anonymity concerns there was a great reluctance to approach local community resources who might be able to help get the word out. Together we wrote a public service announcement using the workbooks for the PI/CPC committee and with the members' permission I approached the local radio station, the newspaper (a weekly), and various other resources in the community. We felt

that it was important to approach the local RCMP detachment and provide them with some information about AA and the meetings. We also approached the Mental Health and Addictions Department and provided them with meeting schedules and information about AA, and we posted meeting schedules at various places in the hospital and other community centers. We did attempt to hold a public meeting at the hospital in Happy Valley but the only people who attended were the same AA members mentioned previously. I suspect that part of the reason for the low turnout was the short notice. When I returned home, I contacted the Area Webmaster to update the meeting information for this region.

I also visited Northwest River and Sheshatshiu. These communities are currently serviced by Apenam's House, a residential treatment center in Northwest River based on the Brentwood Recovery Home in Windsor, Ontario. I was invited to take part in a sharing session with some of the Innu women from Sheshatshiu. I noted many similarities between the language they used and the language of AA. They spoke about character defects, a Higher Power and forgiveness.

I spoke with one of the counselors at the center and she told me that there are many repeat clients and that some of their people have shown an interest in attending AA meetings, but would prefer to go to Happy Valley. We talked about some of the difficulties her clients had finding the meetings in Goose Bay. I gave her a schedule of the meetings and

she posted it on social media as well as around the center.

I feel that the trip was quite successful in that the members feel now as if they are reconnected with the main body. They don't feel quite as isolated and cut off. At my last meeting there on Friday night, with only 2 members present, they talked more positively about growing the AA community now that the word is out there. They talked about maybe being able to have a real group with a GSR and maybe a treasurer and other officers. There was more hope in the room that night and it was clear that the Higher Power was at work.

Submitted by
Area 82 Remote Communities
Committee



AREA 83—EASTERN ONTARIO INTERNATIONAL

History of Remote Communities

The earliest note of remote communities in Area 83 appears in our September 10, 1994 Area Committee meeting minutes. It is a report given by our panel 33 Delegate (1983-1984) Tommy H. During the early 90s Tommy met Native Canadians who had travelled from northern Canada to the Bellwoods Treatment Centre in Toronto. Through telephone conversations, Tommy kept in touch with some of these people after they returned home. AA literature was collected and sent to those in need in northern Canada. Our Panel 43 Delegate (1993-1994) Don S. reported at our December 3rd, 1994 Area Committee Meeting that a treatment centre had opened in Baffin Island, and that Bellwoods is the training Centre for councillors. At the June 1995 Area Committee meeting, Tommy H. reported about the ongoing efforts to carry the message to Remote Communities and made a request for contributions of money or literature.

A Northern Remote Communities report given by Tommy H. appears in our October 1997 Assembly minutes. In the report Tommy talks of literature, video, and tapes being sent to several different communities in northern Canada, as well as phone calls he received from members as a result of the materials and contributions that were sent to them. A request for contributions, which he would prefer comes from the groups, was put forth.

At our October 28th, 2007 Assembly a motion was passed for our Alternate Delegate “to be the single point of contact and be responsible for all matters relating to Remote Communities initiatives across Area 83, including serving as liaison with other Delegate Areas as required”. At this same Assembly, a motion was passed stating “that Area 83 support the concept of creating an Inter-Area Remote Communities Steering Committee potentially consisting of the 14 Canadian Areas, and the Alaska Area.

In February of 2009 our Panel 59 Alternate Delegate Robb W. attended a Special Forum in Moose Factory Ontario. Robb reported: I’m not 100% certain about the numbers, but I believe that there were about 60 people in attendance. The weekend

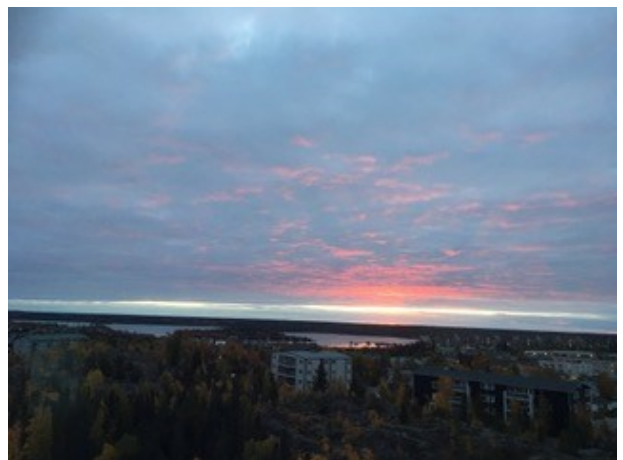
was setup and run by the Trustees and Staff from the General Service office. As a special forum, there was a small contingent from the Trustees and staff. Presentations were made about the General Service Office, what and who they are and what they do.

I started out on my journey with the thought in my mind that we were bringing A.A. to this community. What I came to understand was that A.A. was alive and well in Moose Factory. There were many examples of long-term, contented sobriety there. What I realized by the end of the weekend was that this community, just like all A.A. communities, just wanted to feel that connection to A.A. as a whole. I believe that this weekend accomplished that goal.

In 2011, Mel C., our Panel 61 Alternate Delegate attended the First Eastern Arctic Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous in Iqaluit, Nunavut which had been organized by Bob P., a Past Eastern Canada Trustee from Area 90. Over a hundred attendees made the trek including the GM of our General Service Office, Phyllis H., Delegates from as far away as Alberta joined earnest alcoholics in the north to carry the A.A. message where it was desperately needed.”

Area 83 continues to be part of the Inter-Area Remote Communities workgroup, takes part in the bi-monthly Remote Communities workgroup conference calls, and supports efforts to carry our message of recovery to remote communities.

Submitted by Rob M.
Panel 69 Delegate



AREA 91—SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA

Area 91 is the beautiful region of Saskatchewan, Canada. With 650,000 square kilometers and a population of 1.16 million people, we have 19 active districts; with two districts that cover the top half of the province and some meetings only accessible by boat or ice road.

In Area 91 there is a large disparity of remote communities by culture and language, very few of the AA literature has been translated into the local language; and the recent increase of immigration populations we are finding cultural barriers also to be appearing. There are many Indigenous communities with different dialect of languages, such as: Cree, Woodland Cree, Saulteaux, Ojibwa, Nakota, Lakota, Dakota, Dene, and Mischief. Very few items of the AA literature has been translated into the local language, and even though communities are open to Alcoholics Anonymous coming in, it's the challenge of reading basic text that creates calamity.

One of our major challenges is within our remote Indigenous/ First Nations communities having access to Alcoholics Anonymous due to both by geography (some meetings only accessible by ice road) and language. With the Indigenous communities being 15% of the Saskatchewan population, these communities hold a stigma of what the "Western World" brings to their community. Being traumatized from historical challenges, any suggestion where they feel they are being forced into a direction of changing their world, the community will reject. Alcoholism is one of the top diseases that have overtaken within the communities.

We also have a distinct population of "remote" communities throughout Saskatchewan, where the accessibility of alcohol is more predominant than the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. These are small communities, town sites, and farms with no access to have that "connection" of being able to talk or relate with another alcoholic.

In Area 91, we are moving into our second term of the Committee System, the Remote Communities Committee now has Guidelines prepared for the Area Assembly for approval. The Remote Communities Committee also has a distinct fund called the District Development Fund; it provides special funding to facilitate a service function within a remote community, ability to send a service member to an assembly where funding is required, and increase our "tools" of accessibility to help carry the message.

The Area 91 Remote Communities Committee consists of the Alternate Delegate as Chair, three District Committee Members selected by the hat at the Area Committee Meeting, and the remaining of the committee being selected by random generation through registration for the first spring Area assembly of the service term. This

committee will ideally have the same members during the full service 2 year term.

Our Remote Communities Committee is excited with the growth of the committee at the Conference level, with the recognition and implementation of the Remote Communities as its own committee. We are planning to build a number of 'tools' that will help carry the message to remote communities within Saskatchewan.

Tools include:

- ◆ Building a display board that will be accessible at our assemblies, conferences, and other service functions.
- ◆ Update our Area 91 Website (www.aasask.org) with important information about Remote Communities.
- ◆ Establishing an online meeting via the Internet, which will also have the ability to telephone into the meeting.
- ◆ Build a communication notice for the newsletters throughout our Area.
- ◆ Create a brochure that has information about our Remote Communities Committee.
- ◆ Create a tent/business card that will have important information.
- ◆ Develop an FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) about Remote Communities.

At the our Remote Communities Committee meeting at Spring Assembly 2019 the committee discussed and reviewed the new "Remote Communities" Committee package and also brainstormed more ideas on what could be identified as a 'remote' community and what they are in Saskatchewan. We are finding we have remote communities such as geographical, cultural, loners, age, and active military (there is a large number of retired military within our rooms, but not many active as it was discussed that the culture is not to have weakness and alcoholism may be viewed as weakness).

Within the majority of our districts in Area 91, we are seeing an increase in the immigrant population, with some individuals coming from countries where it was illegal or dangerous to identify as an alcoholic. This fear component is a barrier, as if they identify themselves they can be potentially be seen as a "misfit" within their community. We see a need to find a way to reach those new communities.

We are excited about our direction of the Remote Communities Committee in Area 91 Saskatchewan.

Yours in Love and Service,
Lesley W.
Area 91 Alternate Delegate & Remote Communities Committee Chair



AREA 92—WASHINGTON STATE EAST

Washington State East Area 92 region contains the city of Spokane, which is the second largest city in the state. The Tri cities, Columbia River and the Grand Coulee Dam, the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, the fertile farm lands of the Yakima Valley and the scenic byway of the Palouse. The entire state has 71,300 square miles of land in which Eastern Washington is comprised of 65%. Within WSEA 92, we see and hear the need for outreach to our remote communities. Our diverse population is covered throughout this beautiful part of the state east of the Cascade Mountain range.

Native Americans and Spanish speaking members comprise a large part of our focus on cultural challenges. Recently, my eyes were opened to one that I had not taken into thought, our Jewish Community. In researching for input from some of these communities, I was able to understand that the Cultural Challenges reaching them is much greater than I had ever known. A member, in our fellowship, from our Jewish Community shared his story with me that I so greatly appreciated. His strong message that was conveyed was that “He would hope that Alcoholics Anonymous will take a second look at our Jewish brothers and sisters in considering what we can do to attract them to our program and fellowship”. This was a very heartfelt statement!

Our Native American Community consists of several different tribes stretch-

ing from the Northeastern corner of our state and throughout the mid and southeastern section. Including a small part of Montana and Eastern Idaho. Of them mortality rates are 514% higher than the general population. A high percentage of this is due to alcoholism. With enthusiasm from the Western Area Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (WACYCAA) for example, this is one tool that we can reach the native teens in hope to reduce the high number of those afflicted within the Native American society.

We have four Linguistic Districts in our Area of Spanish Speaking members. They are represented at our area functions and participate fully. We welcome their input with new ideas as well as the cultural challenges. The language barrier is something we have overcome with the assistance in having a Translation Chair at our Area level. Communication is so vitally important in growing with the challenges we all face. With this, the Spanish AA community is hosting our 2019, area 92 voting assembly. This shows that with unity and service, unifying this remote community is achievable.

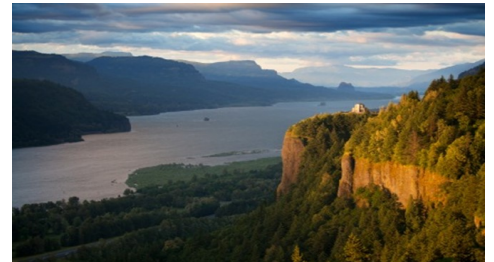
On page 14 of the accessibilities workbook under suggestion for working with underserved or remote communities it states we should meet the challenge of organizing regular telephone and or video conference meetings with members for recovery and service. Despite modern communication methods, we hope to reach out physically

with the Grapevine, La Vina, GSO Pamphlets, audio and paperback books, along with local meeting schedules. With this outreach to the alcoholics in these remote areas we can help with the solutions that will ensure that every alcoholic that is still suffering has an opportunity to participate in unity, recovery and service.

Within cultural challenges in reaching remote communities, the future of Alcoholics Anonymous growth can overcome these barriers that have come to light and have proven the need for developing these ongoing solutions that are vital within our fellowship.

“Clear vision for tomorrow comes from only a clear look at yesterday”!

Submitted by Allen D.,
Panel 68 Delegate



Columbia River, WA State | Photo courtesy of Allen D.

A Declaration of Unity

This we owe to A.A.'s future; to place our common welfare first; to keep our Fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives, and the lives of those to come.



I Am Responsible. . .

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,

I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.

And for that: I am responsible.

