



Area 30

Alcoholics Anonymous
General Service Committee
of Eastern Massachusetts



The Messenger

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Hello Area 30!

This is an exciting time of year for AA. Our Delegate heads to New York City soon and we gather today to send her off as best informed as we can. Please join me in wishing Mary Jane a safe and productive and rewarding journey!

This month we have a submission from our Archives Committee, and "Meet the Districts" features District 15&16. I've also launched a new monthly feature called "An Interview with a Past Delegate" and a Poetry Corner. (Okay - I know poetry is not everyone's thing - but - I am hoping there are enough of you out there with recovery poetry that you may wish to share!)

What else would you like to see? This is **your** Area 30 newsletter, and in that vein, please feel enabled to call or email me with suggestions

messenger@aaemass.org.

Thanks!

Karen M.

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A Vision of the Whole

"Though many of us have had to struggle for sobriety, never yet has this Fellowship had to struggle for lost unity. Consequently, we sometimes take this one great gift for granted. We forget that, should we lose our unity, the millions of alcoholics who still 'do not know' might never get their chance."

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"We used to be skeptical about large A.A. gatherings like conventions, thinking they might prove too exhibitionistic. But, on balance, their benefit is huge. While each A.A.'s interest should center principally in those about him and upon his own group, it is both necessary and desirable that we will all get a larger version of the whole."

"The General Service Conference in New York also produces this effect upon those who attend. It is a vision-stretching process."

Ref: As Bill Sees It, pg. 297, Letters 1949, 1956

A SPACE FOR NOTES

From Area 30 Archives Committee:



“PIGEON” by Father G. (Anonymous)

Let’ have a little respect for that word-“pigeon”. As I understand the story, the term “pigeon”, to refer to a newcomer in Alcoholics Anonymous, came from Dr. Bob, one of the two co-founders of A.A. It was Dr. Bob’s habit of saying, “I must see the pigeon in 218” or “I have a pigeon coming tonight.” Suppose I told you that Dr. Bob didn’t pick that term, referring to heavy drinkers, out of the air. The word “pigeon”, has a very good “lexicographical” standing.

From all accounts, Dr. Bob was a very light sleeper. He loved to read when he could not sleep. One of his favorites was H.L. Mencken. The gruff Baltimore newspaperman wrote “The American Language.” It was first published in 1919, revised and supplemented several times. This book was a natural for a man of Dr. Bob’s temperament and training. Mencken and Bob were the same age., both were wily, had contempt for shallowness and conceit. Mencken always a heavy drinker, reserved some of his harshest words for those he called the Prohibitionists. He referred to the 18th Amendment in capital letters- “The Thirteen Years”.

When Mencken reaches the words which he introduces as: “terms still used by American boozers”, he waxes eloquent. You can see he knows his stuff. He notes, first, the words about drinking imported from England, then those which were homegrown on this side of the Atlantic. Mencken points out, correctly, that Benjamin Franklin was the first American who wondered why tavern habitue never referred to a patron as being drunk. They were “soused”, “corned” or “stewed”. The genius, Ben Franklin, who gave us the lightning rod, the bifocal lens, the fuel saving stove, good postal service, also gave A.A. its “pigeons”.

Franklin addressed himself twice in his lifetime to the subject of synonyms for drunk. (The American Slang Dictionary claims that there are more synonyms for drunk than any other word

in American speech.) Ben first wrote about it when he was learning the printer's trade in his home town of Boston. He was working under his older brother James who did not have too high an opinion of Ben's talents. The 16 year-old teenage was forced to write articles under the pen name of "Ms. Silence Dogood", and slip them under the door of the printshop. James Franklin admired the letters and printed them until he discovered the Ben had written them.

The two brothers quarreled constantly. The next year, Ben ran away to Philadelphia, then the largest city in the colonies. At age thirty, as a successful owner of the Pennsylvania Gazette, Franklin returned to his boyhood hobby. The Silence Dogood letter had only 19 expressions, now the Philadelphia newspaperman had collected 225 words referring to fuddled imbibers. He published "The Drinkers Dic- onary" which amused H.L. Mencken immensely.

Some members of A.A. may take offense at being compared to the lowly pigeon, take heart, Dr. Bob, Mencken and Franklin could have made you a bear, bee, cat, fox, toad, rat or goose. Franklin was descriptive. He claimed that compulsive drinkers "eat a toad and a half for breakfast" or they are "dizzy as a goose" or "as good conditioned as a puppy". The actual entry in Franklin's dictionary which Mencken quotes, says that people who hung around taverns referred to anyone who was "PIGEON-EYED". Dr. Bob, knowing English grammar very well, referred to anyone who was "pigeon eyed" lovingly as being "his pigeon".

You may still resent being called a pigeon. Franklin may agree with you. He added this paragraph to his work "The phrases in this dictionary are not (like most of our terms of art) borrowed from foreign languages, neither are they collected from the writing of the learned in our own, but gathered wholly from the modern tavern conversation of tipplers. I do not doubt but there are many more in use; and I was even tempted to add a new one myself under the letter B, to wit "brutified." But, upon consideration, I feared being guilty of injustice to the brute creation, if I represented drunkenness as a beastly vice, since it is well known, that the brutes are in general a very sober sort of people." Dr. Bob would agree-pigeons don't drink.

Reference: "Markings" Vol VI No 1. 1988 GSO Archives' former newsletter.

AREA 30 ARCHIVES COMMITTEE MEETS VIRTUALLY EVERY 3RD Mon OF THE MONTH AT 7:30PM. LOG IN INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ON THE AREA 30 CALENDAR. ALL ARE WELCOME!



An Interview with a Past Delegate

featuring Suzanne S. - Panel 73

Editor's note: Suzanne made my first interview with a past delegate very easy as she wrote it herself!

The goal is that these features bring a more personal side to the past delegates we may have looked on with "Service position eyes" only. I hope you enjoy Suzanne's share as much as I did.

"I grew up in a small town on the North Shore of Massachusetts—a quiet, simple place. But for me, that small-town life was just the backdrop to a much bigger journey—one filled with struggles, growth, and ultimately, redemption.

I found Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) at 16, though at the time, I didn't fully grasp how much it would shape my life. I was lost in alcoholism, but by the time I was 20, I was sober, thanks to the people in AA who showed me a different way to live. Looking back, I realize how fortunate I was to get sober so young. Many of the people I met in those early meetings had endured decades of drinking and devastating losses. I hadn't lived through that kind of pain yet, but I had my own struggles. With the foundation of AA, I learned how to navigate life—the good and the bad—without alcohol.

In the beginning, I was lucky to have an incredibly supportive AA community. As the "token young person" in my area, I had a lot of older members looking out for me. But it wasn't until I was 24 that I truly found my place. That's when I met a group of young people in AA, and it felt like stepping into a whole new world. I had spent years building a strong foundation with older members, but now I was surrounded by peers who understood exactly what I was going through. With them, I embraced life in ways I hadn't before—I went back to school, started going out dancing, attended conferences, and really learned how to have fun in sobriety.

Service became a huge part of my journey, and it was those young people in AA who first introduced me to it. They showed me that service isn't just about holding a formal role—it's about showing up for

others. Sometimes, it's as simple as sitting in a chair at a meeting. If no one had been there when I walked in at 16, I don't know if I would have come back. Just being present for someone else can make all the difference. Over the years, I've done whatever I could—setting up for meetings, making 12-step calls, driving someone to detox. I felt a deep responsibility to give back, especially knowing how much AA had given me.

I've also had the privilege of serving in various roles, from General Service Representative (GSR) all the way down the triangle to serving as the Panel 73 Delegate for Area 30 Eastern Massachusetts at the General Service Conference. It was an incredible journey—one I was honored to be a part of.

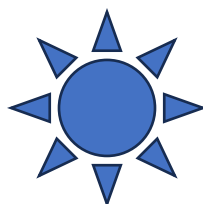
What I've learned along the way is that as long as I stay committed to practicing AA's principles in all areas of my life, I'll be okay. I'm not perfect, and I don't pretend to be. I make mistakes, but the important thing is that I clean them up. Every morning and evening, I take time to reflect on my day and do an inventory. Sometimes, I don't like what I see, but even then, it's an opportunity for growth.

The relationships I've built through AA are the most treasured part of my journey. I have a small group of about eight people who have been in my life since we met at that young people's meeting back in 1983. We grew up in AA together, learning how to live, supporting each other through life's ups and downs. Over the years, we've seen many come and go, but this group remains. We work hard at it. We call one another. We watch out for one another. We love one another.

I was told early on, when I was having difficulty in relationships, that I would get out of them what I put into them. I have found this to be true, and it is one of my largest rewards in AA today. I've had some challenges in the last six months, and it is my family and those core people who have always been there who have been there for me. Additionally, I have had many others from my AA community, both here in Massachusetts and across the country, who have provided me with incredible support and love. I cannot say enough about the people God has put in my life at this time. I am truly blessed.

As I look to the future of AA, I'm hopeful. As long as we stick to the principles that have made AA so powerful, it will continue to be there for those who need it. I don't have a crystal ball, but if I did, I'd hope to see AA still helping the sick and suffering alcoholic many years from now.

For me, recovery isn't just about not drinking—it's about learning how to truly live without a drink one day at a time. It's about serving others, building meaningful connections, and embracing a life I never could have imagined when I first walked into those meetings as a lost 16-year-old kid."



Meet the Districts!

Spring greetings from **Districts 15&16!** This is Jeff P. (he/him), and I had the opportunity to serve as our DCM in 2023-24. Like a few others in Area 30, we technically consist of two Districts but operate as one. District 15 includes Cambridge, Somerville, and my current hometown of Medford, while District 16 includes Malden, Everett, Chelsea, Melrose, and Stoneham. Roughly speaking we're "the cities directly north of Boston."

Our monthly District meeting has some unique traditions to support our collective growth in service. Each month, a volunteer prepares a share on either the Tradition or Concept of the month (speaker's choice), and another volunteer shares about something they learned from the Service Manual. In addition to hearing group reports from our GSRs, we have a practice of making space for people to pose questions or challenges their group is facing so that others may share how their groups have dealt with similar issues, from how to get group members more engaged in service to guidance on conducting a Group Inventory or Group Conscience. We fit a lot into a 75 minute meeting!

Our signature event is the 4th of July Alkathon, which we cohost with our neighbors from Districts 12&13 each year. Of late, we alternate between speaker meetings and speaker discussion meetings, and we always have plenty of groups eager to share their experience, strength and hope to make it happen. We have historically held the event at First Church Somerville UCC, but due to renovations at the church, we are in need of a new permanent home for the event. Emmanuel Church in Boston kindly accommodated us last year. On a personal note, after seeing relatively low turnout when we first returned to holding the event in-person, it's been a great pleasure seeing it really rebound and having a packed room for the length of the day last year. Other recent events we've hosted include the 2023 November Workshop Area Assembly, and a workshop entitled "Voices of A.A. Come Together: A Fall Workshop and Fellowship Gathering" with District 22.

Like so many others, we have our share of challenges. A bit over a decade ago we were dark, and I'm grateful to say that some enterprising folks in service revitalized us! However, we currently lack a DCM, and not all the cities within our District have representation. Given the large populations of our cities, we have 100+ groups in Districts 15&16, and in my experience we've typically had around ten active GSRs at a time. But I can say that those who participate are really engaged and care a lot about service and A.A. as a whole. As such, I have faith that one way or another we will continue to serve the members of A.A. we represent.

I wish you all a serene and sober season, and thanks to Karen and the Messenger for the opportunity to share about our District!

Big Book Trivia!!!

What is the baffling feature of alcoholism?

- a.) It affects people of all ages and nationalities.
- b.) This utter inability to leave it alone no matter how great the necessity or the wish.
- c.) We don't have a cure for it.

(See the answer on the last page.)



Poetry Corner

Dirt - A mother's path on her child's alcoholism.

What happens when the fear crashes down,
When the lake of tears contains no balm,
When the mouth of heart contains no sun.
The multitudes of misfortune's smiles cram only dirt into the holes.
Such is the pain of a mother's fear,
When the child shall not rise but for the days of breaks,
Landed into the realm of sleety, sharp,
Ever crawling through the impenetrable dirt of holes.
It makes no sense to listen to the dirge.
It is a soul wrapped in chains
Crooked notes sung well would not mitigate.
So she goes back to her source.
Float it away one breath hanging on one drop,
In the air the rings in the pond are the way.
By Karen M.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN AREA 30

Many Committee Meetings convene virtually. Please see the Area Calendar at aaemass.org or contact Committee Chairs to inquire about location, format, and possible time changes. All are welcome to attend.

General Service Area Committee – chair@aaemass.org

7:30pm – 4th Wednesday of the month *in even-numbered months*

Note: 3rd Wednesday in December, In-Person: IBEW Local 103, 256 Freeport St #1, Dorchester, MA 02122



Accessibilities Committee – accessibilities@aaemass.org

7:30pm - 3rd **Monday** of the month

Note: 2nd Monday in December

Some alcoholics experience barriers to participating in AA due to cultural, geographic, mental, physical, or social factors, or other reasons. This committee is working toward a future where all who want to participate in AA meetings (and other AA services) in Eastern Massachusetts are in fact able to fully participate.

Archives Committee – archives@aaemass.org

7:00pm – 3rd **Tuesday** of the month

The Archives Committee is charged with collecting, preserving and presenting materials of historical interest to Alcoholics Anonymous. We invite you to join us as we continue our efforts to discover and celebrate the history of AA in Eastern Massachusetts.

CPC Committee – cpc@aaemass.org

7:00pm – 2nd Thursday of the month

Members of C.P.C. committees inform professionals and future professionals about A.A. — what we are, where we are, what we can do, and what we cannot do. They attempt to establish better communication between A.A.s and professionals, and to find simple, effective ways of cooperating without affiliating.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN AREA 30 (cont.)

Joint Correctional Facilities Committee – corrections@aaemass.org

7:00pm – 4th Thursday of the month

Responsibilities include working with the correctional facilities in Area 30 to assist in bringing the AA message behind the walls. We currently offer a service helping inmates who are being released from prison connect with AA members in their communities called the Prerelease Contact Program. AA's who are interested in corresponding with an inmate by mail or being included on a 12-step call list to serve as contact points for those getting out of prison should contact Boston Central Service for particulars.

Grapevine Committee – grapevine@aaemass.org

7:00pm – 1st Wednesday of the month

One of the Grapevine Committee's primary goals is to let the people and their groups in Area 30 know all we can about our "meeting in print." Like our meetings, the monthly Grapevine magazine is as diverse as each of us. Its 64 pages, written by friends and members of AA, have become the voice of AA today. Through the Grapevine, members share their Experience, Strength, and Hope, always striving to carry the message of Recovery -Unity -Service to all who read it.

Literature Committee – literature@aaemass.org

7:00pm – 1st Monday of the month

In addition to our committee's purpose and goals listed on the CONTACTS page of this website, we use the time at our meeting to review current conference-approved and locally developed literature in order to be able to let the membership know what is available and to assure that the message is consistent with the principles of our Steps and Traditions. We answer inquiries requesting information on various topics and provide possible sources of information. Our goal is to inform the membership of the tools available for our own recovery as well as to carry the message to others.

Joint Public Information Committee – pi@aaemass.org

7:00pm – 1st Thursday of the month

Public Information (P.I.) in Alcoholics Anonymous means carrying the message of recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic by informing the general public about the A.A. program. We carry the message by getting in touch with the media, schools, industry, and other organizations which can report on the nature and purpose of A.A. and what it can do for alcoholics.

Joint Treatment Facilities Committee – treatment@aaemass.org

7:00pm – 3rd Friday of the month

The purpose of the committee is to coordinate the work of individual AA members and groups who are interested in carrying our message of recovery to alcoholics in treatment facilities, and to set up means of "Bridging the Gap" from the facility to the larger community. The JTFC provides information about AA as well as literature and guidelines for setting up AA meetings in treatment and outpatient facilities. Its objective to make sure all treatment facilities wanting AA meetings to participate is serviced.



Technology Committee – technology@aaemass.org

7:00pm – **1st Tuesday** of the month

This committee currently meets jointly with the Website Committee.

Website Committee – website@aaemass.org

7:00pm – **1st Tuesday** of the month

This committee maintains the Area 30 website per assembly action and develops recommendations on the future maintenance of the site. This committee currently meets jointly with the Technology Committee.

Joint Committees: In the spirit of cooperation, the Boston Central Service Committee and the Eastern Massachusetts General Service Committee (Area 30) work together on these committees whose purposes are to carry the message of experience, strength, and hope to those who may be interested in Alcoholics Anonymous.



AA Mass State Convention

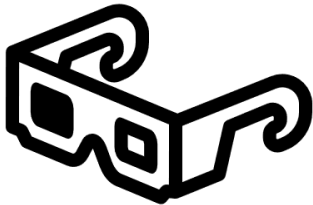
November 14–16, 2025

Next planning meeting will be on May 27th at [Royal Plaza 181 Boston Post Road W., Marlborough.](#)

<https://aamastateconvention.org/About.html>

MSC planning meetings are scheduled for January, March, May, July, September, and October, please join us!

ATTENDING TODAY'S ASSEMBLY ONLINE?



Area 30 strongly encourages service sponsorship, especially for those new to work within the General Service Structure. It is important that your service sponsor has some knowledge of how the General Service structure operates. It is important that your service sponsor knows about the position you are serving in. We would suggest that ***anyone willing to be a service sponsor please add a hashtag to the beginning of their name*** so people know who is available and who they can reach out to. Thanks!

SAFETY

It is our desire that all members feel safe here. Whether you are in a recovery meeting, service meeting or AA event, safety is very important to us. If you have any issues at all, please contact the CHAIR so the issue can be addressed. If you wish to learn more about the safety guidelines recommended by the General Service Office, please go to aa.org. Type in the word Safety in the search box and this will bring you to the service material they provide.



The Area 30 newsletter, *The Messenger*, is published five times a year. It is available at all Area Assemblies and through the service structure at the many, varied committee meetings, schedules for which are found in this edition and posted on aaemass.org. *The Messenger* contains news, stories, and special events going on in Eastern Massachusetts. Suggestions and submissions are welcome and may be emailed to messenger@aaemass.org. Please include your confidential contact information.

Big Book Trivia Answer: item b.) From Big Book page 151, paragraph 2, line 9

