

The North East Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly took place February 21st – 23rd in Warwick, Pennsylvania. The topic of the assembly was ‘Communicating Our Legacies – Vital in a Changing World.’ While I did attend many helpful and informative panels, my main reason for being there was to attend the Archives Roundtable. In addition, our traveling archives display was set up in a prominent location and was seen and studied by many.

The roundtable took place on both Friday and Saturday nights. Moderated by Bobbie, a former Delegate and current archivist for Area 31(Western Mass.), 15 people attended on Friday and 20 joined on Saturday. Archivists and Archives Committee Chairs from many of the Areas were present, as well as the NERAASA Archivist. All attendees were given a packet of GSO materials pertaining to archives.

On Friday, the attendees shared what archive work was currently being worked on in their area. Neal shared that Area 47 emphasizes policies for the acceptance and receipt of materials and that we are in the process of sorting and organizing several donated boxes of documents. Several Areas have Archives Committees that meet once a month outside of Area Assembly to work on the collection. By trusting members with sorting and scanning material, committees are able to accomplish more and keep up on the inevitable backlog.

Digitization of archival documents, as well as audio and video material, is being accomplished in some areas, but others are prohibited by the cost of the equipment. Digitizing records is the best method available for backing up collections, as well as protecting them against natural disasters. Area 47 (HMB) lost nearly their entire archives collection a few years ago due to flooding, some of which is irreplaceable. With digitization, while

materials may be lost, the information is saved. The night ended with all attendees being urged to attend the Ntl. AA Archives Workshop taking place in Philadelphia in October to learn more about this and other aspects of archival preservation.

On Saturday we discussed means of displaying some archives in order to drive interest. A narrative/timeline was suggested as a means of connecting members with archives and AA history. Area 47 has already accomplished these with our traveling display and the small red book 'A Short History of AA in Central New York'.

Digitization was again discussed and this is the direction that Area 47 needs to move into next. The GSO document *Digitizing Archival Material Guidelines* provides a roadmap for accomplishing this task. It was suggested that scanning starts with today and moves forward, filling in the past as you can. The evening ended with a spirited discussion of anonymity versus accessibility of material. Cleaning up documents to protect anonymity is a time consuming process and presents the largest hurdle for making material available on the Web. We were all reminded that anonymity continues to apply even after a member has passed away.

Being new to archival work, this experience provided the knowledge needed to move our Archives Committee forward, showing where our priorities need to lie and how to our collection for future members of AA.

Thanks for the opportunity to serve,

Lisa D, Archives Committee Chairperson