

Liza C. NERAASA Report-2024

This year, when I registered for NERAASA, I eagerly signed up to serve at the Assembly. To my surprise, I was asked to be a presenter. The mix of excitement, nerves, and exhilaration I felt at being given this opportunity was overwhelming. As a visually impaired woman, preparing for this role required a great deal of prayer, dedication, and assistance. I never learned Braille due to losing most of my vision later in life, so I rely on assistive technology to navigate the world around me. While this can be frustrating at times, I persevere and continue to learn what works best for me.

During the presentation, I encountered a technical difficulty when my voice recorder failed to play. Feeling stuck and unsure of how to proceed, a fellow panelist named Adam, who served as the technology coordinator for Area 60, came to my rescue. With his help, I was able to deliver my presentation. Despite the discomfort of knowing I only had 12 minutes to present, I found solace in the supportive community of AA that surrounded me. This experience reinforced my belief that with faith, determination, and the helping hands of others, anything is possible.

I traveled with 3 other Area 47 members. We arrived later than expected and I was thrilled to kick off the weekend by meeting the Accessibility Chair, who graciously offered to give me a tour of the main area for NERAASA's scheduled panel discussions. She was incredibly helpful in setting up sighted guide for my visual impairment. Throughout the weekend, I had the opportunity to meet three new people who kindly agreed to accompany me to round table discussions and the main conference room, where I would be presenting on Saturday afternoon.

Unfortunately, due to a delay in getting our hotel room, we were interrupted early in the 2nd panel "Is our literature still relevant today S12/T5/C4" Despite this setback, I still had a wonderful time fellowshiping with others at the event.

- The registration for the conference was recorded at 1315 attendees, making it the largest NERAASA conference to date. And, the Sweetest NERAASA in the Country; being held in Hershey Pennsylvania.
- the 2025 NERAASA will be virtual and hosted by NJ.

Round Tables: In anticipation of the upcoming elections, I made the decision to attend the Area Chair round table on Friday night. However, on Saturday night, after I was to sit through the speaker presentation I regrettably missed out on the valuable C.P.C. collaborations at the round table.

Area Chair Round Table:

- Debit verse Credit cards - One area uses credit card but most use debit cards
- Role of Past Delegates - Can be used as parliamentarians, facilitate GSR & DCM schools, conduct area inventories such as our own past delegate Barb C. who conducted Area 47's inventory in 2023.
- Committee chairs - if wearing 2 hats, i.e. GSR & committee chair, have only 1 vote.
- Roberts rules of order - Ask for business & motions in writing, helps the motion to be clear and concise; it is suggested to use a parliamentarian.
- How do we get new GSRs? - The more active our DCMs, the more GSRs. Have the GSRs do a job at area. Ask young people to help with tech committees.
- Time management - Set boundaries, stay active in your own recovery, i.e., Home Group, step etc. Stay in your lane and trust people to do their job. Most importantly keep a sense of humor.

Panels: All Panels begin with a passage selected from A.A. literature, read by the timer of the panel. There are 3 panelists and 2 minutes open mic for the floor discussion.

Panel #3 Money and Spirituality (S12 / T12 / C7).

- First speaker: Should financial resources and the capacity of trustees, directors be considered when making financial decisions (abbreviated) and How do we help the GSB and GSO prioritize among the many projects we have asked them to take on.
 - Constant interaction with delegates, DCMs and GSRs need to happen through participation at Area.
- Second speaker: The Power of the purse: How much financial info and transparency from the GSB do groups desire or require to exercise that power.
 - As much as possible, more not less
- Third Speaker: How does the principle of corporate poverty apply, when membership has plateaued yet the annual operating budget of the GSB increases each year?
 - Only 1/3 of all registered groups contribute. A number of years ago it was 56%
 - Consider moving GSO out of New York
 - Are you making Birthday contributions?

Panel #4 The words of our Founders (S12 / T2 / C2)

- Speaker 1: Revising our literature to remain relevant; The 12 and 12
 - Is what we're doing sufficient?
 - Changes to Steps, Traditions & Concepts - In order for this to occur, 75% of the 125,000 registered groups would need to provide written confirmation. Please refer to the warranties outlined in the concepts.
- Speaker 2: Retaining the original writing to preserve history: the 12 and 12
 - All translations would need updating (Costly).
 - Distraction of caring the message.
 - Any changes are a slippery slope that can lead to other changes
- Speaker 3: When changes to original texts are proposed, should there be a threshold for review? And how they may be formatted on the page.
 - Are our writings the most effective to the still suffering alcoholic? (members have dropped under 21 million)
 - In 1953 Bill stated that he was an umpire for our literature and that he and others should be considered AAs, not founders.
 - See pages 231&232 of *AA Comes of Age*
 - Already in existence : Use footnotes or add an appendix to further explain.
 - Maybe a 12 & 12 Plain Language "Such as what we're already doing with the Big Book"?
 - Change we must or die we will

Panel #5 Are we communicating effectively within AA? (S5/12, T2/11, C1)

Speaker 1: What is each member's personal responsibility to share information, ask questions, get involved.... (abbreviated)

-We do not dictate

-Invite and encourage others to service events (NERAASA, Area Assembly, etc.)

- Speaker 2: Discuss the Fellowship's need for transparency and accessibility of information from the bottom of the triangle
 - Communication flows both ways; the "Dashboard for Delegates," (referred to as "On Board" today) from GSO Board and Trustees provides an idea of how information may be given throughout the A.A. structure.
 - Is it time for an inventory in our Service Structure?
- Speaker 3: How might newer communication tools (e.g. YouTube, social media, pamphlets) help us not only to carry the message but to facilitate greater dialogue in the GSC structure?
 - Talked about how information might be given down the triangle "from groups to GSO" and then how it may be delivered up the triangle "from GSO to the members" Using newer tools.

Panel #6 Safety in AA, Belonging in AA (S12 / T1/3, C9)

- Speaker 1: How do we cultivate compassion, empathy, trust and respect to create a welcoming environment?
 - Allow everyone to participate and respect them.
 - Together we can; alone we'll perish.
- Speaker 2: How were the September 2021 changes to the Safety in AA: Our Common Welfare (SMF-209) service material politicized, and did attempts at inclusivity inadvertently lead to polarization within AA?
 - Service material does not need conference approval
 - I felt bad for the interpreter. I had a hard time keeping up (fast speaker).
 - Should service material go through the conference approval procedure?
- Speaker 3: Does a sense of belonging lead to the feeling of greater safety within AA?
 - Is everyone in your home group welcomed and made to feel safe?

One of the highlights of my weekend was when our Past Northeast Regional Trustee, Francis, playfully escorted Mary and me over to meet our newest Trustee, Ken T. We had a delightful conversation.

I am extremely grateful to Area 47 for granting me the privilege and opportunity to share this experience with hundreds of fellow members. Each time I attend such an energy-filled weekend, it ignites a fire within me and fills my heart with the motivation to continue serving. Therefore, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Area 47 for all of their support.

Gratefully,
Liza C.
CPC Chair A47 P73