

BC/Yukon Area 79 Remote Communities Workbook

Remote Communities Workbook

This workbook is service material, reflecting experience shared in
BC/Yukon Area 79. Workbooks are compiled from the practical
experience of the Remote Communities Committee and A.A. members.

2014



BC/Yukon Area 79

www.bcyukonaa.org

General Service Committee

PO Box 42114 • Vancouver, BC V5S 4R5 • Tel (604) 435-2181

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BC/Yukon Area 79 Remote Communities Committee

MISSION STATEMENT

To foster unity within the fellowship of Area 79 by creating an awareness of the needs of alcoholics in remote communities. This committee seeks to assist those who are unable to make it to regular face-to-face meetings on a consistent basis. Members may be faced with travel or geographic challenges or may face barriers such as language, cultural considerations and/or anything else that could separate a person who needs A.A. from our lifesaving program of recovery.

COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Remote Communities Committee Chair is an appointed position on the General Service Committee. For more information please visit www.bcyukonaa.org .

To contact the Remote Communities Committee Chair

Email: remotecomunities@bcyukonaa.org

Phone: 604-435-2181

Mail: PO Box 42114, Vancouver, BC, V5S 4R5.

Remote Communities District Committee Chair

Suggestions:

1. Prepare a **Contact List** of remote people and locations. This can be accomplished by asking those in your committee and in your district committee or by any means possible, who and where these people may be. They could be active or inactive members of A.A.
2. Prepare a **Quick Reference Guide** for A.A. services in your community, e.g. meeting lists of surrounding groups or all A.A. meetings in your district. This would also have the location (and possibly name and/or contact information) of those in remote communities. This list would also include the day, time and place of your district meetings, including a district contact list with people's names and contact information.
3. Suggest where the nearest **Literature Depot(s)** may be found.
4. The **Remote Communities Chairperson reports monthly to district** by contacting each remote member (or community) once a month to see how things are going. This is very encouraging for those living in a remote situation and provides for more unity within the whole district.
5. Consider using **Public Service Announcements** (PSAs) in local media, including newspapers, radio and television.
For more information on PSA's contact: BC/Yukon Area 79 Public Information Committee
Chair: publicinformation@bcyukonaa.org
Mailing address: PO Box 42114, Vancouver, BC V5S 4R5
Telephone: (604) 435-2181
Website: www.bcyukonaa.org
6. Information about **Online Meetings** can be found at www.aa-intergroup.org . There are some easily accessible meetings in languages other than English.
7. You may suggest the **Grapevine** magazine and other Grapevine publications, available at:

Website: www.aagrapevine.org

Mailing Addresses:

New York Office:

475 Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10115

Customer Service Grapevine

PO Box 16867
North Hollywood, CA 91615-6867

Customer Service La Viña:

PO Box 15635
North Hollywood, CA 91615-5635

Telephone Numbers

New York Office:

(212) 870-3018 Monday-Friday,
9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST

Telephone Orders - credit card only
Monday - Friday,
8:00 am - 8:00 pm EST

English: (800) 631-6025 US,
(818) 487-2091 International
Español: (800) 640-8781 EE.UU,
(818) 487-2092 Internacional
Français: (818) 487-2093 É.-U. et à
l'étranger

Fax Orders - credit card only
(818) 487-4550 (7 days/24 hours)

Questions concerning subscription
orders and related material orders

English: (800) 631-6025 US,
(818) 487-2091 International
Español: (800) 640-8781 EE.UU,
(818) 487-2092 Internacional
Français: (818) 487-2093 É.-U. et à
l'étranger

8. **Loners-Internationalists Meeting:** Supply contact information for access through the General Service Office:
Mailing address: Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
Telephone: (212) 870-3400
Fax: (212) 870-3003
Website: www.aa.org
9. Prepare a list of **Teleconference Meetings** for your area.
10. Supply a list of **Area 79 Remote Community Committee tools**, which include: **A.A. Speaker CDs, Temporary Sponsors, phone and/or email buddies.**
11. Supply the contact information and explanation of the **Remote Communities Connection Program.**
12. Organize **Roaming A.A. Meetings.** This is where a group of members travel to a remote community for a meeting. Experience suggests that this could be done every one to three months. There is usually no cost to the district as the travellers chip in to cover expenses.

These suggestions are meant as possible tools for districts considering the value of implementing such a committee. We would love to hear about any information you feel could be added here, or anything you may feel is lacking.

Considerations for People Living in a Remote Situation

1. You can contact Alcoholics Anonymous in **BC/Yukon Area 79** by:
Phone: (604) 435-2181
Email: remotecomunities@bcyukonaa.org
Website: www.bcyukonaa.org
Mail: c/o Remote Communities Committee Chair
BC/Yukon Area 79
P.O. Box 42114 Vancouver, BC V5S 4R5

2. At the above site, you will find information on the **Remote Communities Connection Program**. This is where you can have an A.A. meeting via telephone (and/or possibly Skype) with a sponsoring group at no cost to yourself.
3. Would you appreciate a **Temporary Sponsor (Mentor)** or a **phone** and/or **email buddy**?
4. We can supply you with some **A.A. Speaker CDs**.
5. There are some **Teleconference Meetings** listed on the BC/Yukon Area 79 website at www.bcyukonaa.org under the "Find a Meeting" tab. Click on Remote Communities.
6. The General Service Office website, www.aa.org, is a great resource for A.A. information. You can even read the Daily Reflection, which is a free daily download available in English, French and Spanish.
7. Information about **Online Meetings** can be found at www.aa-intergroup.org. There are some easily accessible meetings in languages other than English.
8. May we suggest the **Grapevine** magazine (our A.A. meeting in print) and Grapevine's other publications? You may contact Grapevine at:

Website: www.aagrapevine.org

Mailing Addresses:

New York Office:

475 Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10115

Customer Service Grapevine

PO Box 16867
North Hollywood, CA 91615-6867

Customer Service La Viña:

PO Box 15635
North Hollywood, CA 91615-5635

Telephone Numbers

New York Office:

(212) 870-3018 Monday-Friday,
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English: (800) 631-6025 US,
(818) 487-2091 International
Español: (800) 640-8781 EE.UU.,
(818) 487-2092 Internacional
Français: (818) 487-2093 É.-U. et à
l'étranger

Fax Orders - credit card only

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(818) 487-2092 Internacional
Français: (818) 487-2093 É.-U. et à
l'étranger

9. **Loners-Internationalists Meeting:** This service can be accessed through the General Service Office:

Mailing address: Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

Telephone: (212) 870-3400

Fax: (212) 870-3003

Website: www.aa.org

These considerations are meant as possible tools for someone living in a remote situation, whether short-term or long-term. We would love to hear any suggestions for information that you feel could be added here.

Remote Connection Program

This is an entirely different way of carrying the message to those who, because of their location or other challenges, are unable to make it to regular, face-to-face meetings.

A connection is made between the remote person/group and a person/group that is willing to become a host. The host might be considered a “sponsoring” person or group. Meetings should not be too large, so as to lessen any possible confusion on the other end about who is sharing. There are few requirements other than a suitable location and the communication device you plan on using at both ends. Some use telephones while others use computers, and some are using a combination of the two.

The groups are introduced to each other by telephone or email through the Remote Communities Committee chair. At that time, the participants decide the frequency, day and time of meetings, and the format they wish to follow. A commitment is made by both groups to be there to make or receive the connection. The sponsoring group may have a list of members who would like to participate in the meeting, thereby ensuring the remote members hear a variety of experience, strength and hope.

How can you help as an individual or as a group?

- Individual sponsorship by telephone, email or becoming a host.
- Your group can become involved with a remote connection and host a meeting.

Some considerations before signing up...

- People are counting on you. Participants have a responsibility to show up for the time they are committed to.
- Groups of five to seven have been found to work best.
- If you are a large group, consider forming a committee to take on this project and be willing to contact members to remind them of the group’s commitment to ensure you have a full complement of members at each meeting.
- Financial commitment: The sponsoring group should cover any charges, and perhaps purchase a speaker phone. It may also be necessary to supply the group you are sponsoring with a speaker phone.
- Be patient. The wheels of A.A. rotate very slowly. Be prepared to wait for your sister group. In most cases it will not happen instantly, but you will eventually get connected.
- Individual sponsorship: Other than the fact that you may never meet your

sponsee/sponsor face to face, this does not differ much from normal sponsorship. Almost all communication will be via telephone, email, etc.

Remote Connection Program – Tips for Three-Way Calling with Shaw and Telus

Some remote connections use three-way calling, also known as conference calling. To use the three-way calling feature:

1. Call the first party and inform them you will be placing them on hold and bringing in another party.
2. Press the link/flash button on your phone; if your phone does not have one, use the on-hook button (just like call waiting).
3. When you hear dial tone, dial the number of the person you are trying to reach.
4. When they answer, press the link/flash button (or on-hook) and you will now have the three persons in the conversation.

Like call-waiting, it is better to use the link/flash button for three-way calling if available. Also, if the second participant is unavailable, the customer needs to press the link/flash button twice to get back to the original party. When on a three-way call, call waiting will not work and all incoming calls will be routed to voicemail (or a busy signal if voicemail is not subscribed).

REMOTE CONNECTION SIGN-UP

Please fill out the form below if you are interested in participating in the Remote Connection Program, as either a Remote Participant or a Sponsoring Group, and return to the Remote Communities Committee chair or your DCM.

Group/Name	City/District/GSR	Email	Phone

If you have any questions or concerns, contact:

remotecommunities@bcyukonaa.org

Phone 604-435-2181

What a Member of

Teleconferencing has to say:

Hello, my name is...

I am a grateful recovering alcoholic and grateful recipient of the **Remote Connection Program** which is an outreach teleconferencing meeting.

Our "HORNBY ISLAND RECYCLED GROUP" has linked up with the remote outreach group since February 2011 and let me tell you – it has been a godsend – a real blessing. The Sponsoring group is a truly great bunch of people who come together each Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. to reach out with a meeting, even if it's just me on the other end of the line. Sometimes we link up with "Ahousat" on the west coast of Vancouver Island where they too have only two members.

The remote meetings have turned out to be some of the best meetings I have attended. The sharing is full of numinous insights and I often jot down notes to myself which carry me through the week as I re-read them. I always feel uplifted, revitalized, supported, encouraged and strengthened, and these meetings keep me on track as well as bringing me back to basics. At a time when our meeting is floundering, the remote outreach meetings help to keep the doors open for those who still suffer – for all this I am totally and truly grateful.

Sincerely, a friend of Bill W's in need and deed.

Services

- Teleconferencing Meetings
- A.A. Speaker Recordings
- Library of old Grapevines etc.
- Temporary Sponsors
- e-mail/telephone contacts


Contact Us

Email:
remotecomunities@bcyukonaa.org

Phone:
604-435-2181

Mail:
PO Box 42114
Vancouver, BC V5S 4R5

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.



Remote Communities

Anyone or any group significantly removed from support of other A.A. groups or services

BC/Yukon

Area 79

Aug/14

To foster unity within the fellowship of Area 79 by creating an awareness of the needs of alcoholics in remote communities. This committee seeks to assist those who are unable to make it to regular face-to-face meetings on a consistent basis. Members may be faced with travel or geographic challenges or may face barriers such as language, cultural considerations and/or anything else that could separate a person who needs A.A. from our lifesaving program of recovery.

Sign up to be a temporary sponsor; provide copies of A.A. speaker CDs; have your group sign up to sponsor a **Remote Connection Program** meeting or have your district consider having a **District Remote Communities Chair** position.

It is no more difficult than dialling a normal phone call or Skyping with a friend. All you need is two phones equipped with speakers/mikes. Cost and quality vary so check into what equipment suits your needs. Next is a cheap long distance plan and you are off.

A map of British Columbia, Canada, highlighting its coastline and inland regions. Major cities are labeled, including Vancouver, Victoria, Kelowna, Kamloops, Prince George, and Fort St. John. The map also shows significant water bodies like the Fraser River, Skeena River, and various lakes such as Okanagan Lake and Kootenay Lake. Mountain ranges like the Coast Range and Selkirk Mountains are indicated. The map serves as a geographical reference for the locations mentioned in the text.

Sign up to be involved in Teleconferencing. See more testimonials from members using this service at: bcyukonaa.org

The BC/Yukon Delegate Area 79 includes the Yukon Territory, most of British Columbia and one small section of Washington. At 1,431,250 km² (552609 sq mi.), it is the second largest Delegate Area in Canada/USA. Area 79 includes districts that are of equal size to the states of Mississippi and Maryland combined, not to mention districts that are as big as the third-largest state in the US, smaller only than Texas and Alaska. From the southernmost tip of British Columbia to the northernmost tip of the Yukon Territory is a staggering 2,540km/1,587 mi.

A trip from Vancouver to Prince Rupert is just under 1/4 the length of Area 79 geographically (789km/493 mi.). However, actual road travel comes in at twice this length due to navigating around vast mountain ranges, rivers and lakes. This extends the trip to approximately 20 hours and 1,516km/947 mi., the equivalent of Vancouver to San Francisco. BC/ Yukon has many districts and groups that are only serviceable by ferry, small plane, boat or even snowmobile.

Prince George is almost the geographical centre of BC and for this reason is often referred to as the "Hub City". Almost all roads to the central and northern parts of the province, as well as the Yukon, pass through Prince George.

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

GENERAL IDEAS

1. The Twelve Steps

Some groups discuss one Step a week. If there is a newcomer attending for the first time, the group may change the topic to focus on the first three Steps.

2. The Twelve Traditions

Following the conclusion of the Step meetings, some groups will discuss the Traditions so that, every thirteenth meeting the group focuses on a Tradition.

3. The Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous

Some groups discuss one chapter from the Big Book each week. Other groups read from the Big Book weekly and discuss each chapter as they go along.

4. Readings from ***As Bill Sees It*** can inspire sharing on discussion topics.

5. ***Living Sober*** also has many topics used by groups.

6. Some A.A. slogans can be used as topics—such as **“Live and Let Live,” “Easy Does It,” “First Things First,”** and **“H.A.L.T.”** (Don’t get too Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired).

SOME SPECIFIC TOPICS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Acceptance | 11. Hope |
| 2. Attitude of gratitude | 12. Humility |
| 3. Belief in a Higher Power | 13. Identification |
| 4. Complacency | 14. Inadequacy |
| 5. Contempt prior to investigation | 15. Inventory |
| 6. Dependence | 16. Letting go of anger |
| 7. Fear | 17. Let’s be friendly with our friends |
| 8. Forgiveness | 18. Living one day at a time |
| 9. Freedom through sobriety | 19. Making amends |
| 10. Group inventory | 20. Meditation |

21. Open-mindedness
22. Participation and action
23. Patience and tolerance
24. Personal spiritual experience and spiritual awakening
25. Plan the action — not the result
26. Practice these principles in all our affairs
27. Principles before personalities
28. Projection — living in the wreckage of the future
29. Resentments
30. Responsibility declaration
31. Rigorous honesty
32. Serenity
33. Service
34. Sponsorship
35. Staying away from the first drink
36. Surrender
37. Three Legacies — Recovery, Unity and Service
38. Twelfth Stepping
39. Twelve Concepts
40. Understanding Anonymity
41. Ways of carrying the A.A. message
42. What is sobriety
43. Willingness
44. Working with others

Other topics may be found in the A.A. Grapevine monthly section on “Discussion Topics.”

General Service Office
P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163
Web Site: www.aa.org
Revised 8/15/11

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LONERS-INTERNATIONALISTS CORRESPONDENCE SERVICE

The *Loners-Internationalists Meeting (LIM)* is a confidential bimonthly bulletin sent to Loners, Homers, Internationalists, and to Loner Sponsors and Port Contacts. The bulletin contains excerpts from *LIM* members' letters, and includes full names and addresses. *LIM* is distributed only to the members mentioned above who appreciate the need for confidentiality of personal sharing through correspondence.

A G.S.O. staff member coordinates the Loners, Homers & Internationalists correspondence service, which is open to A.A. members in one of the categories listed below.

To participate, an A.A. member needs to: 1) read and write English; 2) provide a permanent mailing address; and, 3) be willing to share experience, strength and hope via correspondence. Most *LIM* members communicate via regular mail, although a few utilize e-mail.

Loner: An A.A. member who is unable to attend meetings regularly because there is no A.A. meeting in the vicinity where he or she lives.

Homer: An A.A. member who is unable to attend A.A. meetings because of physical incapacity.

Internationalist: An A.A. member working on a seagoing vessel for long periods.

Port Contact: An A.A. member willing to serve as a contact for Internationalists when in port.

Loner Sponsor: An A.A. member, active in local A.A. meetings, who shares his or her experiences and group activity with Loners, Homers, and Internationalists through correspondence. (A Loner Sponsor is not a "Loner" or a "sponsor" in the traditional A.A. sense.)

Loners, Homers, and Internationalists receive bimonthly copies of the confidential bulletin *Loners-Internationalists Meeting (LIM)* and Box 4-5-9, a newsletter published by G.S.O. *The Loners-Internationalists & Homers Directory* is printed annually and lists active LIM members. Interested A.A. members who fit a LIM category may contact the Loners Assignment, c/o General Service Office, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163, or e-mail: lim@aa.org

Overview of *LIM* History

The first *LIM* bulletin, printed in 1949 as *The Internationalists Round Robin*, was a few pages of excerpts from letters received at G.S.O. and mailed to a small band of Internationalists determined to stay sober no matter how isolated they were.

By 1963, the bulletin consisted of 5 or 6 one-sided pages, mimeographed on blue paper. In 1976, an A.A. *Loners* meeting merged with the original *Internationalists* meeting. Since the March-April 1980 issue, *LIM* has been printed on the familiar yellow pages.

LIM began through the efforts of Captain Jack S., a sailor who found sobriety in A.A. and understood that to maintain sobriety he needed to reach out to other members through correspondence.

Initially, Captain Jack was looking for A.A. contacts in port cities when he wrote a letter to G.S.O. dated March 28, 1946. Captain Jack requested information on A.A. contacts because he was “. . . still at sea on oil tankers, on which I have served for ten years. I have few contacts ashore with A.A., and have to rely on the Book and the guy upstairs.” A G.S.O. staff member provided Captain Jack with the names of A.A. contacts in port cities, and encouraged him to write to other seagoing members, which he did.

After the publication of a three-part article, “A ‘Loner’ at Sea,” by Captain Jack in the October, November, and December 1948 issues of the A.A. Grapevine, plans began to take shape to start an Internationalists meeting-by-mail. Letters responding to that Grapevine article prompted another G.S.O. staff member to suggest to Captain Jack that he consider starting a “Round Robin Meeting” via letters. Captain Jack responded positively and suggested the name be “The Far East Internationalist Group.” He said that name “. . . would leave it open to lone members stationed ashore in the Far East and also to men who sail these waters under flags of different nations.”

Captain Jack died in December 1988 at age 91, a few months after celebrating his 42nd A.A. anniversary. He had remained active in the Fellowship, seeking newcomers in Portland, Maine, where he had retired, while continuing to answer the many letters he received.

Some of A.A.’s phenomenal worldwide growth is attributed in part to Captain Jack and hundreds of Internationalists like him who, sailing the seven seas, carried the message wherever they dropped anchor.

Online A.A Meetings

www.aa-intergroup.org



Online
Intergroup
Alcoholics Anonymous®
www.aa-intergroup.org



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Get Help Now for a Drinking Problem

AA members worldwide are available now to help by email. Fast, confidential responses. [Go](#)

Link your AA group or office to our 12th Step Help Committee. [Go](#)

Browse the Online Meeting Directories

Email, chat, audio, and forums meetings in a variety of languages are in progress. [Go](#)

About AA online and how to get started. [Go](#)

Conferences, Conventions, Roundups

Calendar of local, regional, national, and international AA events ... find one or submit yours. [Go](#)

About Alcoholics Anonymous

Learn about AA or locate a meeting near you. [Go](#)

Ask a question. [Go](#)

Inquiries from professionals who work with alcoholics welcome. [Go](#)



AA GRAPEVINE
The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous



AA Literature
Read it online
at AA World Services
[Go](#)

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Items Available in Native American/First Nations Languages

Algonquin (Quebec)

(Translation)

- How It Works
- Serenity Prayer
- Slogans
- Twelve Steps
- Twelve Traditions

American Indian (Inactive)

(Translation)

- Twelve Steps

Cree (Translation)

- Serenity Prayer

Dene (Audio)

- Diane's Story

Hawaiian (Translation)

- Serenity Prayer

Inuit (Greenland) (Translation)

- Promises
- Serenity Prayer
- Twelve Steps
- Twelve Traditions

Inuit (Audio)

- Member's Story
- Serenity Prayer
- Twelve Steps

Inuktitut (Northern Quebec)

(Translation)

- A.A. At A Glance
- A Newcomer Asks
- How It Works
- Is A.A. For You?
- Message to Teenagers
- Preamble
- Public Information Poster
- Slogans
- Twelve Promises

- Twelve Steps

- Twelve Steps Illustrated

- Twelve Traditions

- Where Do I Go From Here?

Inuktitut (Labrador)

(Translation)

- Lord's Prayer
- Meeting Procedures
- Preamble
- Twelve Steps
- Twelve Traditions

Inuktitut (Labrador) (Audio)

- Member's Story (14 min. Inuktitut/14 min. English)
- Sharing session from St. Jerome, a correctional facility in Eastern Canada (20 min. Inuktitut/20 min. English)
- Twelve Steps
- Twelve Traditions

Micmac (Translation)

- How it Works
- Lord's Prayer
- Preamble
- Serenity Prayer
- Twelve Steps
- Twelve Traditions

Micmac (Audio)

- Helen's Story
- Serenity Prayer

Mohawk Dialect (Translation)

(Native Indian)

- Serenity Prayer

- Twelve Steps

Montagnais-Naskapi

(Translation)

- Preamble
- Serenity Prayer
- Twelve Steps
- Twelve Traditions

Navajo (Translation)

- Preamble
- Serenity Prayer
- Twelve Steps
- Twelve Traditions

North Slavey (Audio)

- How it Works
- Mary's Story (English)
- Twelve Traditions

Oji-Cree (Translation)

- Preamble
- Serenity Prayer
- Twelve Steps
- Twelve Traditions

Ojibway (Translation)

- Lord's Prayer

Ojibway (Audio)

- Betty T.'s Story
- Peter W.'s Story
- Big Book – 1st 164 pages (DVD)
- Twelve Steps (DVD)

Yupik (Translation)

- Preamble
- Serenity Prayer
- Twelve Steps
- Twelve Traditions

(revised – 9/07)

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About Area 79

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The members of Alcoholics Anonymous are represented in this area by over 700 groups in 48 districts. The groups in each district elect a District Committee Member (DCM) to be their representative on the Area Committee. The General Service Committee (GSC) has 14 members, who also sit on the Area Committee, and who serve as area officers. In addition, there are twelve standing committees, each chaired by a member of the GSC, that report to the Area Committee.

The BC/Yukon Area Committee meets four times annually, at quarterlies and assemblies. A schedule of area meetings is posted under the Events/Quarterlies and Assemblies tab and elsewhere on the website, along with a detailed meeting information and agenda package for the upcoming meeting.

The Area 79 Committee

Perhaps more than any other group of people in A.A., the Area Committee is responsible for the health of the conference structure and thus for growth and harmony in the A.A. fellowship. If GSR's are lax, if there is a lack of harmony in a district, if there are difficulties in public information or some other service area, the committee member knows it and can turn to the full committee for help.

An active Area Committee deals with all kinds of service problems: Is experience being shared among groups? Is the A.A. message getting into hospitals, prisons, jails, and rehabilitation centres? Are news media and professionals who deal with suffering alcoholics well informed about A.A.? Are new groups and loners being visited and helped? (Chapter 5 of the Service Manual)

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION:

The Area 79 Committee is made up of the 48 **District Committee Members** (DCMs) in the Area, or their alternates, plus the 14 members of the **General Service Committee** (GSC). All members of the Area Committee are eligible to vote at area meetings (quarterlies and assemblies).

The General Service Committee (GSC)

The GSC reports to, and takes direction from, the full Area 79 Committee. It has 14 members, consisting of seven elected area officers and seven appointed officers, who sit as chairs of designated area standing committees. GSC members serve two-year terms in keeping with the Conference Panel rotation.

Elected Members: Seven **area officers** are elected, in even numbered years, at the October meeting of the full Area Committee (the Election Assembly). They are:

Delegate

Alternate Delegate

Chairperson

Alternate Chairperson

Treasurer

Secretary

Registrar

Further information about each of these positions, contact information and a job description are provided on their individual web pages, in the **Elected Area Officers** section of the website.

Appointed Members: Seven area officers are appointed and serve the same rotation as the elected positions.

Standing Committees: Area 79 has ten standing committees, which are chaired by appointed GSC members except as noted.

Archives

Cooperation with the Professional

Community

Corrections

Finance (chaired by Treasurer)

Grapevine (chaired by Alternate Chair)

Literature (chaired by Alternate Delegate)

Public Information

Remote Communities

Treatment/Special Needs/Accessibilities

Website/Grassroots

Panel 61 Remote Communities Ad Hoc Committee Final Report

This committee was struck in 2011 for the purposes of:

- Examining the scope and purpose of the Remote Communities Committee (“RCC”)
- Identifying unmet service needs and any duplications of services available in Area 79
- Review progress of work with Remote Communities since this subject was last examined in the 2003 Remote Communities Ad Hoc Committee and consider any outstanding recommendations made at that time

History:

-In 2003 there was a Remote Communities survey by an ad hoc committee. Information was sought (through Districts that were identified as having remote communities) to identify the travel and geographical challenges facing members in our remote areas and suggesting some possible solutions.

-It was the work of this ad hoc committee that led to the formation of our current Remote Communities Committee, the maps of District Boundaries, the DCM fact sheet and the development of a DCM travel subsidy.

-Another suggestion from that ad hoc committee’s final report was that we consider other potential aspects of “remote” in the future. These could include barriers such as languages, cultural considerations, and/or anything else that could separate someone who needs AA from our lifesaving program of recovery.

-A new “Remote Communities ad hoc committee” was formed in 2011 to revisit the challenges of our vast geography in Area 79 and open the dialogue about any other barriers that could be identified.

-Area 79 conducted an Inventory at the July Quarterly in 2010. At that time it was identified that there were still many who felt uninformed about what it means to be a part of Area 79 and what services are available through your General Service Committee.

Information reviewed by the Remote Communities Ad Hoc Committee:

- 2003 Remote Communities Ad Hoc Committee Final Report
- Panel 57, Panel 59, and Panel 61 General Service Committee (“GSC”) Inventories
- Panel 59 area-wide inventory
- Remote Communities Committee “Report-backs” and materials
- Reports and materials from current and past Remote Communities Chairs
- Presentations by other GSC members on the subject of “remote”
- “Inter-Area Remote Communities Work Group” information
- “Remote Communicators”, notes from the meeting held annually in New York prior to the General Service Conference
- Panel 57 “Cross Committee Initiative” report
- Current and historic District participation at Area 79 Quarterlies and Assemblies
- Job Descriptions for all General Service Committee positions

Note: the majority of these documents are available on the Trusted Servant section of the BC/Yukon Area 79 website, at www.bcyukonaa.org or by request through the General Service Committee.

Methods used by the Remote Communities Ad Hoc Committee to gather new information:

- 1) An 18 question survey was distributed to all known Groups in Area 79 (with the distribution of the agenda package for the 2011 October Voting Assembly in 100 Mile House B.C.). Known lone members in Remote Communities were provided with copies and/or contacted by the Remote Communities Chair. Past Delegates were contacted and asked to complete the survey. Hard copies were also provided to members in attendance at the 2011 October Voting Assembly. Over 60 surveys were completed, several of which were in the form of a single survey representing the feedback from a Group or a District.
- 2) A Sharing Session on the topic of “Remote Communities” was conducted at the 2012 January Quarterly held in Chilliwack, BC.
- 3) A “Group Mapping” project was undertaken with the intent of creating a visual representation of where there are currently Groups and/or known members in BC/Yukon Area 79, to assist with determining where our future efforts to reach out to members in Remote Communities may be best directed.
- 4) Information was collected regarding the recent sales of AA literature in languages other than English in BC/Yukon Area 79.

The issues identified can be broken down into two main areas; “A: Remote” and “B: Area/General”.

A: Remote:

“Remote” was defined variously as geography, distance, road conditions/weather, ferry travel, travel time, travel expenses, and issues of language and culture. Some feedback also included social issues such as poverty, and illiteracy as “remote”. There was also mention of those with medical conditions or disabilities that have resulted in them being unable to attend meetings.

Based on the feedback from the fellowship, and research conducted, the largest “Remote” challenges we face in Area 79 continue to be geographical and travel related. Matters of remoteness due to language and culture are of increasing concern, and could be addressed through the remote Communities Committee. Other issues such as illiteracy and members who are home bound due to illness may be best addressed by the Special Needs/Accessibilities Committee.

- There is a need to establish more effective ways to connect people who are returning to remote communities from treatment facilities and correctional facilities to AA.
- Some expressed a need for greater clarity regarding the scope and purpose of the Remote Communities Committee, feeling that a definition of remote is needed. It was suggested that all aspects included in that definition need to be assigned to a specific committee (not necessarily all to the Remote Communities Committee). Specifically as it relates to members with special needs, as the Special Needs/Accessibilities Committee did not exist at the time the Remote Communities Committee was formed.
- Some small groups and lone members have limited resources of time and finances. This is evident when 12th Step calls and/or service work require travel and participation.
- There is a need to more effectively connect remote persons or groups with ongoing “sponsorship”.

- There is a desire for more information on teleconferencing, videoconferencing and new technologies and how to utilize these to carry the message.
- There continues to be a large concern for some alcoholics living in small communities that they will be identified as AA members. These anonymity concerns can cause people to be reluctant to start groups and/or attend AA meetings.
- Concerns continue to be expressed regarding real and/or perceived prejudice, racism, and exclusion due to cultural and/or religious differences.
- Some members of cultural groups report stigma associated with Alcoholism within their communities as a barrier to seeking help from AA.
- “Far” does not necessarily equal “remote”. Locations that may be considered remote by some do not identify themselves as remote. These are towns and cities with sufficient resources and amenities to support their AA activities, but that may be far away from the majority of the AA population in the south of BC. This was reported by 2 locations in the north. There are other locations, one only 170km from Vancouver, that are remote from the majority of the AA population due to issues of road access and geographical barriers, as well as matters of culture and language.
- There is an opportunity to provide different services to meet each of these needs:
 - sober AA members living in remote locations
 - AA Groups and Districts that face substantial travel and geography challenges
 - the still suffering alcoholic in a community with little or no AA activity
 - members or potential members with cultural and/or languages barriers
- At the time of the 2003 Remote Communities Ad Hoc Committee several districts were identified where participation in Area 79 has been limited due to travel. In most cases this has improved. However, District 51 (Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte Islands) continues to be in communication with Area 79 but has not been in attendance at Quarterlies or Assemblies.

Language Data:

Although it is difficult to identify possible unmet needs of cultural and/or linguistic groups, the following information is a good starting point.

2006 Census of BC (most common languages spoken in descending order)	2006 Census of Yukon (most common languages spoken in descending order)	Big Book sales in BC/Yukon (most common languages in descending order)
English	English	English
Chinese languages	French	Spanish
Punjabi	German	Punjabi
German	Chinese	French
French	Tagalog (Filipino)	Farsi (Persian)
Tagalog (Filipino)	Dutch	Chinese
Korean	Spanish	Korean
Spanish	Vietnamese	Vietnamese
Persian	Hungarian	Arabic
Italian	Punjabi	German
Dutch	Gwich'in	Italian
Vietnamese	Tlingit	Russian
Hindi	Yakuts (Sakha)	Japanese

Known meetings in languages other than English in BC/Yukon	
Spanish	
Punjabi	
Russian	
Polish	
French	

Composition of AA Membership (in Canada and the US) as per the 2007 Membership Survey:

White	85.1	Native American	1.6
Black	5.7	Asian and Other	2.8
Hispanic	4.8		

It is evident that there are many who are reaching out for help through literature available in their languages, but these alcoholics do not seem to be represented in our meetings. It is also apparent that the composition of AA Membership does not reflect the diversity of our communities.

B: Area/General:

- There is a continued need for improved communications throughout the service structure.
- More emphasis on active participation in Home Groups and Sponsorship.
- Some of the Fellowship is not informed that members of the BC/Yukon Area 79 GSC are available for Workshops and events at the local level. There is also some confusion regarding self support and who is responsible for expenses when Area is invited.
- There is a lack of awareness regarding services available from Area 79 and how to access these services.
- Many members reported a lack of information regarding current AA activities in the District, Area and worldwide.
- Much of the Fellowship is not informed of Box 459 and/or Grassroots.
- The development of a list of Area wide literature sources (Central Offices, Literature Depots, District Literature resources) may be useful in response to comments that some members don't know how and where to get AA literature.
- Attraction vs. promotion. How we "attract" members into service continues to be a matter of great concern.
- There are varying degrees of access to and comfort with computers while an increasing amount of Area 79 information is made available online. Some expressed concern about access to this information and the costs to members to print material, especially Grassroots.
- Some Groups feel they do not need District/Area; they can handle things themselves
- Some Groups do not encourage "outsiders" to participate, even within the same District
- There were several comments regarding "disunity", "personality issues", and "rotation issues".
- Barriers of homelessness, poverty, or being transient can make getting sober, staying sober, and getting involved in service difficult.

Areas of Service Duplication Identified:

Services/Needs	Committees
reaching out to “homers”, and those with physical and/or mental disabilities	Special Needs/Accessibilities ; Remote Communities; “LIM” Program by GSO
Communication with treatment facility staff, coordinating Bridging The Gap contacts	Treatment/BTG ; Remote Communities
Communication with correctional facility staff, coordinating pre-release contacts	Corrections; Remote Communities
Communications with professionals who are located in remote locations, professionals in urban settings who provide services to people in remote communities, work with professionals who deal with specific cultural or linguistic groups	Cooperation with the Professional Community; Remote Communities
Communications with the public who are located in remote locations and/or the public who are part of specific cultural or linguistic groups	Public Information; Remote Communities

Follow-Up on recommendations from 2003 Remote Communities Ad Hoc Committee report:

Nearly all of the recommendations made by the 2003 Remote Communities Ad Hoc Committee have been implemented. Examples include the formation of a standing committee on Remote Communities, the development of the DCM Travel Subsidy, the creation of the DCM Fact Sheet, the District Boundaries project. Other changes that were recommended were also implemented in the time since this report. Examples of that include emailing of agendas, Grassroots on website, and efforts to distribute background materials in a more timely fashion.

Here are the 2003 recommendations that either were not implemented or have since lapsed:

Recommendation: The job description of the current Delegate include the retrieval and distribution of the Remote Communicator to all DCMs beginning in 2004

Status: This is not currently included in the Delegate’s job description.

Recommendation: A travel message board be considered for the BC/Yukon Area web page.

Status: A survey of the Fellowship was conducted during the Panel 59 term regarding what the Fellowship would like to see for site redevelopment. There was not a stated need for this feature at that time, so the recent site development did not include this.

Recommendation: The General Service Committee explore the idea of a 1-800 number and report back to the fellowship.

Status: This was completed in Panel 55 term. The outcome at that time was not to pursue a 1-800 number.

Recommendation: The General Service Committee develop a remote communities guideline.

Status: A pamphlet was developed. There is not currently a document that is titled as a "guideline".

Recommendation: The scope of remote studies be enlarged to include cultural and language barriers.

Status: Information regarding language has been included in this report, and the 2011 remote communities survey included questions regarding all types of barriers.

New Recommendations:

A: REMOTE:

- The Remote Communities Chair should make every effort to communicate with the other members of the GSC to ensure needs are met and services are not duplicated. Primarily PI, CPC, Corrections, Treatment/Special Needs/Accessibilities.
- All members of the Area 79 GSC ensure communication with the Remote Communities Chair when their activities involve those who are "remote".
- Rework Remote Communities Chair job description, based on current activities.
- Work with District Remote Communities Chairs and/or DCMs, to assist and support communication with remote members.
- Develop tools and resources to support the efforts of members and groups to carry the message to those who may be remote, possibly a Area 79 Kit and/or Workbook modeled after the resources available from GSO for other committees.
- Gather information from and share information with other Areas regarding remote communities.
- Ensure information regarding Remote Communities is available to the Area via the Area 79 website. This may include Remote Communicators from the meeting before the Conference, minutes from the Inter-Area Remote Communities Work Group, presentations from WRAASAs and other service events.
- Collect information on meetings in languages other than English and add it to the Area 79 find a meeting list, make it searchable if possible.
- Listings of teleconference & online meetings for remote communities (by phone, video, SKYPE, etc.)
- Travelling groups- promote/encourage districts who have "remote communities" to start up travelling meetings.
- Learn from International AA efforts to determine if there are any tools or experiences that we could utilize for work with Remote Communities.
- Explore any new ways to stimulate participation from District 51, and continue make every effort to find out how the Fellowship in this remote District would like Area 79 to be of service.

B: AREA/GENERAL:

- Consider an Area service piece modeled after the "Services Available by GSO"
- Develop a list of literature depots and central offices in Area 79
- Ensure ALL Districts are invited to request workshops and/or service participation from Area 79.
- Consider a one day event styled after a Regional Forum but based on Area 79 information and

services to be made available to Districts upon request, possibly on a trial basis.

- Review DCM travel subsidy. Could it be made available for all 4 Quarterlies and Assemblies?
- In response to comments from the fellowship in the survey feedback and during the sharing session, consider having a discussion regarding if there is a way to make limited travel subsidies to GSRs available.

R. C. Report on the Yukon Tour 2011

By: Clifford T. Panel 61 Remote Communities Chair

I arrived in Whitehorse on Sunday the 5th of June at 2:00 pm and was met at the Airport by Bud and Laurie. This was to be one of my homes away from home for the next two weeks. That night Bud barbecued up some Elk steak along with some Caribou sausage for supper. It was an excellent meal and I was made to feel very much at home.

This CPC (Cooperation with the Professional Community) Tour was organized by Lawrie C. who is the CPC Chair for District 52 and was the impetus behind the Yukon Videoconferencing meeting which is available every Friday at 1:30pm at all of the 14 Yukon Nursing Stations. I would like to take a moment and recognize Lawrie's hard work without which this tour (and the need for it) would have never happened. She knew who the right people were in each town and village to assist us in acquiring such a large interest of professional people. Together, Lawrie and I made 7 CPC Presentations along with Ken B. at the Videoconference meeting and with Tom A. at the Carcross presentation.

Lawrie and I along with Ken B. the P.I. Chair, began on Monday, at 1:00pm on the Whitehorse Hospital grounds, where we held a Videoconferencing meeting with 5 Nursing Stations. Our presentations ended with the 20 minute DVD *Hope* which was an excellent way to finish.

The Communities present for this were Carcross (1), Destruction Bay (1), Mayo (1), Ross River (1) and Watson Lake (2). The head nurse from Ross River was very keen on using our "*Bridging the Gap*" program for her clients. She was so eager that she wanted to have clients introduced to their *Temporary Sponsor* (so to speak), before they even left for the Treatment Center. This may be an idea worth considering for utilizing *Bridging the Gap* in Remote Communities?

We left Whitehorse at 4:00 pm, that Monday because we needed to be in Dawson City at 1:00pm Tuesday and it is a 6 hour drive. We ran out of fuel 3 km before the turnoff to the Dempster Highway at 11:15 pm and were not able to get fuel till the next morning. We were about 45 km from Dawson City and arrived in Dawson by 9:30 am on Tuesday.

In our Tour, we had two types of meetings. They were *Inter Agency Meetings*, which were held in: Dawson City (6), Mayo (9), Pelly Crossing (7) and Haines Junction (6). We attended 2 *First Nations Meetings* with Carcross (3) and Teslin (6). The brackets denote the number of people attending the presentation.

I also spoke with the Nursing Staff in Dawson City (4) and in Faro (2).

Those from other Agencies included: Nursing Station Staff, a Daycare Manager, College Instructors, R.C.M.P., a Principal, a Recreation Coordinator, Yukon Ambulance Services, a Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Support Group, Social Workers, a Seniors Lodge Nurse, a Women's Shelter Manager, a By-Law Officer, a Yukon Housing Corporation Manager. In Haines Junction we even had a Loners International Member (L.I.M.) attend our presentation. He has over 23 years of sobriety and is a very vibrant individual. We were glad to have him there.

The *Inter Agency meetings* would also include First Nations representation. The First Nations have had their land claims settled for some time and have taken responsibility for the Social welfare of their people. They included: Intake workers, Admin. Assistants, Home and Community Care Workers, Program Coordinators, Health Manager, Wellness Counsellor, Elders Program Coordinator, Case Managers, Community Health Coach.

In A. A. we have a twice yearly professional periodical that is called *About A. A.* that is sent out to interested professionals and I was able to acquire 19 such subscriptions throughout the tour.

Some of the notable highlights from this tour were, in Dawson, the Social Worker who was also responsible for juveniles that were in trouble at the judicial level for both Dawson and Old Crow, was concerned that if she were to send any of her younger people to A.A. that they would be tainted by a harsher experience of alcoholism from A.A. members. I assured her that the young people were generally, quite experienced in the world of addictions.

When dropping off Yukon Meeting schedules at the Dawson Nursing Station, I was invited to an impromptu CPC presentation that lasted about 15 minutes. The head nurse mentioned that she had just sent someone to Whitehorse for treatment and it would have been helpful to have A.A. involved. The next morning, I was able to drop off some of our A.A. literature.

It is important to note that by speaking to these people in person, we were able to make a real connection, with the possibility of having them consider our services, the next time an opportunity arose.

While in Dawson I spoke with the cashier in one of the stores and found out that she was a teacher and was working in the store because school was out for the season. I was able to offer her my card and let her know about the possibility of a P.I. presentation in her school in the next term. That afternoon, Lawrie and I, along with three of the local A.A. members had supper at the Midnight Sun Café which had great Chinese food. One of the local A.A.'s said that they could take care of this when the need arises and had a younger A.A. member in mind to take with him. In Mayo, the local College Instructor said that in the 22 years living in this community, this was the first time he had heard of A.A. The NND (Na-Cho Nyak Dun First Nations) Manager of Social Services in Mayo said that she had some young people staying sober that did not want to break their anonymity in this town. I suggested to her that we could offer her an RC Connections Program and also the L. I. M. (Loners International) Program from GSO. It is noted that there is

an A.A. member in Mayo who has been basically a lone member for the past 13 years and has just cancelled his Wednesday A.A. meeting due to a lack of interest.

When we travelled to our next village, I was in the local Interpretive Center and let the two workers know that I was there for an Inter-Agency meeting. Upon hearing this, and with no one else in the store, the lady behind the till said that her husband has been sober for 2 years and is always angry and she can't stand it. She was wondering if her husband was on a dry drunk. I said that this was probably the case. This village did not have a regular meeting except for the possibility of the Friday *Yukon Unity Group* at 1:30 pm.

The other young lady had been to treatment in the last year with her husband and had been dry for 6 months and said that she could use some assistance. I gave them both my card and I was able to offer the younger lady a *R.C. Connection Program* meeting along with setting her up with a *Temporary Sponsor* in Whitehorse where she was going to be going to, finish off a College Course.

In the first week Lawrie and I were able to attend District 52's District meeting. I was to meet two young fellows who are the mainstays behind the Whitehorse *Happy Destiny Young Peoples Group*. I was able to offer them some excellent Young person's stories from BCYPAA2 – WACYPAA10 and the North Shore Rally from my iPod. I was able to leave behind copies of A.A. Speaker CD's throughout my Tour. Mostly, they were the stories of two excellent speakers.

I witnessed the energy of everyday A.A. Members doing their work quietly without any fanfare or acknowledgement. They were the people that you could count on in a pinch.

Speaking of diligent workers, I would like to make mention of Ron R. of Nanaimo, who passed away suddenly this week after a battle with cancer. He had over 34 years of sobriety and he will be remembered for his strong and caring spirit.

Being a new sober member of A.A. is even more challenging in Remote Communities. Some (or most) of these people go out to Treatment Centers and come home to eventually fall back into their old ways. The local support system is not able (for the most part) to help keep these people sober. Those of us in more populated areas can go to any meetings that we choose, but for these people in small communities, everybody knows everyone else's business so anonymity is next to impossible. The family aspect is far more important and holds more power because without family there is nobody else. So, in this regard, Culture offers some real concerns that cannot be ignored. These are some of the real challenges of trying to stay sober in a Remote Community!

It is hoped that with our new Remote Communities Ad Hoc Committee, we will be able to identify and learn more about these concerns and hear what the fellowship would suggest we do. An ideal would be that if you have a concern(s) that you would attempt to offer some possible solutions.

I spent both weekends with Mark and the first weekend I was able to arrive in Faro in time for the *Yukon Unity Groups* 1:30pm Videoconferencing meeting. After that meeting, I spent almost an hour speaking with 2 of the 3 nursing staff. The second weekend saw Mark and I traveling to Skagway, Alaska on Friday and Atlin, B.C. on Saturday. While in Atlin we took the time to visit one of the lone members there. We were very well received and spent over 4 hours at their home and it was one of the highlights of my journey.

You may ask yourself, why did we bother with a Tour of this nature, or what is the value of such an endeavour as this? Firstly, about 30% of the people who are in A.A. were referred by a professional. Secondly, I learned that there is no substitution for personal contact with those we wish to reach. It was actually quite spiritual to be able to look into each individual's eyes as I was able to give our presentation, which came almost right out of the pamphlet "*If you are a Professional*". We will now need to do our follow-up with the professionals by reminding them how to get in touch with us at the Local, District, Area and G.S.O. levels.

This CPC Tour was an experience of a lifetime. I felt that our Higher Power was well in charge and gave us many qualified people to share our A.A. message of hope to. It will be up to us all, to continue this work that our founding Fathers, Bill W. and Dr. Bob have put before us.

I remember our past Western Canada Trustee, Tom K. speaking to us in 2008, at the Pre-Conference in Whitehorse saying that, what we had accomplished that weekend was like dropping a pebble into the water. First was the splash and then comes the ripple effect and the ripples will go to some places that we know not where. Well, this is one of those continuing ripples that just got amped up a bit and will continue on to unknown locations.

Yours in Love and Service,
Clifford T.
Remote Communities Chair Panel 61

Cross Committee Initiative Report in the Hazelton's

By Marty W. - Panel 57 Alternate Delegate and Scott H. Panel 57 - CPC Chair

October 2008

Hello all, my name is Marty, I am an alcoholic.

Area 79 is growing, not on a geographic scale but on a scale of awareness. Getting the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to outlying areas in British Columbia and the Yukon is no small task. BC Yukon Area is approximately 1,431,250 sq km, which qualifies its status as the second largest area in the North American Service Structure. It consists of 46 soon to be 47 districts. From the southern most tip of British Columbia to the northern most tip of the Yukon Territories, is a staggering 2540kms. Even the State of Washington plays a role in Area 79's geographic composition. A trip from Vancouver to Prince Rupert is just under 1/4 the length of area 79 geographically. However actual road travel comes in at twice this length due to detours around

vast mountain ranges, rivers and lakes. This extends the trip equivalent to the distance between Vancouver and Saskatoon. Many of our eight hundred groups encompassed by forty-seven districts are only serviceable by ferry, small plane, boat and even ski-doo.

So it stands to reason that the fellowship felt that a standing community or Remote Communities needed to be implemented in Area 79. This was achieved four years ago. Since its inception, much has been accomplished by the Remote Communities Committee. But when a cry for help came from the Hazelton's in West Central BC last February, AA in BC Yukon had to take a hard look at how it was servicing these outlying areas. Reportedly 8 suicides and 111 attempts was initiative enough to formulate a 'pilot project', which would somehow take AA into the Hazelton's in a way that parallels our Traditions, AA principle and general service practices. So a cross committee was struck. With loving persuasion from our delegate, I was to chair this committee which consisted of the Cooperation with the Profession Committees Chair, the Public Information Chair, the Remote Communities Committee Chair and in the forefront the DCMs in Districts 50, 52, 54, and 56. The role of the General Service Committee had to be pro-active. To act quickly on urgent inquiries regarding a need for AA in Area 79 utilizing area resources as well as local resources. Also to bring to the attention a need for Alcoholics Anonymous in any given community in Area 79 through the District Committee Members or appropriate local committee. And of course, to extend help through the appropriate standing committee chairs.

Our first meeting was in Whitehorse, where we hammered out how we were going to approach this mammoth task. After much discussion we did come up with a Cross Community Initiative protocol. The protocol explained everyone's role in the pilot project, which was decided to be held on Sept 19 in conjunction with the Northern mini-assembly on the 20th. Each participant then had direction on what his or her duties were, and how to implement them into the initiative. This made sense. The over all project would more or less have the flavour of a professional's luncheon or an information fair spearheaded by the Remote Communities Chair, who would gather the initial information, contact local Band Leaders and more importantly, do the follow up with local AA members. The CPC Chair would gather information and contact professionals in the medical communities, courts, treatment centers and the RCMP. In addition draft the invitations and generally organize the information luncheon.

The PI chair would inform local radio stations with AA PSA's, contact the media, local schools and associated professionals. In this particular project, I would like to mention our PI chair did have the opportunity to twice be interviewed on the local radio stations about what AA is and what AA is not. The local district committee members would of course be the foundation. Contacting and informing the local AA community of the initiative, tapping into local resources and organizing local activities, booking halls, setting up meetings, formalize a professionals list to contact, organizing the lunch and basically the heartbeat and conduit to all local activities and events. Wow, what an order! We met again in Vernon at the July Quarterly. Most of the previous mentioned tasks were accomplished in April, May and June. A deadline was set to have numbers of professional attending to the DCMs by September 10th. The draft invitations rafted by the CPC Chair were sent by July 15th, followed up with a phone call by the end of July. Another letter sent in the third week in August with another follow up call by September 8th. Through numerous e-

mails and phone calls, reservations, church bookings, travel plans, food arrangements and invitations, the stage was set.

My name is Scott and I am alcoholic. I am pleased to be serving as the Panel 57 Chair of the Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee for the BC/Yukon Area 79.

As you have heard at some previous Quarterlies and Assemblies, and as you have heard from Marty today, the Cross-Committee Initiative sub-committee organized and participated in a CPC/PI information session in Hazelton, BC. Julie M, DCM for District 50, was able to provide Gordon, Jim and I with a list of contacts for Bands, schools and professionals in the Hazelton and New Hazelton areas. Jim and Gordon and I wrote, phoned and wrote again to each of these people. As any of you involved in CPC work know, the secret to getting any kind of response or turn out is repeated contact with the professional. The result of all of this is that we had 14 professionals at our luncheon. This included 3 doctors and a medical resident, 2 lawyers and a number of counselling professionals. What I saw was a great deal of interest in Alcoholics Anonymous and what Alcoholics Anonymous can do to help in those communities. We were able to leave a lot of AA literature with these professionals. I have had some requests for some follow-up information and have been able to provide some of that information and have a little more to follow up on.

What I was also able to do when I arrived in the area, because I needed to arrive a day ahead of time due to flight times, was meet for about an hour with a Provincial Court Judge at her office in Smithers. She had a great interest in Alcoholics Anonymous and what it might do as a resource for the people she comes in contact with in her work. She indicated as an aside that she thought that alcoholism and addiction accounted for about 70% of her workload. Since returning home, I have been able to provide her with a little bit more information that she had requested. I was also able to spend about a half an hour with the Administrator of the hospital in Smithers. What has come out of this is an interest in having the local Smithers CPC Committee arrange to provide some information to the hospital and medical staff in the area.

I was also able to spend about a half an hour with the Administrator for the hospital in Hazelton. She related to me that last year there were 202 successful and unsuccessful suicide attempts in the hospital's service area. I am not sure how large an area the Hazelton hospital services, but the total size of the hospital appeared to be smaller than this room. For any who might have had lingering doubts about whether we should have taken the initiative to bring an event like this into the Hazeltons, this single statement would seem to answer all doubt.

The facility itself was well set up and Lori W, the help that she brought from Smithers, and Julie M deserve much credit for that.

The lunch itself was scheduled for an hour and a half, but we still had people lingering to speak with us until close to 2:30 p.m.

So many of us come from communities where we have a choice of one or two or thirty or forty meetings a day to attend. Attending an event such as the one that we attended in Hazelton really drives home how vitally important the work our remote communities committee does. When I hear statistics like 202 successful and unsuccessful suicide attempts in a year in a small community, and I know how many of those are related to alcoholism, it makes clear to me the responsibility that I have that is so ably summed up in our Responsibility Statement. We say these words at the close of every one of our assemblies, but an opportunity to participate in bringing truth to those words is where I meet that responsibility. I thank you for this opportunity to be of service to the fellowship that saved my life.

Yours in love and service Scott H.

We made mistakes but had many successes, together we have formulated an action for when the need arises again. A need or an inquiry for help from the members or the local community will be deemed an initiative. The response will come from the CPC Chair, PI Chair and Remote

Communities' Chair. They will make recommendations to the General Service Committee. The GSC will discuss the recommendations and if deemed necessary, take a pro-active approach. The District Committee members, who are involved, will be approached for input on discussion and ideas on the best methods to apply. The final action will be to take appropriate measures to insure a prompt response. All of us involved feel this will better help Area 79 to service the needs of its members. I would like to thank the DCMs involved and the countless hours and love for AA they put into the project: Jen from District 52, Peter from District 56, Lori from District 54 and Julie from District 50. You guys are an inspiration.

Also our RC Chair Jim, our PI Chair Gordon and our CPC Chair Scott. You gentlemen are truly leaders. Hopefully experience gained from this project, with the input of all involved will set an example for other districts when the need arises in their communities. Area 79s standing committee on Remote Communities will be the key in assessing the need of this service, and will hopefully continue to evolve into servicing the remoteness of our vast area.

YLAS - Marty W. Alternate Delegate BC Yukon - Area 79

Northwest Territories – June 10 – 19, 2005

By Tom K. - Western Canada Regional Trustee

What an honourable and auspicious day to begin this “twelfth step” journey! June 10, 2005. Seventy years ago on this day, Dr. Bob S. of Akron, Ohio, had his last drink of alcohol, and it wasn't a very glamorous beginning for what was to become the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous, one of the miracles of the twentieth century. That last drink was a bottle of beer, administered to him by his new friend of about one month, Bill W. It was taken in order to steady his still unsettled nerves, as he was a surgeon, and about to go and perform a scheduled operation in the hospital where he worked. That last drink was taken in a car, in the parking lot of Akron City Hospital. It was 9:00 AM

That, in reality, is where this story begins. For, what we were embarking upon, and hoping to accomplish, was just a continuation of that process, began on June 10, 1935. One alcoholic talking to another, sharing a solution to our common bedevilment, alcoholism. And in keeping with suggested practice of twelfth step calls, there were two of us going.

Vic P., Area 78 Alberta/N.W.T. delegate shared his intention to travel into the northern portion of his Area almost a year previous. Slowly, the idea took shape, that this could be an opportunity for the General Service Board, and by extension, A.A. as a whole in the U.S./Canada, to participate in this huge “twelfth step” call. I spoke with Bob P., Eastern Canada regional trustee about this possibility. He had been travelling into the northern part of his region, Nunavik, and Nunavut, and had a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to share. He encouraged me to talk further with Elaine McDowell, chair of the General Service Board, and Greg M., General Service Office manager about my proposed plan to accompany Vic, at his invitation, into the Northwest Territories.

They were both supportive and encouraging. I reported back to Vic that this was the case, and made a commitment to begin planning to go with him. We could share accommodation and

transportation costs where possible. This would enable us to reach more communities and people together than one of us might have been able to singly. Vic did all of the planning, utilizing his many contacts as delegate. He painstakingly put together the framework of an itinerary that would stretch over 10 days, and span many thousands of miles.

The day of departure finally arrived and I headed for the Regina airport at 3:30 AM, Friday, June 10th. My luggage, including a suitcase full of A.A. literature and videos was checked on through to Yellowknife. The flight on Air Canada left on time, at 5:10 AM and after a brief touchdown in Calgary, I arrived in Edmonton around 10:00 AM. There I met my friend Vic, who would be a travelling companion for the next 10 days. We boarded our flight to Yellowknife and during the flight we were able to collaborate on plans, objectives and procedures. Adjustments were talked about and made, and we arrived in Yellowknife around 11:30 AM. Three people, two of whom I knew and had served with in Saskatchewan, met us. They were Rick A., a former DCM from Saskatoon, and Byrne R., a former DCM from Swift Current. I had no idea they were both up here. What a nice surprise. The third person was a new friend, Sandra M., a member newly arrived in Yellowknife herself not that long ago. They helped us with our luggage and we took possession of our rental vehicle, a blue 2004 Explorer, which was to be our faithful means of transportation over 1800 km, or approximately 1200 miles of rugged and beautiful terrain.

We drove into Yellowknife, and checked into our accommodation, a bed and breakfast called "By the Bay", overlooking Great Slave Lake, located at 3505 McDonald Dr. Great Slave Lake, the fifth largest lake on the continent with an area close to 11,000 square miles, is an integral part of the Mackenzie River system in the Northwest Territories. Irregular in shape, it is 300 miles from East to West, with a maximum width of 70 miles. Sinking down to over 2000 ft. on its east arm, this lake is without question one of the most amazing lakes in North America.

After unpacking our bags, we were off immediately to a community centre called Tree of Peace. We had been invited to speak to a group of about 20 wellness workers from across the NWT. This was a marvellous opportunity to reach many people and communities.

These wellness workers were gathered in Yellowknife for training sessions put on by the Territorial government. They are part of a Social Services program to put trained people into each of the scattered and remote villages and towns that make up the Northwest Territories. They are being trained to be resource people for their communities, and were being familiarized with many different problems faced by their people, and how to support them and direct them to possible sources of help. Of course alcoholism is one, if not the leading social problem faced in almost all of their communities, so talking about alcoholism and Alcoholics Anonymous as a resource, was a wonderful way to begin our journey.

I did a C.P.C. focussed presentation of A.A., what it is and what it isn't. This was followed by a great discussion facilitated by Vic. We met many wonderful people, many of whom were sober A.A. members themselves now, or at some time in the past. There was a general familiarity with A.A., albeit not always an accurate one.

We met Lucy from Tuktoyuktuk. She is an Inuvialuit, a people formerly referred to as Eskimos. She related to us the following: A.A. is in the community, but not well supported by members on a consistent basis. Members often arrive, sent by the court system. Many people come to take advantage of an income support program that requires attending A.A. meetings.

Dolly, from Fort Resolution, is the addictions worker in the community as well as a member of A.A., and is a Dene Indian. She is seen as the A.A. person in the community. Since she is a paid

community worker, it is viewed that it is her job to open up the meeting and make coffee. When she is sick or out of the community and can't open up, it doesn't happen. Some of the elders in the community equate A.A. with the former Residential School system, and see it as another tool of the white man to control them. They arrive at this belief because of their perceptions of the Twelve Traditions, which they see as restricting rules, rather than suggested guides to working together and maintaining unity and sense of purpose. People are willing to drive 110 miles or 155 km to Hay River to attend meetings, rather than attend or commit in their own community. There is funding provided in band budgets to provide addictions services. The whole A.A. concept of self-support is not understood, or is sometimes not feasible. Since the culture of the people is of a communal nature, with the community as a whole providing for the needs of its people equally, the idea of a group supported only by the contributions of its individual members and not by the community as a whole, is a stretch of thinking, even counter cultural.

Beatrice from Fort McPherson shared that there used to be lots of A.A. activity in the community in years gone by. People slowly stopped coming. They still come out if there is a special occasion, a speaker or something social. But that's it. No regular, committed meeting attendance. And with that, an absence of sponsors for those new people who come back into their communities from treatment, filled with a new hope, and a desire to stay sober.

We also met Tina from Fort Providence, whom we hoped to meet up with later in the week, Sarah from Aklavik, Vicki from Cold Lake, and many more caring, committed people from around the NWT.

With our workshop over, it was back to our rooms to rest and reflect. We agreed that our time with the little group was well spent, and we came away with much new awareness of the challenges that face prospective A.A. members who wish to get sober here. Looking at my watch I realized I had been up for 12 hours. And the day was only half over. We were indeed a long way from Olds, Alberta or Vibank, Saskatchewan.

The reason we began our trip in Yellowknife was to attend and participate in the annual AA Roundup. It was held at the Elks Ski Club, on the outskirts of Yellowknife. The theme of the Roundup was "I Am Responsible" and the focus was on the celebration of AA's 70th anniversary. The roundup began Friday evening with an AA supper meeting at the North Slave Correctional Centre. We were invited to attend, along with many of the local AA members from Yellowknife. The supper and meeting were hosted by members of the Centennial group, the name of the group that exists within the prison. The group numbers around 20, the largest it has been for some time. Edwin, a member from the outside, led the activities. We were treated to a feast prepared by the group members themselves. We dined on caribou, buffalo, and the best fish I have ever eaten. Not a bone to be found. I wasn't able to find out for sure what kind of fish it was but it was succulent. Bannock, as well as salads, potatoes and chocolate cake rounded out the meal. Following the meal, Vic and I each were given 20 minutes to share some of our story. What a way to celebrate AA's 70th birthday. I imagined that Bill and Bob would be pleased.

This was my first time inside a correctional facility to attend an AA function. I couldn't help but think that most of these very ordinary men were likely here because of something that occurred while intoxicated in some manner. I recalled the many times I could have been apprehended for some infraction while intoxicated, which could well have started me on the hopeless cycle of imprisonment as well. I watched as some of the young men sat and gazed outside through the window, into the natural environment that surrounded the facility. I'm sure

their thoughts were many hundreds of miles away, in their respective villages and communities, with family and friends left behind. I could only hope that AA was present for them when they returned home, and that maybe something we were doing here this week could contribute in a small way to that happening for them.

Even though I could relate with them in the sense of having lived in an emotional prison of my own, with the bars of fear on the inside, I was free at the end of the evening to leave the facility, and go back out into the world. I was free to return to my own village, where my well-established home group existed, and where there was an abundance of AA, and opportunities to be of service. I pray that this could happen for them too. I thought of the Responsibility Pledge and all that it implies.

Returning to our quarters, I slept for 8 wonderful hours. I realized I had been up 21 hours the day before, following 3 hours of sleep the night before that. I feel very rested. An amazing capacity this human body has for stretching and accommodating itself. We had a breakfast of waffles, sausage and scones, which we shared with another guest at the inn, Rene from Fort Simpson. He is an elder of mixed Metis and French Canadian heritage who was born in northern Alberta. He was brought in to Yellowknife to speak with youth about the coming effects of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline construction, which is expected to present a major social disruption to the lives of most of the population of the NWT, since most of the people live in communities along the Mackenzie River, its tributaries and connected lakes.

The Mackenzie is known as Deh Cho in the Slavey language. Deh is river, moving water. Cho is much, big. A lot of moving water. Big River country, a mighty network of colossal waterways. Like a gentle giant, Deh Cho, the great Mackenzie River rules serenely over the waterways of the great northwest. It is Canada's longest river. Beginning at the headwaters of the Peace and ending in the Beaufort Sea and the Arctic Ocean, the Mackenzie River system totals almost 4200 km or 2600 miles. Its watershed of 1.8 million square km drains one-fifth of the country of Canada. Tons of freight are still shipped down north from the town of Hay River by barge every summer. Hay River has a Canadian Coast Guard station while being over 1700 km by river from the nearest coastline.

Saturday morning was spent in a leisurely fashion, visiting with Vic, listening to some of his many travelling experiences of the 80s and 90s, and reflecting on our previous days activities. We left for the Roundup around noon. We shared a Hot Dog lunch, followed by an AA meeting held out on the deck, in the warm, bright afternoon. The topic of the meeting was Step 11. We were joined at the meeting by an angry, resentful raven, who perched above us on the roof, and angrily reprimanded us for being there, disturbing his space with our chatter and laughter. He persisted with his vindictive squawking and we persisted with our meeting. A short while later we noted that he had removed himself and had lighted in a tree 50 feet away. His squawking had changed to a soft, rhythmic cooing. He had found some serenity, and we couldn't help but think that the spiritual power of the meeting may have assisted him in finding it. To further add to the wilderness spirit, as we gazed out over the countryside, we observed a wolf about 200 feet away, ambling across a clearing in full view, before disappearing into the woods.

That afternoon, still at the roundup, we participated in a workshop on "Unity, Participation, and Our Primary Purpose". It was facilitated by Vic, and attended by around 30 people. There was very good discussion. The last portion of the workshop was devoted to Remote Communities, a topic near to the hearts of all present. One of the problems discussed, which would be recurring

throughout our journey, was the problem of confidentiality in the meetings. Since most of the communities are small, confidentiality is a major issue. In small villages, everyone knows everyone, and many are related family members. People start attending meetings, sharing deeply, rather than in a general way. They become angry and disillusioned when their sharing becomes public scuttlebutt in the community. When we could, we offered suggestions, such as using sponsors, counsellors, clergy or other trusted persons to share intimate, personal problems with, and talk in a general way in the meeting, focusing more on the solution than the problem. Good advice to heed myself.

We were again treated to a delicious potluck supper of everything imaginable, followed by Vic sharing his AA story. We returned to our quarters around 11:00 PM. It was still daylight! Took some pictures off the balcony of the lake, and off to bed.

Sunday June 12th we awoke to another beautiful, sunny morning. We had another great breakfast, packed our belongings, and checked out. We would be leaving Yellowknife following the roundup. Arrived at the roundup around 9:30, and I had the privilege of sharing my AA story with the assembled that morning. We then headed off to Rae, a Dogrib Dene community 70 miles or 115 km northwest of Yellowknife. The twin communities of Rae-Edzo have a combined population of 1,860, and form the largest Aboriginal settlement in the NWT. Vic had previously arranged a meeting there with Joe B. When we arrived at the facility there was only Joe to greet us. Before long though, some 15 people arrived. It soon became apparent that they would like an AA group to begin meeting again on a regular basis. And so our workshop turned into the first business meeting of what we hope will be an ongoing, regular AA meeting. The group picked a name, a meeting day and time, and elected officers of the new group. They will be known as the Raven group, after playfully kicking around several other possibilities in a truly northern humorous fashion. One of their choices was "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly" which elicited much laughter. They will begin meeting on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM.

We emphasized the importance of a group being connected to the rest of AA in order to remain healthy and survive. Just as individuals need other individuals to share with, so do groups need to share with each other. Victoria C. was elected GSR. Mabel was elected treasurer, and Archie the secretary. After being presented with gifts, we departed Rae full of hope for our new friends and fellow alcoholics.

We headed down Highway 3 for Hay River, 390 km or 240 miles away. On the way we passed through the Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary, and seen the first of what would be hundreds of buffalo roaming at large, feeding in the ditches with their young, crossing the highway at will. They seemed indifferent to us, tolerating our presence, as they ambled along. We stopped and took pictures, being careful not to wander too far from the safety of our vehicle.

About halfway to Hay River we reached Fort Providence, located on the bank of the mighty Mackenzie. It was our first look at the river. It was so huge and wide that at first it looked like a lake. Fort Providence marks the beginning of the Mackenzie River proper, as it exits Great Slave Lake a few miles to the east, and flows uninterrupted northwest to the Arctic. This is where we crossed the river by ferry the first time. The river appeared to be calm and easygoing, but upon closer examination, huge volumes of water were moving at a rapid pace, rushing to the sea. We resumed our travel by road, arriving at our destination, Hay River around 10:00 PM. We checked into the Ptarmigan Inn, which was to be our home for the next 3 nights.

Hay River is a community of about 3800 people, and is located on the south shore of Great Slave Lake. Hay River is an important barge port for the entire Mackenzie River system.

Monday morning we had an appointment at the Nats'ejee K'eh Treatment Centre, located just out of Hay River proper, on the K'atl'odeeche Dene Reserve. This is the first and only reserve in the NWT, and was established in 1914. Today it is a thriving community of about 300 persons. The treatment centre located here is the only one in all of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. It is a beautiful 30-bed facility, with indigenous culture expressed in its every aspect. We met several of the directors and staff. Kristine Vannebo-Suwala, the Clinical Supervisor, gave us an in depth tour of the facility. We were invited to have lunch in the facility, which we did, continuing our visit with Kristine. After lunch we were both given an opportunity to speak to the 20 some odd clients present. In our discussions we talked about AA, the importance of the Home Group, the importance of unity to the group and the role of the twelve traditions. We distributed some of our literature here, which was grasped eagerly by all. We realized that even though we brought a large amount of pamphlets, over a suitcase full, we would have to ration it in order to have some available at every stop. The value of our literature as a tool in carrying our message became very tangible for me as I saw these people seek and read everything we could provide them. I developed a deeper awareness of the need for utter clarity and simplicity in our literature, as there are so many confusing terms, issues and factors that compete for attention out there. The painstaking Conference process by which we draft and produce our AA literature is a great safeguard against any unintended confusion produced by our literature, as to what AA is, isn't, and how it works. We are well cared for by our process, as we stay focussed on our primary purpose.

That evening we attended an AA meeting at the Friendship Centre, located across the street from our motel. Our small numbers were hugely augmented by a busload of clients from the Treatment Centre, our new friends. After the meeting we went for coffee with two of the stalwarts of the group, Jim M. and Ron D. There we talked about the group, the district, problems and challenges that exist. There was evident in them a deep appreciation for the support expressed by our coming to visit the north and their group. We emphasized the coming to Yellowknife in July, 2007, of a Special Regional Forum. We assured them that we would remain in regular contact. They were also encouraged to consider attending assemblies in the Area down in Red Deer. This would be no small feat, requiring a 1200 km drive one-way, or an approximate \$700-800 return airfare. Possible nonetheless!

The next morning, Tuesday, June 14th we were off to Fort Smith, 205 miles or 335 km southeast on Highway 5. We passed through Wood Buffalo National Park, which is by far the largest national park in Canada, and one of the largest in the world at approximately 45,000 sq. kms. It was created in 1922 to provide a haven for the last free-roaming herds of bison. It is also the home of the last remaining wild nesting habitat of the endangered Whooping Crane. The park's wild Whooping Crane population has increased to 194 birds, up from its all-time low of 16 birds in 1941. The flock here annually migrates 4000 kms to and from its wintering grounds in southern Texas. In 1983, UNESCO named the Park a World Heritage Site because of its fascinating features that make it a unique Canadian landscape.

We arrived in Fort Smith around noon. Fort Smith is a community of approximately 2600 people, predominantly of Metis and First Nations decent. It is located on the 60th parallel, just north of the Alberta border, and is situated on the banks of the Slave River.

We found Aurora College and located Chris P., a member who is employed there. We went for lunch with him and returned to the college where we conducted a Public Information workshop with around 15 people attending. There were people from the local Correctional Centre, social workers, a member of the clergy, and staff members and counsellors from the college in attendance. I did an informational presentation and Vic facilitated a question and answer discussion. The participation by everyone was superb.

Chris did an outstanding job of advertising the workshop as we found out later. We toured around the town later in the afternoon and every public location where a notice could be posted, there we would find a very professionally done and attractive poster hanging.

We were encouraged to visit the Wood Buffalo National Park Interpretive Centre, which we did. It was very informative and time well spent. We reconvened at 5:30 PM with the local AA group, called the Thebacha Group. They meet in a member's private clubroom, where they rent their space. You just know you are in for a treat when the meeting place is called the "Old Lion's Den". And we were.

First we were treated to a meal of pizza, 4 different kinds to choose from, and roasted chicken. It tasted even better than it sounds when shared with a group of friends, eight members of the group, who turned out. There was Chris, Maurice, Clayton, Todd and many others. The gathering was billed as a Mini-Roundup. It began with a workshop, facilitated by Vic, on the legacy of service. The workshop was to last from 5:30 to 7:30 pm, followed by an AA meeting. As we got into the workshop questions it became apparent that we were not going to complete the workshop before the AA meeting. The group decided to forgo the AA meeting and continue with the workshop, which finally wrapped up around 9:30. The group seemed infused with a new sense of purpose and determination to reach out to the neighbouring groups in Hay River and Fort Resolution, and to the Area. They all expressed deep appreciation for the first visit from AA outside the local area, and had a sense that they were not alone and isolated here, but were indeed a part of the world-wide fellowship of AA, connected and not forgotten. We left for our three and a half hour drive back to Hay River and our beds feeling again most gratified for the opportunity to be part of the solution, a connective link to AA as a whole. The drive back occurred in full daylight, in this beautiful land of the midnight sun. On our trip back we were treated to several natural gifts of wonder. A black bear crossed the road in front of us, and just ambled along in the ditch, looking at us curiously. This was an opportunity two amateur photographers could not pass up, so we slowed down and turned around, drove back and snapped some pictures. The mosquitoes were so vicious when we opened the windows to take pictures that I wondered if the bear might not have been easier to deal with. Anyway, we both had lots to do swatting mosquitoes for the next half hour. Further up the road, a wolf leisurely crossed the road and disappeared into the bush, probably wondering who in their right mind would be out and about at this time of night. It was midnight! We got back to the motel and welcome beds. It was 1:00 am.

Wednesday morning at 8:30 had us leaving Hay River, retracing our steps back to Yellowknife. We crossed the Mackenzie again on the Merv Harvie ferry, and pulled into Fort Providence where we had lunch. The drive from Fort Providence back to Yellowknife was again exceptionally breathtaking, and we made some stops along the way, snapping pictures and marvelling at the natural beauty surrounding us. We arrived back in Yellowknife at 4:00pm and went straight to the Tree of Peace centre, where another group of wellness workers from across the north were

waiting. We had a presentation and discussion with them. The questions and comments were similar to the week before. The challenges that exist to establishing and maintaining AA groups in small rural communities. Vic and I could both share our similar experiences in joining a small group in a rural community and the importance of establishing contact with AA as a whole, through the General Service structure.

We were now 6 days into our 10-day trip. We were over half way through. I wondered what would become of our many new friends in the many groups and communities we had visited to date. I began to gain a deeper sense of the value of our connections and contacts. Even though there was no tangible way of measuring the worth of our efforts, I somehow believe, through these person-to-person encounters, a higher power could commence to achieve things in a new way. It was not important whether I knew what that might be. Connections are what AA is about. When a connection is made, the circuit is completed, and the power can work. When I lived in emotional and spiritual isolation from my fellows, a higher power could not reach me, as much as I am sure he wished to. I would drink alcohol to gain the courage to reach through that imaginary barrier, and connect with the world around me. But when the booze was gone, my solution was gone. When I took those tentative steps, and allowed others to reach through that imaginary barrier that existed around me, and touch me with their kindness, this power had a chance to do for me what he could not do before. And so, these connections and contacts we made were accomplishing this same end, creating an opportunity for a higher power to work through our efforts. Because of my own experience in recovery, this is not some theory or belief. This is the great fact for us.

Wednesday evening, Byrne R. invited us to his apartment where he treated us to barbequed steak, rice and a stir-fry. It was delicious, and so relaxing to just sit with 2 friends and enjoy the warm, sunny evening. We went for a drive around Yellowknife later that evening, with Byrne serving as our tour guide. It is a city of contrasts. There are one and two million dollar homes sitting side-by-side Dene shacks and cabins. The huge contrasts between wealth, affluence, and poverty were stark. Byrne took us up onto the old water tower hill, named Pilot Hill. There you could see for miles in every direction. The view is breathtaking and leaves one with a very spiritual sense while up there. The city of 19,000, is the only city in the NWT. It is built on rock, pre-Cambrian shield, so there is no underground water or sewer lines. Sitting on the shores of one of the largest freshwater lakes in the world, and having difficulty obtaining cheap affordable water. There is a dark underside to the city as there is to all cities. It is a distribution centre for crack cocaine and other drugs into the north. Crack is a huge problem locally.

We returned to our bed and breakfast for one more nights sleep in Yellowknife before beginning the next leg of our journey the next morning.

Thursday morning we drove to the airport, turned in our rental vehicle, and boarded a plane bound for Norman Wells. Now we were really reliant on the contacts that were waiting, or not waiting at our various stops. We arrived in Norman Wells, and with no one to meet the plane, and no answer at any of the 3 phone contacts we had a decision to make. We decided to grab the first available flight out to Fort Good Hope, our next stop. Luck was with us, and we were put on a flight out an hour later. We arrived in Fort Good Hope, a community of about 750, situated on the shores of the Mackenzie River, and also on the Arctic Circle. Here again there was no one to meet us. Our contact, Dolly P. was called away to a job interview in Norman Wells, with no way to inform us of her absence. A couple of workers from the Community centre noticed us,

and asked if we would like a lift into town. We gratefully accepted their offer and were deposited on the doorstep of the local RCMP detachment, which ended up doubling as a café, motel and taxi service for the next 24 hours. It was a four-member detachment, headed by Cpl Donna Rorison, Detachment Commander.

We arrived the day following a community plebiscite to determine whether the community would become a dry town, or remain wet. The wet side prevailed, and we sat in on a debriefing and sharing session by members of the dry steering committee. Our RCMP friends, who had supported the dry campaign, told us that if liquor could be physically kept out of the community, 90 percent of their calls would be eliminated. Since everything comes in either by air or boat, it would be relatively easy to enforce. But it was not to be.

My appreciation for the RCMP and the role they play in communities deepened immensely as a result of our experience in Fort Good Hope. We were put up for the night in the homes of two of the members of the detachment. We had breakfast cooked for us, were provided transportation around the community, and to the airport when it was time. They gave new life and meaning to the term, “welcome the stranger, the traveller, in our midst.” They are in the front lines in dealing with the manifestations of alcoholism on a daily basis.

That afternoon with some spare time on our hands, we walked over to the rectory, and asked Sister Joan if she would open the church for us to view. We had been told not to miss seeing it if we were in town. When we got inside we understood why. We were inside the church of Our Lady of Good Hope, built by Father Emile Petitot in 1865-70. Petitot decorated the church with glowing frescoes, using natural dyes. These have been lovingly restored, giving the church a vibrant, almost modern feeling. It has been declared a National Historic site. There is no resident priest in the community. He flies in every so often to say Mass. There are two resident Sisters who stay in the community and offer pastoral care to parishioners. We had an informal discussion with Sister Joan later about AA, and alcoholism. I confess I sometimes take for granted that most people have the same level of understanding of AA and how it works that I have. Informing our friends in the helping professions about us is very crucial to reaching potential sufferers.

We contacted Harold C. a local member and probation officer. We went to his office, and made tentative arrangements for a meeting at the school later that evening. We arrived at the school but no one showed. Donna, our taxi driver, then drove us to Harold’s house. On the way, she stopped in at a few other prospective members homes, informed them of the meeting, and dropped us at Harold’s house. Two other members showed up, Tommy, and Darryl, and we had an AA meeting. Darryl, who sobered up in Alberta, really took to the idea of starting a group again in the town that would be committed and regular. We were secretly hopeful as we left Harold’s house after the meeting. We had all agreed to meet in Harold’s office the next morning at 10:00 to have a business meeting for the prospective new group. Harold, by virtue of his working there, was the only other member to show the next morning. Accepting the things we cannot change, we contented ourselves by visiting with Harold the rest of the morning. Our flight to Inuvik was to leave after lunch. We said our good byes to Harold, and headed back to the detachment office. They then drove us to the airport and it was off to Inuvik and our last stop on the journey.

We were met and welcomed at the Inuvik airport by John H. and his young son Eric. John is a member of the Delta AA group, which meets in Inuvik. Our plan to be billeted at a member’s home didn’t materialize, so we checked into the Capital Suites, on the main thoroughfare of Inuvik.

Inuvik is a community of approximately 3500 people. Inuvik means “place of man” in Inuvialuktun. It is the largest Canadian community north of the Arctic Circle. It is set on a flat, wooded plateau overlooking the Mackenzie Delta. The Arctic Ocean is only 97 km farther north. Inuvik is a “model town” planned in the 1950s to replace Aklavik as the Delta’s commercial centre. Construction began in 1955 and was completed 6 years later. Today it serves as an important administrative and supply centre for the Western Arctic.

A Mini AA Roundup was planned for that evening, sponsored by the Delta Group. It was held at the Anglican Church where the group regularly meets, and began at 6:00pm with a potluck supper. Another fabulous culinary experience. An AA meeting followed the meal. Present were Ellen S., the chair of the steering committee, John H., Moriah, Ellen’s sister Bella, Alestine A. from Tsiigehtchic, Dennis A., and the group’s GSR, Laura. Laura originally comes from Nova Scotia. She lived in Regina for a couple of years, 2002-03, where she attended school. She went to meetings at the Fireside and Heartview groups in Regina, and knew several friends of mine in Regina. A small world it is!

A wonderful meeting ensued. After the meeting plans were finalized to go out to Tsiigehtchic the next morning. Dennis, John, Vic and myself went for coffee after the meeting. We left the coffee shop for our motel around midnight. The sun was high in the western sky. It was broad daylight. Took a picture for proof! Welcome to the north! I had my first difficulty falling asleep tonight because of the abundance of light.

The next morning, Saturday, June 18th at 7:00am John H. picked us up for breakfast. We were joined by Dennis A. who brought his 77-year-old father Victor with him. Victor is an Inuvialuit, a very humorous old man, who loved poking gentle, good-natured fun at white southerners. For some reason he reminded me a bit of my own late grandfather, with whom I grew up, and was close to. I grew quite fond of Victor as the day progressed.

Tsiigehtchic is about a 125km or a 65-mile drive along the Dempster highway from Inuvik. It required another ferry crossing over the Mackenzie to reach the little community. It is a community of about 200 people. The residents are Indian people, Gwichya Gwich’in, or “people of the flat land”. The village is located at the confluence of the Mackenzie and the Arctic Red rivers. The community is also referred to by some simply as Arctic Red.

We took 2 vehicles out. I rode with Dennis and his father, and Vic rode with John. Dennis had lots of questions about the AA service structure, the various service positions and their function. We had a good discussion and the time flew by. In no time we were at the ferry, crossed the Mackenzie again, and came ashore at Tsiigehtchic.

Local worker Alestine A., also a member of the fellowship, had been our contact here, and had made arrangements for a meeting here. But life intervened and due to illness in the family, her plans changed, and she was unable to join us. But the meeting went ahead. We met in the boardroom of the Band Office. We were joined by Archie, Martina, Fritz, Sam, John F., John N., Peter (chief), John H., Dennis A., Victor A., Vic and myself. We began with an informal talk/discussion on AA, the value of a Home group, the value of maintaining connection with AA as a whole and other groups. We distributed the last of our literature and videos here. Our suitcase was empty, our supply exhausted.

The local members expressed a wish to re-establish a group in the community, and made plans to have their inaugural meeting the following Sunday, June 26th at 7:00pm. They decided they would have a cookout preceding the meeting. John H. from Inuvik committed himself to coming

over and supporting them. Archie agreed that a regular commitment to a regular time would be good. "It was time", he said.

With those decisions made, we proceeded with a regular AA meeting. The meeting was blessed by the presence of a wet drunk who wandered in. He was visibly intoxicated, and when he spoke, he really confirmed that. Having the smell of alcohol wafting through the room was a kind of incense or benediction of the meeting, reminding all present of our spiritual purpose, and why we were here.

We retired to Archie and Martina's home after the meeting where we shared a lunch and more fellowship. We said our good byes and left with our hearts and stomachs full. Filled again with the joy of seeing hope rekindled in the hearts of fellow members, as they determined to make a new beginning of AA in their community, and also I believe a tangible sense that they were not alone here, and were supported.

The drive back to Inuvik was filled with more conversation, interrupted by a few stops to appreciate the beauty, and take some pictures. Back in Inuvik, Vic, Dennis, John and myself shared some more coffee and fellowship. Later in the evening Vic, John and I took in an 8:00pm meeting at the hospital. Darryl, another local member, chaired it. After the meeting we went for a late supper with Darryl and talked some more AA. And off to bed.

Sunday June 19th. Here we were! The last day of our 10-day odyssey to the north had arrived. I again reflected on how I would never again refer to La Ronge, Thompson, Ft. McMurray or Grande Prairie as being in the north. John H. picked us up at 10:00am and we went for brunch where we were joined by Dennis A. After brunch we said our farewells to Dennis. John H. continued to ferry us around Inuvik, taking in many more scenic sites and places of interest, as we awaited our flight departure time. Finally, around flight time, John deposited us back where he picked us up 2 days ago, and we said our good byes. It was with some sadness that I watched John turn and walk away.

We headed for home with our hearts filled with gratitude, with tinges of sadness lingering. We were leaving behind many new friends, a haunting and beautiful land, and wonderful people! We were taking with us connections to a land and people, and memories to last a lifetime. I was told by a friend that this would be a life changing experience for me and it was.

This was a trip of establishing contacts. It was a journey of carrying hope. It was a week of many intangibles. We were here only a day when we found ourselves marvelling that we still had 9 days left, and how could it get any better? Practically every day this was our observation, as we reflected at days end. We drove 1800 km around Great Slave Lake, through Rae-Edzo, Ft. Providence, Hay River, Fort Smith, and back again. We flew roughly 2500 km around the north, not counting the flight up from Regina to Edmonton and on to Yellowknife. At every stop we were met with gratitude and love. Sometimes things appeared at loose ends, people not being somewhere when we expected, but each time, someone would appear from somewhere, and we would pick up the new strands that would materialize. They would then lead us in a new direction, the direction we were supposed to be going all along, I suspect.

As a result of our experiences and observations, I would encourage a continuation of visits by one or two individuals, at least every 2 years if possible. In between visits, regular communication be maintained with the group contacts, and new connections established when necessitated by rotation or moving. Groups not visited personally can be contacted and communicated with by mail, email, or telephone as well. Some translations of literature into the local dialects could help

add credibility to A.A. as a resource for them. It is my intention to maintain contact with the groups and individuals we visited and met. The Special Forum coming to Yellowknife in 2007 is an ideal focal point for maintaining our relationships, with the goal being to meet again in Yellowknife, at the Forum.

The distances, the cost of travel, and the geographic isolation of many of the small communities cannot be minimized. It is very real! Even travelling south to their Area Assembly in Red Deer for the furthest south groups, Fort Smith and Hay River, would require a 1500 and 1200 km drive respectively. That is one way. A round trip airfare alone would likely run \$700-800.

With these facts as perspective, it is essential that we continue to do all in our power to maintain connection with the groups and members here, ever remembering it is a two-way flow, and that we as a Fellowship are enriched ten-fold by our collective efforts.

With gratitude,

Tom K. - Western Canada Regional Trustee

REMOTE COMMUNITIES SURVEY AD HOC COMMITTEE 2003

Reporting to BC/Yukon Area General Service Committee

December 15th 2003

Condensed version from 21pgs-10pgs no content missing.

Introduction: The Ad Hoc Committee on Remote Communities was struck July 2003. This resulted from discussion at the General Service Committee meeting regarding the northern remote communities liaison (**NRCL**) and alternate northern remote communities liaison positions and their services. The task of the ad hoc committee by unanimous consent was to review services to all isolated communities within BC/Yukon Area 79 including the north but not limited to the north. The scope was broadened to include all possible remote communities within Area 79.

Purpose: To review our service to all of our Remote Communities within the BC/Yukon Area 79 and present items for consideration back to the BC/Yukon General Service Committee by December 2003.

Definition: (for the purposes of this study) Anyone or group significantly removed geographically from support of other A.A. groups or services.

Limitations: This report focuses specifically on geography and travel challenges. Cultural diversity and language were not considered for this study.

Background: During the eighties there were no appointed positions and elections would last up to two days to fill 12-14 positions. The assemblies and quarterlies did not travel and all were held in the lower mainland and attended by 90% lower mainland members. At that time, the Area did not have the financial means to travel. It was through the traveling quarterlies and assemblies (begun in later eighties) that financial support was obtained in order to accomplish the travel that is done today. The lower mainland groups were slow to accept the idea of spending group money to send their DCMs and GSRs outside the lower mainland. At that time the Area Committee

would travel once or twice per year outside of the lower mainland. A large portion of committee work was done in the Southwest corner of B.C. and this was generally understood.

During the eighties, most geographical areas were represented on the General Service Committee at one time or another. All were voted positions. This included members from the North, (Fraser Lake, Prince George,) the Interior (Kelowna, Penticton,) the Island (Victoria, Comox) and the lower Mainland. Past GSC members felt that no position was restricted by a members' location but that people could not always avail themselves to the time and travel requirements.

In the early nineties specific attempts were made to recruit members from the north. This was at a time where service resumes were not required. From approximately 1992 until 1999 for reasons not apparent the north did not have representation on the GSC until the creation of the NRCL and the alternate position. There is no recollection of resumes submitted from the north during this time period.

In 1999 -2000 a Northern Remote Communities Liaison (NRCL) position was appointed. The intent was to serve the northern groups and was discussed and voted on by the fellowship. The appointee lived in Whitehorse and it was concluded that during the two-year term, this position did not allow for travel outside of the Yukon. Therefore the position did not adequately serve all northern communities and was limited to the Yukon. In 2001 -2002 a Northern Remote Communities Liaison (NRCL) was appointed along with an Alternate. The NRCL lived in Kitimat and the Alternate in Prince George. The intent was to serve all communities within their Districts along the Highway 16 corridor. This did not provide service to District 52 (Yukon) or District 51 (Charlottes). Time required to travel long distances and costs to travel remained prohibitive. Travel records indicate that during this time the GSC continued to fulfill all travel requests from anywhere when invitations or requests were submitted. Northern travel was not limited to the NRCL or its alternate.

Current Situation: There are two appointed positions for the 2003-2004-service term with the NRCL and its alternate serving three Districts in the north. These are Districts 56, 54 and 50. The NRCL lives in Prince George and the alternate lives in Kitimat. The job description of the NRCL and its alternate closely resembles the "duties of the DCM" (Service Manual. **S29**) A voice has emerged from the fellowship that remote services should provide service to all and that Districts not necessarily from the north, need equal consideration. Area 79 continues to fulfill all travel requests as per invitation and northern travel is not restricted to the NRCL or its alternate position. The NRCL position has a vote on the GSC committee and is the only liaison, which holds a vote or is appointed by the Area.

Travel and Distance:

Research was completed in this area with computer generated scale maps of BC/Yukon as well as travel and mileage charts and locations of airports. These maps provided a working frame of reference for this portion of report and support the idea that many communities in Area 79 face

challenges and obstacles in travel. Travel time was calculated by the speed limit with stopovers at ferry terminals*

Records show there are currently 155 communities in Area 79 that maintain listed A.A. meetings. Many of these communities face remote challenges. Meetings in isolated areas do not experience the large attendance normally found in a densely populated area. This leads to small amounts in the basket, which sets the stage for inadequate funding for the GSRs and DCMs to travel. Contact with DCMs and study of maps show that some district boundaries are ill defined thus leading to improper support of the District and in some cases, no representation in Area 79.

*Maps and charts available upon request

The quarterlies and assemblies continue to travel throughout BC/Yukon Area* subject to the bid process, which involves a bid submission and a vote by GSRs and DCMs. The bid process was reaffirmed by the fellowship at the Voting Assembly 2003 by substantial unanimity. Driving is the most common form of travel however in some extremely distant communities time constraints remain a barrier to driving. Cost of flying is sometimes comparable and cheaper to driving and in other cases remains prohibitive.

The following communities have airports with commercial scheduled flights:

Abbotsford, Bella Coola, Campbell River, Chilliwack, Comox, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Nelson, Penticton, Port Alberni, Port Hardy, Powell River, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Princeton, Quesnel, Salmon Arm, Sandspit, Smithers, Squamish, Terrace, Tofino, Vancouver, Victoria, Watson Lake, Whitehorse and Williams Lake.

The following communities have chartered flights available:

100 Mile House, Alert Bay, Beaver Creek, Burns Lake, Cache Creek, Cortes Island, Duncan, Faro, Fraser Lake, Fort Langley, Fort St James, Golden, Grand Forks, Hope, Houston, Invermere, Kitimat, Lillooet, Mackenzie, McBride, Merrit, Osoyoos, Port Alice, Qualicum Bay, Radium Hot Springs, Revelstoke, Salt Spring Island, Sechelt, Texada Island, Trail, Valemont, Vanderhoof, Vernon and Whistler.

Approach: Input from the fellowship was a primary consideration.

1) The following 14 Districts were identified as possible remote areas. Districts 1, 3, 4, 9, 46, 47, 50, 51, 52, 54, 56, 59, 60 and 66* (District 68 and 64 were inadvertently overlooked) The selection process was based on the purpose of this report and criteria included A.A community characteristics, infrastructure, environmental factors, isolated groups within a District and total District size. Each District selected shared several common factors. The DCMs were mailed a survey of twenty-seven questions in regards to their respective Districts. The questions ranged from their personal feeling of whether they felt remote to activities within their own District and from group to group within their respective Districts. Access to airports, highways, and service responsibilities of a geographic nature were considered. Also surveyed was their awareness of how BC/Yukon Area Committee serves them and what they need from BC/Yukon Area. The response was 100%.

2) The following mini assemblies or groups of Districts were emailed or snail mailed a survey of six questions: * South Central Mini Assembly, Northern Mini Assembly, Seven Districts, District 18-46 and Five Districts. The intention was to explore their role within the service structure, which Districts belong, when and how often they meet, the benefits, and, what they might need from the General Service Committee. The response was 100%.

*Appendix A, B, C,

3) Fifteen members of the General Service Committee were emailed a survey of two questions. * The questions asked for two considerations: To assess their respective positions with a view of equal service to all and, their input as to what improvements could be made. The response was 99%.

4) Past Delegates and GSC Committee members from 1985 to present were interviewed directly or by email concerning our history.

5) Grassroots minutes from 1985 to September 2003 were reviewed. This provided insight into location of quarterlies, and, provided a travel history of the Area Committee, not including special assignments requested by individual districts. *(See following page for reference)

6) Portions of BC/Yukon Archives and Grassroots Forum were reviewed as a supplement to interviews by past service workers.

7) Two letters of correspondence from individual members of BC/Yukon Area 79 were reviewed. ** It was felt this report acknowledged those concerns.

*Appendix D, E, F

BREAKDOWN OF QUARTERLIES AND ASSEMBLIES 1986 – 2003

Greater Vancouver

North Shore, Squamish, West Van, Port Moody, Pocos, Richmond, Surrey, White Rock, New Westminster, Delta, Ladner, Twassen

Fraser Valley

Langleys, Cloverdale, Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Mission, Hope, Aldergrove, Maple Ridge

Okanagan

Kamloops, Vernon, Kelowna, Osoyoos, Oliver, Penticton, Salmon Arm

South Eastern BC

Golden, Sicamous, Invermere, Revelstoke

South Central BC

Cache Creek, Spence's Bridge, Ashcroft, Lone Butte, 70 Mile, 100 Mile

North Central BC

North of 100 mile to Prince George inclusive.

Northern BC

Smithers, Burns Lake, Fraser Lake, Ft St. James, north and west of Prince George to Yukon border

North Coast and Queen Charlottes

Kitimat, Rupert, Terrace

Yukon Territory

South Vancouver Island

Parksville, Nanaimo, Victoria, Saanich, Sooke and Salt Spring Island

North Vancouver Island

Courtenay, Campbell River, Port Hardy, Pt. McNeil

Other

Powell River, Sunshine Coast, Gulf Islands

GREATER VANCOUVER	18%
NORTHERN B.C.	0%
FRASER VALLEY	14%
NORTH COAST	1%

OKANAGAN	17%
YUKON	0%
SOUTH EASTERN. B.C	3%
NORTH ISLAND	7%

SOUTH CENTRAL B.C.	6%	OTHER	5%
SOUTH ISLAND	19%	OROVILLE WA.	1%
CENTRAL B.C	9%		

Findings:

District Survey:

Thirteen districts out of fourteen surveyed felt they had groups apart from the rest within their district boundaries, or felt remote as an entire district. Most held monthly meetings, some bi monthly or quarterly. GSR attendance at District meetings was split and distance was a paramount factor in attendance. A large majority of DCMs were making an effort to visit all groups in their Districts although distance, ferries and feasibility are a concern. A large majority attended some or all four quarterlies and assemblies. Two DCMs make it to the assemblies only and two did not know.

A small parentage of groups use tapes and most DCMs did not know if the groups are listening to tapes or not. Nine Districts are not aware of the idea of group sponsorship and three are. All Districts are aware of the Grapevine and thirteen out of fourteen are not aware of the newsletter the "Remote Communicator". Workshops are being held 1-4 times per year in most Districts. There are no workshops in one district. Contact from district to district varied from:

- Personal Contact
- Newsletters and emails
- Guests and visitors
- Mini assemblies/Multi District Meetings
- Nearest District
- Some do not make contact with other Districts

Most Districts have paved highways, and there are several Districts who access groups by unpaved roads. Travel challenges were noted as the following: Weather, time, road conditions, ferries, cost, unsafe highways and logging roads.

Ten DCMs could fly directly to Vancouver, two had to first drive to other cities and one was cost prohibitive. Three DCMs could fly directly to Kelowna and ten could not. All Districts can reach Kelowna via Vancouver.

Most were aware that the Area Committee is available to host workshops, two were not and one was unclear as to who pays expenses. A majority said they needed to be better informed as to what services the GSC provides and the following needs were expressed:

- An outline of what the GSC does and the services that it offers.
- An outline of monetary assistance available for travel

The final question was an open question: Question 27 "Questions for District Input"

What can the General Service Committee do better to serve you?

- A need was expressed to learn more about resources in the form of an outline.
- Attention was drawn to the outer isolated Islands off the East coast of Vancouver Island in particular heading north
- Grassroots on website
- Timely distribution of background and motions
- Distribute a summary of major issues being considered by the GSC
- Raise GSC profile on the Sunshine Coast
- Greater use of electronic transferring because it is time saving and cost effective.
- Send quarterly agendas by email
- Additional monies to assist DCM travel
- A 1-800 number for Area
- Eliminate Friday nights at quarterlies and assemblies when possible.
- More presence by the GSC members in A.A. communities by dropping in at regular meetings when away on travel assignment.
- Provide a message board on web page for trading travel information
- Remain cognizant of remote communities

Mini Assembly Survey:/Multi District Meetings

The purposes of the assemblies varied slightly but all focused on the following:

- Sharing district news and concerns and maintaining contact with groups and other Districts
- Discussing upcoming Quarterly and Assembly agendas
- Liaise between their groups, the Area, and GSO
- Carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers (unanimous)

Numerous benefits of mini assemblies/multi district meetings included, good service tools for new GSRs and DCMs, maintaining a focus on Tradition Five, meeting new contacts, holding workshops and inviting a GSC member for questions and answers. In a larger metro area, mini assemblies allow only one set of "district level" service representatives, while in smaller and sometimes more remote areas, mini assemblies allow Districts to connect with each other.

The mini assemblies expressed different needs from the Area 79 which included getting the agendas out to districts faster, showing DCMs and GSRs how to put on workshops, and how to hold a group inventory. One hoped to see copies of workshops listed on the website. One expressed a need for Area 79 to clarify their relationship with smaller assemblies and noted differences from one to another. One mini assembly suggested leaving the Northern Remote Communities Liaison as is.

The meetings varied from twice a year to once per month and all thought that Area 79 is doing a good job of keeping the groups and districts informed. They know that if information is needed, it is available.

General Service Committee Survey:

Eight GSC members felt their service position allowed equal service to all communities within BC/Yukon Area, three did not, three stated "somewhat" and one did not know.

The majority of members felt the best way to improve equal service to all was through contact at quarterlies and assemblies. It was felt Grassroots and its content is a major communication tool and assisted all positions because it reached all GSRs and DCMs four times a year. Workshops and contact by phone, email and or fax were effective tools and travel to isolated communities when requested, remained important. Getting the information out that the committee is available to serve remained paramount. It was felt by some that each committee chair should attend workshops within their specific service responsibility when possible. The Chair noted he relied on different liaisons and DCMs to keep the committee informed as a whole. GSC members felt accurate and timely information sent to Districts remained of primary importance and individual committee chairs offered their own solutions to their respective committees. Better communication with all Districts is a key to most solutions focused on equal service to all Districts within BC/Yukon Area Committee.

Perceived problems included the following:

- There are no records indicating participation by District 51
- District 36 and 1 are no longer represented at the Area level
- Most members are not aware of what some committees do.
- Three Archive kits are insufficient for a vast Northern Area
- The Northern Remote Communities Liaison position is serving the northern corridor only and its remote groups.
- No accurate assessment of language barriers or cultural barriers.
- Time and cost are a factor to carry the message into remote communities

Conclusions:

- A significant portion of the membership feel uninformed as to the role of BC/Yukon Area and its services.
- A significant portion of the membership who may be affected are not aware of travel assistance
- The mini assemblies/groups of Districts require a clearly defined, equal role as to submitting reports, and representation at Area meetings.
- The north of BC/Yukon is divided into three distinct geographical areas, the Hwy 16 Corridor, the Yukon, and the Charlottes.
- Districts 51 and 52 are significantly removed by entire District.
- Districts 1, 50, 54,56,59,66 have parts but not all of the area within their District significantly removed because of distance, infrastructure weather etc.
- Districts 3,9,46,47,60,61, express travel challenges due to service responsibilities within their respective Districts.
- Neither past, nor present appointed NRCL positions effectively serve the entire north.
- Other remote communities have not been given equal consideration:
- Most surveyed felt they faced remote challenges within their Districts.
- The bid process for quarterlies and assemblies, which includes a submission and a vote, works effectively and encourages travel and participation throughout all of Area 79.

- Research to date does not include language or cultural barriers.

Recommendations:

Immediate Action:

- The General Service Committee develop a fact sheet and other possible structures to facilitate better communication of services to the membership.
- The General Service Committee clarify their relationship with Mini Assemblies Multi District Meetings.
- The General Service Committee explore ways and means to enhance communication to our absentee Districts. (1, 36 and 51)
- Individual committee chairs follow through on their own suggestions.
- The job description of the current Delegate include the retrieval and distribution of the Remote Communicator to all DCMs beginning in 2004.
- A travel message board be considered for the BC/Yukon Area web page
- The General Service Committee explore the idea of a 1-800 number and report back to the fellowship
- The General Service Committee develop a remote communities guideline.

Future Action:

- The current District boundaries be assessed and redefined for DCM clarification and to insure all communities are serviced and linked to Area 79.
- One appointed standing committee on Remote Communities replace the Northern Remote Communities Liaison position and its alternate position for the service term of 2005 - 2006. This position to be appointed as any other appointed position with qualifications and experience by resume.
- The job description and function of this appointed position and its committee be clearly defined before appointment to avoid duplication of services.
- The scope of remote studies be enlarged to include cultural and language barriers.

APPENDIX

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BIBLIOGRAHY:

Tourism B.C. Website

Tourism B.C. Magazine

Locations of Quarterlies and Assemblies 1986 - 2003

<u>1986</u>		January	Ashcroft	January	Parksville
January	Victoria	April	Kamloops	April	Burnaby
April	Maple Ridge	July	Nanaimo	July	Squamish
July	Williams Lake	Oct	Burnaby	Oct	Abbotsford
Oct	Surrey	<u>1993</u>		<u>1999</u>	
<u>1987</u>		January	Chilliwack	January	Powell River
January	Abbotsford	April	Prince Rupert	April	Langley
April	Kelowna	July	Nanaimo	July	Sidney
July	Salmon Arm	Oct	Kelowna	Oct	Oliver
Oct	Nanaimo	<u>1994</u>		<u>2000</u>	
<u>1988</u>		January	Richmond	January	Vancouver
January	Sidney	April	New Westminster	April	100 Mile House
April	Ashcroft	July	Vernon	July	Port McNeil
July	Prince George	Oct	Burnaby	Oct	Courtenay
Oct	Surrey/Delta	<u>1995</u>		<u>2001</u>	
<u>1989</u>		January	Abbotsford	January	Surrey
January	Chilliwack	April	Maple Ridge	April	Nanaimo
April	Campbell River	July	Kamloops	July	Kelowna
July	Oroville Wa	Oct	Powell River	Oct	Kamloops
Oct	Salmon Arm	<u>1996</u>		<u>2002</u>	
<u>1990</u>		January	Golden	January	Sidney
January	Kelowna	April	Campbell River	April	Surrey
April	Abbotsford	July	Prince George	July	Prince George
July	Nanaimo	Oct	Cache Creek	October	Powell River
Oct	Coquitlam	<u>1997</u>		<u>2003</u>	
<u>1991</u>		January	Duncan	January	Salt Spring
January	Victoria	April	Revelstoke	April	Parksville
April	Vernon	July	Williams Lake	July	Vancouver
July	Prince George	Oct	Victoria	Oct	Chilliwack
October	Courtenay	<u>1998</u>			
<u>1992</u>					

Source: Grassroots Forum Minutes 1986-2003

***APPENDIX A**

Questions for District Input:

1. Do you consider your District to be remote?
2. How many registered groups in your District?
3. Average number of members in District?
4. How often is your District Meeting held?
5. Do you move the location for your District Meeting?
6. Does your General Service Representative/Alternate attend District Meetings?
7. Is distance a factor in non-attendance?

8. Does the District Committee Member visit all groups in your District?
9. Is distance a factor in non-attendance?
10. Does your District Committee Member travel to quarterlies and assemblies?
11. How many quarterlies per year?
12. How many assemblies per year?
13. Do the groups in your District listen to tapes of other meetings?

14. Are your Groups/District aware of the idea of group sponsorship?
15. Are your Groups aware of availability of Grapevine?
16. Is your Group/District aware of the "Remote Communicator"?
17. How many workshops does your District hold on an annual basis?

18. What contact do you have with other Districts?
19. What challenges in travel do you encounter?
20. Is your District connected by paved road or highway?
21. Does your Service District travel dirt roads to reach certain groups and if so, how far

***APPENDIX B**

22. Can you fly direct out of your District to Vancouver?
23. Can you fly direct out of your District to Kelowna?
24. Are you aware that the General Service Committee members will host workshops in your District?

25. Do you currently make use of this service?
26. Do you need to be better informed as to what our General Service Committee does and what services they offer to Area 79?
27. What can the Area 79 General Service Committee do better to serve you?

September 2003

CONFIDENTIAL - FOR A.A. USE ONLY - LAST NAMES USED

1. What is the general purpose of your mini assembly?
2. What Districts belong?
3. How often do you meet?
4. What are the benefits?
5. Do you need to be better informed as to what our General Service Committee does and what services they offer to Area 79?
6. How can BC/Yukon Area serve you better?

***APPENDIX C**

September 2003

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Service Position: _____

Consider the idea of equal service to all:

1. Do you feel your service position allows you to provide equal service to all **of Area 79 including those districts with** remote communities? Elaborate.
2. What can be done in your area of responsibility to enhance service to all remote communities?

***APPENDIX D**

Letter to Ad Hoc Committee:

I would like to bring the following forth to the committee.

First of I would like to see our Area map changed to accurately reflect the Province. At present it has the normal lower mainland mentality of showing anything north of Hope as being north. This is not true. A vast portion of the province should be considered the central interior. With that said and nothing against our Northern Liaison Chair, I fail to see why we have a person from Central B.C. as the chairman? Could someone please explain that to me?

I am the D.C.M. for District 66, which is the Columbia Valley in southeastern B.C. Our travel time to Vancouver is no different than for someone in Prince George, yet we have to travel what is considered the most dangerous highway in Canada. If we want to travel to the lower mainland by air we have a 2.75 hr drive, as long as one remembers the little signs on the side of the roads are minimum speeds, not maximums. I would like to point out the following also in regards to air travel. Prince George, Smithers, Terrace, Prince Rupert, Whitehorse, Watson Lake all have airports. Many other communities in this area have the same or less travel time to the closest airport than what District 66 does. If one is to book flights well in advance, which we can for quarterlies, a recent comparison I did reveals the following.

Calgary - Vancouver (Return Flight)	\$294.34
P.G. - Vancouver (Return Flight)	\$286.85
Whitehorse - Vancouver (Return Flight)	\$495.50

Another consideration is the size of the A.A. population of the District. Many groups in the lower mainland have a regular meeting attendance more than triple the entire membership of smaller Districts. We look at 12 members in attendance as a large meeting.

To be a remote and under funded District does not mean one has to be in the north. When I became DCM for our District I stated I would not attend any meetings on Vancouver Island. The reason, too remote to travel to. For most of us out of the lower mainland travelling to the Island adds a minimum of one extra day travel, which translates into two or three days of work missed, instead of the usual one. With this thought one can place the northern island as just as remote as any place in the interior.

I am not a member of this committee, but prior to the final report of the group I would like to present a few more perspectives from our remote part of the province and points I believe should be taken into consideration which are: Size of the district, how many groups, number of communities, distance between meeting locations, what is the average attendance, number of active members, cost of travelling to various locations.

***APPENDIX E**

Hi Friends,

Sorry I could not be there in person to deliver my thoughts on what I am reading in minutes of our General Service Committee's proposed changes to our remote communities positions but I do have some thoughts I would like to share with you and some facts. The existing 2 positions, in our Northern Remote Communities were originally created 1) because there was a need 2) because 2 people submitted a resume and it seemed like it would be helpful in creating the link in the large geographical area seeing as both lived at opposite ends of the spectrum which is still the case.

Over the past two years great strides have been made to

- 1) Link the membership in remote communities with the area and AA as a whole
- 2) To lend meeting support and information previously unaware of
- 3) To assist with literature previously not known about. And much more. This has been working well so why change it. I cannot possibly see how creating a remote communities chair will better the situation even if there were committees struck in the various communities. Those committees would still be wanting to meet with each other to discuss advances in service. From what I've heard from these remote communities, they don't want your proposed changes and are they not the ones to be consulted? Has the Remote Communities Liaison been in consultation with the Fellowship in these districts and is their voice being heard? We presently have Area General Service Committee members living within a reasonable distance to all our remote communities, why are they not being utilized to provide the service to all the remote communities? We have an alternate delegate living within hrs of the North Island and 2 committee members in the Interior within hrs of the Kootenay remote districts. How would one Remote chair serve better than what is in place now? Great deal of travel to all remote communities at great expense. We have something that is working, why mess it up. Better utilize the positions we have already in place. I realize that other areas have appointed a Remote Communities chair but they don't have the geographical area we have. Maybe it is time to form a second area within the BC Yukon to cut down on the geographic and the cost of service and make it more affordable for more representation at area functions. We are very fortunate that so much is being done in the north at their own expense because the funding is not being provided by the area.

***APPENDIX F-???**

Letters of Gratitude

District 44 Mission Hosting Sach Harbour NT

...I am an alcoholic,

Four years ago, my mom and I had to go Sach Harbour for eight months. Sach is on Banks Island with about one hundred residents of hunters and trappers.

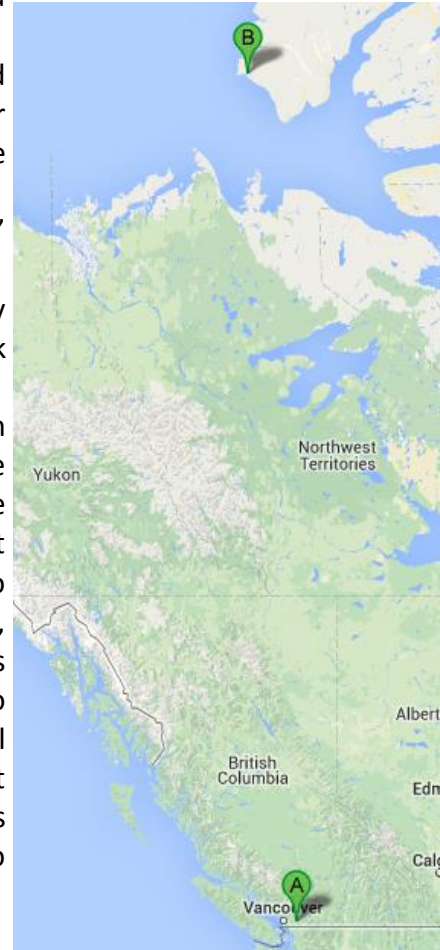
The Remote Communities Chair in Whitehorse contacted me with a Group in Mission BC. Who got together for an hour every Thursday night in Bob W.'s home to share the message with me.

Tears of joy, a lump in my throat as I heard "How it Works" over the phone a couple thousand miles away.

These six to eight people pulled me through the loss of my sister, being away from my only son, my grandchildren, work and the strong fellowship.

Last April 2012, the Pre-Conference was held in Whitehorse, people were invited to the mic to share experience of being new to this event. As I shared my gratitude for this life saving organization, a hand went up and I knew it had to be Bob W! My heart raced, felt overflowed with joy to finally hug and look into the eyes of the man who tirelessly, energetically hosted people of all stages of sobriety in his kitchen (to prove that one alcoholic could affect another as no non alcoholic could it also indicated that strenuous work, vital to permanent recovery.) bbXVI The language of the heart offers hope, faith and courage and gives way more than words can ever express. Only way to show this gratitude for me is to attend a meeting and try give it away and thank God.

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## The Origin of Remote Communities in Mission District 44

My name is Bob, a grateful Alcoholic in Mission. My first experience with Remote Communities was at a quarterly in 2009, I believe, as a GSR, where I attended a remote committee meeting. I knew nothing about it, but as I listened to stories and accounts of the people in remote areas who had no access to AA or meetings I became intrigued.

One story in particular really struck home where in one community there were over 100 attempted suicides and a good number of them were successful in the space of one year. I immediately enquired how I could get involved. I was given the remote chairperson's email and phone number. Shortly after I returned home I contacted Jim De. And got what information I needed to get started using a speakerphone. Jim gave me a contact number to call a person in, I



believe, was Hornsby Island and had my first remote meeting with seven members sitting in. It went fine for about a month and then we lost him. We have had some successes as well as a few failures. We were told not to be discouraged. If we could help even one Alcoholic then we are all winners. We had a few 3way speaker meetings which were great.

Our most exciting contact was a woman who was in Sachs Harbor on Banks Island in NWT. From our first meeting I knew we had a person who we could help. Sarah has a few years sober, but being on an island without any other recovering alcoholics to talk to, other than her Big Book, and the majority of inhabitants were practicing alcoholics. Some of our meetings were when she was in the middle of a snow storm and her satellite connection had a lot of static but we all made do. We noticed her strong spirituality along with her knowledge of the Big Book had kept her going. She has since moved to Whitehorse and we kept our communications open. I attended a voting assembly in Whitehorse and was amazed when a lady introduced herself and said she was looking for a man from Mission named Bob who literally saved her life. I stood up and we met and hugged to a round of applause. We had never met other than pictures we exchanged so when we shared we were not talking to a black box, but her picture which helped immensely.

After two years or so I decided to pass on the meeting to a couple who share my enthusiasm. Chris and Wendy are doing a great job of carrying on with Remote meetings in their home. Art, one of their main contacts will be in Mission on April 9 2014 and look forward to seeing him again. I once met him in Whitehorse the same time I met Sarah. My higher power was working overtime then. Art is from Endako, near Vanderhoof and his input has been inspirational.

At one time we had another remote meeting being run by Henriette. Her contact was a long haul truck driver who shared either from a motel room or from his rig. Bobby was very funny to hear sometimes but he takes his sobriety very serious. Henriette finally had to give it up and could not find a replacement.

I am so glad that Chris and Wendy are keeping Remote meetings going in Mission. Thank you both!!

ILAS

Bob W. past chair for remote communities in Mission District 44

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District 07 Nanaimo Hosting District 04 Hornby Island

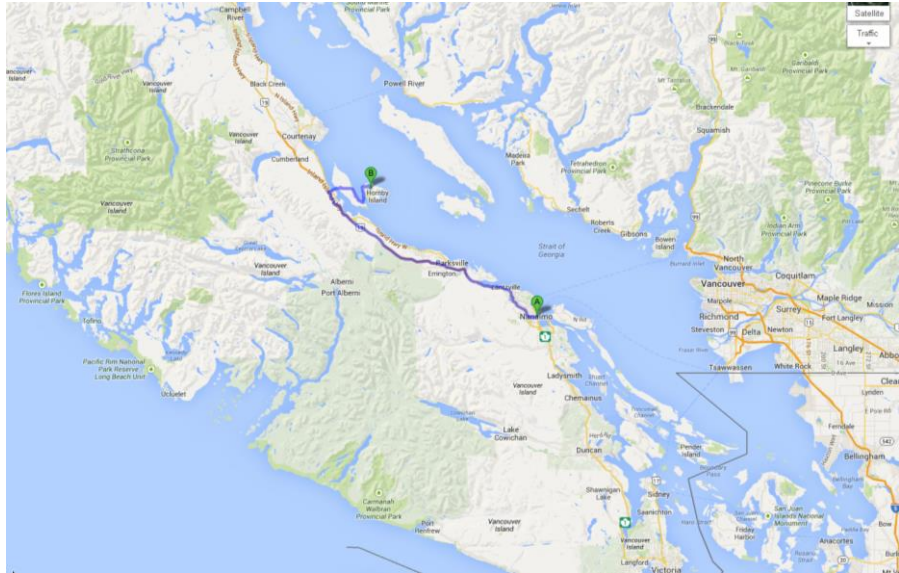
Nanaimo Remote Outreach Teleconferencing Meeting.

Hello, my name is Joe...

I'm a grateful recovering alcoholic and grateful recipient member of the Nanaimo Remote Outreach Teleconferencing Meeting.

Our HORNBY ISLAND RECYCLED GROUP has linked up with the Remote Outreach Group since February 2011 and let me tell you it has been a God send- a real blessing. The Nanaimo Outreach Group are truly a great bunch who comes together each Wednesday at 7:30pm to reach out with a meeting even if it's just me on the other end of the line. Sometimes we link up with Ahousat on the west coast of Vancouver Island where they, too have only two members.

The Remote Meetings have turned out to be some of the best meetings I have attended. The sharing is full of numerous insights and I often jot down notes to myself which carry me through the week as I re-read them. I always feel uplifted, revitalized, supported, encouraged, strengthened, and these meetings keep me on track as well as bringing me back to basics.



At a time when our meeting is floundering, the remote outreach meetings are helping to keep the doors open for those who still suffer---for all this I am totally and truly grateful.

Sincerely, a friend (of Bill W's) in need and deed,
Joe O.

This Hour Has 45 Minutes

Teleconference Phone-in Meeting - listed on the Area 79 Website Directory

By Mike G.

God's Will and Dose of Compassion for My People

Back in the early days of my sobriety I was tricked into service by a feisty old school A.A. woman. I was at the Business Meeting for the Miracle Group in Kamloops British Columbia, and the Group needed a person to pick up the cake for members birthdays. It sounded easy, but I didn't really like cake meetings because they reduced my chances of being asked to share.

After a couple of years my self-appointed service sponsor nominated me as GSR sating the Spirit of Rotation and my need to let go of my now beloved cake delivery job. I reluctantly became the GSR, and over the next 2 years was blessed with the insight and whole new level of fellowship that service at that level invariably provides. While GSR, I was invited to a 'Mini-Assembly', a regional version of a Quarterly, and participated in a workshop on Remote Communities. Having grown up in a small northern community, I intuitively stumbled upon what one might call my calling in Alcoholics Anonymous.

I had a background in technology and with new modes of communication springing up all the time I envisioned a way, with minimal effort on my part, I might help those in remote communities, and get my techno-jollies at the same time. Of course, with advent of the Internet (and being inclined towards grandiosity) I was expecting anything I organized to go viral and become the new big thing. I started a Tuesday night phone meeting on a conference call system

on my company phone system and so Tele-Serenity was born, running from 7:30-8:30 Pacific Time every Tuesday night. It was very slow, but thanks to my service sponsor and one fellow that had recently returned to his small town from a treatment centre we had a small core group to keep us going. Soon we had a couple more regulars, one man from Arizona and another Canadian living in the mountains of Puru.

But it was spotty, and over the next couple of years I spent a few meetings listening to the elevator music of the conference system that played when only the administrator was on the line. One day, a lady from a very remote native community came on the line. It was just the two of us that night. She shared how she had been keeping the doors open on a small meeting for years. How just when she was ready to give up, a still suffering alcoholic would show up and inspire her to keep the doors open. Many times over the past four years I had felt that same feeling, remembered her story, and kept the phone line open just in case. And like my friend, God would send me a still suffering Alcoholic to stoke the fires of my determination to keep the meeting open. The meeting moved to Monday nights and still struggled but remained going. But I resented the fact that I would often miss an 8 o'clock meeting and have a no-show night so, I changed the name to This Hour Has 45 Minutes, and had it run from 6:45-7:30pm so people could still catch an 8 o'clock meeting...and it worked. New referrals, a better time and some dedicated regulars have turned the meeting into one of the best ones I attend.

People often congratulate me on what a wonderful thing it is I am doing...but, this is God's work. I show for an hour each week, for me, and I am rewarded with sobriety. I have no idea how it has been 4 years since we started, but, I know it was not my doing. I ask God for guidance and He has put people, places and circumstances in my path that simply compel me to keep coming.

My partner Kate and I now live on a cruising sail boat, and recently had a new baby. When we are out and about in the islands of British Columbia west coast we always have at least one meeting a week. And we seek out more wherever we are. Invariably, the meeting happens at inconvenient times, like when we are rowing against a strong current to get back to ship, after a long day of land travel, sailing into an anchorage, or more recently, while Kate is in labour preparing to deliver a baby.

I am truly blessed to have been given this beautiful path to follow to carry the message and receive all the joy and God shots along the way. All this resulted from me truly feeling the difficulty I would have had, had I tried to sober up in my home town, rather than in a larger centre. I am one of the chief beneficiaries of this meeting. This happens every time a new voice comes on the line. What started off as God given compassion for the people of my home town has blossomed into a gift for all A.A.s in remote communities and shut-ins.

I am truly grateful.

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### **Distinct 37 White Rock/South Surrey Hosting District 52 Faro/Marsh Lake/Mayo, Yukon**

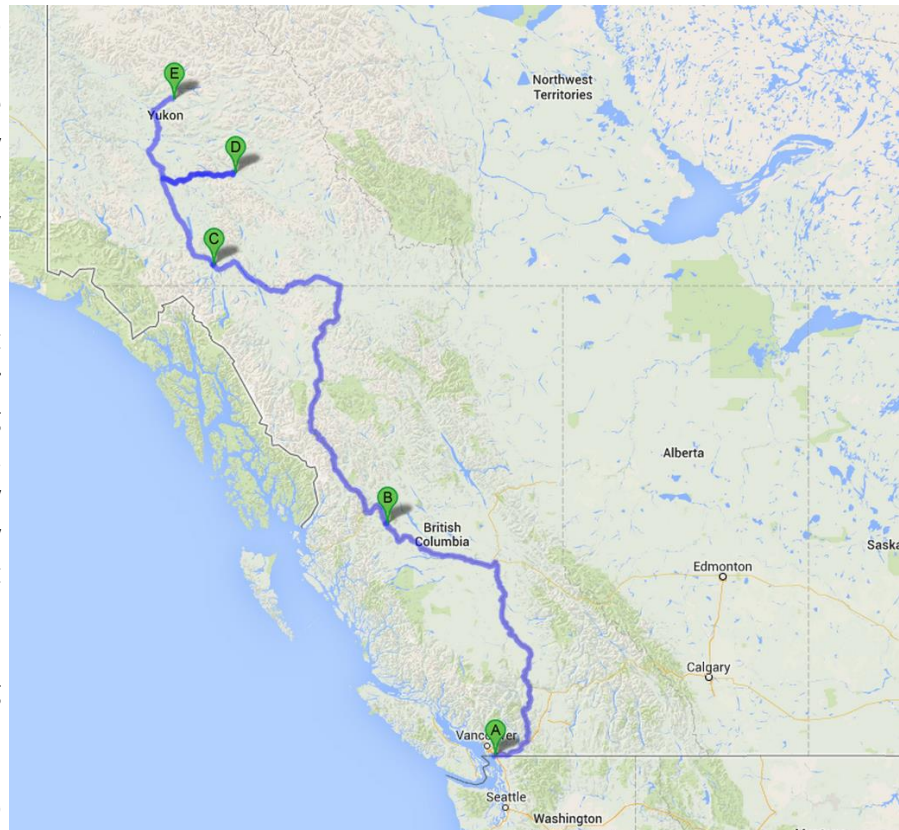
**"Going to Any Lengths" Meeting**

By Mark V.

Our Meeting started April 27, 2006 shortly after I was called by our Whitehorse District 52 Remote Chairperson and asked if I would be interested in a telephone meeting. White Rock, BC was interested in sponsoring a remote telephone meeting and I was the lucky candidate. Faro (a

community of 2,500 people) had for many years 3 meetings a week. When the mine shutdown for the last time in 1996, the population dropped to approximately 350 people and I eventually found myself the only AA member left. I made up the meeting shortfall by doing service for others by heavily involving myself in Ambulance, Fire, Search and Rescue and other volunteer situations. While these activities are good, it doesn't make up for the Spiritual aspects of the A.A. Program and over a period of time, my attitude would occasionally slip into a state of complacency. I just wasn't feeling as well as I liked to. Missing the following of A.A., this became the norm, which could put me at risk. Always, I need to remember where I came from. Having in the past, been very active in A.A., I have yet to find any substitute for the fellowship.

Meetings with White Rock started and ran every two weeks and ran for a short time, then at my request, we stepped it up to every week with alternating sponsors at the White Rock end. Our meeting format is reading & studying the 12 Steps & 12 Traditions. I'll anxiously await this meeting every Wednesday and haven't yet felt it was an obligation or a burden to be met. I'm grateful for people taking time from their busy lives to assist others, such as myself, in their journey to and through sobriety.



This particular meeting is invaluable to me as it demonstrates other peoples commitment to service through their consistent, reliable and timely call each week. I've gained friends and we have visited both ways. When I travel to the lower Mainland (not often), I am greeted with enthusiasm, love and hugs in abundance. It makes me feel cared for such as when I started in the program in 1982. Each meeting reminds me of my early days and the feelings I had at that time. I can actually feel the love over the phone line, which I would not have believed possible.

Meetings such as this can make a huge difference in a remote Alcoholics life, whether he (or she) is new in the program or have been around awhile and needs to remember what it was like, what happened and what it's like now.

~\*~

More from Mark V.

Our group will soon be entering our 6<sup>th</sup> year. We've experienced a few changes since we held our first meeting on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006. We've gone through a number of our southern hosts (through the Spirit of Rotation). Our latest hosts thought Skype would work so we decided to give it a try. It's been working very well as it still allows telephone connections (I don't have internet) and I can bring many more people into the meeting. With this tool, we can have members from various remote communities as well as people from down south, so they can too be a distance apart or shut-ins. This allows a meeting to happen even if some are missing from a call. Another change is we have had weekly meetings for several years now. It's been great as it allows me to ride the AA wave for several hours anticipating the meeting as well as after the meeting. Thank-you for the opportunity to be a part of AA and participate in recovery. It is wonderful to be able to commit to one meeting a week which would otherwise be very difficult.

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September 19th, 2006

Hi my name is Jade and I am an Alcoholic,

We call our remote meeting "Going to Any Lengths". We started in March 2006 by presenting the idea to our home group the White Rock Fiver. We asked them to sponsor a remote meeting, where by it was passed, and agreed, that they purchase the speaker phone for approximately \$100, and pay the long distance charges every month (approximately \$20) depending upon the telephone rate plan. The first Meeting was held April 27, 2006.

We agreed to start it off in our home. Gordon M. then set us up with our contact information. A fellow by the name of Mark V. in the Yukon Territories, in a place called Faro. Mark & I spoke on the phone and also by E-mail. He was able to obtain a speaker phone and a meeting place. *(If he was not able to get the use of a speaker phone we were prepared to ask that our group foot the bill for his too)*. We agreed to have the meeting bimonthly, every second Thursday, at 7:30pm-8:30pm. We take turns chairing the meeting. Reading the Preamble, How it Works, sometimes the traditions, sometimes the promises. We take our topic from the big book. Someone opens it up and reads a page. We have done this twice in one meeting if the meeting is small and we get through the topic quickly and there is still time left. We have had as many as 8 on our end and 5 in Faro, often though it is 1 or 2 in Faro and 4 or 5 in White Rock.

We have a sign-up sheet that is passed around our home group and the District Meeting. Members put their names and numbers down who would like to attend. I usually give them a reminder call.

We sit around the coffee table in the living room. We do not take tradition 7. People bring their own drinks. We keep track of the meetings and sometimes exchange e-mails with the fellows in Faro. We end with the Serenity Prayer.

Remember if you have "Call Waiting" feature on your phone to dial *70 before the number you are calling so as not to get that annoying beep if someone is trying to call you during your meeting.

As time goes on my list gets longer but this is truly one of the most rewarding experiences I have had since coming to this beautiful fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I hope this has been helpful ☺

ILAS - Jade F-H.

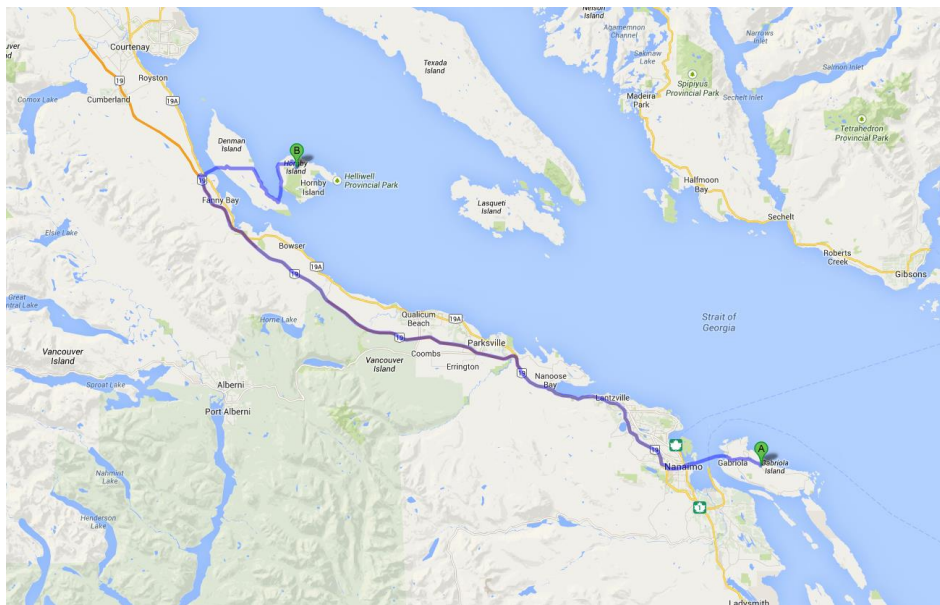
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## District 07 Gabriola Island Group Hosting District 04 Hornby Island

Hi, my name is Joe,

I'm a grateful recovering alcoholic and a member of A.A... I say gratefully recovering because, though my obsession with regards to alcohol was removed almost from the first time I walked through the doors of A.A., I still have to watch for obsession of mind in other areas of my life. Journey of life continues- "onwards and sideways" I like to say. From the start of my introduction to the "recovery realm" it was very apparent to me that "obsession-of-mind" was a key component of the drinking/thinking problem as it was for many of the ills and issues in society as well. And the underlying goal, it seemed to me, was and still is emotional sobriety for the alcoholic...the result of a spiritual solution that people who would not normally mix absolutely agree upon.



For some time now I have used "obsession-of-mind" as a catch phrase to help me catch all the areas of my life that can be warped out of shape by this...but it's a virtual MINDFIELD out there/in here. The compounding stress, anxiety and fear can be so debilitating at times that it can paralyze...in other words, it can lead to depression. Speaking of obsession of the mind and the MINDFIELD, I also try to keep these two sayings in mind; "keep it simple serenely" and: "gratitude is the greatest healer...and the greatest problem solver". Having said that, and since this is an honesty program, I have to admit that this is my fifth draft or attempt to write this. Simple share, yet have found myself going through the chance encounters and situations that brought me into A.A. without even realizing I was attending an A.A. meeting that first time I came through "the doors". I suppose it could be that because I'm a bit of a recluse living in a remote community (population of 900 people) that when I do some communicating I can get caught up in all the background details and "chance occurrences" of my story of recovery. That word; chance is a curious word- as is the word grace when you think about them...to me they are interchangeable. In any case I am truly grateful to be privileged to have the generous hand of the A.A. Remote Communities outreach reaching out to me. This is my second year of remote meetings and I also have been connected up with a fellow in Invermere who was having a one-on-one Twelve Step Study with me to help me get through the steps again which I've never been able to do since the first time back in 1998!!!

Another curious thing I discovered is that the root word for gratitude is the Latin word: “gratia” which means: GRACE!!!! - Which is an unmerited gift... which is great since as it says in the book: “WE are not saints”...and with these MINDFIELDS I need help even with it being about progress not perfection. One last saying: “no amount of head-stuff will amount to anything...the longest journey in life is (about) 18 inches-from your head to your heart”.

May ALL LOVE surround you, embrace you and continue to guide your way...HOME! (HOME IS WHERE THE HEART OF THE MATTER IS.)

Sincerely and gratefully,  
Joe O.

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District 52 - The Yukon Unity Group

Tele-Health Meeting –Video Conferencing

Carcross, Carmacks, Dawson City, Faro, Haines Junction, Old Crow, Whitehorse

Art- alcoholic,

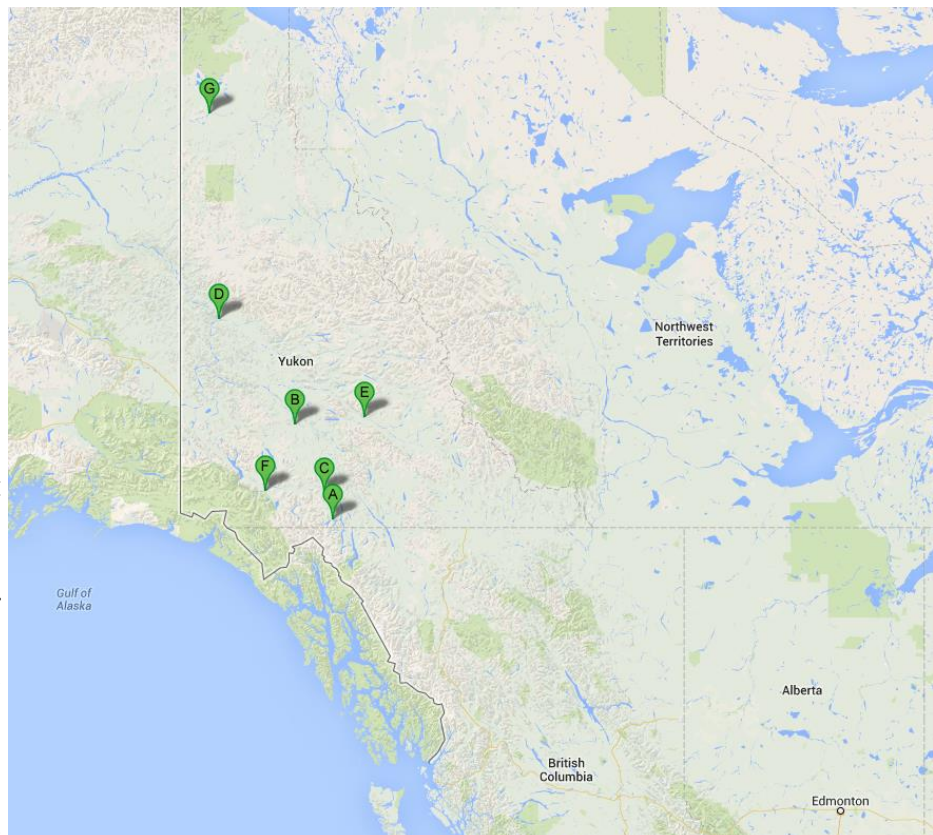
The Tele-health meetings are a very needed and appreciated assistance in our sobriety. Such a wonderful way to be in touch with others, to share and help each other. We hope this will help to bring more people into the rooms and help each of us stay on this path of life. Thanks. Dawson City, YT

~~~

My name is Sean, I am an alcoholic. When I finally decided to really get sober I had been attending AA for some time. It was in the small community of Haines Junction. People say it is harder to sober up and remain that way in a community and I see quite a bit of truth in that thought.

The teleconference meetings connect people in similar situations in sobriety and I have found it a comfort to realize that there are others who understand the unique challenges that communities present

in recovery. There is a common thread of understanding among alcoholics in general, but the



teleconference meetings just add that extra bit of tailoring that sometimes helped me get over a hump or hurdle. Yes the last sentence was in the past tense, I am now living in a small city in southern Ontario where I can go to two or three meetings a day if I want. I now realize how important that once a week meeting was in helping me stay sober. My recovery feels much more solid here with more support, but I am grateful for the teleconferences without which I might not have gotten to this point at all.

Formerly Haines Junction, Yukon

~~~

Hello, my name is Isabel and I'm an alcoholic.

I attended my 1st AA meeting in London, Ont. some 20 years ago. I was spoiled then, having my choice of meetings 7 days a week. But I didn't know that then. I took for granted that AA meetings would always be there for me.

I didn't actually get (and stay) sober until years later. By then my husband and I had moved to Haines Junction, Yukon, to retire. Haines Junction is a beautiful small community nestled at the edge of Kluane National Park. I woke up every day surrounded by 3 acres of woods and the most spectacular views of the St. Elias Mountains. But I was not sober. In fact my drinking escalated and I was totally out of control.

When I hit my bottom, I hit hard, like so many of us do. If that wasn't bad enough, I learned there were no, nada, zip, zilch, AA meetings in my community. At that time the only meetings were in Whitehorse, a 2 hour drive away. My vehicle was an old beater that barely made the 20km drive to the Post Office and back.

I unpacked my *Big Book* and *Twelve and Twelve* and began to read. But I sorely missed the contact with other alcoholics. I needed their support. Now, I realized what I had so casually dismissed in London. I was alone and I was isolated.

I was sober about 20 months when a family crisis took me back to London. Meetings, at last!!! My father was very ill and my mother had dementia and needed constant watching. My Home Group was a 5 minute bus ride away but I could not leave my parent's apartment, I was the sole caregiver to both my parents 24/7 and I was unable to get to any face-to-face meetings. So close and yet....so far out of reach.

When I returned to my home in Yukon, I was again isolated and alone. I was sober, but just barely. I was a dry drunk. My program was sorely lacking the fellowship part of my recovery.

Then 1 day I saw an ad in the newspaper. There were new AA meetings in Haines Junction! I was ecstatic! Finally! At last!

I attended my first video-conference meeting on a Friday afternoon, in a small room, just me and a television screen. Suddenly the screen came to life and to my complete astonishment there were people on the screen, sitting around a conference table. Then another screen opened and there was another single person sitting staring at me. Then another and another.

Tom A in Whitehorse, was chairing the meeting and began to read *How It Works*, another person read *The 12 Traditions*, and another the *Daily Reflection*. It was a real an AA meeting! And I was a part of it. The feeling of belonging I felt that day is unimaginable. I was no longer alone. I was surrounded by my fellow alcoholics and it felt wonderful. These were *my* people, the ones that really knew and understood my struggles.

That hour flew by. At the end, everyone stood up and 'held hands' for the Serenity Prayer. For those of us alone in the communities we had our hands outstretched toward the screen, those in Whitehorse lined up and held hands too. But the people at the ends of the line had their hands outstretched to us in the communities. In that moment a new meeting and new tradition was born. We were a group, separated by hundreds of kilometers, but we were united as one.

Later, we called ourselves **The Yukon Unity Group**. What an appropriate name; for we truly are united, as a group, spread out in a vast wilderness called Yukon. This is my Home Group now and I am thrilled to be a part of something so new and exciting. It is also my pleasure to be secretary for this group; my first step into service work since filling coffee pots and setting up chairs, some 20 years ago.

It is with the support from these video meetings that I can say: I am sober, 24 hours at a time, since October 14, 2007. And I am no longer a dry drunk, I am a recovering alcoholic. I am grateful for those that made this type of meeting possible for me and many others and hope it will spread out to other remote communities around the world.

"It works when you work it" and this works!

~~~

Hi my name is Karen and I am an alcoholic,

When I first started attending AA, it was in Whitehorse and I hung out with people who truly enjoyed going to meetings. I was going to 1, 2, 3 meetings a day and I was going to lots of Roundups. Yes, I was not drinking and I was going to lots of meetings, and I thought I was working a program.

I have had a few different lives in the last 29, 30 years. The last 12 years I have done a lot of moving to different provinces, which as we know all had meetings and people in recovery, meetings and people that I did not search out, not very often anyways. Then there were communities that did not have meetings and there was no one who was working on recovery with the program of AA, but there was the tele-health meetings on Fridays, and as others have shared, I was the only person in that particular building in my community, but when the time came and the meeting started, people from all over the communities would be on the screen, Dawson City, Old Crow, Carmacks, Carcross, Haines Junction, Faro, and of course Whitehorse.

God Bless those people and you know who you are that did the work that was needed to have these meetings, to ensure the message of recovery through AA is possible, and that we never really have to be alone, unless we want to be.

Thank you.

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District 44 Mission Hosting District 54 Endako

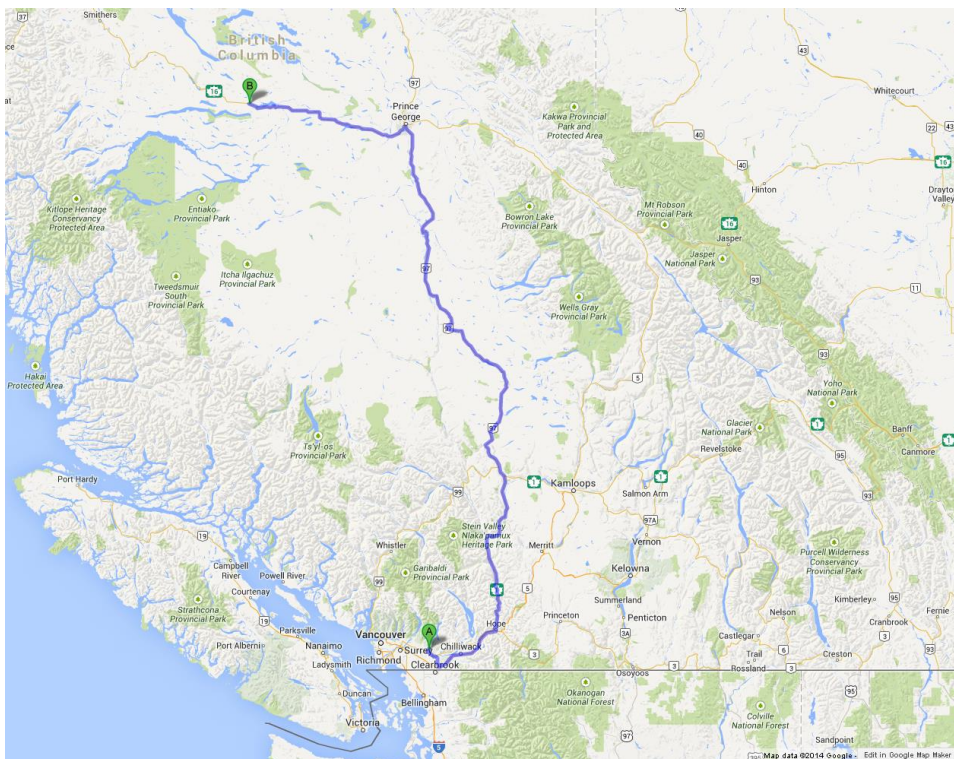
By Art B.

Technically I don't know if I exactly fall under the auspices of a remote community. There are seven meetings a week that I could drive to - if the snow isn't too bad, and hasn't drifted over my driveway, with the snow plow at the wrong end. In the Spring I can usually contend with the mud.

However to get to those meetings requires navigating over 800 kilometres of Highway 16 and believe me, sometimes, in order to get my vitamin A, eh, I will do that, but the 15 or so hours required can prove a bit onerous.

Most of the meetings in my area are small, average 3 to 4 people. While it only takes two alcoholics to have a meeting, I have to admit to occasionally wanting more.

It was a delight when I was introduced to the remote communities' telephone meetings. Wednesday night come seven o'clock will find me, supper finished, slippers on sitting in my office waiting for Chris or Wendy to call. Their group facilitates a telephone meeting and I have the luxury of attending, snow



storm, rain or mud without my wife wondering and worrying about when I will be back from the meeting. A wonderful serving of fellowship, the A.A. Message of recovery, and the sure knowledge that I am not alone. Sometimes I can even smell the cookies being served at the other end of the line!

If you're up on Highway 16 on a Wednesday night around 7p.m., drop by. I'm listed as a remote meeting and there is always room for one more around the speaker phone. With a bit of heads up I can make sure that the smell of cookies isn't just our imagination.

And together we can pass on a message of recovery though a Remote Communities Connection.

Remote Communities Kit Literature

Pamphlet Name	Pamphlet #
A.A. Guidelines (full set)	MG-20
A.A. Fact File	M-24
Information on A.A.	F-2
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BC/Yukon Area 79

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General Service Committee

PO Box 42114 • Vancouver, BC V5S 4R5 • Tel (604) 435-2181