

## 2025 Remote Communities Communicator: The Remote Communities Toolbox

*Greetings to the members of the 75th General Service Conference!*

This non-Conference event is an opportunity to learn how A.A. members across the United States and Canada transcend the barriers of geography, language, culture, and life conditions to carry our message to all who seek it. *Each area determines how to apply this definition to its specific circumstances.* Remote Communities can be found in most, if not all, areas in North America.

We encouraged each Area to submit an article of 500-600 words with the broad theme of a "Remote Communities Toolbox." Articles can include anything that can help those involved with remote communities and might address such topics as the history of an area's Remote Communities efforts, the types of perils areas face, solutions that have proven effective, literature that has been used to carry the message, and plans for future evolvment.

Thank you to all the areas that contributed to this year's Remote Communities Communicator Newsletter: Area 02 – Alaska, 08 – San Diego/Imperial

California, 87 – Southwest Québec, 42 – Nevada, 15 – South Florida/Bahamas/VI/Antigua, 83 – Eastern Ontario, 78 – Alberta/Northwest Territory. ■

### ***In Love and Service,***

Alan W., *Panel 74/Area 84 Delegate (Northeast Ontario)*

JoEllen L., *Panel 74/Area 02 Delegate (Alaska)*

Kerri K., *Panel 74/Area 46 Delegate (New Mexico)*

Richard O., *Panel 74/Area 08 Delegate (San Diego/Imperial California)*

Terri P., *Panel 74/Area 29 Delegate (Maryland)*

### **CONTENTS**

- 1** A Brief History of the Pre-Conference Remote Communities Meeting
- 2** Map of Delegate Areas
- 3** List of Article Submissions by Area, Delegate and Author
- 4** Announcements





## ► A Brief History of the Pre-Conference Remote Communities Meeting

*This is a brief recap of the history leading up to the start of the Pre-Conference Remote Communities meeting. 1970's: The need for the special attention to Remote Communities efforts was identified back in the seventies or perhaps maybe even before that.*

**July 1993:** An informal meeting concerning remote communities was held in Toronto, during the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of A.A. in Canada. Not much happened other than the fact that the need was expressed that something had to be done, and members were encouraged to do what they were already doing in their areas.

**February 1996:** At the Western Canada Regional Forum in Calgary, the then Trustee-at-Large Canada organized a breakfast meeting with delegates, trustees and the G.S.O. Manager to discuss creating a Canadian committee that would deal with some perceived remote communities' issues. Outcome of meeting: needed to create a committee, needed to get support to set up a luncheon at the upcoming General Service Conference and work toward holding a special conference geared to establishing a working committee consisting of 14 Canadian areas and Alaska.

**April 1996:** Met over lunch at the 46th General Service Conference with some delegates, some G.S.O. staff and Board members to discuss the movement and to move ahead. A staff member was assigned to help coordinate efforts.

**July 1996:** In Toronto, the first Remote Communities Conference was held with all 15 delegates. Several areas reported on the history of remote communities' work. It was determined that a remote community was any community to which it was difficult to carry the message because of language, culture, or geography. It was also determined from that meeting that we needed to continue to meet, and the most effective time would be prior to the yearly General Service Conferences.

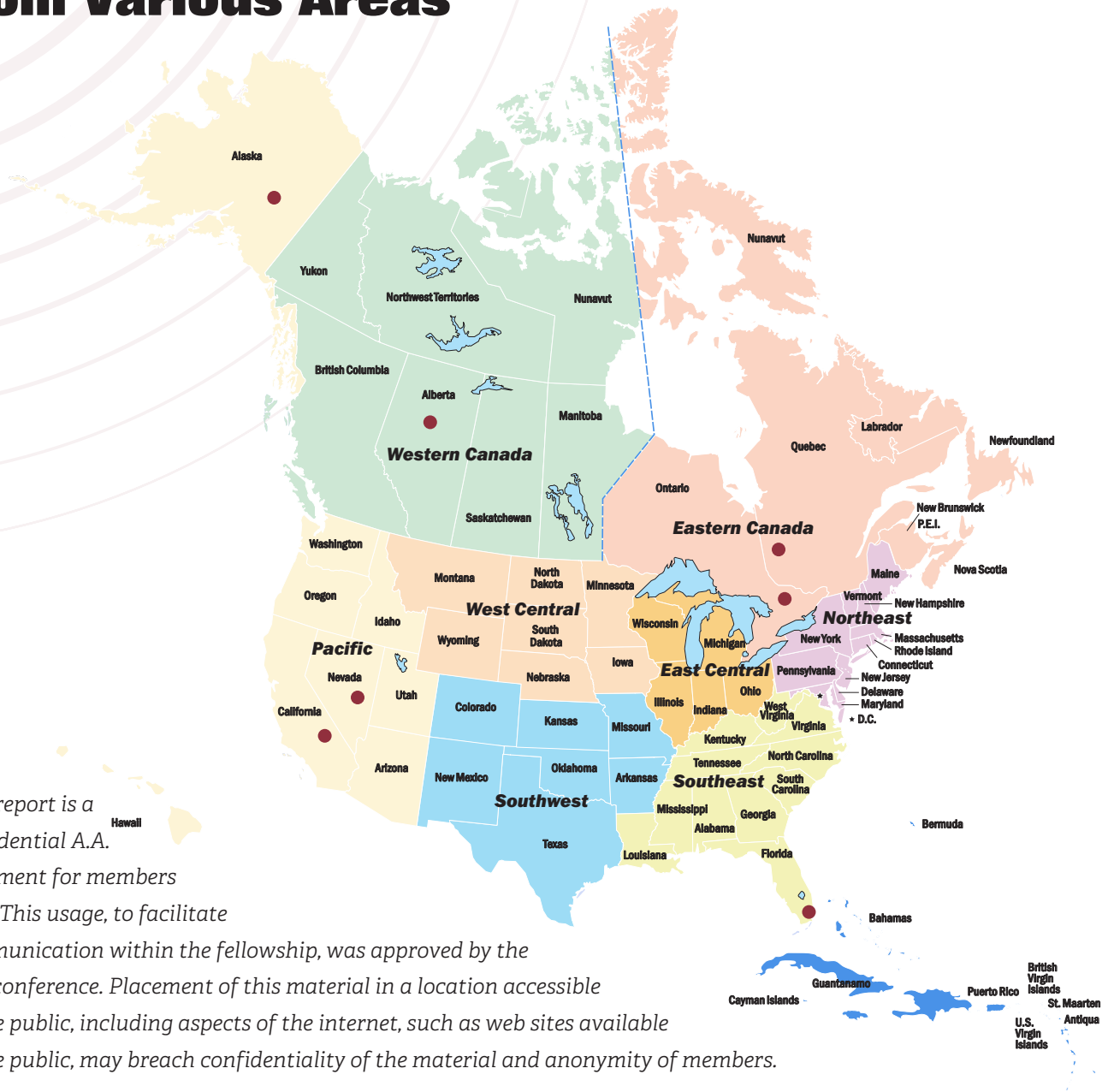
**1997:** The Remote Communities Committee met prior to the opening of the 47th General Service Conference. In attendance were the original 15 delegates, a few invited delegates from the U.S. areas that experienced some of the same concerns, several trustees, and G.S.O. staff members. The "remote communities" definition was reviewed and recommitted to, as was the purpose of the committee. The only action taken at this meeting was to open up the membership to the whole conference. It was determined that after 1997, the committee should have four co-chairs, one each from Western and Eastern Canada, and one each from each side of the Mississippi in the United States. A newsletter was also to be developed to assist in reporting what was happening in this vital area of Twelfth Step work.

**Present:** The Pre-Conference Remote Communities meeting continues with 2-5 co-chairs and a staff member who provides support and assistance to the chairs of this committee as well as the newsletter (*Remote Communities Communicator*). ■



# Map of A.A. Areas with Articles Submitted from Various Areas

*This report is a confidential A.A. document for members only. This usage, to facilitate communication within the fellowship, was approved by the 1975 conference. Placement of this material in a location accessible to the public, including aspects of the internet, such as web sites available to the public, may breach confidentiality of the material and anonymity of members.*



## List of Article Submissions by Area, Delegate and Author

**Area 02** — Delegate is JoEllen L.; Authors are Ben L., Alternate Delegate, and Alex H., Remote Communities Chair

**Area 08** — Delegate is Richard O.; Authors are Blaine B., Armed Services Committee Volunteer, and Paul K., Alternate Area Registrar

**Area 87** — Delegate and Author is André D.

**Area 42** — Delegate is Lyle C.; author is Annie KD, Alternate Treasurer

**Area 15** — Delegate and Author is Lisa D.

**Area 83** — Delegate Amy L., and co-authors are Amy L. and Bill C., Alternate Delegate

**Area 78** — Delegate is Karen O., and author is Kathryn P., Remote Communities chair

## Area 87 — Montreal

### Our Remote Communities in 2025



According to the 2021 census, there are roughly 150,000 Haitians and roughly 150,000 Latin Americans, with the majority concentrated on the Island of Montreal. The vast majority of all Haitians and a large proportion of all Latin Americans in Canada live in the greater Montreal area.

At present, Area 87's membership is made up of some 5,000 Francophones, 2,000 Anglophones, and around 250 Hispanophones, in 370 groups. Haitians, an important community in the Greater Montreal area, are absent from our service structure. We do have a Russian group that meets once a week and is hosted by a Latin American group. We also have a Polish group that is inactive, but which the area continues to post on its meeting list. Natives North American in our area have two groups. We used to have a Farsi-language group (Iranians), which has disbanded and is in practice integrated into an English-language group. Italian members attend our English-speaking groups. And especially, we have a group that has been hosting telephone meetings in French since Monday, March 23, 2020 (COVID), for alcoholics who are unable to attend or have limited mobility. And a group that has been holding regular meetings for deaf people in *Langue des Signes du Québec (LSQ)* for more than 30 years.

The composition of the Greater Montreal population, especially on the Island of Montreal with its 2.1 million inhabitants in 2023, is a real mosaic. It represents a great diversity of cultures, races, colors, beliefs and languages. There are no fewer than 120 cul-

tural communities from all five continents. This reality is not necessarily reflected in our meeting rooms.

In Montreal and its suburbs, we pride ourselves on being inclusive. So how do we get our message across to alcoholics who can't be reached because of their "remote-ness"? A remote community is not necessarily an isolated community from the North Pole. According to our guidelines, such a community is defined as one where it is difficult to get the message across because of language, culture or geography.

It's a very broad definition, and can be viewed as a very inclusive one. Whether an individual is housebound, living in an institution, part of a special interest group, or is stigmatized because of their religious or cultural beliefs, they are welcome within our society. The issue is how do we reach out to those communities, and how do we ensure equal access for the people currently underserved by our local service structure?

We have a lot of work to do in identifying community resources and leaders within our area's ethnic and cultural communities (local media, places of worship, medical care providers, social clubs, schools, etc.).

Recently, our local Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community committees have struggled to bring together members interested in connecting with our cultural and linguistic communities.

The forthcoming arrival of the Haitian Creole-language Big Book challenges us to reach out to this important community in the Greater Montreal area. Although over 56 percent of the population of the Montreal region is bilingual and 24 percent trilingual, the issue of discrimination on the basis of race, color, language or ethnic origin is real, even in 2024.

When I ride on the public transit in Montreal, I'm really in a diverse world, unlike sitting comfortably in my home group's Monday meeting. The contrast is striking. Why do our meetings not reflect the same diversity? And how can our small microcosm of A.A.s in the Greater Montreal area become more inviting to

those underrepresented communities today and moving forward? The challenge is daunting.

In my 31 years in A.A., the A.A. message hasn't changed. I've changed. The world has changed too. The city I've lived in for nearly 40 years has also changed a lot. I'm still the same man, but my inner self has been transformed, thanks to the Twelve Steps program. My best friend is English-speaking; my sponsor is American. I have a close friendship and collaboration with a Latin American member, despite the fact that I speak virtually no Spanish. I have Greek, Italian, and other friends.

All our area meetings and assemblies offer simultaneous French/English translation provided by our volunteer members. All my written communications as a delegate are in three languages, since historically our area is English, French and Spanish.

In 2024, we celebrated 80 years of A.A. in the Greater Montreal area. It was an Anglophone who introduced A.A. to us. In 2024, we also celebrated 50 years of A.A.'s Spanish-speaking presence in Montreal and 75 years of history of the first French-speaking group in Montreal. Diversity has always been in our DNA. How can we make it flourish in 2024? Right now, our membership seems to be stagnating. Please, let's stop justifying

ourselves by blaming the pandemic. We could point to many reasons and certainly many of our shortcomings. Taking action is about turning to a Higher Power, cleaning house, and then turning to others and knowing why you're doing it. Individually, that's fine. But collectively, are we ready today to undertake this exercise? What we want to pass on to others, are we ready to apply it to ourselves? Collectively?

The challenges are great. I'm personally convinced that the answer lies in our shared experience, above all in sponsorship — good sponsorship, as Bill W. put it. Solidarity, camaraderie, support, and above all, a reassuring, ongoing presence. It doesn't cost much, but it takes a lot of time. In its early days, A.A. took a vow of corporate poverty. Individually, A.A. means a little money, but a lot of shared time and love.

In closing, let's keep this in mind:

"But the ex-problem drinker who has found this solution, who is properly armed with the facts about himself, can generally win the entire confidence of another alcoholic in a few hours. Until such an understanding is reached, little or nothing can be accomplished." (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, page 18) ■

André D.

**Ben L.**

**Area 02 — Alaska**

## My Experience in the Upbringing of the Area 02 Remote Communities Workbook

As I am standing as the District 11 Remote Communities Chair for the third year, our group has embarked on a new task. Area 79 had given us a gift. A workbook their committee had created that we could use to build our very own. It was great! The format was perfect, and the information gave us grounds to match with our own. All we had to do was go through it, page by page, and replace their information with our own.

We began by including the workbook as an agenda item during our monthly business meeting. Each member would select 1–4 pages to edit over the next month and report back to the group with their draft(s) during the following business meeting. Some pages took longer than others, so the amendments were slow moving. Sure enough, we were able to edit the first 17 pages. This was during the start of COVID, and it seemed we

all had some time on our hands.

At the start of the next panel and as COVID restrictions were lessening, people's lives seemed to become busier again and committee members were learning new roles. Our Remote Communities Group was off and rolling again. Literally, as we trudged along the road on our first trip in years! As great as it was to be back "out there," in a good way, the workbook was sort of left behind. I slowly worked on some small edits here and there, built our own pamphlet, but have not made any large updates recently.

With this upcoming meeting our delegate is attending and all the interest in remote communities, I am hopeful again that we can gain movement on the

workbook. With a great suggestion, I “chopped off” what we had edited and created a draft of our first Alaska Area 02 Remote Communities Workbook. Slowly we will be able to add to this document with stories from our very own Alaska A.A. members who lived/live in remote areas of Alaska, as well as committee members who will share their experiences spreading the message with this amazing group. More to come from Remote Communities Area 02 because when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, we want the hand of A.A. always to be there, and for that, *we are responsible.* ■

[Link to the Area 02 Remote Communities Workbook \(In progress\)](#)

**Alex H.**

**Area 02 — Alaska**

## My Remote Communities Story

**H**i, I’m Alex. I am an alcoholic, and Remote Communities has saved my life. My story is not unique. My drinking was not unique, although I had some unique things happen to me. I am your run-of-the-mill alcoholic. I started drinking daily by the time I was able to buy alcohol legally. By the time I was 27, I was diagnosed with acute pancreatitis. One month after getting out of the hospital, I started drinking again, even though the pain that I felt during my hospital stay was so intense I thought I would never drink again. Within four months I was back in the hospital with pancreatitis for a second time, and I was given a fifty-fifty chance of making it out. That was still not my bottom. It took nearly another year of drinking, knowing that my body was going to shut down. I was killing myself slowly. I eventually became so lonely and desperate that I went to a meeting. That was in the spring of 2016.

My health and my life got better quickly. I had a home group; I had service positions at that Home Group, and I thought I was in the middle of A.A. Nine months into my recovery, I went to the dentist and walked out with a script for pain medicine. I spent the next year coming in and out of the rooms. I changed sponsors and home groups. My new home group offered me a GSR position, even though I was newly sober. I said yes, even though I had no idea what I was doing. This, looking back, was the best decision I ever made for my recovery. It introduced me to service at the district level, which in turn introduced me to

service at the area level. I saw enthusiasm in those rooms and meetings that I had never seen before for Alcoholics Anonymous. This enthusiasm was contagious. I wanted more of what they had.

During my time as a general service representative, I learned about remote communities. My sponsor was given a scholarship to go on one of the trips. He came back from that trip and told me all about it and from then on, I have been hooked. I started attending the monthly meetings, and then I became the district Remote Community chair for Anchorage. I said yes to this position in February of 2020 with hopes of getting to travel around the state and be of service to my fellow alcoholics. March of 2020 the pandemic started. I was so frustrated that I almost stepped down from the position. I am so glad I didn’t.

During the pandemic, I had to find a new routine. Being involved with remote communities and having the responsibility of attending the monthly meetings and the district meetings kept me in the middle of A.A. during this tough time in my sobriety. I felt isolated, I felt removed from the Fellowship, I felt remote. We stayed busy by sending literature out to villages and overseeing the Alaska Statewide call-in meeting. We tried to be of service to the remote places in our state as best as possible. The compassion and gratitude that I received from some members in these remote places fueled my recovery. I stuck with it.

When we started traveling again, we hit the ground running. We coordinate one flying trip every year to a village that is only accessible by boat or plane. We also do one driving trip on the road system. When we go to a remote location, we get to be of service in almost every capacity. Treatment, corrections, PI, CPC, we get to do it all! We visit schools, police stations, jails, treatment centers, health clinics, hospitals, attend local meetings and put on our own. We have potlucks and pizza nights and do our best to stay in contact after we leave. I truly am grateful that I said yes to these positions, even though I wasn’t convinced I was a good choice or that I could do the job well. But I was taught in the rooms to say yes to Alcoholics Anonymous, and thank goodness I did.

Currently I am the Area 02 remote community’s chair. I am so grateful that I get to be of service in this capacity in a state such as Alaska. We not only are separated geographically and limited to where we can travel in a car, but we have language barriers, we have social economic differences, we have jails, treatment



centers and many other communities that can be considered remote. When I started my term as area chair, I had one goal in mind and that was to make Alcoholics Anonymous in Alaska feel like one big Fellowship rather than several small pockets. I hope we can continue working toward this goal. I also hope that we in Alaska can be an example for other areas because every region has communities that feel isolated or separate. And we in A.A. are all-inclusive. Every member should feel the love and support that I have felt during my time in this beautiful lifesaving program. ■

**Blaine B.**

**Area 08 — San Diego/Imperial California**

## Remote Regiments — How the Area 8 Armed Services Committee Carries the Message

Greater San Diego has always been a military town. Our Area 8 encompasses San Diego and Imperial Counties in Southern California. We are currently home to eight major military installations including literally hundreds of individual commands. The active duty population is approximately 120,000, about equally split between Navy and Marine Corps. If we add in the dependents of those sailors and marines, and consider the general incidence of alcoholism, there is a large target audience for carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous.

What makes our military population a remote community? First, there is an element of geographic separation. While the Naval Station San Diego (home to 46 ships) is located in the metropolitan area of San Diego, our largest military facility in both size and population, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, sits at the northernmost reaches of San Diego County.

At 120,000 acres (1,850 square miles), its great expanse is home to 42,000 marines. There is significant physical separation from populated areas that border it. And many individuals there do not have ready access to personal transportation.

The second, and probably most significant factor, in making the military a remote community is cultural. The drinking of alcohol has been a longstanding military tradition.

From rations of rum or grog to happy hours at clubs that serve low-cost drinks and pitchers. If one does not partake, it is often seen that one is not a team member. Certainly, there are individuals who drink responsibly, but to the nascent alcoholic who needs no encouragement, it is a ticket to disaster.

Until a few years ago, there was not an organized effort at the Area level to carry the A.A. message to the remote military community, but some service did take place. Panels coordinated by our two H&I (Hospitals and Institutions) committees took meetings into treatment and correctional facilities where military members were present, and a number of A.A. meetings had been established by individuals on two of the military bases.

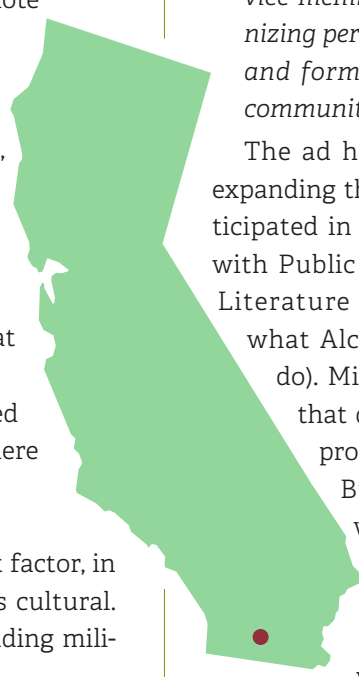
Then, in 2019, a longtime A.A. member, the late Tiffany G., arrived in San Diego from Japan. She had been a civilian employee on the Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, and while there, became very active in the local service structure and in promoting Alcoholics Anonymous to those marines at the Air Station. Upon reaching San Diego, she set about doing similar things in a much bigger pond. [See “An Armed Services Standing Committee for San Diego/Imperial California (Area 8)” Box 459, Fall 2021]

Tiffany organized an ad hoc committee, which included some active duty A.A. members as well as veterans and others interested in this service. The mission was:

*To carry the message to still suffering alcoholic service members, veterans, and their families, by organizing personnel and assets available within our area and forming new relationships with our military communities.*

The ad hoc committee met regularly and began expanding the services already in place. Members participated in safety presentations and, in conjunction with Public Information, attended veterans' events. Literature items were developed that described what Alcoholics Anonymous does (and does not do). Military service-specific cards were created that directed those who might have an alcohol problem to websites and local central offices. Business cards with similar information were distributed.

The valuable service work done by the ad hoc committee was recognized, and in early 2021, the Armed Services Committee was voted in as the newest standing com-



mittee of Area 8. Since that time, service work has continued with a specific emphasis on establishing more regular A.A. meetings on the military bases.

Our largest military facility, the aforementioned Camp Pendleton, currently has six (6) regular meetings with all weekdays covered. One of these meetings was established at the request of the First Marine Regiment, a command located in a remote part of the base. As the population centers of our northern A.A. neighbor Area 9 are much closer to that meeting than those in Area 8, we were invited to pitch attendance at this meeting as a service opportunity for members living in southern Orange County, California, at Area 9's District 12 monthly meeting.

Difficulties are encountered in these efforts. While some military commands are cooperative, the commanding officer of that First Marine Regiment invited members of the Committee to sit down with him and his staff to discuss how to better handle marines with alcohol problems; that is not always the case. Also, it is becoming increasingly difficult for A.A. members without some sort of military identification to get on to facilities to attend the meetings conducted there. However, with much Area 8 support, the Armed Services Committee will continue to serve our remote uniformed population. ■

**Paul K.**

**Area 08 — San Diego/Imperial California**

## **Bridging Divides of Remote Communities: Overcoming Linguistic, Geographical, and Cultural Barriers in Area 8**

The Area 8 Remote Communities Outreach Initiative is a dynamic and comprehensive effort to ensure that every alcoholic who still suffers receives the support and fellowship of A.A. At its core, the initiative addresses three critical barriers — linguistic, geographical, and cultural — that prevent many members from fully accessing A.A.'s resources. The Remote Communities Ad Hoc Committee is committed to understanding and dismantling these obstacles through innovative strategies and a tailored approach.

From a **geographical** standpoint, many A.A. members reside in remote or isolated areas where tradition-

al meeting access is limited. For instance, members on Native American reservations or those living in rural parts of Area 8 often face long travel distances, infrequent local meetings, and limited transportation options. Recognizing these challenges, the Committee has implemented hybrid meeting formats that combine in-person gatherings with digital platforms such as Zoom. This approach not only bridges physical distances but also ensures that even homebound or rural members can participate in A.A. fellowship without the burden of travel. By bringing meetings into the digital realm while still preserving the essence of face-to-face interaction, A.A. can effectively reach isolated communities and create an inclusive support network.

**Linguistic** challenges also play a pivotal role in limiting access to A.A.'s message. Many members come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, particularly within Asian and Hispanic communities. Language differences can lead to misunderstandings or a feeling of exclusion when standard A.A. literature and meeting formats do not resonate culturally or linguistically. To address this, the Committee is committed to continuously updating both digital and printed A.A. materials — such as GSR manuals, service guides, and pamphlets — to ensure that they are accessible, culturally sensitive, and linguistically appropriate. Dedicated liaisons and subcommittees are tasked with tailoring communications and outreach strategies so that language is not a barrier. By translating key materials and adapting meeting formats, the initiative ensures that the richness of A.A.'s message is available in multiple languages and dialects, thereby fostering better understanding and participation among non-English-speaking members.

The **cultural** dimension of the outreach is equally crucial. Cultural differences can manifest in various ways — from differing beliefs about recovery to unique societal norms and expectations. The initiative focuses on engaging communities with distinct cultural identities, such as Hispanic populations (with a special focus on Hispanic women), Native American groups, LGBTQ+ members, military personnel, and others. Cultural sensitivity is achieved by partnering with local community centers, shelters, and other trusted organizations that understand the unique cultural context of these groups. These partnerships facilitate targeted outreach efforts, such as planned visits to the Rincon Reservation and tailored programs for Hispanic communities, where cultural nuances are respected





and addressed. The Committee's strategy emphasizes the need to listen first — gathering direct feedback from community members — to better understand their specific cultural needs and then adapting outreach efforts accordingly.

Recent initiatives further underscore the Committee's commitment to overcoming these intertwined barriers. A series of community visits is scheduled to assess local needs, engage in dialogue, and introduce available A.A. services directly to affected communities. These visits are designed to open channels of communication, enabling A.A. to better understand both the geographical isolation and the cultural and linguistic nuances that might otherwise keep members from participating. Furthermore, by integrating online A.A. groups into the broader A.A. structure, digital participants are afforded the same robust support as those who attend traditional meetings, ensuring that no member feels isolated due to their location, language, or cultural background.

In conclusion, the Area 8 Remote Communities Outreach Initiative is not just an outreach program, it is also a dedicated effort to dismantle the linguistic, geographical, and cultural barriers that hinder full participation in A.A. Through hybrid meeting formats, updated and multilingual resources, and culturally tailored outreach efforts, the initiative works relentlessly to build a more connected, inclusive community. The call to action is clear: Every A.A. member is invited to join this transformative effort — whether by participating in workshops, serving as a volunteer liaison, or providing feedback based on firsthand experience. Together, we can ensure that the message of A.A. reaches every corner of Area 8, leaving no one behind. ■

**Annie KD**

**Area 42 — Nevada**

## **The Nothing In Between — Tales from Area 42 District 19, Ely, Nevada**

I started to attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in Ely when I first joined A.A. in 2011. Ely (population 4,900) is a geographically isolated mountain town located in the high desert about 250 miles in the middle northeastern part of Nevada. By many accounts, Ely is considered to be the most remote community in the contiguous United States because of its distance from a city with more than 25,000 people and its proximity to a major regional airport. It's five hours from Las Vegas. Six hours from Reno/Carson City and four hours from Salt Lake City.

As a newcomer and a visitor, I liked to imagine that Ely's tiny fellowship — three groups, six meetings per week — was probably quite similar to A.A. when it was growing out from Akron and New York: disconnected, small and mostly men with the occasional out-of-town visitor or newcomer who showed up.

As trips to Ely became more frequent, I spent a lot of the drive time dreaming about what "they needed" or how "they could do it better." I wanted Ely to have all the things: workshops, meetings inside the jail, speaker meetings, picnics, potlucks, A.A. plays. These are the things I took for granted in Las Vegas.

By 2019, I was serving as Las Vegas Intergroup's webmaster, Area 42's Registrar and splitting my time equally between Las Vegas and Ely. I called the Ely Freedom Group "my home group away from home,"

but I was still a visitor. So, I kept my big ideas about what they needed to myself. But I was delighted to help the Freedom Group and the other groups in the area add their meeting information to the meeting schedule, which feeds the new Meeting Guide App.

When COVID happened in March of 2020, I found myself living in Ely full-time. I helped my Ely friends stand up and attend online meetings, including the now hybrid Area 42 Assemblies and committee meetings.

By November of 2020 the elyaa.org webmaster asked me to take over management of the site. I started to feel slightly more local, so I went out on a limb and convinced an Ely friend to call a District 19 business meeting and stand for DCM. He was elected to serve Panel 71. I was elected district secretary.

At that election meeting, someone floated the idea of hosting a picnic or a campout that would serve as a desperately needed fellowship opportunity for the local community. A few of us felt that a picnic would be great; more thought that a weekend campout would serve the members better.

Last year our Fellowship had a dream-come-true moment when one of Ely's own took a one-year chip at CampNic, which is also where she attended her first meeting.

In the fall of 2022, I felt local enough to stand to serve for Panel 73, Area 42 DCM for District 19 and was elected. The District 19 committee was small at first — me, three GSRs and a CampNic Chair who also volunteered to serve as our intergroup rep. Our treasurer was also the alternate DCM, and one of the GSRs was also our Grapevine rep. I filled in the gaps — secretary, CPC/PI liaison, webmaster and literature person. At times I felt like I was satellite central office for eastern Nevada.

As Panel 73 started in January, our intergroup rep found out he could not attend Las Vegas Intergroup's monthly Monday evening meetings because it did offer an online or hybrid setting. For our guy, in-person attendance meant an eight-hour drive; plus a two-hour meeting meant an afternoon of missed work and most likely an overnight stay in Las Vegas.

After I made mention of this in a few area reports and spoke to everyone I could, a few sympathetic members of intergroup took up the hybrid cause. An

ad hoc committee was created, a proposal was made, and LV Intergroup eventually voted to become hybrid, making attendance possible for District 19 and many other groups outside of the Las Vegas Valley.

By March 2023 Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (PRAASA) DCM Roundtable meeting, I found myself sitting in silence as someone from Las Vegas described Nevada Area 42 as “north — Reno, Carson City, Lake Tahoe, and south — Las Vegas — and a whole lot of nothing in between.”

It was then and there that I knew I would make it my mission to make sure the rest of the area knew there was “something” in the middle of all that “nothing.”

As I write this, I am looking forward to going to PRAASA in Alaska as an Area 42 officer, and District 19 is sending a member who I am hoping her experience will benefit the eastern Nevada fellowship.

Despite all the strides and attention District 19 has received over the past nine years, I worry that small towns will be left out of the larger A.A. picture because of the “nothing in between” misnomer. Or maybe it's simply because many of them don't know about the world of A.A. that exists outside of their home groups. I can only hope that through continued connection, education and action we can help each other learn how best to serve ourselves and the still suffering alcoholic.

As I write this, I am on my way to PRAASA in Alaska as an area officer. Our current DCM could not attend, but the district is sending an Alternate GSR in his place. I just can't wait to experience a new world of A.A. as it opens up through the shared experience that will be Alaska. ■





**Lisa D.**

**Area 15 — South Florida/Bahamas/  
US Virgin Islands/Antigua**

## Connecting Communities Far and Wide in 2025

**A**rea 15 Remote Communities Committee (RCC) mission is to serve any community where it is difficult to carry the A.A. message of recovery to A.A. members or prospects because of language, culture, geography, or other challenges that could be a barrier to a willing person accessing our lifesaving program of recovery.

Seems clear, right? However, sometimes we are asked how we are different than the Accessibilities Committee, or how do we work with Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC)? Very fair questions. Our response resembles something akin to a Venn diagram, describing potentially shared areas of support with outlying areas in distinct zones of support. Is this duplicative? Sometimes yes, but mostly no. We believe by working closely with Accessibilities and PI/CPC committees, we can identify, potentially fill the gaps, and meet the needs of the still suffering alcoholics. Partnership with other committees is key to our mutual understanding and success to support those desiring access to A.A., always keeping in mind our role in RCC is to serve any community separated by barriers — language, culture, geography or other challenges.

As we begin our activities during Panel 75, with one quarterly under our belts, our primary focus in 2025 is to update the Area 15 Remote Communities Workbook and our Legacy of Service to provide our Districts with information sources and forums to aid their RCC mission. To help the Body understand our mission and how we can help, we are working on creating a display for our committee to exhibit at future quarterlies and A.A. events. We will continue to publish our Area 15 Remote Communicator at the end of each panel.

In addition, we plan to work closely with the Area Accessibilities and PI/CPC committees to identify areas within each District potentially desiring contact from A.A. and the message of A.A. In our area, we have initially identified several remote communities: Native American and the Haitian Communities, the

elder community, as well as cruise lines. Why these communities? We have discovered, through some of our districts, that these communities are challenged by language barriers, misunderstanding of what A.A. is (spiritual or religious), and just plain physical barriers.

Remembering who is not in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous and how can we reach out with the hand of A.A. to help? ■

**Amy L. and Bill C.**

**Area 83 — Eastern Ontario**

## Bridging the Gap: Spreading Hope to Remote Communities

**I**magine being in a place where help feels out of reach. Where “distance”—whether geographical, cultural, linguistic, physical, legal or social—creates an invisible wall between those struggling with addiction and the lifesaving message of recovery that comes from Alcoholics Anonymous. This is the reality for many people in “remote communities,” and it’s exactly why Area 83 is so deeply committed to ensuring that no one is left behind.

Our Area’s journey in connecting with remote communities began in 1994 when our Panel 33 Delegate would repeatedly meet residents from Northwestern Ontario traveling to Toronto for treatment. That spark of awareness quickly turned into action. By July 1996, Area 83 proudly hosted the first-ever all-Canadian delegates’ meeting focused on remote communities. This landmark event set the stage for a powerful and ongoing mission: to carry the message of recovery to those in the most isolated places.

One of the earliest initiatives saw the Alternate Delegate in Area 83 taking responsibility for supporting the Inuit community on Baffin Island. This was no small task.

Providing literature, resources, and financial support, Area 83 helped ensure that even the most geographically remote alcoholics had access to the help they needed. Over time, northern districts “adopted” groups,

keeping them stocked with vital recovery materials and a line of communication. What started as long-distance phone calls in 2010 has since evolved into dynamic online video meetings, making it easier than ever to connect, share ideas, and inspire action and carry the message of hope.

Our understanding of remote communities has evolved considerably since those early days.

When I stepped into my role as Remote Communities Liaison last year, I wondered: “How can I make a difference?” It didn’t take long to realize that the answer was already unfolding. By attending monthly Remote Communities working groups, I heard stories of outreach efforts reaching far beyond geographic isolation. A revelation hit me — remote isn’t just about location. It can also mean cultural, linguistic, physical, legal or social isolation.

This perspective shift changed everything. While Area 83 has long been focused on geographic remoteness, I started to see that our largest cities—Toronto and Ottawa — are home to remote communities, too. Toronto, often called the most multicultural city in the world, boasts over 6.4 million people, with more than half born outside Canada. Over 200 ethnic groups and 140 languages are represented, yet the rooms of A.A. do

not reflect this vast diversity. Many individuals remain disconnected from recovery, not because they don’t need it, but because cultural and language barriers prevent them from seeing or accessing A.A. as a solution.

So, what’s next? Awareness and Action is key. In my second year, I’m working alongside A.A.’s Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) and Public Information (PI) committees to find innovative ways to bridge this gap. Translated literature in key locations is a simple but effective start. But we need to do more. With Toronto and Ottawa’s rich cultural landscapes, it’s surprising how few non-English A.A. meetings exist. We have had one courageous person start a Farsi group in Toronto with many more language/cultures underrepresented in the GTA.

Including a need to better understand how we might better prepare these communities to start A.A. groups is one of the things that we as a committee can do. I know this kind of change takes time—it happens on God’s time, not ours—but each conversation, each meeting, and each outreach effort brings us one step closer.

If there’s one thing I’ve learned, it’s that the Universe has a way of bringing together the right people at the right time. And with just a little willingness,






the next right step reveals itself. Our work in remote communities—whether geographically, culturally, linguistically, physically, legally or socially isolated—isn't just about service. It's about hope, connection, and making sure that no one is ever truly alone in their recovery journey in A.A.

So, let's keep going. Let's keep talking. Let's keep reaching out. Let's keep doing. Because you never know whose life you might change with just one message of hope. ■

**Kathryn P.**

**Area 78 — Alberta/Northwest Territories**

## Extending the Hand of Alcoholics Anonymous

 Our Area 78 Remote Communities Committee is here to extend the hand of Alcoholics Anonymous.

We do this in many ways. Sometimes it is by answering calls and emails. Those we support usually found us by word of mouth, or through their own diligence, looking up A.A. online to find the Area 78 or GSO websites.

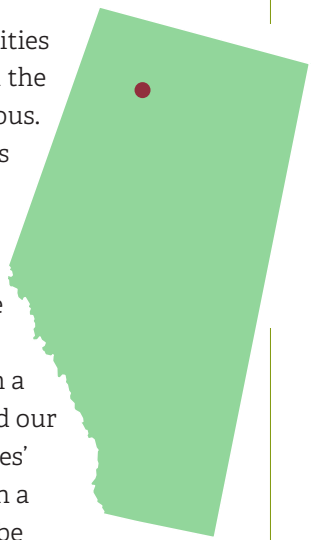
One time I received an email from a newcomer from Nunavut who found our area website and remote communities' email when they posed a question on a social media page! She happened to be traveling to one of our towns that holds two meetings per week. Because of our incredible Fellowship, I was able to connect her with a member who took her to her first meeting, where she received her first copy of the Big Book. These interactions are spiritual experiences, bringing me great joy at being just a small part of someone's recovery journey. We also extend the hand of A.A. by reaching out to various facilities and institutions, professionals and friends of A.A. In all these interactions, we take the time to listen attentively and learn the specific needs of a community or individual. This fosters connection and understanding, enabling us to collaborate until we find ways to assist the still suffering alcoholic.

One thing that I know about Service is, it's all about connection. Our committee has been sharing information about remote communities with their home groups and districts, and some even carried

our message into their workplace. It's all about outreach!!! Through this last year, I've had the pleasure of connecting with newcomers, members and friends of A.A. from Nova Scotia, Rankin Inlet, Northern Quebec, Iqaluit, Igloolik, Ontario, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, British Columbia, and all across Alberta, as well as in my own hometown of Calgary. Exchanging information and resources, all to help the suffering alcoholic. I like to joke that our committee works for all our other committees. But in reality, what we do is utilize the awesome resources that these committees have to find ways to support those in remote communities. We had the pleasure of helping get Big Books and other literature into corrections facilities, a few health centres, friendship centres, sending Grapevine subscriptions all over our Area, and as well providing Big Books and pamphlets directly to remote newcomers. All of this is a spiritual experience for me.

I had the exceptional opportunity to do outreach in the Northwest Territories last May following our Area Committee Meeting held in Yellowknife; what an incredible experience! Heading home, my plans were diverted by an act of my Higher Power. I ended up staying at a campground where I met a woman who shared her recent experience of helping her niece escape a dangerous situation and her problems with alcohol. That's when I was able to tell her the true reason I had come to the Northwest Territories. The next thing I knew, I was making a Twelve Step call. Her niece and I spent the next day together; I listened and shared my experience, strength and hope. She was open to learning about Alcoholics Anonymous, our meetings and resources. I provided her with a Big Book, pamphlets and some members' contact information. I later learned she returned to her community and since then that a meeting had recently started there! I know it was Creator who guided me that day and that I was just the boots on the ground.

I was recently invited to give presentations and bring awareness about remote communities in a few of our central Alberta districts. This all leads to more information being shared, more connection! More boots! Our committee will continue to engage with districts, groups and members. And continue with outreach. It's the dedication and unity of Area 78 that ensures the hand of Ax.A. will be there for those in remote communities. I feel truly blessed to serve on Area 78's Remote Communities Committee. ■



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

The A.A. *Guidelines for Remote Communities* (MG-19) is now available in English, French and Spanish on [aa.org](http://aa.org): *A.A. Guidelines for Remote Communities / Alcoholics Anonymous* ([aa.org](http://aa.org)).

Interviews with active-duty and veteran military members are available on [aa.org](http://aa.org) along with other resources to support A.A. members and newcomers in the armed forces. You can check this out at [aa.org/military](http://aa.org/military).

There is a monthly meeting of area Remote Communities trusted servants called the Inter-Area Remote Communities Working Group (IARCWG). IARCWG meets online the last Sunday of each month at 10 a.m., Pacific time; 1 p.m., Eastern time. The working group is comprised of representatives from any of the 93 Delegate Areas in North America who have an interest in bringing A.A. to remote communities.

Zoom ID: 935 567 510

Password: 381612

## A.A.® Guidelines

from G.S.O., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

### Remote Communities

The A.A. Guidelines below are compiled from the shared service experience of A.A. members throughout the U.S. and Canada. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference. In keeping with our Tradition of anonymity except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole, most decisions are made by the group conscience of the members involved. The purpose of these Guidelines is to assist in reaching an informed group consensus.

#### CARRYING THE MESSAGE TO ALCOHOLICS

##### IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

The material in these Guidelines has come from the experience and growing pains of A.A. Accessibilities committees, Lovers and Interrelationalists and Remote Communities Committees. We are privileged to share it with A.A.s throughout the United States and Canada who are carrying our message to alcoholics who would not otherwise be reached. Additional information is available in the Remote Communities section of GSO's website at [www.aa.org/remotecomunities-committees](http://www.aa.org/remotecomunities-committees) or you can contact GSO's Accessibilities Desk ([access@aa.org](mailto:access@aa.org)) directly.

##### WHAT IS A REMOTE COMMUNITY?

In Toronto in July 1996, the first Remote Communities Conference was held with 15 Area Delegates. At that time, it was determined that a remote community would be defined as any community to which it was difficult to carry the message because of language, culture or geography.

##### WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF REMOTE COMMUNITIES?

###### Language

- Individuals seeking help with a drinking problem who are not able to access the message in a language they can speak, read or understand.
- Other language access problems arise for members of the Deaf and Deaf-blind communities in parts of the country where no ASL meetings are available.

###### Geography

- Those with accessibility challenges, including those who are homebound, or those who live in facilities like hospitals or nursing homes where there is no access to A.A.
- Geographically distant communities, for instance in northern Canada, Alaska or other rural parts of North America.
- Note: Those who are part of remote communities because of geography may not have access to the technologies (like high-speed Internet) that make online meetings possible (see below).

##### Culture

- A.A. is a diverse fellowship which includes many different cultures and identities. While many alcoholics feel quite comfortable in any A.A. group, some AAs have shared that at times they find it easier to attend a special interest AA meeting for identification purposes as an alcoholic and to be able to be open about certain personal experiences. For example, individuals might feel most comfortable sharing in a women's meeting, an LGBTQ A.A. meeting, a young people's meeting or meetings designated as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color).
- Some individuals may face additional burdens of stigma because of religious or cultural prohibitions on consuming alcohol which can make identifying as an alcoholic particularly difficult.

In each of these cases, whether communities are remote because of language, culture or geography, Remote Communities trusted servants endeavor to work with those communities to offer "the heart of A.A." in whatever ways that community finds most useful and to learn from these individuals and members who are part of remote communities.

##### PURPOSE

Remote Communities Committees and Accessibilities Committees work to ensure equal access to those in remote communities. Committees focus on overcoming barriers that could make it hard to access the A.A. program — barriers such as geography, language or culture.

##### HOW TO GET STARTED

Because there are so many kinds of remote communities, there is no one-size-fits-all way to get started. Perhaps the first step would be to contact your local area committee and, if there is an existing Accessibilities committee, ask to be connected to the members doing work with Remote Communities. If there is no work being done with Remote Communities in your local area, you may have to work with other trusted servants to determine what kinds of outreach is needed.

- To reach groups that are geographically isolated, you might check with your Central office/Intergroup office, Delegate

