



Area 72 Newsletter

January 2026

**** CONFIDENTIALITY ****

This is a confidential document for AA members only. It contains members' last names, addresses and phone numbers. Please respect our anonymity.

Western Washington Area Newsletter is published monthly by:

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Its purpose is to facilitate communication within the membership of AA. Opinions expressed are not to be attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous, or the Western Washington Area, except when Conference-approved publications are quoted. Articles from AA World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S.) and the AA Grapevine, Inc. (as well as other publications) appearing herein are reprinted with permission.

NEWSLETTER POLICY

The Area Newsletter is a communication vehicle serving Western Washington Area 72 (WWA72). The scope includes WWA72 business, i.e. election results, committee appointments, motions, discussion topics, special committee activities, status of WWA72 trusted servants, and content provided by members of the Western

Washington fellowship intended to carry the message of AA to the still suffering alcoholic.

The Newsletter also includes a calendar of events, which prominently features a categorized list of the dates and times of Area Service events, and other AA related events occurring throughout the Western Washington fellowship, i.e., campouts, luncheons, and picnics. Fliers related to the above events, registration, contribution, and subscription forms are consolidated in a separate section. Districts' reports are encouraged.

The Newsletter Editor requests content each month from the WWA72 Committee, in particular elected & appointed officers, standing committees, special committees, Intergroups & Central Service Offices, and the DCMs for each of the 44 districts. All the above are encouraged to submit content that features a method of carrying the message in their sphere of duties.

The author's first name, at minimum, will accompany all submissions. The Editor reserves the right to edit and/or refuse to publish content considered to be inconsistent with the three legacies: Recovery, Unity, and Service, with particular scrutiny given to content perceived to contain foul language and/or personal attacks.

The Newsletter is intended to be shared with all the members of the Western Washington fellowship and relies on the WWA72 Committee to generate content, overall awareness, and ensure distribution to the groups. It is distributed monthly, free of charge, to WWA72 elected and appointed officers, DCMs, and Alternate DCMs, GSRs of the registered WWA72 groups, past Delegates, GSO, Pacific Region Trustee, reciprocating Pacific Region Newsletter Editors, and the 15 Pacific Region Delegates. Homegroups or individuals may subscribe for \$12 per year by sending send their name, address, and payment to the Western Washington Area Treasurer. The views and opinions expressed in the articles and reports are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Newsletter Editor, Western Washington Area 72, or Alcoholics Anonymous.

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Delegate

As I begin my second year in the rotation, I remain grateful and humbled to represent such an incredible Area and to serve as part of the Pacific Region. It's an exciting time as are welcoming new Panel 76 delegates, and at the same time I will truly miss the Panel 74 delegates and the experience and guidance they brought.

My role as Delegate is to help ensure you have timely, relevant information to share with your districts and homegroups. To support this, I continue to update the Delegate's Corner on the Area 72 website. Many documents referenced in this report are posted there, along with a QR code below (please remember to log in).

It's also that time to start preparing for the upcoming 76th General Service Conference in April. Pre-conference and other conference-related materials will be posted as they become available, and I'll send an Area-wide email once all background materials and the agenda are posted.

Thank you for letting me be of service,
Courtney S
206-795-8311
delegate@area72aa.org

Delegate's Corner QR Code:

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Courtney S

206-795-8311

delegate@area72aa.org

Alternate Delegate

Welcome to 2026 and our first year of a purely digital newsletter!!

As we start the second half of the rotation, I've been thinking about what my job is as Alternate Delegate, and how I've done as Alternate Delegate. I've had quite a few conversations about this type of service work and how I can best be of service to Area 72.

The biggest takeaway I had was: do what I can to be available to you, Western Washington. In that vein, in 2026 I will continue to do GSR schools, DCM schools and other workshops as requested or needed. I get great joy out of being of service to Area 72. Service work has helped me actually mature and really come to think of others how I can best meet their needs. I am never too busy to take calls, help with group or district inventories, etc.

Thank you for participating in my growth, and thank you for letting me serve.

--Lupita

Area 72 Alternate Delegate | Panel 75

altdelegate@area72aa.org | 206.372.7335

Secretary

Reflections on Area 72's Transition to a Fully Digital Newsletter

Change has always been a part of Alcoholics Anonymous. From handwritten meeting lists to printed Grapevines, from phone trees to websites and apps, our Fellowship has continually adapted to better carry the message. The recent decision by Area 72 to move from a traditional newsprint newsletter to a completely digital format is another example of that ongoing evolution.

I'll admit, this change stirs mixed feelings for me.

There was something tangible and grounding about the printed newsletter. Holding it in my hands, seeing it on a meeting table, that snap of opening a crisp, fresh newsletter that I may have just received in the mail, or folding it into a back pocket made the information feel present and accessible. For many members—especially those of us who have been around a while—the printed newsletter represented continuity, tradition, and a shared physical connection across our Area. It was something you could point to, pass along, or leave behind for someone who might need it. Or, for some of us to use to start fires in the fire pit (after we've utilized it to its fullest extent possible as a readable document)

At the same time, I recognize the practical realities we face today. Printing and mailing costs continue to rise, volunteer time is limited, and fewer people rely on printed materials as their primary source of information. A digital newsletter allows Area 72 to be more timely, more flexible, and more far-reaching. Updates can be shared quickly, links can connect members directly to resources, and information can be accessed anytime by anyone with a phone, tablet, or computer.

From a service perspective, going digital also reflects good stewardship. Reducing printing and postage expenses helps ensure that Seventh Tradition contributions are used as effectively as possible to support our primary purpose. It allows trusted servants to focus more on content and communication rather than logistics.

Still, it's important to acknowledge that not everyone engages with digital platforms in the same way. Some members have limited access to technology, while others simply connect better with printed material. As we move forward, I hope we remain mindful of inclusivity—encouraging groups, districts, and service committees to help members access the digital newsletter and to share important information verbally at meetings and assemblies when needed.

The heart of Area 72 hasn't changed. The experience, strength, and hope shared through the newsletter remain the same—only the delivery method is different. If we approach this change with patience, compassion, and a willingness to help one another adjust, it can strengthen our communication rather than diminish it.

As Area 72 has passed the motion for a fully digital newsletter, I encourage each of us to stay engaged. Take a moment to subscribe, read it regularly, and share the information at your home group, district, or service meetings. If you know someone who struggles with technology or access, consider being a bridge—print a copy, talk it through, or help them get connected. Together, we can make sure no one is left out as we continue to carry the message.

Thank you.

Don N., Area 72 Secretary

Area Secretary

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Thank you.

Don N., Area 72 Secretary

Eastside Intergroup

New Digital Newsletter,

As an older Member of AA I was more toward the paper newsletter that I would receive, once I started my journey into service with my District positions. It would come to my mailbox every month and I thought that was cool. But when we suddenly had to change due to the covid pandemic of having to learn how to have digital meetings with zoom, I was able to go through a learning curve because I was willing to do whatever it took to stay sober. So my computer and digital skills got a lot better over the next few years. So when the discussion at the Area about our budget and ways to prudently spend our members money and if the paper newsletter was the best way to reach our members? I kept an open mind and kept away from contempt prior to investigation. As the digital newsletter demo first came online I went to it and started to browse through it and see how it looked and was amazed at how easy it was to access, so I would email Erin as always for her to put my article in the 1/4ly newsletter and when I went to the demo digital newsletter it looked great, easy to find under eastside intergroup. Now the next step to help Erin will be to submit our articles directly to the digital newsletter now that the site is live in January. Willingness to ask for help is what has helped me to

stay sober all these years. So you can go to our new digital area newsletter now or to submit a story and learn!

News.Area72AA.org

Looking forward to read all your articles! Ray H. ESIG

Snohomish County Central Office

SNOHOMISH COUNTY CSO was established to provide a Phone Answering Service TO HELP the Still Suffering Alcoholic. This is still it SNOCO CSO's primary purpose. There are many 12step calls most months.

The financial support is provided by Districts 2, 3, 19, 12, and 57. The SNOCO CSO is run by vote through the Districts and their Reps. They elect all the Service Positions except for the phone volunteers.

The SNOCO CSO has evolved through time and motions to be more than a phone answering service. The larger office and parking lot are used for AA committees and other AA events. With over 100 phone volunteers and A. A.'s on planning committees, the office is being well used.

Some District 57 A. A.'s travel distances outside of Snohomish County for business meetings at SNOCO CSO each month.

With on-line technology, AA members can now attend the committees remotely as each committee chooses. This advantage is especially shown when the weather causes travel issues. We will continue to look at technology, using AA Traditions, to help the Alcoholics and Non-Alcoholics requesting assistance in the next rotation. The SNOCO CSO Committee meets on the 1 st Tuesday of each month at 7pm. Our location is 1625 East marine View Drive, Everett, WA 98201. It is a Hybrid meeting with Zoom ID # 874 5921 0224. Alcoholics Anonymous members are welcome to attend. We have several positions open.

Our phone number is (425) 252-2525.

Thank you to the new phone volunteers, and to those who have rotated out and those being elected in.

In Service,
Anonymous.

Accessibility Chairperson

- District 24 is hosting a Safety workshop in March. A planning meeting will be on zoom January 10th at 10am, all are invited, here is the link.

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/87325203593?pwd=LRWpXeux58SKb1FbDTcRwRegbiJUVV.1>

- There will be a special online forum for deaf AA members Saturday January 17th 2026. Free registration is now open on deafaa.org to of the page-click on “Special Forum” for information.

Registration ASL/LSM/LSQ Vlog https://youtu.be/q6oigNTpxow?si=TVEB_AJyvkOd27MB

Please reach out to me if you have any questions or comments, I am easily reached at accessibility@area72aa.org or my cell phone number 253.392.4748

Your service sib,

Bud

Archives Chairperson

Accomplishments from the past quarter.

- The Archives Steering Committee (ASC) completed a major milestone by updating the Area 72 Archives Standing Committee web page. These improvements were made to better serve District Archivists and Archives Chairs by providing clearer, more accessible resources.
- We held a very successful Archives Quarterly on November 1st. Our speaker, Nancy

K., Past Area 7 Archivist, presented on Early Women of AA. Fun fact: Nancy also presented this topic at the International Convention in July, which made it especially meaningful to host her here in Area 72. • The ASC hosted a Traveling Archives Display at the Area Assembly, which was very well received. Over 400 members engaged with Area 72 history and signed our guest book that weekend. Special thanks to the District Archivists and Archives Chairs who volunteered their time to help the ASC staff the display:◦ Terry (District 21)◦ Andi (District 40)◦ Heidi and Kim (District 24) • The ASC supported a Regional Archives Workshop, organized by our Archivist Maryland, in collaboration with Areas 58 and 92. The workshop was informative and practical, including hands-on instruction in technical archival tasks such as safely removing tape and staples without damaging documents. • I am serving on the National AA Archives Workshop (NAAAW) 2026 Host Committee as Chair of Literature and Displays and attend the planning committee meetings on the third Monday of each month. • At our most recent ASC meeting, we honored Cindy M. with a potluck and a certificate of appreciation, thanking her for four years of faithful service. She will be greatly missed. • We currently have a vacancy on the Archives Steering Committee. This is a great opportunity for someone to be of service to the Area and participate in meaningful archival work. Problems or Issues • We still have two pallets of OSD3 books remaining in storage. • The OSD3 Committee is continuing to explore strategies to increase sales and responsibly reduce inventory. Please share some goals you hope to achieve or begin work on in the next quarter. • Review and update additional Area 72 Archives web pages. • Continue exploring the use of technology to enhance archival projects and support the Area's growth. • Support and participate in the February 7, 2026 Quarterly, hosted by District 14. • Create a timeless, post-pandemic survey to capture group histories for future Area history projects. • Continue supporting the planning of the National AA Archives Workshop (September 2026, Tacoma, WA). • Prepare to support upcoming events taking place in Area 72 including but not limited to:◦ Blending of Time◦ International Men's Conference◦ 85th Anniversary of AA in Washington State◦ Pacific Northwest Conference (PNC)◦ La Viña 30th Anniversary◦ Step Ashore◦ PRAASA 2027 • Continue efforts to steadily reduce the number of books in the repository. In service, Jennifer

Grapevine and Literature Chairperson

I think the newsletter serves a valuable purpose, and I do think it deserves to be hung from the clothesline and thumped with a carpet beater. I am grateful for the group conscience process. I would not have been able, had I been charged as a trusted servant, to make this decision on my own.

As many said during the discussions, I have seen the printed newspaper sit undisturbed for months. Resolutely placed out on the literature table at the beginning of the meeting and dutifully returned at the end of the meeting to the literature box. With its drab, grey paper and discomfiting size, the printed edition is an awkward part of our past, like a once-stylish pastimes now tut-tutted on Tik-Tok. Many of us no longer hide behind a newspaper as our fathers did; we crane our necks forward to stare at our hand-held screens, even when, especially when, we are with someone. With the printed newsletter, I will read those articles that I want, fold it back together and stash it away.

What do I find valuable? When I was a District Committee Member, getting the opportunity to write a column each month put me in a mindset of meeting deadlines, to be responsible, and to use spell-check most of the time. By virtue of writing twenty-four articles over that rotation, I learned more about how I write. Typing, to meet a deadline, I might write a great paragraph. Then I'd explain what I'd just written as a second paragraph, whence, upon review, I'd realize my sequencing was off. The second paragraph often was the opening statement. I'd answered my question first, so to speak.

Reading other servants' stories, articles, and responses, I came to value what I have to say. Even writing on the same theme, each of us takes a different aspect, a different approach; one among many, equal to all. I bring my unique contribution to cocreate the chaos that is our choir. The paper version is aligned with my mental process. I can recall sections of the page where I recall reading something which is harder to do on the web.

But if all I need is one passage from which to make an attribution, or to check a previous comment, I really don't need the other eighty-seven pages of newsprint. Were I teachable, I could use the digital Search function to find in a nano-second

the reference I want, without getting newsprint ink on my fingertips. The digital offers more options like up-to-date flyers, all my articles, oops, all of the Delegate's articles in one place.

Jack

Grapevine and Literature Chair

Western Washington Area 72

gvlit@area72aa.org

Newsletter Editor

Inclusive and Accessible: No One Left Behind

For years, the idea of a web-based monthly newsletter to connect our area has sparked discussion in General Service. The challenge has always been: how do we keep everyone connected and ensure no one is left behind? After 12 years of hearing every reason, problem, and resistance to change, this year marks a turning point.

In 2024 the cost of printing increased yet again and became the largest item in our budget. The discussion began again. This time our AdHoc Committee created a prototype web site so we could spark the imagination of our fellowship. At our Annual Area assembly in October, Area 72 voted to take a leap of faith. I published our last print issue of the Area 672 Newsletter, and we were ready for a new chapter. In January 2026 the first web-based issue of the Area 72 Newsletter, proving that it can be done. This new format offers our trusted servants greater flexibility and accessibility, making our communications more inclusive than ever before.

To guide this transition, we established a Newsletter Steering Committee. Our focus was maximum participation and coverage. By recruiting members from across our district, we ensured a comprehensive view of what's happening in our area. We created regions and appointed regional editors, so every corner of Western Washington has a voice. These editors serve as resources for each district, helping create and upload stories. Additionally, our central events coordinator manages the flyer wall and calendar, streamlining event information for everyone.

Innovative Features for Greater Inclusion

This year, we're making the newsletter even more engaging and accessible:

- **Photos:** Visual highlights from our community events and stories.
- **MP3 Audio Stories:** Members can listen to articles, making content accessible for those with vision challenges or who prefer audio.
- **Spanish Translation:** Stories can be easily translated, broadening our reach and inclusivity.
- **Low Bandwidth Adaptation:** The newsletter is optimized for members with limited internet access.
- **Printable PDF:** Each issue can be downloaded as a compact PDF, perfect for printing or emailing to those who prefer physical copies.

By embracing technology and teamwork, we're building a communication tool that truly leaves no one behind. These new features ensure every member—regardless of language, ability, or internet access—can stay connected and informed.

Let me introduce **our Newsletter Steering committee**.

- **Newsletter Editor and head of the Steering Committee** ~ Erin E
- **Past Delegate:** Gail H Panel 57
- **Technology and Web Member:** John B
- **Events Coordinator:** Sansannah J. alt DCM 3
 - Flyer Wall and Calendar
- **Media Editor:** John P.
- **Translation and Spanish Editor:** Claudia C.
- **Electeds' & Appointeds' Editor** ~ Rose DCM 7

- **Peninsula Districts & Intergroups & Service Centers ~ Editor: Jo G-**
DCM 25
 - 10 Kitsap Peninsula
 - 22 North Olympic Peninsula
 - 55 Sequim Area
 - 56 East Jefferson County
 - 43 Key Peninsula Cities and Towns
 - 25 Online District
 - Vancouver Area Intergroup
 - South Sound Service Centers
 - Greater Seattle Intergroup: Jeff U (Primary Author) —
JeffU@greywolfeconstruction.com
 - Eastside Intergroup: Ray H — RVbutcher@yahoo.com
 - Puget Sound Central Services: Megan
 - Snohomish County Central Offices

- **Southern Districts~Editor: Debbie B** DCM 8

- - 7 South Clark County & Skamania County (Vancouver, Camas, Washougal)
 - 8 Thurston & Mason Counties
 - 9Central Tacoma Firecrest
 - 27 Cowlitz & Wahkiakum Counties (Long Beach & LongView)
 - 28 Lewis County
 - 37 North Clark County (North Vancouver)
 - 2 [District not specified]
 - 21 Grays Harbor County
 - 29 Puyallup Eatonville Orting
 - 44 North Tacoma
 - 45 SW Pierce County
 - 54 Bonney Lake Buckley Enumclaw

- **Central Districts ~ Editor: Teri** DCM 42

- - 14 West Seattle, Vashon
 - 15 Central Seattle

- 16 University District, NE Seattle
- 17 Ballard, NW Seattle
- 18 Renton, Kent, Tukwilla
- 31 Burien, Des Moines, Normandy Park, SeaTac
- 32 Auburn, Federal Way
- 33 Maple Valley, Covington, Black Diamond, Hobart, East Kent
- 34 Bellevue, Redmond, Mercer Island, East Lake Sammamish
- 35 Issaquah, South Sammamish Plateau
- 36 NE King County (Carnation, Duvall, Fall City, North Bend, Preston, Snoqualmie)
- 38 Kirkland
- 39 Bothell, Kenmore, Woodinville
- 40 East Capitol Hill, Madrona, Madison Park
- 41 North Downtown Seattle, Queen Anne, Magnolia
- 42 NW Seattle, Shoreline, Lake Forest Park

- **North Districts ~ Editor:** Shane DCM 12
- - 2 Camano Island & NW Snohomish County
 - 3 SE Snohomish County
 - 4 Skagit County
 - 11 Whatcom County
 - 12 NE Snohomish County
 - 19 SW Everett, Mukilteo, Mill Creek
 - 24 SW Snohomish County (Mountlake Terrace, Edmonds, Lynnwood)
 - 46 Whidbey Island, Fidalgo, and the San Juan Islands

Like anything New we will have a period of transition please reach out and ask for help from any of the committee members as we create something new that will change the way we can share and communicate with each other. Unity is paramount to our recovery, Lets make sure No One is left Behind!

By Erin E

Area 72 Newsletter Editor

Public Information Chairperson

As we move into 2026, I find myself reflecting on the many changes that took place last year in Area 72. One significant change has been the transition of our area newsletter to a digital format. This shift has been a long time coming, and I am deeply grateful for the hard work and dedication of our trusted servants who made it possible. In my experience, when changes occur in A.A., there is often considerable effort required to overcome objections and resistance. Yet time and again, I've found that once a change is implemented, people tend to come along. This transition has been no different. Our new digital newsletter is user-friendly and easy to read. Personally, I no longer read paper newspapers—everything I read is online. I find it not only more convenient, but also much easier to share with friends and family. In the same way, this digital format allows our newsletter to be more accessible and more widely shared. I am truly happy to see this vision come to fruition and look forward to hearing how members are using the digital newsletter and sharing it within their districts and home groups. Here's to continued growth, connection, and service in the year ahead. In fellowship & service, Julie U Area 72 PI Chair

Area Registrar

Thanks for the opportunity to address Area 72 AA NEW DIGITAL NEWSLETTER. I am going to try and not sell or be this new service for our trusted servants as well as Area 72 members (maybe even beyond) loudest promoter, but honestly that's going to be hard.

From the moment that our current Newsletter Chair accepted her position she was very clear that 1) she needed help, 2) that she did not know how she would find the time to produce it in its current form and at its current cost and 3) that she was asking and requesting help that the board assign her a committee to help. The result of our Newsletter Chairs honest and proactive communications over the year lead us to an ad hoc committee with eager, knowledgeable and willing trusted servants, a great deal of gathering information and researching alternatives and the committees amazing ability to be clear with options, answering important

questions for our diverse fellowship community and always putting the members of AA first.

The committee's diligence, their follow-through and their eager attention to details made this BIG CHANGE possible in less than a year. This year will be our Digital Newsletter Kick-off and what I can confidently say is that over the past six months we have been given wonderful opportunities to see what is possible and what is ahead. Most importantly we have made sure that members and trusted servants have access to the newsletter. It will not only be easily available, but honestly more available than ever. For me that is so important because it helps all of us to see what service is, see what service can do and invites us all to participate. Hopefully, this year I will be able to assist even more trusted servants through writing articles about getting GSR's, Alt GSR's, DCM's registered to have complete and accessible information in our database and with the AA General Service Office!

Please join us in celebrating this new digital newsletter by going to Area72AA.org, creating an account for yourself and accessing this new format. Help us with not only your feedback but also your contributions!

In Service and with Respect,
E Houston L.

Registrar@Area72AA.org

Area Treatment Chairperson

I have absolutely fallen in love with my position of Treatment and Bridging the Gap this year as Area 72 Chair. I have also fallen in love with all of the Area 72 District Treatment, Bridging the Gap Chairs and the new DCM's and Alt DCM's I have had the amazing privilege to service with.

These amazing servants have gone to any length to service their district to the best of their ability and this has only been the first year of this rotation. We are all learning together. The first year has passed too quickly. I have many ideas of how the final year of our rotation will grow. We have learned from each other all sorts of

smart ideas and procedures. We have also learned from the staff of the treatment facilities some wonderful lessons to take with us into our second year. I have a feeling this year will be full of immense growth. We are going to concentrate on working more closely with the treatment and detox centers to get feedback on how you have done in 2025 and get direction and suggestions on moving forward into 2026. This will help us to grow smarter.

One of my favorite ideas from our first year is creation of our monthly educational meeting; the Treatment Roundtable. This was the idea of Carol F. the Treatment Chair from District 39. Everyone attending these monthly meetings has grown in leaps and bounds. That is due to everyone jumping in and offering their experience, strength and growth. It has been a time to ask for help, barrow others' ideas and speak up to offer your suggestions. I have seen such personal growth and service growth from this awesome idea. We have had very good attendance at these monthly meetings, but it would be so beneficial to all chairs to join us and grow in leaps and bounds.

I wish our Panel 75 was for a term of four years. By then we would be even more accomplished and have that much more joy. But then I don't want to be selfish. I want everyone to experience the satisfaction in service that our Treatment Committee has experienced.

District 3

As we begin the new year, District 3 is restarting our regular rhythm of communication and service. This January Quarterly (Jan 2–4) gives us a chance to reconnect, look ahead, and set the tone for the months to come.

I was out of town for the December District meeting, which was hosted by our Alternate DCM, Sansanna. I'm grateful for her willingness to step in and keep the district moving forward.

In the weeks ahead, we'll be sharing more information about upcoming pre-conference dates, which have already been released, as well as details for the April

Quarterly. These events give groups the opportunity to stay informed, participate in the Area process, and help shape the collective conscience of our fellowship.

While there are no major district updates to report at this time, we look forward to a steady start to the year, renewed engagement, and continued participation across District 3 as we move forward together in service.

Dan H
District 3 DCM,
425-343-6252

District 4

Happy New Year Everyone!

District 4 is heading into the new year with some renewed vigor and desire to tackle some non-unique issues .

2025 started out well and as the year grew we developed some challenges regarding service commitments, personalities over principles and location and venue challenges. However we overcame many of these challenges and are working towards a much more productive and unified new year.

Our District, which encompasses the greater Skagit Valley from Conway to Alger and Concrete to LaConner is proud to welcome a new Treatment Facility this Spring, and will be posting more information on the Area website upon its official opening. We truly enjoyed our collaboration with the other Northern Districts in hosting area events and we look forward to Hosting more area events at the recently opened Aqua Room at Skagit PUD, where our District Meeting will be returning to this month. We will hold a concepts study beginning this month prior to the district meeting, and will be covering a concept a month. Many workshops are in the works as well.

Hoping everyone has a wonderful kickoff to a fabulous year!

District 10

Newsletter Transition to Digital

I am truly looking forward to only having the digital newsletter, so I don't have to look for both! Yes, the paper was great, it was in your hands and looked like an old fashion newspaper! I remember that type of paper growing up. It was something to hold on too and crumple up when finished with and use as a window cleaning rag. Paper had and still does have its purpose. The Newsletter will now be digital. I am happy to see it. With it comes change. I am not a tech savvy person but because of A.A. I realize change is good. This may make me better at the computer and my phone. It will also make me use the A.A. program when I am frustrated & irritated and cannot find something in the digital newsletter, or unable to print it out without asking someone. So, I am already learning how to navigate and find items of interest and scroll to areas I was unable to find before. Heck, I can even print it out now. Thank you A.A. program for giving me Patients and Tolerance when I need it most. I do love the Digital Newsletter. Peace

District 12

District 12 DCM Report January 2026

Well first of all i've had the most incredible time working with John and Erin publishing Articles and Flyers for our Online Digital Printable Newsletter for the past 3 or 4 months The hardest part was picking a picture to go with all your awesome Reports I turned in a service resume to Erin to be on the Newsletter Steering Committee and now found myself being The North Districts Regional Editor yay im so Excited !!!

Now about newspapers, I was a newspaper route kid, i always loved having the newspaper around as a kid especially the comics on sunday. That continued into my adult life. I loved flipping through our newspaper, and Phone Books. I loved using them too, and maps and a thomas guide too. My phone has replaced all that,

no more letters or address books either my phone and computer have replaced all that. The only Newspaper ive got in the last 20 years has been our Area72 Newsletter. I loved getting it each month. I just realise how incredibly useful and important tools they are in my life. Though I do love in person meetings and appointments, Zoom is so Awesome it just makes a lot of sense to me.

We had a great gratitude banquet. We got our District 12 Inventory done Thanks Lisa for doing our inventory with us!! We're already working on Qualitative actionable ways to improve groups involvement at district and on service committees.

I had an awesome holiday season going to Alkathon meetings with my homegroup and I got to travel to spend a lot of time away with family and still work remotely on district stuff.

I cant believe its Been a year and look forward to pre Conferences, GSR Workshops, The Delegate Report back and the Pre Assembly again then our Assembly. Were working on a District12 open house and another Dist19 Dist12 Picnic again so fun!!

ShaneM DCM District 12dc12@area72aa.org and snocoaaSNOCOA.A..

District 18

Looking forward to another year of service

We are looking forward to the Quarterly this month. Getting together in one place and seeing everyone's beautiful faces is one of the highlights of serving in Area 72. District 18 had a cookie competition at the meeting in December. I think this will become an annual tradition. Our District has had many holiday parties and Gratitude Banquets this past month, we are not hungry in District 18, and we love to share. We will also be getting together in January to talk about our New Year's resolutions for our District and our Committees. We will ask ourselves if we are

being as effective as we can? Do we need to collaborate more with other Committees or Districts and/or ask for help? Do we need to get more creative with our resources or is following the path that was laid out before our time sufficient in carrying out our primary purpose? As alcoholics, we are heavy with ideas and short on follow through at times. It can be real spiritual progress and an exercise in humility to just follow the path that some other big thinker already blazed for us. Keeping things simple and simply serving. We are looking forward to another year of service and getting things done. Yours in service, Lara R DCM 18

District 24

Digital Newsletter!

I am grateful for the time, effort, research, and committee work that went into the creation of our

digital newsletter. I recognize this was a long-discussed and sometimes difficult topic, and I

respect the group conscience that led to this decision.

At the same time, I believe some important considerations were not fully addressed. In particular,

there was limited discussion around an “opt-in” mailing option or a thorough review of the

mailing list. While these points were mentioned, the long-term impact on cost, accessibility, and

responsibility was not clearly resolved at the group conscience level.

During accessibility discussions, it was suggested that Districts could provide printed copies for

groups or individuals who require them. After the first digital edition was released, I looked into

printing costs at the District level and found that printing a single copy would cost approximately

\$70 through local office supply vendors. While this may vary, the cost is significant and raises concern.

From this perspective, it appears that overall expenses have not been reduced but rather shifted.

What was intended as a cost-saving measure may now place an added financial and service

burden on Districts and trusted servants, without clear guidance or funding to support that responsibility.

I offer these observations in the spirit of unity and informed group conscience, with the hope that they can be considered as we continue to evaluate this change and seek solutions that best serve all members.

Lisa J.
DCM District 24

District 25

Newsletter Transition to Digital

If you read District 25's newsletter report from December 2025, you would have noted that the district planned and invited folk from our district and the area to participate in an online only holiday party. The express purpose of hosting such an event was of amplifying the sense of unity and fellowship that we hear too many people say gets lost in online meetings/settings or digital platforms. I can't completely disagree with this thinking. Knowing that the Fellowship of the Spirit is promised in our program of personal and spiritual growth, District 25 determined that it was important to get creative and find ways to aid our members in getting to better know one another; and to demonstrate to ourselves and one another that "we are not a glum lot". Toward those ends the "planning committee" devised games and challenges for all those in attendance and a good time was had by all (unless, of course, you are a Grinch whose heart is still guarded).

What has this to do with the topic of the Newsletter Transition to Digital? Well, I'm hear to tell you that even an online district, meeting, or members that only participate in AA through digital connections, might balk out of fear of change or simply not knowing how to access the digital newsletter or how to submit their reports, etc. It was so easy to simply receive the newsletter in our snail mail post box. For those of us asked to submit reports and articles to the newsletter it was fairly easy to just send it all to the Area Newsletter Editor every month and rely on them to do everything from that point forward. Now everyone wanting to read the newsletter will have to learn how to find it and navigate it. And we will be asked to send our reports using the newsletter website and the form provided. Some cleaning up of these reports, if necessary, will be accomplished by "Regional Editors" who will have to learn how and in a timely manner with the final layout being handled by the Newsletter Editor themself.

As I write this I am utilizing the new report form on the website. Despite having been walked through it by steering committee member, John B., it will take me a number of submissions and some trial and error before this gal can do it automatically and without the frustration that my ego will generate because I'm having to learn something new. The Twelve Steps of our beloved program will certainly help me with the egoic thinking and fears. I didn't learn those steps or how to apply them in the blink of an eye when I got sober, and so its useful for me to remember that learning the steps to access the newsletter for the purpose of submitting the district's reports or to edit the reports from the districts in the region (that I have been assigned as a trusted servant on the newsletter committee) will only be learned and internalized through regular practice. Additionally, just as in working the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous it is to my advantage to remember there are people I can ask for help, to give myself extra time to wade through the process, and that remembering to breathe and be grateful will help this gal to experience the transition with positivity.

District 31

Happy New Year to All! I hope everyone stayed sober and enjoyed your holidays. I'm looking forward to 2026 and working with all of you! Can't wait to see what the

next year holds for us. Love & Service, Dawn P. D31 AltDCM
altdcm31@area72aa.org

District 32

2025 marked a strong and meaningful first year of Panel 75 for District 32. Together, we built connection and momentum through a joyful summer picnic, active participation in Central District events, and the important work of assembling a budget committee to thoughtfully update the D32 budget for 2026. We also took time for reflection and growth through a District Inventory, graciously facilitated by our Area 72 Alternate Delegate, Lupita. We closed the year in the spirit of unity and gratitude with a district potluck, strengthening fellowship with our district committee chairs and GSRs.

Looking ahead, District 32 is honored to host the 2026 Burien Little Assembly on Saturday, March 14th with District 33 as co-host, and to continue facilitating our monthly BLA planning meetings on the third Sunday of each month via Zoom. We are deeply excited about the opportunity the BLA offers to be of service and to carry the message of this year's theme, **“Humility in Action.”** As we move forward together, we do so with openness, collaboration, and a shared commitment to serve in AA with purpose and, of course, humility. Please visit www.burienlittleassembly.org for more information, opportunities to volunteer, and way to contribute.

Our District serves the Auburn, Federal Way, Algona, and Pacific area, and we hold our monthly GSR Business meetings on the 1st Monday of the month in the Brooklake Church Coffee Shop at 7pm in Federal Way. We provide snacks/treats and enjoy collaborative discussions about AA in our area and how we can serve together to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic. Please stop in and join us. We have plenty of service opportunities and could use your help.

Nicole F. DCM32

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District 35

The Newsletter Transition to Digital Format

District 35 is very much looking forward to our Newsletter transition to a digital format.

The new format, I believe, offers substantial improvement to the newsletter's functionality, efficiency and aesthetic presentation, offering an experience for readers that will be more interesting and engaging, easier to read through and digest, and better brings all the work that is being done throughout the Area to life.

I have confidence in this new format direction for two reasons: the quality and thoroughness of the analysis done by the Ad Hoc Committee this past year, and the passion and skills of those who will bring this newsletter product to fruition.

District 35 Current/Upcoming Activities

1. Both our DCM and ALT DCM will attend the upcoming Area Business Quarterly in early January.
2. D35 is excited to host the upcoming Area CPC Quarterly on February 7, 2026, from 10 am – 3 pm, at Eastside Fire & Rescue HQ, 175 Newport Way NW, Issaquah WA 98027.
3. In early March 2026, D35 will again take Young People panel(s) into Issaquah Middle School 7th grade Health classes, during their “Alcohol Unit” curriculum.
4. Our Bridging the Gap Committee is currently setting up a bridge for a young man in Sammamish.

Grateful for the opportunity to serve,

John K., DCM

District 43

I like the new digital newsletter. For me, the only thing I am having trouble with is submitting my article to the newsletter committee. As I write this I am thinking to just write the article and send it in the way I always have (which is to the email it directly to the Newsletter's chair). But I have also received an email from the committee person who is supposed to be the one where I send my article to. I am also having problems navigating what the instructions are telling me what to do. It keeps kicking me back to where I started. Maybe it's me just not doing something

right, which is probably what is going on. I will have a cop at the Quarterly of my article so it can get published. Then I will get with someone and get this figured out. I do believe digital newsletters are the better way to go and do like the way it is formatted. It's easy to navigate and being able to make a printable copy for those GSRs in my district who don't have access to a computer is a great feature.

District 46

I want to start out with a real-life thriller written by John B.: [How We Changed the Newsletter](#). You can find it on the Member Articles page or by [clicking HERE](#). I'm already running into a "spoiler," because I have created an embedded link that would be impossible to do in a print version. Take that away, and we go back to hunting through a dense manuscript, trying to find what has been referenced.

Back to How We Changed the Newsletter. Almost like a detective story, John shares the journey of taking a leap of faith, bolstered by the skills and experience he brought to the table, in order to deal with the ongoing, problematic reality that was the printed newsletter. He takes us through the initial conceptualization of the problem- knowing it wasn't meeting the needs of Area 72, demanding almost inhuman hours of effort by the newsletter chair, having been carpet bombed by numerous ad hoc committees and foundering on not having a vision of how to move forward. The final straw on the proverbial camel's back: proffering the solution of cutting back the newsletter 30%.

His article then becomes somewhat of a thriller. Obstacles encountered, the magnitude of work daunting, the timeline pressing. Through it all, John shares his process and thoughts as he moves forward. It's a fabulous "insiders" glimpse into what made this transition to a digital newsletter work.

Cut to the quarterlies and the main issues as I saw them presented: what about people who didn't have access to digital content? What about translation and archive issues? Work was being done behind the scenes and there appeared a print function, for example. In what seemed to me to be an incredibly responsive period of time, the major issues people brought up were addressed. Then there were what

I called the micro-objections. Here's an example: what if a person didn't have the wherewithal to print out that version of the newsletter? This idea seemed to catch a bit of momentum until someone who was their district's Accessibility chair spoke up and essentially shouted out: "Hey! That's what we're here for. We've got this!" And another objection was laid to rest.

We presented the newsletter to our district and kept referring to it. Our committee was unanimously in favor of it after the print dilemma and translation issues were addressed. When it came time to discuss and vote on moving to a digital format at the Assembly, our table of GSRs were excited to get past the churn of questions, especially after John B. spoke. We cheered after the vote was taken. "Finally!" we told ourselves. "Finally, we have a newsletter that will work for ALL of us."

I'll steal a company's former tagline (sorry John) and apply it to the digital newsletter: "it just works." I've seen incremental and significant changes that have been implemented over these few short months and they have all added to the functionality and ease of use of the newsletter.

I started with doing something that couldn't be done in the print only version and I'll close with demonstrating another thing that could only happen with the digital version: namely you being able to read this report. The newsletter now has regional editors and I've received several emails from ours, encouraging us to submit a report. Usually our alt DCM does this, but with the holidays, work schedules and this transition to the digital format, it fell between the cracks.

I received a phone call from our regional editor and had a wonderful conversation with him. He gave me further information about the website, the way to submit, and explained they were still working through some of the kinks. He suggested I send the report to him and he would make sure it made it into the newsletter. Because I had been informed earlier that we could submit a picture related to our district (D46 and the San Juan Islands) I also sent that to him. NONE of this would have been possible with a print format.

Thanks so much to John and to ALL the folks who have participated in birthing and shepherding this digital rollout!

Dave J

DCM District 46

360-317-4893

For free and for fun!

District 54

We have embraced the Area 72 Newsletter in its new electronic format and appreciate all the work that has gone into making it a “user friendly tool” that we can all enjoy! It will be really helpful to be able to forward articles/information to those in the Program and have the archived information readily available. I was personally sold once the “print capability” was established. To me, this seemed to satisfy all of the essential elements that I heard expressed by those in the Area, all while providing more functionality at a much lower cost.

As we move into 2026, our District 54 Standing Committees plan to capitalize on the momentum established throughout 2025.

- CPC: Getting Big Books and 12X12s into the local libraries, in English as well as Spanish. Working on a Firefighter project which has put together a packet of pamphlets for 1st responders to hand out to those they come across in need.
- Corrections: In the process of standing up meetings at the Enumclaw jail. We have not had a presence since Pre-COVID. Initial meeting to be held in December!
- District Newsletter: This District newsletter has returned after many years of absence! Our Editor released monthly editions of the Plateau Messenger since June! Read it and let us know what you think! Flyers - Google Drive
- PI: The committee hosted an AA Booth, for our first time ever, at the King County Fair in Enumclaw in July. The event was a great success! In addition to ensuring there is AA literature available throughout our community, the committee is working to get a panel into the local High School.

- Treatment: The committee continues to take panels into several Treatment facilities in the general area.
- Workshop: As part of a 12 Step Workshop Series, the committee hosted an event on Steps 6 & 7 in October and are scheduled to host the next event on `
- We identified the team to generate our 2026 budget which met and developed a proposed Budget and then presented it to the District – it was approved in October!
- We filled our Alt DCM position in November – Welcome Russ!!
- We celebrated the Holiday's with fellowship/meals @ both our November & December District meetings and are excited to hold our District 54 Inventory during our January District meeting!

As we start the new year, I hope to encourage additional participation within the District as we can do great things within our community when we all work together.

In gratitude,

David H. D54 DCM

Putting GSRs in the Center

General Service Representatives, or GSRs..., are to me, the most important folks who attend our District monthly business meetings. For me, it is not just about that fact, but more importantly, how we invite, encourage, engage them. How do we spread the word that service is fun...a life-changer and a life saver. In District 56, we have been working the past year, to lift the voices of our GSRs. We have begun to accomplish this in several replicable ways. (1) We added a GSR sharing agenda topic into our monthly meetings and encourage the GSRs to share their issues, concerns and events with another. This small change has created inclusion, belonging and joint ownership in our District. (2) We invite and encourage our GSRs and our Committee Chairs to accompany the DCM and ALT DCM to

quarterlies, workshops and other special events across Area 72. We carpool, share joys and sorrows, and build fellowship and trust. (3). We remind them how important they are to carrying the message to their groups...how much fun it is to be in service...and how our service structure is organized. Finally, we attempt to visit meetings throughout our District. These small changes have made a world of difference. And, reminded all of us that we don't do this alone!

How We Changed the Newsletter

This is the story of how the Area 72 newsletter changed shape, and the part I decided to own in that shift. On our Ad Hoc Committee, others looked hard at distribution, printing costs, and content. I stepped into an unorthodox role of building a working digital newsletter the fellowship could see, question, and push on, and I held it to a single test—does this make Twelfth Step work more possible in Western Washington? That single question changed the conversation from speculation to actualization.

January–March 2025 – From Budget Cut to First Draft

For decades, since the late-60s, the newsletter was one of our most familiar habits in Area 72: it showed up in the mail, landed on group literature tables, and anchored the way we shared business and stories. People saved copies, circled items, and carried it to district and group meetings. But as the rest of our lives moved onto screens, the newsletter kept arriving in the same printed form it always had. Our affection for it stayed high even as our actual use of it dropped. It slowly became something we felt good about keeping, not something most of us actually turned to when it mattered. The Area did not ignore the problem. In 2010 a Newsletter Ad Hoc Committee was formed to ask the basic questions: What is the newsletter for now. How much are we spending. Could we print less or publish less often. Should there be an online version. They surveyed, ran numbers, and showed we could save real money by capping the print run or going quarterly. It was solid, careful work. The subtext was clear: someone should certainly do something about

this. The report was thanked, filed, and the newsletter carried on more or less unchanged. By 2020 the tension was sharper. A second Newsletter Ad Hoc logged what people were actually saying: it's too long, too dense, hard to read, not visually inviting. They tried new layouts, pitched friendlier sections, asked about Spanish, and surveyed again. Communications Ad Hocs widened the scope to all Area communications and found the same split with different numbers: a fellowship drifting toward digital, still attached to paper, and deeply afraid of cutting anyone off. Each committee named the problem accurately and stopped just short of crossing into "Here's how we're going to fix this." Once again the message underneath was: yes, this needs to change; somebody should. And, again, we all quietly assumed that somebody, someday would. "Modernize the newsletter" became one of those phrases everyone said and almost nobody could define. Ask around and you'd get fragments: a few favorite features, a pet concern, a general sense that it should be easier, faster, more accessible. But that's where it ended. We had enthusiasm, instincts, and opinions—just not a shared, concrete example we could all rally around. My part in the story starts when the money got cut before the problem was solved. At the January 2025 Quarterly, the Finance Committee delivered its report: "We talked about the costs of the newsletter and that our Area has moved away from and beyond the original intention of the newsletter. We speculated that if we returned to the original intention, we could reduce our newsletter budget by one-third. Our Finance Committee unanimously approved the 2025 budget with the reduced newsletter budget." That was the moment I stopped hearing a budget report and started hearing something else. Even with the best of intentions, we, through our Finance Committee, were acting as if the newsletter's "original intention" still fit the way our Area actually lives and reads today—and using that untested assumption to justify cutting a third of its funding. We were reaching back to a purpose shaped in the late 1960s and using it to steer a major decision in 2025—with no concrete plan for what the newsletter should become or how we'd fill the gap that cut would create. So with a third of the funding already gone and no clear plan for what the newsletter should become, the Area reached for the tool it trusted most: we formed another ad hoc committee. We handed over the familiar questions—format, content, distribution—and asked a small group of volunteers to come back with answers on the tightest timeline yet. Driving home from that Quarterly, I realized the question wasn't what the newsletter was meant to be in 1968, or whether the budget cut had been tidy. The

question was simpler: would whatever came next make Twelfth Step work more possible in Western Washington. If that was the standard, we didn't need another report or survey; we needed a living newsletter people could actually use and flexible enough to grow and change with the fellowship. This wasn't theoretical for me. I build software and tools for a living, taking rough ideas and turning them into things people can actually use. So when I imagined a solution, it felt less like a dream and more like a service project I already knew how to do. A few days after the January Quarterly, Mike L., my district's DCM, and I were chatting over coffee on the Microsoft campus. We talked about how service leadership is more than just filling spots on a committees. It's bringing our whole selves into the work—our skills, our talents, the gifts we've developed outside the rooms—then rolling up our sleeves and going first, not asking anyone to do work we aren't willing to do ourselves. When we serve that way, side by side, that's when the Fellowship of A.A. stops being a vague idea and starts becoming real. As we talked, I realized I should do this. And no half measures either. "If I got involved, I'd have to totally crush it – leaving everything on the field.", I thought. This solution had to be seamless. All the features had to connect cleanly. If people without digital experience started "helping," we'd end up with a pile of half-integrated tools and broken workarounds. The only way to prevent that was to move first and build fast, to show something so solid it discouraged interference. The new ad hoc was meeting in a few weeks, so the site needed to look real by then: functional, stable, inevitable. The subtext of my effort would be simple and intentional—I got this one. I also decided to build this proof of concept on my own dime. Under one or two grand, easy. No committees, no debates about cost or permission, just movement. If it gained traction and people had opinions about costs later, fine—we'd deal with it then. But I wasn't going to let committee deliberating over \$200 issues slow down or kill something I knew would be great. I envisioned an ideal online newsletter. Submission system. Editorial queue. Translation workflow. Membership registration that respected anonymity. Search that worked. A front page that read like a newsletter. A printable version that did not punish the person tasked with making copies. It had to feel like a newsletter, not a blog. And it had to be maintainable when I stepped aside. I got to work building on a subdomain of my own site—news.johnbarry.com—because it was fast, simple, and demonstrated that the site's address could be news.area72aa.org. I wanted a place where I could think, design, and ship without waiting on approval loops. I figured the ad hoc committee

would probably underwrite the effort after they saw it, but the build itself would be mine: my architecture, my design language, my call on the details that mattered. It was all upside for our fellowship. No risk. People could see if it worked. If they didn't like it, they didn't have to adopt it. I sent a short note to Geene F., the ad hoc chairperson, and said I had some bandwidth for service and would be glad to support the newsletter committee. She wrote back with a warm welcome. In that moment, the reality of it landed. My name was right there in the address bar—news.johnbarry.com—impossible to miss and impossible to separate from the work. Anyone who opened it would know exactly who had put it together. If it looked sloppy, that was on me. If it was hard to use, on me. If it didn't feel like a real alternative to print, still on me. There would be no shelter in a committee vote or a group decision. I had put my name on the door, and now the work had to live up to it. That raised the bar. This thing had to be strong enough to make people reconsider what a newsletter for Area 72 could be. I had tied myself to the outcome, and the only way to protect both the idea and my service career was to build something that could stand on its own. This was only the beginning. Success would hinge on one question: could I turn that blank site into a working digital newsletter, fast enough and well enough to give the fellowship a real choice before the budget cut ran its course, finishing off the newsletter.

April–July 2025 – Long Days, Late Nights, A Working Site

There's that line attributed to Henry Ford—if he'd asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses. We'd been trying to make faster horses for fifteen years. We didn't need a slightly better way to print or email a newsletter. We needed a way to experience it that worked for us. I had about a week to get the first working site on its feet. Late nights at my desk, dogs asleep at my feet, every hour aimed at building something that the fellowship couldn't shrug off. I wanted the site to feel calm the moment it opened, like stepping into a clean, well-lit room. Quiet, familiar, intentional. The printed newsletter had always been dense and noisy—walls of text, tiny type, stories fighting for attention. I stripped that away. Headlines have room to breathe. Each story lives on its own page, surrounded by white space so the eye can rest. The layout moves at a human pace: you can see

what matters, land on it, and stay there. Nothing blinks, nothing shouts. No fake materials or decorative skeuomorphism—no drop shadows or ornament that doesn’t earn its keep. Just a genuinely digital page: good typography, clear hierarchy, words, balance, and air. Designing the experience felt less like coding and more like building a front porch. You think about how someone approaches, where they slow down, where they sit. I wanted the site to welcome people in without asking them to learn anything new. Interactions had to be obvious but still a pleasure to use. The whole thing needed a human, generous voice—something that feels like someone made it for you, not at you. I texted Geene F., “Do you have a few minutes? I want you to see something.” We jumped on Zoom that evening. I shared my screen and walked her through the front page—the typography, the white space, how the layout showed relationships instead of just stacking content. I only made it halfway down the page before she burst out laughing in that way that tells you the thing works. “Oh my God, John, this is beautiful. This is it!” She was grinning ear to ear, already talking about how the committee was going to lose its mind. I laughed too, mostly out of relief. We were set for the demo to the rest of the ad hoc committee. Days later, at the ad hoc committee’s meeting, I opened with a screen share—no warm-up, no preamble. I walked them through the design goals and content taxonomy, the way the categories worked together, how stories could be tagged and searched, and how the structure stayed simple underneath it all. I showed them how translation could plug in without extra steps and how archiving could be automated. The flow made sense immediately; you could feel it land. The conversation lit up—“Wow,” “This feels alive,” “This is the newsletter.” This living example of a digital newsletter would be the cornerstone of our committee’s report to the Area. Erin E., the Newsletter Editor, was also on the ad hoc committee and on the call. A results-driven professional with no patience for fluff, she carried the newsletter each month through sheer grit—copying submissions into a stubborn Word file, wrestling with layout, and chasing translation and print deadlines. She joined the demo skeptical, arms crossed, watching closely. But as the site unfolded—submission forms, built-in formatting, translation ready—her posture changed. She began to see a future where the work didn’t grind down the editor. It wasn’t yet excitement, but you could see it getting there. For the rest of February and into March, my work shifted from building to listening. I reached out to Tami B., whose life had been rebuilt in AA and who carried a quiet, steady gratitude for it into everything she did. She loved the printed newsletter, and not because she was

afraid of change. She loved it for two very practical reasons. First, print didn't move. It stayed the same from one day to the next, so she could set it down, come back later, and find her place. Second, print allowed her to see everything at once—all the stories laid out together—without having to dig through menus or remember where stories were. I credit Tammy's two powerful insights with making the newsletter's user experience work. It was on me to solve for both experiences. So I wrote code that pulled every story from the current issue into a single scrollable home page—a digital facsimile of flipping through the newsletter in one sitting. Then I locked the home page for each issue so it wouldn't change all month and built a way to revisit past issues, each preserved exactly as it appeared when published – like a paper newsletter. It worked and I showed it to Tami. She told me she still preferred paper, laughed at me, then added that this addressed what she valued about the paper format. Okay, we were close. A few final refinements, some polish, and we'd be ready for the April Quarterly.

The April Quarterly

I wouldn't be able to attend the April Quarterly in person. Instead, I'd be online, co-presenting with Sooz B., a fellow member of the ad hoc committee. Sooz was warm, grounded, and fearless at the mic - at least she did a good job pretending to be fearless at the mic. We trusted each other completely and had already developed an easy rhythm working together. Members at the quarterly were friendly, curious, and politely skeptical in that way AA does so well. I remember thinking: this either works in a real room, with real distractions, or it doesn't work at all. I was on Zoom, 200 miles away in Redmond, driving the demo from my desk while Sooz stood at the front of the room. Geene introduced us, and Sooz took the mic as I shared my screen with the room. We moved through the site together—her reading the room, me guiding the visuals. The homepage appeared: clean, steady, familiar but alive. We showed the issue layout, the search bar, the bilingual workflow, and the single-page scroll Tami had inspired. For a long moment, silence—then a ripple through the room, faces brightening, voices overlapping. The fellowship's interest piqued. They were seeing what we'd seen for months: the newsletter, finally alive online. The April Quarterly gave us all the proof we needed to keep going. The enthusiasm was real, grounded in curiosity and possibility. The main concern came from Archives and Accessibility—they needed a printable version that would also

work for members with weak internet. From April through July, I built a printable version that generated automatically, along with several new features: a built-in bulk emailer that protected anonymity, an anonymity scanner, a streamlined translation workflow, and cleaner design throughout. I shared all the new features I developed with the ad hoc committee except one—the Flyer Wall. AA runs on flyers: workshops, picnics, conventions, gratitude banquets. The printed newsletter had always devoted its back pages to them, and I knew we needed a digital equivalent—something visual, intuitive, and easy to browse. The Flyer Wall was a single page displaying every upcoming event across Western Washington, filterable by event type, ready to grow with mapping and search later. When I saw it come to life, I knew we had something special. It showed, more clearly than anything else, that a digital newsletter wasn't just a replacement for print—it was a new medium entirely, alive with possibility for how we could connect.

The July Quarterly

The July Quarterly felt like summer: louder, faster, already in motion. Sooz and I were both there in person, her at the laptop and me down among the tables instead of at the podium. I'd asked for a mic ahead of time because I wanted to move and talk to people where they were, not compete with whatever was glowing on the screen up front. The room wasn't just full; it was engaged. Pages turning, side conversations pausing mid-sentence when something landed, that charged feeling when a group realizes something might actually get easier. I started with the demo, walking the room through what I had built since April: the automatic print version, the translation workflow, the clean, fixed monthly layout. Sooz surfed the site live, following my cues as I spoke. Heads nodded, people whispered, someone in the back said, "That's sharp." Then I stopped, let the silence settle and people felt the demo was about over. I smiled. "There's one more thing," I said. A few chuckles, a few curious looks. "As we all know our fellowship runs on flyers—workshops, picnics, softball games. Right now, as I speak, we have a table of flyers just outside this room. And the back pages of the printed newsletter had always carried them." I said, "We need a place for that, too." On cue, Sooz clicked. The Flyer Wall appeared—a grid of every upcoming event, everyone's bright flyers stacked edge to edge like a bulletin board after a meeting. For a second, no one moved. Then the room came alive: "Woah", laughter, people craning to see the screen. It was the

sound of a shifting paradigm. You could feel it. The digital newsletter had stopped being an idea; it was articulation of possibilities, something the fellowship could see, touch, and claim as its own. After the sugar high of the presentation a few voices urged caution, and I completely agreed. But even as they spoke, the shape of a way forward formed in people's minds. What had begun as a proof of concept was now becoming action. I could feel it in the air: the fellowship was fired up and ready to go. In short order the room created the motion to replace the printed newsletter with this digital version. They weren't treating it as an experimental prototype anymore. With smooth, decisive stroke it had stepped into the role of likely successor. I stayed long enough to watch that happen, then slipped out while the room moved on to its other business. Outside, the weight of what this turn meant hit me. This service project would quite possibly stand in for fifty years of print. Every district, every concern, every corner case of our fellowship would press against it on the way to the Assembly. The build was strong. But now it had to hold up under the full scrutiny of the Area.

August–December 2025 – District Visits, Questions, and a Group Conscience

After the July Quarterly, everything turned toward October. The motion to transition the Area 72 newsletter to a digital format would go before the Assembly, and my job in the months between was simple: use the preassemblies and this time to make sure every member who wanted to understand it could. I joined the trusted servants on the preassembly circuit, and lived on emails, texts, and late-night calls. I lived in online meetings, in my inbox, and on the road. If someone had a question about the site, I wanted to be the one who answered it. I owed the fellowship that clarity. I needed a way to scale myself—to reach every corner of the Area without burning out. So, I made a video demonstration. One warm Saturday in July, I set up my laptop on the porch and hit record. I walked through the site as if I were sitting next to an old friend—home page, stories, translations, the Flyer Wall lit up with color. Later I added a simple voiceover—steady, conversational, no pitch, no gloss. I wanted it to sound like service, not marketing. When it was finished, I uploaded it to YouTube and started sending the link around. Among my

friends I called it the “Porta-John”—not fancy, just a small, portable way to bring a demonstration of the newsletter anywhere. By the end of July, that eight-minute video had a life of its own. Districts played it at meetings, DCMs shared it over email, some texted links to it like a whispered, “You’ve got to see this”. It went into rooms I was never going to get to in person.

The Pre-assembly Circuit

Each preassembly had its own vibe. Bellevue’s tables were lined with enough casseroles and desserts to feed hundreds. Tacoma was crazy hot, the air heavy enough that paper stuck to your arms. Mount Vernon spirited until the lights dimmed and the site appeared on screen. I learned to read a room before I opened my mouth—to tell the difference between resistance and confusion. The questions that came weren’t about technology so much as trust. Would the site be public or password-protected? Would anonymity be protected? Would there still be a printable version for people without Wi-Fi? Would Spanish translations publish at the same time as English? I answered each one, careful not to rush. I told any willing listener how the site respected anonymity by default, how the print version was generated in seconds, how Spanish and English lived side by side in the same workflow. When a question invited a long, technical answer, I tried not go full Service-Nerd. In one meeting, a member asked what would happen if a hacker wiped out the site. I said, “First, we use industry best practices to keep that from happening in the first place. But if those protections totally failed, we have disaster recovery systems to bring it back.” Then I walked everyone through, in simple terms. I wanted them to walk away knowing this part of the work was in steady, capable hands. I found many of the questions weren’t about technology; they were about belonging. How will this work for people who are visually impaired? What if we want to add another language? Will there still be a place for me in this? Will this serve us with compassion? The most important feedback didn’t come from the mics. It came from faces. The furrowed brows that eased, the slow nods, the small smiles. In Tacoma, a woman who must have been seventy said, ‘I don’t do computers, but I do love this. It feels like us.’ That line has lived in my head ever since. In Mount Vernon, one exchange stood out. During the Q&A, Alan F.—a past delegate with a lot of energy and a clear love for Area service—stepped up to the mic a few feet from where I was standing. He told the room he hoped I wouldn’t be

the one to present at the Assembly, then turned, pointed at my chest, and said, “Look—you’re a rock star!” The room laughed; I did too, a little embarrassed and a little amused. Seeing me smile and shake my head, he went on to say that a strong walk-through from me could pull the Assembly toward the new site before we’d really talked through what adopting it would mean. I could not agree more. I didn’t want us choosing it because it looked sharp on a screen. If this was going to replace fifty years of print, the decision had to rest on the strength of the idea, not on smart presentation. September was work. No adrenaline, no applause. Just long days tightening the bolts before the Assembly. The systems were finalized, accessibility checked and rechecked, backups tested repeatedly. I wrote documentation, rewrote it, tested it on someone new, rewrote it again. The site became quieter, cleaner, more reliable. If the vote passed, it had to be ready to serve hundreds of people without my hands on the controls.

The Assembly

The Assembly came on October 5, at the Lynnwood Convention Center. Seven hundred chairs, the air alive with caffeine and nervous chatter. It felt less like a debate and more like a family meeting that had been postponed for fifteen years. When the motion finally reached the floor, the microphones filled fast. Questions I’d heard all summer—cost, access, ownership, inclusion—came from every corner of the room. I sat near the back, quiet, filling a page with the themes and gaps I heard, knowing I was the one they’d look to for the solid answers. After about ninety minutes, the same concerns started looping back in different voices. That’s when I walked to the microphone, notes in hand, and waited in line. When they called on me, I took a breath. “John B., alcoholic.” As soon as I gave my name, a guy in the middle of the room called out, ‘Hey, it’s news dot JohnBarry dot com.’ A pocket of people who caught it laughed, and the tone shifted—not louder, just different. The folks who knew the site now knew the person at the mic was the one who built it. I let it settle for a beat. “I’ve heard a lot of the concerns,” I said, “and I think I can answer them for the fellowship.” I looked up at the dais. “I think I can do it in under two minutes, but I’d like to ask the Chair for a little leniency on the timer.” The countdown that had just started was reset to 2:00 and paused, ready for the next person. I had the freedom to answer the questions cleanly. I turned to the fellowship. I was now talking to them. I took them through my notes:

anonymity, access, translation, print options, cost. I explained each point plainly, the way I did in so many district meetings or over coffee with individuals—no slides, no tech talk, just the reasoning behind some of the choices. I wasn't defending the project; I was clearing up the remaining concerns in a way that didn't waste everyone's time and attention. When I finished, I thanked the fellowship and stepped back. The room was quiet for a moment, then a couple more people went to the mic and the Chair finally called for the vote. I stood in the back so I could really see the vote. Cards went up in favor—hundreds of them. Then came the cards opposed, a couple dozen scattered through the room. It still wasn't final; the Minority Opinion was next. That's where a group conscience does some of its best work, and I really wanted to understand these concerns. But in the end, no minds were changed by the Minority Opinions and the motion carried.

Applause filled the Convention Center—steady, sustained, full of relief. After twenty years of circling the same questions, of watching the paper newsletter age in place as the world moved on, we had finally acted. The sound carried something deeper than celebration—it was release. A shared exhale after two decades of tension between tradition and practicality. For twenty years the newsletter had arrived each month as a quiet reminder of what we couldn't seem to fix. Now, with one vote, we had found a way forward. The applause said it plainly: we can adapt, we have agency, we can build. I stood still, listening, feeling that long-deferred movement roll through the room.

Turning it Over

By late November, Erin, our long-suffering Newsletter Editor, and I assembled her Newsletter team—regional editors from around the Area, an events editor, photographers in nearly every corner of Western Washington. By December we were training together while producing the January issue—the first all-digital edition in Area 72 history. The team came alive faster than I expected. They were funny, opinionated, generous—a mix of longtime servants and newcomers with design chops, writing skills, and a taste for adventure. It felt less like a committee and more like a small newsroom. People showed up with ideas, not just questions. We set a rhythm: a planning meeting after each issue's deadline, looking ahead at events, assigning stories and photos, catching bottlenecks early. We built a simple workflow, wrote a style guide, set submission deadlines. Now, as I write this, most

nights I sit down at the laptop and watch it take shape. A draft homepage here, a translated story there, a photo dropped into place by someone I barely knew a year ago. It no longer feels like a prototype on my website; it feels like shared work. My hope is that we use this to share our service experience with each other in Western Washington. Not just tidy monthly reports, but the real stories of our work: how we carry the message in our groups and districts, how we cooperate with each other, where we share common. The experiments that worked, the ones that failed, the moments that were beautiful, and the ones that blew up and pissed people off. We already have thousands of those stories. Now we have a place to throw them on the table and use them to leave our groups, districts, and service positions better than we found them—in writing, in audio, in photos and video that show exactly how we did it.

A Sunset Review: Why This Worked

When I look at this Service Project—moving the Area 72 newsletter into a digital form—I’m encouraged. Not because “we got something passed,” but because I can already see where it makes Twelfth Step work more possible across Western Washington. Now the question is “Why did this Service Project succeed. What made it effective and impactful in real life.” Here is my best attempt to answer that, in case there’s anything here you can steal for your own service.

1. It started with pain we were already living with

For years, trusted servants had been naming the same problems with the old format: hard to read, hard to produce, slow to arrive, expensive to print and mail, and out of step with how much we said we valued it. In other words, the dissatisfaction was already baked in. The Service Project didn’t have to convince anyone that something was wrong. It simply took the existing pain seriously and asked, “If we believed the newsletter really mattered, what would a better tool have to do.”

2. Real people, not abstract ‘users,’ shaped the design from the start

As the project took shape, I kept picturing specific people: A DCM grabbing five minutes at lunch to see what’s coming up. GSR in a small town trying to understand what’s happening beyond their district. A newsletter editor at the end of a workday trying to get three more stories in before a deadline. A Spanish-speaking member wondering if they will see their language treated as equal, not as extra. Pages, forms, menus, and workflows were all adjusted with those people in mind. Not to impress tech folks. Not to show off what this software can do. Just to make the experience as simple as: click in, find what you need, read it, and go live your life.

3. We worked on the whole path, not just the surface

What most members see is the front end: articles, images, menus, maybe a flyer or two. But underneath that is a path: Someone has an idea for a story. They turn that into a submission. The editor shapes it and schedules it. It gets translated when needed. It lands in a readable form at the right time. An event or announcement points someone to take action in their own recovery or service. We tried to shore up that whole path, not just the homepage. That meant building submission forms that collect what editors actually need, creating a production flow that doesn’t crush volunteers, tying in events and flyers, and making sure translation isn’t an afterthought.

4. The Traditions were treated as guardrails, not obstacles

There were a lot of places where this could have turned into a standard web project: loosening anonymity, leaning into personalities, collecting more data, turning the newsletter into a general-purpose Area portal. Instead, we kept coming back to the same kinds of questions: Does this respect anonymity in spirit and practice? Does this feel like we’re serving our primary purpose, not promoting

things? Does this keep Spanish and English on equal footing wherever we can? Does this keep the focus on principles rather than personalities? Does this keep us right-sized around money, prestige, and attention? Sometimes those questions meant reworking an idea. Sometimes they meant letting it go. Either way, the effect was that members who care deeply about our Traditions could look at the Service Project and still recognize AA.

5. People got to try it before they were asked to trust it

By the time the Assembly considered the motion, the digital newsletter wasn't hypothetical. It was already publishing issues. People had clicked around. Some had submitted stories. DCMs had seen live demos at pre-assemblies. A handful of trusted servants had seen the admin side. So when we finally asked the body, "Should this become the Area's way of doing the newsletter," they weren't voting on a drawing. They were being asked whether to keep, improve, and support something they had already seen in action.

6. The story stayed about making 12th step work more possible, not about the tool

There were—and are—lots of secondary benefits: lower printing and postage costs, faster turnaround, better accessibility on phones, easier archiving, and so on. But the main story stayed pretty simple: This helps connect groups, districts, and committees to each other. This makes it easier for trusted servants to know what is happening and respond. This carries stories of service and recovery from one corner of the Area to another, in two languages, with less friction. That is language that fits naturally alongside our primary purpose and our own experience of recovery from disordered alcohol use. It isn't about "modernizing" for its own sake. It's about getting the message from one person to another with fewer unnecessary barriers.

7. We kept the scope small enough to hand off

Once the prototype was visible, ideas poured in. Many of them were smart and well intentioned. Quite a few would have been useful somewhere. But not everything that is useful belongs in the same place. One of the hardest parts of this Service Project was saying, in different ways, “That’s a good idea, but not here,” or “Maybe later, if it still looks essential,” or “That really belongs on the main Area site, not inside the newsletter.” Without that, the site would have swollen into something so busy and brittle that future editors and tech servants would struggle to maintain it.

8. It was built with the next rotation in mind

From the outset, the hope was that this Service Project would outlast any one trusted servant. That meant making choices with future editors and tech folks in mind: Using tools that are teachable to a willing volunteer, not just to a specialist. Writing things down instead of keeping them in one person’s head. Keeping the layout and architecture understandable instead of clever. Working with the structure the Area already has (editor, committee, steering group) so the newsletter has a home, not just a server. We won’t know for a few years how well that holds. But the intention was clear: build something that people in recovery from disordered alcohol use can inherit and run, not just something to admire for one rotation and then quietly retire.

What I’m taking forward

When I walk away from this Service Project and think about whatever comes next—for me or for you—these are the questions I find myself coming back to: Is there real, shared pain this is responding to, or just a clever idea? Can I picture specific people in recovery using this and have I let their reality shape it? Am I tending the whole path, not just the part that looks good on a slide? Do our Traditions show up in the design itself, not just in the preamble? Have people had a chance to experience it and change it before I ask them to approve it? Can I explain how it

makes Twelfth Step work more possible or carries the message in a sentence or two? Am I willing to say no often enough to protect the core? Could someone else pick this up and run with it after I'm gone? If this series has been about anything, it's been about that: taking the honesty and willingness that changed our lives away from alcohol, and applying that same spirit to how we build and maintain the things that carry our message. If even one idea from this Service Project helps you shape something in your own corner of AA—whether it's a district effort, a home group experiment, or a new way to welcome people walking in from disordered alcohol use—then every late night staring at that screen was worth it. Thanks, John B. john@johnbarry.com

Gifts Offered Daily

When I first came to Alcoholics Anonymous, I heard that G-O-D stood for Gifts Offered Daily. Since I came from a family that had endured the Great Depression, and I was not used to gifts, this was a wonderful description of God, even though I had gone to church for years. I vividly remember when I experienced some good feelings one early morning in the program and what a gift they were. I decided to walk to work in the bright morning light with the birds singing away. It was my first experience to wake up feeling good and happy.

We are now having a new gift to our program. The old newsletter sent by mail is no longer available. Searching through the pages of a printed-paper has changed to a computer edition. We are experiencing a new, newsletter that is only on line. It has the same information with new additions. The colorful pages compared to the plain version of all black ink are a nice touch. There are links to the people you may need to contact and do not know how to reach.

In addition, as we read on line we are staying in touch with up to date information that keeps our unity. Also, this group decision is financially prudent. This is a gift to the member ship in saving expenses, and making the newsletter easily available allowing the membership to stay currently informed.

This new opportunity brings a new version of support our connection and continuity for the unity of purpose in carrying the message. This change provides strength for all in the program. Our primary purpose is to be there for the new comer. The awareness of this change has brought a new awareness about the newsletter. Earlier, I was in the program for some time before I heard about the newsletter. It is a wonderful source of information.

There is always something new I need to read and hear. The more information, we can share and have access to supplies new and additional thoughts about sobriety. I was dying 40 years ago from alcoholism. I found all the information I could read, hear at meetings, and in sharing with my sponsor were exactly what I needed to hear at the time. The newsletter has this information and keeps me up to date on events and activities to enjoy. The more I learn and apply in my life, the better my life became.

Our common welfare must come first. That is the best gift we can have in recovery and sobriety. Seeing the new format for the program newsletter is progress and can improve communications about activities and events. This is a unique way to bring a joining for all our members. This is a gift to us all.

By Marilyn R.
