

The newsletter committee met Saturday August 8<sup>th</sup> in Mankato. We had 1 hr of just the Newsletter comm., and then an hour with the Website and Group Records Comm. The Joint committees meeting will be covered in a different report that was filed by Sissy under the title of "Joint Newsletter, Website, and Group Records report".

As for the Newsletter committee, we had 5 people present for the meeting, Sharon from D 26; Dan from D 8; Michael from D22; and Michael's guest Mark and myself. There was no old business discussed.

As for New business, there is a good deal of it. Basically we are reviewing some of the guidelines and areas where the newsletter has not ventured before, like an electronic version of the Pigeon. Here are the new business topics and questions:

- Who outside of Area 36 should receive the regular printed Pigeon?
  - We just added Northern MN Officers and Comm Chairs.
  - In the Region, Which positions?
  - Outside of the Region, which positions?
  - GSO?
  - Trustees?
- Electronic version of the Pigeon
  - Should we have an electronic version of the Pigeon Area Newsletter?
  - If it is decided to have an electronic version (PDF doc), basically what would the new additional Newsletter guidelines be for the electronic version of the Pigeon be?
  - The concerns are anonymity.
    - Should last names be omitted?
    - Should phone numbers be omitted?
    - Email addys should not be a problem because they are of the Area's site email that are listed, not personal emails.
    - Anything else?
  - Who should get it?
    - At the Joint MNAA & SMAA Workshop 2 weeks ago, it was definitely recommended to at least send an electronic version to DCMs, Officers, and Comm Chairs.
    - Should GSRs District Comm Chairs and AAs also be included for the electronic email list in SMAA similar to the regular mailing list?
    - Who should receive the Pigeon outside of Area 36? Meaning who should be included on the regular mailing list and the electronic list? Area officers? Area Chairs?
  - Any other concerns that should be addressed regarding having an electronic version?

As you can see it covers a lot of territory. The purpose being, lets take a look at what we can do better, be more efficient at, etc... all in the name of better communications so that the end result is the alcoholic who still suffers can have the opportunity to recover from alcoholism. Please review the above, and send comments to me about this, as at the December Newsletter meeting we will go over all the comments and condense them to form new guidelines and perhaps Policies that then will be reviewed again in a more formal process. So basically for now, we are collecting comments for the basis of possible future guidelines/policies for Area.

On another note not related to the newsletter Comm, but rather related to the publishing aspect of the Pigeon, we are automating the labels/mail sorting aspect for producing the Pigeon newsletter. Basically it takes about 3 days of time to pick up the newsletters, mail sort the labels, apply the labels, bundle the Pigeons and then go the St Paul PO to mail the Pigeon. And the Groups records Sec has to print 1750+- labels too. So now, we will be using a company that specializes in mail sort/labeling. They have a major computer program that does the sorting, inkjets the labels directly onto the newspaper, and they deliver it to the post office. All we do is send via email the Pigeon mailing list to them and the printing co drops off the Newsletters to this company, and it is done on our end except for picking up the extra copies of the Pigeon. The cost is approx \$200 to do this per issue. As the Pigeon mailing has grown, it has basically become a "job" to do the mail sort/labeling and that is after spending 3 to 4 days laying out/editing the Pigeon right before the mailing. The past Newsletters had co chairs(spouses) to help in this. But being I am single that is not an option, plus we went from 1150 on the mailing list 6 years ago to 1750+ names this year, thus the it has grown in the amount of work it takes too. Rest assured I have been keeping in constant contact with the Area Chair so she is fully aware of what has been going on with this new automation. I believe that in the long term, this will help serve the Area better in efficiency and that it will also open up more people to be available to the position of Newsletter chair/Pigeon editor as the work load will be less daunting for them. And a dividend also will be we will save some \$ on returned Pigeons, as the addresses will be checked against the Post Offices' NCOA change of address data base, which means the addresses are corrected before the Pigeon is sent, and the Group records chair will receive a report of the changes, so hopefully it'll make that job a bit easier too. And there will be less travel expenses too, and in these times of \$3 a gal for gas that helps save us \$ too. Basically there have been huge strides made in the last 5 years in the publishing/ mailing industry in technology, so we are just catching up to these new standards.

That covers the current items for the Newsletter. As always, if you have any concerns or comments, please feel free to contact me.

Yours in service,  
Alan N.  
Newsletter Chair and Pigeon Editor.