

### BRIEF PARLIAMENTARY GUIDE

When recognized by the chairperson: 1) Stand, clearly state your name and the name of the Group you represent. 2) Speak as clearly and as briefly as possible – your remarks must be pertinent to the business at hand or items you wish to bring to the floor.

You want to:	You say:	Second required	Debatable	Vote
Adjourn	I move we adjourn	Yes	No	Majority
Register a complaint	Point of privilege	No	No	No vote, chair decides
Table a matter	I move we table this matter	Yes	No	Majority
End a discussion or debate of a matter	I move the previous question	Yes	No	2/3
Have further study of a matter	I move we refer this to a committee	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	I move this motion be amended to read...	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce a matter of business	I move that	Yes	Yes	Majority
Object to an error in procedure	I move that the order of the day or point of order	No	No	No vote, chair decides
Request information	Point of information	No	No	No vote
Take up a matter previously tabled	I move we take from the table	Yes	No	Majority
Reconsider an item already disposed of (Maker must have been on the prevailing side on the original motion)	I move we reconsider the vote on our action relative to...	Yes	If the original motion was debatable, yes	Majority
Consider an item out of its scheduled order	I move we suspend the rules and consider...	Yes	No	2/3
Delay an action indefinitely	I move to postpone indefinitely...	Yes	Yes	Majority

# GSR SURVIVAL GUIDE

**A Brief Training Program for New (and not so new)  
General Service Representatives**

MAY 2005



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### **PACIFIC REGION ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS SERVICE**

**ASSEMBLY (PRAASA):** A service assembly held the first weekend in March in an Area of the Pacific Region, PRAASA is open to any member of Alcoholics Anonymous. Some General Service Conference agenda items are discussed as well as any A.A. topics of general interest to the attendees.

**PACIFIC REGION FORUM:** A workshop held every other year in an Area of the Pacific Region, conducted by staff members from the General Service Office. The purpose is to acquaint A.A.s with GSO, its operation and the people who work there.

**REGION:** A grouping of several States or Provinces from which a Regional Trustee comes to the Board of Trustees. There are eight regions in the Conference – six in the United States and two in Canada. Area 69 is in the Pacific Region.

**THIRD LEGACY:** Recovery and unity are our first two legacies, handed down to us from the founders of A.A. Our third legacy is Service, the sum total of all our AA services from the twelfth-step call to A.A.'s coast to coast and worldwide activities.

**THIRD LEGACY PROCEDURE:** A voting procedure, unique to A.A., designed to help reduce some negative aspects of elections – such as personality clashes, ego battles and dissatisfied minorities. (See A.A. Service Manual, Chapter 1.)

**TRUSTEES:** The usual term for a member of A.A.'s General Service Board of Trustees. Currently, the Board is made up of twenty-one Trustees, including the Regional Trustees. Seven are "Class A" Trustees (non-alcoholic) and fourteen are "Class B" Trustees (alcoholic).

**TWELVE CONCEPTS:** As the Twelve Steps are to personal Recovery and the Twelve Traditions are to the preservation and Unity of A.A., so are the Twelve Concepts to General Service. They are a set of principles and practices intended to preserve service to A.A. and the still suffering alcoholic. They also protect the structure by which such service is made possible. (See "The Twelve Concepts for World Service" in the back of the A.A. Service Manual).

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WELCOME TO ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS GENERAL SERVICE!  
THE GSR PREAMBLE

We are the General Service Representatives. We are the link in the chain of communication for our groups with the General Service Conference and the world of A.A.

We realize the ultimate authority in A.A. is a loving God as he may express Himself in our group conscience. As trusted servants, our job is to bring information to our groups in order that they can reach an informed group conscience. In passing along this group conscience, we are helping to maintain the unity and strength so vital to our fellowship.

Let us, therefore, have the patience and tolerance to listen while others share, the courage to speak up when we have something to share, and the wisdom to do what is right for our groups as a whole.

As an elected General Service Representative (GSR) you now represent the voice of your AA group's conscience to the A.A. General Service Conference held in New York each April. Through your elected District Committee Member (DCM) and the Area 69 Delegate, you will become the two-way link between your group and the world of A.A. as a whole. As such, you and fellow GSRs worldwide have become the key to the unity of A.A.

There is a saying in A.A. that "You might be the only copy of the Big Book that someone sees". As GSR you might be the only Service Manual someone sees. The GSR is the link for the group and the group conscience to general service. You can also be the link for a newer member into service and general service.

One ingredient for a healthy group is having its members involved. Have a job or position for all willing members. Make sure the group members have at least some understanding of what happens beyond the group level. Invite or bring a few members to a district meeting, area committee meeting, or any sort of service gathering. Let them have some exposure and explain what is going on.

Having a well-informed and experienced group will generate better future GSRs, stronger groups and can only benefit A.A. as a whole. As we grow in A.A. service, as we learn and see more, what we come to understand is what a gift it is to have the opportunity to repay A.A. for our new lives, and like most gifts in A.A., it is one to be given away in order that we may keep it!

In order to more fully forge the two-way link between your group and the General Service Office (GSO) and the Conference, you (the GSR) will become active in building and keeping a strong service structure.

**CONFERENCE:** The meeting held each April in New York of the elected Area Delegates, the Board of Trustees, and the GSO staff. This meeting keeps the individual A.A. members and GSO in close supportive contact with each other through the General Service chain. This chain is made up of several links: the Trustees' Committees working closely with comparable Delegates' Committees (e.g., PI, CPC, Treatment Facilities, Finance); the Delegate from, and back to, the Area; individual A.A. members through the GSR. In the Conference, each Area has one representative Delegate who confers with approximately ninety two (92) other Delegates. Twenty-one Trustees (14 alcoholic and 7 non-alcoholic), 19 GSO staff members and representatives from the two corporations – A.A. World Services and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

**DELEGATE:** An A.A. member of the Area Assembly who is elected by the GSRs, DCMs Area Standing Chairs and Officers of an Area to represent them at the Conference. It is through the Delegate that the A.A. Group passes along its informed group conscience to the Conference and receives back the results of the Conference. Each Area is designated either as an "even" panel or an "odd" panel referring to the year for which the Delegate is elected. This way A.A. is assured of continuity at the Conference. Area 69 is an "odd" panel.

**DISTRICT:** A geographic sub-division within a General Service Area created in order to come closer to the individual A.A. Group. It is here that each group in the District sends its elected GSR to carry its group conscience forward on the chain to the Conference and to receive back important information from A.A. as a whole. Area 69 has eleven (11) districts.

**DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER (DCM):** A GSR who has been elected by his fellow GSRs within a District to represent them on the Area Committee. The DCM is also responsible for coordinating and assisting the efforts of the other GSRs in the District.

**GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE (GSR):** An A. A. member who is elected by his/her Home Group to represent that group's opinion in discussions at the District and Area levels. He/she also keeps the group as fully informed as possible of important decisions, discussions, and events occurring within A.A. at the District, Area, Regional, National and International levels. He/she is further responsible for seeing that the best possible A.A. representatives are chosen to serve the whole fellowship by voting for the DCMs, Standing Chairs, Area Officers and Delegates to the Conference.

## GLOSSARY OF COMMON A.A. TERMS

**ALTERNATE:** A general service worker who, according to local autonomy and needs, is elected at the group, district or area levels to participate with, assist in, and appropriately assume the duties of a principle office holder, i.e., Alternate GSR, Alternate Delegate.

**ARCHIVES:** A collection of memorabilia, usually maintained by a committee. Committee functions might include collection, indexing, storing and exhibiting original and reproduced national, international and local A.A. materials such as newspaper and magazine articles, tape recordings of important A.A. functions, oral histories of oldtimers, group and district histories, etc.

**AREA:** A geographical division within a State or Province. Normally there is one Area for each State, except where there might be a densely populated State or Province. Area 69 encompasses Utah and Wendover, Nevada.

**AREA ASSEMBLY:** A periodic meeting of the group General Service Representatives (GSRs), District Committee Members (DCMs) and Area Officers. From among the members of the Assembly, they elect their Area Officers and the Area Delegate to the General Service Conference in New York. The Assembly is a basic unit of the General Service Structure and conducts or helps coordinate most of the A.A. business for the Area.

**AREA COMMITTEE:** A committee within an Area that is made up of one or more District Committee Members (DCMs) from each District within the Area and all Area Officers. The Area Committee is a vital A.A. service in that it functions as a research, study and advisory group to the Area Assembly.

**BOX 4-5-9:** A bimonthly publication of the General Service Office, the title of which is the New York mailing address of GSO (Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163). The banner of this informative mini magazine often consists of the words “News and Notes From the General Service Office of A.A.” It includes such items of interest as a calendar of important local, national and international events; questions and problems directed to GSO about A.A.; committee reports from Public Information, Cooperation With The Professional Community, Treatment Centers, Institutions, Finance, etc.; vignettes and anecdotes from A.A. people, history and events; as well as much other information of interest to the dedicated member. Many fruitful ideas for GSRs reports to the Group can be derived from the pages of Box 4-5-9.

You will learn more about General Service, which is based on:

### THE THREE LEGACIES

1. **RECOVERY**, as outlined in the Twelve Steps
2. **UNITY**, as outlined in the Twelve Traditions
3. **SERVICE**, as outlined in the all-important A.A. Service Manual and the Twelve Concepts for World Service. Service includes anything to help alcoholics – clean up, pour coffee, serve Home Group, 12<sup>th</sup> Step calls. “General Service” applies to all kinds of activities within the Conference structure, carried on by Area Committees, Assemblies, Delegates, Trustees and GSO Staff. Usually the service affects the fellowship as a whole.

You will have to protect the rights of individual A.A.’s to have their opinions acknowledged and heard no matter how much in the minority those opinions may be.

You will have your name listed in the Western United States A.A. Directory as the official contact for your group.

You will have the opportunity to give back to A.A. a little of what you have so gratefully received; not only your daily sobriety, but also a new way of living life and the new circle of friends.

By your active presence in General Service you will be helping ensure that A.A. will still be here for the future generations of suffering drunks praying for a way out.

### ABOUT THIS MANUAL

Here we will cover four aspects of General Service

Geographic division  
The geographic division of the United States and Canada into General Service Regions, Areas, and the District Structure in Area 69.

The broad structure of General Service

What is expected of you as General Service Representatives

Some ideas of how to perform the duties as a General Service Representative more effectively.

## A.A. WORLDWIDE

Alcoholics Anonymous is a worldwide organization. There are General Service Offices in many countries, each of which is autonomous. No attempt is made to have the General Service Office (USA and Canada) in New York to be the “World Capital” of A.A. Rather, the New York office is available to share experience, strength and hope with offices in other countries, mainly because it has been in existence a much longer period of time. Every two years a World Service Conference is held with two representatives appointed by the Chairperson of the General Service Board. One delegate is appointed from the United States; one from Canada. Both delegates serve four-year terms and are generally Trustees-At-Large. This conference serves as the way that Alcoholics Anonymous establishes and maintains its worldwide communication links. An A.A. group may contact A.A.W.S. (GSO) if a problem arises that cannot be answered by the DCM or Delegate.

## THE REGIONS

The Service Manual shows the United States and Canada divided into eight Regions:

Two in Canada:

Eastern Canada

Western Canada

And six in the United States:

Northeast

Southeast (including Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, Bermuda, and the Virgin Islands)

East Central

West Central

Southwest

Pacific (including Alaska and Hawaii)

Utah and Wendover Nevada make up Area 69 and are part of the Pacific Region.

## REGIONAL TRUSTEE

Each Region nominates a slate of qualified candidates from which a “Regional Trustee” is elected (see Service Manual) who serves a four-year term on the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Thus, the Pacific Region (covering nine western states) has a single Trustee. The terms of the Trustees are staggered and balanced geographically so that two Trustees are elected each year, which provides both continuity and a smooth flow of rotation (see Service Manual for the rotation schedule).

**General Service Office**-Provides funds to enable our Trustees and the General Service Conference to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous worldwide.

**Contact the DCM or any Area Officer for names and addresses of the specific persons to send your Group contributions.** It is very important that every Group contribute what it can on a regular basis. Like everything and everyone else, A.A. services are budgeted and costs and services available are forecast as a result of those budgets.

## SOME VITAL AIDS

Some reading materials seem tough at first, but study, discuss, see how it relates to other parts of the program and it will surprise you when someday it becomes alive and becomes part of you and your message. All the literature is important but that most directly related to service includes:

- The A.A. Service Manual and Twelve Concepts for World Service (booklet)
- The A.A. Group (pamphlet)
- A.A. Comes of Age (book)
- Area 69 Guidelines
- The GSR May Be The Most Important Job In A.A. (pamphlet)
- A.A. Tradition – How it Developed (pamphlet)
- Supporting the A.A. Support System (pamphlet)
- Circles of Love and Service (pamphlet)
- Inside A.A. (pamphlet)

Using these, you will get both a good overview of the service picture and enough detail to deal in specifics.

Bill W. told us in the Service Manual what makes a good leader: Our leaders do not drive by mandate – they lead by example. Good service leaders...are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety.

Leadership starts with informed group members and GSRs who become DCMs, Area Standing Chairs, Area Officers, Delegates and Trustees.

To fulfill the responsibility that our group has given us, we must become as knowledgeable as possible. If we are willing to learn and keep an open mind, we soon find that we are the ones who benefit.

We find that no one need have difficulty with the three legacies. WILLINGNESS, HONESTY, and OPEN-MINDEDNESS are the essentials of RECOVERY, UNITY and SERVICE. These are indispensable.

Things to keep in mind when making a report to your group are:

Make your report on things you think the Group can relate to or is interested or involved in.

Whenever there is an issue coming up which will require your vote,

Try to explain it as simply, fully and fairly as possible so that the Group can arrive at an informed Group conscience.

With a bit of practice, you can probably work in a piece of information that will provoke a question and get the discussion started.

You may not personally agree with your Group's conscience, but if you have done your job correctly and discussed it enough, you will have no problem in abiding by it and can rightly feel good about it.

Probably the most important thing that we can do as GSRs is to become informed. This serves both us personally and A.A. as a whole. The more you know, the more you can share from personal experience and the more credible your opinion will become.

### CONTRIBUTIONS

Our Seventh Tradition encourages us to be FULLY self-supporting through our own contributions, AT ALL LEVELS. Your Group's funds are to be disbursed after basic expenses for your group are paid. These Group expenses include rent, literature, coffee, prudent reserves, GSR expenses, etc.

Most groups contribute on a monthly basis, but it depends on the Group conscience, the Group's meeting schedule, and the amount of money collected. The pamphlet "Seventh Tradition – Where Money and Spirituality Mix" suggests several options for distributing Group contributions toward A.A. services. Your Group conscience will decide how your Group wants to do this, and the appropriate percentages selected by the Group to be used for the split. The following list delineates the entities which require support.

**Group**– Expenses for the home group and the General Service Representative are paid first. Rent, coffee, and travel for the GSR are all Group expenses.

**District**–To provide DCMs with funds for travel expenses and the performance of their duties on behalf of the District.

**Central Office/Intergroup**–Provides for the local newsletter, meeting directories, answering service, literature and Twelve Step work.

**Area 69**–Funds our Delegate to carry our conscience on issues to the General Service Conference. Funds other Area Officers and Area Assembly.

### THE AREAS

Most General Service Areas follow the broad geographical divisions of a State or Province. Area 69 encompasses the entire State of Utah and Wendover, Nevada.

### THE AREA DELEGATE

Each General Service Area elects a delegate to represent it at the annual General Service Conference in New York where policy issues of A.A. as a whole are addressed. There are a total of 93 delegates (Areas) throughout the United States and Canada. They are elected for a two-year term, with about half elected each year to provide both continuity and rotation as with the Trustees (see Service Manual for the election schedule for Delegates). Remember that the General Service Conference deals only in issues affecting A.A. in the United States and Canada.

### AREA STRUCTURE

Each Area acts as a unit at Area Assembly. Area 69 Assemblies are held three times a year to conduct such business as may affect the entire Area, including:

- . Elect Delegate in odd-numbered years
- . Inform the Delegate of the sense of the Area
- . Receive from the Delegate the Advisory Actions of the conference
- . Conduct Workshops dealing with the various aspects of carrying the service message.
- . A Pre-Conference Assembly is held in March. It is limited to providing a sense of the Area to the Delegate on some of the items to be discussed at the General Service Conference in April.

### THE DISTRICTS

However, the Area gatherings usually have preset agendas and are too large to address specific group problems efficiently. So the Area is further sub-divided into Districts. Our Utah Area 69 is currently divided into eleven Districts.

The organizational structure may seem complicated and too structured at first. It is really in accord with our principle of least possible organization. It has been tested over time as providing the most balanced way to arrive at the only recognized authority in A.A. expressed in an informed group conscience that must be communicated to others when they deal with issues affecting A.A. as a whole. Perhaps this will become a bit clearer if we start at the top of the A.A. structure.

## **SUMMARY OF STRUCTURE**

The structure from the top down is:

THE GROUP

THE DISTRICT

THE AREA (UTAH AREA 69)

THE REGION (PACIFIC)

THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

### **THE GROUPS**

The fundamental unit in Alcoholics Anonymous is the Group. We will work our way down from there. Hopefully, internal matters within any group are resolved at the business meetings of that group according to Tradition Two.

- .Involving as many members of the group as possible.
- .Expressing the widest range of points of view on the subject.
- .Allowing enough time for the members to take all of the information into consideration before any final decision is made on an issue.

One way or another, all healthy groups seem to have learned that this is the best way to arrive at an informed group conscience.

### **OTHER ENTITIES SERVING A.A.**

This is fine as far as it goes, but no group can really exist in total isolation in its community (try though it might) and usually has some sort of contact with the larger surrounding community of A.A. that contributes to the overall maintenance of the group.

This cooperation may be with the local Intergroup or Central Office or other service entities such as General Service. For the latter, a GSR is needed to carry the group's conscience to the larger structure and likewise to take issues back to the group such as those pending before the upcoming General Service Conference.

## **PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

If you start doing all the things indicated above, you'll be active and find yourself attending many meetings. Some of these may seem boring to you. This is not unusual. The main reason for this is that you are a newcomer in a whole different sense. Remember how strange and confusing some of those first A.A. meetings were that you attended. Keep this in mind and it may make it easier.

You may not know any of the people there nor understand what is being discussed, possibly just as it was at your first meeting. Similarly, everyone there was once a newcomer and knows what it feels like. Ask questions. Find out how to get information. You'll find that people involved in service are a friendly bunch and love to take time to share and explain this part of recovery with new people.

Service work takes every bit as much energy as learning and working the Steps and is probably more difficult to explain and share with the general member until we have all told enough people not currently in service what it is really about (participating in an informed Group conscience, the only recognized authority in A.A.) so that this dimension is a normal part of recovery for all of us.

It will seem frustrating at times because you may think that nobody in the Group is listening or cares about what you have to say. Then, sometime you will find yourself amazed by being asked a question relating to something you thought was dead and buried months ago. Or your Group asks you to deal with a question in terms of how it relates to the A.A. Traditions. Those times are part of what makes it all rewarding in the end.

So keep coming back and asking questions until you have or know how to get an answer.

### **REPORTS TO THOSE YOU SERVE**

When giving reports at your Group or District, it's probably best to be brief. Things you might present to the District are:

- Who the Group Secretary is.
- Who the Alternate GSR is.
- What the attendance is at the various Group meetings.
- How your Group divides its funds for contributions.
- Problems the Group may be facing (e.g. having to move, Court Referrals, dual problem members, bank problems, etc.)

Remaining names are posted on a blackboard. (In rare cases, the meeting, by a majority vote, agrees to accept additional nominations.) All GSRs and Committee members of the Area who are present cast written ballots, one choice to a ballot. The tally for each candidate is posted on the blackboard.

The first candidate to receive TWO-THIRDS of the total vote is elected.

After the second ballot (assuming no candidate receives the necessary two-thirds on the first ballot), any candidate having less than one fifth of the total vote will be withdrawn automatically, except the TWO TOP CANDIDATES remain. (In case there are ties for second place, the top candidate and tied second-place candidates remain.)

After the third ballot, candidates with less than one-third of the total vote will be withdrawn automatically, except the TWO TOP CANDIDATES must remain. (In case there are ties for second place, the top candidate and second-place candidates remain).

A fourth ballot is conducted. After the fourth ballot, if no candidate has two-thirds of the total vote, the Chairperson asks for a Motion, Second and Majority of hands on conducting a fifth and final ballot. (If this motion is defeated, balloting is over and we go to the “hat” immediately. In case there are ties for second place, the top candidate and tied second-place candidates remain. If not, the candidate with the smallest total is dropped. If the Motion carries, a fifth and final ballot will be conducted.)

If no election occurs by this time, the Chairperson announces the choice will be made by lot (from the hat). At this point, balloting usually involves only the top two or three candidates.

Lots are then drawn by teller, and the first one “out of the hat” becomes the Delegate.

This procedure, the duties for each office to be filled, and who may stand for office are reviewed and discussed for some time before the actual election so there is ample time to become informed and share in the excitement of an election rather than being perplexed and surprised at the Election Assembly – especially if it “goes to the hat” to be decided.

## **THE DISTRICT MEETINGS**

As has been mentioned, a District is usually composed of six to twenty A.A. groups and is represented by a District meeting (of all GSRs in a District) that is usually held once a month. The format is decided autonomously by District and might include:

- Reports to the GSRs from the District Committee Member or DCM
- Reports from the groups via the GSR
- Discussion of the business of the previous or upcoming assembly
- Discussions of special events such as a “workshop” that the District may be organizing for the general fellowship
- A presentation on some aspect of service.

## **THE DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Each District’s GSRs elect a District Committee Member (DCM) and Alternate DCM for each ten groups in the District. Some Districts also elect a District Committee Member Chair (DCMC) who conducts District Meetings and represents the conscience of the District as a voting member of the Area Committee (see below). When a GSR is elected DCM, that GSRs home group will need to elect a new GSR. The term of office for the DCM corresponds to that of the Delegate.

The primary purpose of the DCM is to stimulate as many groups as possible to be an active part of A.A. as a whole through representation and participation.

## **AREA BUSINESS – AN OVERVIEW**

While all A.A. members are encouraged to attend and become familiar with the issues discussed at the Area Assemblies, only the GSRs, DCMs, Area Standing Chairs and Area Officers vote. As has been mentioned, the main activities at the assemblies center around the Delegate, the Conference and workshops.

The Area Standing Chairs, Area Officers and DCMs meet in the Area Committee. Only Area Standing Chairs, Area Officers and DCMs are voting members here. The committee:

- Discusses problems arising in a District that might affect the Area.
- Contributes to the planning of the Assembly by discussing items which should be brought before the assembly for action at the area level.
- Takes care of the routine interim affairs of the area.

## THE ELECTION ASSEMBLY

At the Fall Assembly in each even-numbered year, an election assembly is held to choose the trusted servants for the Area who serve a two-year term starting January 1 of the next odd year.

The following officers are elected at this time on a rotating basis:  
**Delegate**, whose duties shall be defined in the current edition of the A.A. Service Manual and as suggested by the Area Assembly.  
**Alternate Delegate**, whose duties shall be defined in the current edition of the A.A. Service Manual.  
**Chairperson**, whose responsibility is to schedule the agenda for the assembly and area committee meetings and to conduct these meetings.  
**Recording Secretary**, whose job it is to record the minutes of both the assembly and the area committee meetings and see that they are distributed to all interested parties.  
**Treasurer**, who records and reports all group contributions and other sources of revenue as well as disbursement of funds and participates heavily in the preparation of the annual budget for the area.  
**Corresponding Secretary/Registrar**, who shall maintain a current mailing list and phone numbers of all members of the Area Assembly, and coordinate with GSO, the Delegate and DCMs to maintain current group information.  
**Area Standing Committee Chairs** are also elected at this time. Area 69 has the following Standing Committee Chairs:  
Agenda/Assembly, Archives, Corrections, Cooperation With the Professional Community (CPC), Grapevine, Literature, Newsletter, Public Information (PI), and Treatment.

## THE GSR'S VOICE AND VOTE AT AREA MEETINGS

At the Assembly, the GSRs are both voting members and collectively form a majority of voting members and, as such, should make every effort to attend the Assembly. All matters that have affects on the Area's finances or a direct impact on all the groups, whether raised on the floor of an Assembly or coming out of the Area Committee process, are presented and ratified, rejected, or revised by the Assembly. The March Area Pre-Conference Assembly is to inform and advise our Delegate on issues to be considered at the April General Service Conference.

## Some suggestions and comments about taking part in our personal and group sobriety:

You will find it advantageous to attend all training sessions, workshops, seminars, etc. to get new ideas or knowledge or clarification of a principle. These include (whenever possible):

- Other District and Area Workshops
- Regional Service Assemblies (PRAASA – annual)
- Regional Forums (biennial)

Since rotation is an essential part of service, it is important to have an alternate GSR to learn something about the job before he/she assumes the responsibility that goes with it. Having someone in the wings who is prepared will give you the freedom to go into and experience other levels of service without feeling your job is unfinished because there is no one to take your place. Again, participation is the key which enables us to:

- Become a part of instead of apart from.
- Learn more and feel better about ourselves.
- Take on a job and do it to the best of our ability.
- Become responsible and reliable, which is a large part of what recovery is about.

## THE ELECTION ASSEMBLY

In September of each even numbered year, we hold an election Assembly to choose our Trusted Servants in Area 69 who serve a two year term starting the following January. This is possibly one of the most important things that you will participate in as a GSR, and one of the reasons to take your own two-year commitment very seriously.

If you have been actively participating as outlined above during your term, you will develop some perspective to enable you to make decisions about whom, of those standing for a given office, would best serve the Area in this capacity, who has shown that they do what they say they will do regularly and, by doing their best, set examples for you.

Our Area uses the basic format of the **Third Legacy Procedure**.

All current and past members of the Area Committee are eligible for Delegate. The Chairperson asks whether any are unable to serve, and withdraws those names.

## **DISTRICT MEETINGS**

There are very few completely new and original problems that develop in Groups so our continuity of experience is extremely valuable. The GSRs can share with their fellow GSRs at the District meetings how they dealt with such matters and with what success. Their experience may be helpful to another group.

Also, at the District Meetings, Agenda items that require action at the next Area Assembly can be discussed. This is kind of a middle ground where such a discussion makes GSRs better informed and able to take back to their groups any business where a Group Conscience is needed. The GSR can then take this back to the Assembly to make their Group's voice heard. In the event the GSR cannot attend the Assembly, the Alternate GSR should attend in his/her place.

## **AREA MEETINGS**

By attending Area Assemblies and Area Committee Meetings we become familiar with things happening in the larger world of A.A. through the reports given by Officers of our Area and various Districts. It is quite likely that we will hear some ideas that can be used to better our own Group or District.

It is a good idea to always take a note pad or notebook to these meetings (Group, District and Area) and use it. Memory becomes more selective but less vivid than our imaginations so we need to work from a more reliable source. The discipline involved in taking notes makes us pay more attention to what is going on. This is a skill that takes some practice to develop.

Serving on different committees at all levels of A.A. will teach you a great deal more about the workings of A.A. All phases of A.A. are based on experience, which is our best teacher.

## **INVOLVEMENT IN GENERAL SERVICE**

Regarding the relationship of the GSR to General Service, the Service Manual states: ...general services grew to fill a need beyond the reach of the individual, Group and intergroup. Today, the term general service is applied to all kinds of activities within the Conference structure, carried on by Area Committees, Delegates, Trustees, and GSO staff. Usually, the services affect the fellowship as a whole. Almost always, they are part of A.A.'s distinctive unity, which allows the movement to function so well. In this sense, the Conference can feel it is acting for A.A. as a whole only to the extent that the GSR keeps the group informed and can gather and communicate the Group conscience.

We become informed about what is going on by attending these meetings and discussing issues with others who are in a good position to have experience and information to share on most issues. In this way, the Assembly meets its purpose of strengthening A.A. as a whole in carrying our message in the best way possible for our Area. Again, participation by the GSR is the key link in the vital chain necessary in the two way communication between the members of his/her group and the larger structure of A.A.

At the Area Committee Meetings, only DCMs, Area Standing Chairs and Area Officers have a vote. GSRs are welcome to attend and strongly encouraged to do so.

## **THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE**

The culmination of much of this activity occurs in April of each year when our elected Delegate representing our Area attends the week-long General Service Conference in New York. The voting members of the Conference are:

- The 93 Area Delegates (who form a voting majority)
- The 21 Trustees of the General Service Board
- The 11 – 13 staff members of the General Service Office and the Grapevine.
- The 4 Directors of A.A. World Services, Inc.
- The 5 Directors of the A.A. Grapevine.

The policy of A.A. is decided at this meeting. The Delegates take to the Conference the consensus of the groups in their Areas as expressed (at the Assemblies) by the GSRs' responses to the policies and issues to be discussed and acted upon.

This should clarify some of the names, nature and relationships among the structural entities of General Service in Utah Area 69.

## **DUTIES OF THE GSR**

Now let's focus on the duties of the GSR in a bit more detail. The GSRs have the job of:

- Linking their groups with A.A. as a whole.
- Representing the voice of their Group's conscience.
- Reporting it to the DCM and the Delegate, who pass it on to the Conference and the rest of A.A.
- Bringing the Area and District suggestions and the Conference actions back to their groups.
- Becoming an educated and informed part of the service structure by reading/knowing the Service Manual and Area Guidelines.

## QUALIFICATIONS OF A GSR

Have time available for District and Area Meetings.

It is suggested that GSRs have two to three years of continuous sobriety.

The GSR should be a Home Group member of the group he/she represents.

Have capabilities and time for possible future assignments (Service Manual chapter II).

In general, there are three areas in which the GSRs have their major responsibilities, each of which involves a two-way relationship: The Group, The District, The General Service Area

## YOUR HOME GROUP

The relationship of the GSRs with their groups is probably the most important and hopefully the most fluid and open one. The best way to become effective is to attend the meetings of your home group regularly, which gets you acquainted with the members of the group and their ideas. **It gives you some credibility when you make suggestions or give reports.**

The group conscience is the collective conscience of the group membership and thus represents substantial unanimity on an issue before definitive action is taken. This is achieved by the group members through the sharing of full information, individual points of view, and the practice of A.A. principles. To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions with an open mind.

On sensitive issues, the group works slowly, discouraging formal motions until a clear sense of its collective view emerges. Placing principles before personalities, the membership is wary of dominant opinions. Its voice is heard when a well-informed group arrives at a decision. The result rests on more than a yes/no count – precisely because it is the spiritual expression of the group conscience. The term “informed group conscience” implies that pertinent information has been studied and all views have been heard before the group votes. The difference between a group conscience and a majority vote, or group opinion, is that one or more of the elements described above is missing.

People in General Service – particularly the GSRs – are generally known as the guardians of our Traditions.

If your group has a steering committee, the GSR should be an active part of it, reporting on service activities and important issues discussed at District or Area meetings.

Just as a personal inventory helps us maintain a healthy sobriety by revealing our strengths and weaknesses, so an annual Group inventory can flag areas that may need some focused group attention. A starting format for this may be found in the pamphlet “The A.A. Group”. The Utah Area takes the Area inventory every other December. Many districts and groups elect to do an inventory at around the same time.

The General Service Office has a publication, Box 4-5-9, which is produced bi-monthly and contains many articles of general interest to the entire fellowship. Since the GSR is the listed mail contact for the Group at GSO, he/she automatically receives a copy that should be read and shared with his/her group.

For a nominal cost of \$3.50 per year, a Group may receive ten copies of each issue. Often, just a simple exposure to the availability of this “new-found hidden source” is enough to get a Group interested in subscribing and can be a valuable resource for discussion and tied into the GSR report.

By attending our Group meetings regularly, we stay informed of our Group affairs. Other areas in which the GSR can be of service to the Group include our Group’s finances. It is suggested that a group retain a “prudent reserve” of money to cover potential extraordinary cost that may be incurred. This reserve is retained after the Group’s expenses have been paid (which may include supporting the GSR in his/her expenses directly related to this position.)

## YOUR HOME GROUP NUMBER

Your home group number is a six (6) digit number assigned by the General Service Office. You should include that number on all contributions to your District, Central Office, Area and GSO.