



**San Diego - Imperial Area**  
**Assembly of Alcoholics Anonymous - Area 8**

# NEWSLETTER

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**Theme for 2012**  
**"Anonymity: Our Spiritual Responsibility in the Digital Age."**

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**Area Chair Newsletter Article**  
**January 2012**  
**Jane G., Chair**  
**"The GSR is Unity in Action"**

**Unity: Oneness of mind, feeling, etc., as among a number of persons; concord, harmony, or agreement. (dictionary.com)**

We are members of what is probably the largest organization in the world with an entire

membership that never wanted to join. This thought is amazing to me as I sense the spirit of our fellowship through the actions by those who work to serve it. There are many ways to be of service to others; but in General Service we are serving to ensure AA remains here for as long as God has need for it.

This thought, along with several and a variety of (sometimes painful) spiritual leaps brings me to the concept of Unity. It is through the practice AA's Traditions that our unity is formed. The Traditions don't provide a specific list of what to do or not to do; however, a few boundaries are offered such as those given regarding personal anonymity and monetary contributions. They definitely set the tone for that oneness of feeling described in our book as:

.....the passengers of a great liner the moment after rescue from shipwreck when camaraderie, joyousness and democracy pervade the vessel from steerage to Captain's table. Unlike the feelings of the ship's passengers, however, our joy in escape from disaster does not subside as we go our individual ways. The feeling of having shared in a common peril is one element in the powerful cement which binds us. But that in itself would never have held us together as we are now joined.

Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 17

So, what is it that holds us together and creates unity? It's the actions of our general service representatives (GSR) in the two-way communication only they provide that allow the Area Committee to be connected to the powerful cement that is generated only at the group level. The fact is there is no need for an Area Assembly or the General Service Conference without the GSR. These meeting would well be characterized with the phrase, "If a tree fell in the forest and there was no one there to hear it, would it make a sound?" Bill Wilson recognizes this in his final comment in the GSR pamphlet, "The strength of our whole service structure starts with the group and the general service representative (GSR) the group elects. I cannot emphasize too strongly the GSR's importance." (PDF on aa.org).

This does not mean that all group members will readily and/or enthusiastically embrace the GSR's report as well as any calls for volunteers to the multitude of available service opportunities. The delivery of a GSR may be met with signs, slumped shoulders, pursed lips, and the rolling of eyes. If that happens, please don't let it discourage you. It is important for you to understand this is a normal reaction for many in our fellowship. They will grow. You will need to take comfort in the fact that you are doing work to ensure that AA is here for those who are here now as well as those who have not yet arrived.

Apparently, AA members were not hanging on to Bill Wilson's every word when he was carrying the message of the Traditions to the groups and working to establish the annual conference. AA members had not yet experienced the loss of one of the founding members. Their realization that they would not always be here to hold AA together came to them with the news of Dr. Bob's failing health. This moved them to create a lasting foundation for the fellowship. Here's a description of the treatment AA members gave to their beloved Bill during his promotion campaign of the Traditions:

At this point I began to travel and talk a lot about the new principles. The members listened, but were obviously bored. After a while I received letters like this: "Bill, we would love to have you come and speak. Tell us where you used to hide your bottles and tell us about that hot-flash spiritual experience of yours. But please don't talk any more about those damned Traditions."

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, Page 204

If, as a GSR, you happen to experience AA members that initially appear to be ungrateful for AA as a whole, pray for them before and after you give your report. Remember, these are all people who never wanted to join and WE are undisciplined. The spiritual experience is available to all. Sooner or

later each of use must humbly realize that we are not doing this alone and are dependent of the program and the fellowship as a whole. Those of us attracted to an engaged in service know that this is where we get a reliable connection to a spiritual experience. It will keep you coming back!

Jane G.

**Area Delegate Article  
“Newcomers Again”  
by Tom M.**

Remember walking through the doors of your first meeting seeing faces but not recognizing any, while everything around you was foreign and intimidating? Do you remember not understanding what people were talking about, what all the reading and procedure was about? Welcome to a new cycle of general service in Area 8. Many of us are newcomers again and it is a good thing. It reminds me that I am not the message I am just the messenger and makes me release my tightly held grip on a service position to allow someone else with fresh new ideas to take over. What would it look like if we didn't rotate positions in Alcoholics Anonymous? While sitting at the area assemblies you may want to squint your eyes down almost closed and imagine a landscape of servants holding the same positions for many years. You might imagine a group of people whose knowledge hadn't ever broadened and whose unity was diminished by members accumulating and wielding power based solely on length of service.

Maybe the greatest example of rotation took place in 1955 when Bill officially let go of the custody of the affairs of AA and turned its responsibility over to the newly formed General Service Conference. By his own admission he felt as if Alcoholics Anonymous was being held back by his own parent like care and letting go would allow AA to further mature. He felt that AA was finally safe even from him. I will be forever grateful for the chance to experience personal growth that his legacy of service has given me.

As a newcomer to the program I did just the minimum at first, I attended meetings. My attitude changed as I heard others talk about participating in their own recoveries by sharing in meetings, taking the Twelve Steps with a sponsor, and learning to be of service to those around them. I later discovered that sharing in the meeting can promote unity, taking the Steps with a sponsor was recovery, and taking my turn at helping out was service. It was only through the experience and sharing of others that the three legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous were revealed to me but recently Rod B., our Pacific Regional Trustee, helped expand my own understanding by illustrating that the symbol used for the three legacies is a triangle of equal length sides. He pointed out that the triangle would look a little strange if one side was much longer than the other two sides and asked if the strict emphasis in some meetings on the recovery legacy wasn't unbalancing the triangle.

Arriving in general service I was presented with a learning curve similar to my experience when new to AA because I didn't know why I was here and I didn't know how to define general service in Alcoholics Anonymous. One definition is that general services are those functions that groups can't perform. An example is AA World Services publishing updated and uniform AA literature that is available throughout the United States and Canada. A group can write a book or a pamphlet but they may have trouble keeping it updated and have even more trouble making it available in large quantities all across the North American continent. Our General Service Office does just that among other things. As a General Service Representative I began to see that gathering the input of my group on literature changes and transmitting that input to the area assembly was a small but important contribution to honoring the inverted triangle structure of AA service. In the process I discovered that general service is relevant at the group level even though it seemed members didn't want to participate in discussions about issues related to general service. If you want to test the relevance of general service to your group try announcing that we are taking input on how to change the Chapter to the Agnostic in the Big Book. Indeed, in 2011, one of the General Service Conference agenda

items was a proposal (that was not supported by the conference) to add the Preamble to the first page of Alcoholics Anonymous. Changes to the literature are relevant topics to share with an AA group. The key for me is to find relevance in the non- controversial topics that we present to our groups such as reporting on the new methods of digital distribution of the Grapevine magazine now available or the new apps for the book Alcoholics Anonymous and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions that are just becoming available. More information on these topics is available at [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) and [www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org).

Learning why I was here was made simple when I began to understand the significance of the inverted triangle found on page S16 of the A.A. Service Manual. As long as accurate information flows through the triangle in both directions an informed group conscience can be developed at any level. The need for AA servants to take turns at passing information through the triangle was on Bill's mind when he and some of the early trustees devised AA service structure. In 1951, when the General Service Conference began as a five year experiment, our fellowship was still expanding outward from the early centers of activity. It was clear that as expansion continued groups would only become further separated from the General Service Board of Trustees and a need for a link with the groups was recognized. To this day the GSR functions as that link by gathering input from groups and bringing it to the assembly. The input doesn't stop at the assembly though; it flows to the Trustees through the delegate at the General Service Conference.

As I begin to wrestle with the responsibilities of a new service position I will try to remember to ask for help. One of the staff at the General Service Office was quoted in an article about rotation saying "We become beginners at regular intervals insuring a degree of humility". At the time of writing this article I am in the process of contacting our past delegates ~~begging~~ asking for help in understanding how to serve in my new position. Of course, help flows in massive quantities which reminds me that in Alcoholics Anonymous there is always someone to show you how to do the job.

Tom M.

**Speaker Panel**  
**"Supporting Unity thru Leadership"**  
**Past Delegates of the San Diego-Imperial Area**

**Being responsible at all levels to those we serve?**  
**Tradition 9 — Paul C., Panel 42**

Thank you, Dean, for the invitation to speak today about Tradition Nine, which says, "A.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve." The way I look at it, "A.A. as such" means what we do in our A.A. meetings, what we do in our A.A. fellowship, our sponsorship of people, our sharing of our experience, strength and hope, all the wonderful little spiritual awakenings that occur throughout the day. The fifth steps, and the twelfth step work that goes on. That is, "A.A. as such." That is Alcoholics Anonymous. "But we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve..." We have the General Service Board, A.A.W.S. Inc. and the A.A. Grapevine Inc., but they are only there to comply with the laws of the State of New York. That's it. There are economic, and legal and employment reasons why we must do that. In A.A. we don't boards or committees like that unless we need to.

We do the same thing on a local level. We have a number of central offices. We have other committees carrying the message into jails, prisons, treatment facilities and hospitals. We have the Area Assembly, all of A.A. really functions on a committee system. Without it we couldn't get anything done. We'd be simply reduced to chaos if we didn't have committees. Indeed, much of the work of the General Service Board is done in committees, and most of the work of the General Service Conference occurs in

committees too. So these special boards and committees that we create in A.A. are very helpful in organizing and making efficient the spiritual channels that we have directed towards the problem of alcoholism in society.

I want to make a couple of other points that I think will illustrate the phrase that Dean used when he introduced this topic on your agenda. "Being responsible at all levels to those they serve." When Bill W. — after twenty years of investing all of his blood, tears, toil and sweat in developing the A.A. service system — decided to step down and rotate out from that, he did that at our International Convention in St. Louis in 1955. He was turning the fellowship over to us — our Third Legacy of Service. His parting thoughts were NOT, "isn't this a wonderful thing I've done for A.A.?" His parting thought was, "At last, A.A. is safe, even from me." That's powerful. I think everyone in A.A., who looks to the future of this fellowship can look at him or herself and say, based on their service position or their place in the fellowship at any given time, we have to be able to ask, "Is the General Service Board, the A.A. Grapevine Board, the A.A. World Services Board safe, even from me? Is the General Service Conference, the General Service Office, or the Grapevine Office safe, even from me? Is the Central Office or the Intergroup safe, even from me? Is the Area Assembly, or the district, or the committee safe, even from me? Are the Institutional Committee, and the A.A. groups, and other service entity that we come up with safe, even from me? Is my A.A. home group safe, even from me? Are the people I sponsor safe, even from me?" And very importantly, in the spirit of this Tradition, "Are the new members coming into A.A. safe, even from me? Do they get my full, undivided spiritual attention?"

If the answer to any of these questions is, "no," then we need to take a good, hard look at what we're doing in A.A. We should be directing our energy only towards making A.A. provide for the next generation of alcoholics the same wonderful opportunity for recovery that we had. If that's not happening, we need to "re-jigger" the presentation a little bit.

I would ask you to consider, in the spirit of this Tradition, "do we have enough service entities?" Probably. If we don't, we always have the opportunity to have an ad-hoc committee or entity to provide a specific service for a specific length of time. The structure is pretty sound. It needs to be staffed by well-intentioned, dedicated A.A. members. Am I this person? Joel laid out some of the qualities one might consider if he or she considers making themselves available for these service positions in a couple of months. And I hope people do spend the next six or eight weeks before the election doing some self-examination and seeing if they are willing and able to step forward and take these positions. I have had many conversations over the decades with people who are thinking, "should I be interested in a committee chair position; should I try to be an officer or a delegate? What should I do? You know, I'm busy with the family and job, and so-forth." I would always say, "Yeah, you're right, you have a busy life. You should be grateful for that, frankly." For people who are on the fence, I would suggest that, I've never had anyone regret falling off the fence on the side of doing the service. I've heard regrets, but I haven't heard people regret making themselves available to this wonderful fellowship and use my talents as they might best be used in the next couple of years.

Thanks, again.

**Why are we here? Concept 12 – 6th Warranty –**  
Marc J., Panel 54

The Sixth Warranty, as it reads in the essay on Concept Twelve says:

“That though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in action and spirit.”

There is an endnote on those words that tell us, “Bill here, apparently inadvertently, used the phrase “in action and spirit,” instead of “in thought and action,” that appears elsewhere in both the Conference Charter and the statement of Concept XII.” I think this word change, “democratic in action and in spirit,” gives us an important insight into Bill’s thinking about our relationship to our Traditions and our Concepts.

So that I could get a better understanding of what Bill is telling us, I had to look up a couple words. First was “democratic.” In this period of political division I appreciate A.A.’s tradition of keeping outside issues outside. This ideal led to one of the greatest spiritual experiences I had at my first Conference. At the end of that conference, as we listened to the second year delegates share their love and appreciation for their conference experience, it slowly dawned on me that I had just experienced a full week of discussion by 120 alcoholics from a cross-section of our fellowship, with absolutely no inference of political conflict, although, as you might remember, 2004 was a very divisive election year. A full week... A full week focused completely on our work, as guided by our traditions and concepts. In that moment of realization I became overwhelmed with the love of our Fellowship.

So, keeping this in mind I found the word “democratic” means, “of the nature of or characterized by democracy; advocating or upholding democracy; generally favoring social

equality.” And democracy is “a form of government in which the power resides in the people and is exercised by them either directly or by means of elected representatives; a form of society which favors equal rights, the ignoring of hereditary class distinctions, and tolerance of minority views.” These definitions come from the late 1500s to early 1600s, which is an incredible concept for that time. Next, what does Bill mean by spirit? I went back to the dictionary. It is “the essential character of a thing...the prevailing tendency” or “attitude existing in or animating... a set of people.” So, it is this attitude of everyone being equal and tolerance of minority views that animates our Conference that is the spirit which influences our actions.

In his essay Bill points out that “we expect that our Conferences will always try to act in the spirit of mutual respect and love – one member for another” and that “this sign signifies that mutual trust must prevail.” It is important that we trust one another. Although we all may at times be VERY passionate about some issues in A.A., keep in mind that we all love this life saving fellowship and that we always have the best in mind.

Bill goes on to say, “that no action ought to be taken in anger, haste, or recklessness; that care will be observed to respect and protect all minorities” and “that our Conference will ever be prudently on guard against tyrannies, great or small, whether these be found in the majority or in the minority.” Tyranny, as it may be applied to our fellowship, is power exercised arbitrarily, harshly, or cruelly.” This idea ties back to Concept 9 and Bill’s wonderful essay on leadership where he tells us that we must refrain from an attitude of “Let’s have it our way or no way at all.” One “qualification for leadership, “he says, “is ‘give and take,’ the ability to compromise cheerfully whenever a proper compromise can cause a situation to progress in what appears to be the right direction....we must never lose sight of the fact that progress is nearly always characterized by a series of improving compromises.”

You might be thinking that you are only a member coming to just another A.A. business meeting. But think about this; the Area Assembly is where the

interested groups of our area send their leaders to guide our fellowship. So, whether you have realized it or not, your group has made you a leader. Your group trusts you to do this. They are behind you. I encourage you to contemplate three attributes that Bill claims are most important in a leader – tolerance, flexibility, and vision.

So, when Bill wrote “that the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action,” these were some of the things he was thinking.

**Upon Unity Depend Our Lives – Tradition 1 — Jim H., Panel 52**

Good morning everyone. I am an alcoholic and my name is Jim. Past delegate panel 52. I would like to thank Dean for inviting me to speak today. I’ve been asked to speak on the topic, “Upon Unity Depend Our Lives — Tradition One.” The long form of Tradition One states, “Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.”

The Declaration of Unity we’ve recited together this morning at the start of our assembly tells us, “This we owe to A.A.’s future, to place our common welfare first; to keep our fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives, and the lives of those to come.” Another way we could say it is, “One for all, and all for one.” Sounds like no one’s in charge. No daddy rabbit. Also sounds like we’re all in charge. How about starting with our home group and our informed conscience — for or against change, approval or disapproval of a proposed action — the home group decision travels by the GSR to make sure the group’s wishes are heard and fully considered at the district and area levels and that they are part of the Delegate’s thinking at the General Service Conferences. After each conference the process of communication reverses and the GSR is responsible for making sure that all members are informed about what went on at the Conference, including the full range of advisory actions.

No one’s in charge but everyone is responsible to keep A.A. alive, unified and growing so it will be here to keep us alive and sober today, tomorrow and the days to come.

To maintain strong unity within our fellowship we need able leadership at all levels. As co-founder Bill W. reminded us, “Our A.A. leaders do not drive by mandate, they lead by example.” In effect what we’re saying to them is, “act for us, but don’t want boss us.” Good leadership originates plans, policies, and ideas for the improvement of our fellowship and its services. Good leaders coordinate with others before making decisions and taking action, especially when matters are new and important. They also realize that good plans and ideas can come from anybody, anywhere.

Need we be reminded that our program of A.A. is founded on the principle of humility. This implies, among other things, that we relate ourselves rightly to God and to our fellows; that we see ourselves as we really are — “a small part of a great whole.” Seeing our fellow members in this way, we shall enjoy group harmony. This is why the A.A. Tradition can state with confidence, “Our common welfare comes first.” Some think it’s smoke and mirrors and that within A.A. the individual doesn’t count for much. Not so when we analyze it.

A.A. has no musts. Few groups try and impose penalties on anyone for nonconformity. A.A. does suggest, but we don’t discipline. It becomes a matter of the conscience of the individual; he judges his own conduct. The question is still asked, if everyone can do as he pleases, where’s the enforcement? Since there is no human authority to restrain us, how is our common welfare protected? Time has taught us that when any action seriously threatens the common welfare, group opinion kicks in to remind us and our individual conscience begins to complain. If this pattern of rebellion continues, the individual disturbing everything may turn to drink; alcohol then takes him down.

So it is we learn that in matters deeply affecting the group as a whole, “our common welfare comes first.” Rebellion ceases and cooperation begins

because it must: we have disciplined ourselves. Eventually we cooperate because we really wish to; we see that without substantial unity there can be no A.A., and without A.A. there can be little lasting recovery for anyone. We gladly set aside personal ambitions whenever these might harm A.A. We humbly confess that we are but, "a small part of a great whole.

**Reaching the A.A. who still suffers through General Service - How? Tradition 5 — Sallye M., Panel 48**

Many A.A. members on reaching a comfortable stage of sobriety, one where they have worked the steps, share at the meetings they attend, make themselves available to be a sponsor and do service work within the group, feel that maybe just maybe there is something else out there that they should be doing. Sometimes with a few misgivings they make them self available for General Service. This is the road I took and I want to speak today on my journey into General Service and how it changed my life.

In January 1988 I was a little over 4 years sober, was a legend in my own mind, could speak eloquently on any A.A. topic and practically walked on water. My ego was so big wanted its own gavel. That was when I went to my first Area Assembly, not because I wanted to but because my boyfriend had to be there. I liked the Area Assembly; there was a lot of controversy over computers, a lot of shouting and hot words. It was almost like being back in the bar but without the alcohol. But, in a lull, the chairman stood up and announced that the current secretary had to resign and there was no one at the Area Committee that could take the position and he then asked for someone to volunteer. There was quiet in the room and then my ego pushed me to my feet and made me volunteer. I really thought I was doing these people a favor.

Boy was I wrong!

At the time I had no idea what I was doing but I leaped in with both feet. It wasn't until many years later that I realized that not only had I not understand the mechanics of the Area Assembly I

didn't have a clue to the real purpose of the Area Assembly. I gave my opinion, took notes, was in awe of the Chairman and his wife. Wondered what the Delegate did and had just a nodding acquaintance with the duties of a DCM and GSR.

Later I became a GSR, DCM, Area Secretary again, served on several committees, became Alternate Chair, Alternate Delegate and Delegate Panel 48. I attended Workshops on Traditions and Concepts. Attended many PRAASA's and Forums, and sometime in that period, I began to understand that the purpose of the GSR's and the DCM's, the purpose of the Committee Chairs and Area Officers, the purpose of the Delegate and the General Service Conference is to make decisions that allow the group to carry out Tradition Five.

I'm not saying that this is easy to do. Many times I thought that my group's decision was the right one, but that I had really colored the information I gave them with my own opinions. I had to learn how to present an issue giving both sides equal weight and let them make a decision. Sometimes they decided to give me the right of decision as per Concept 3 and then at the Area Assembly I had to listen to both sides of any issue and vote on what was best for A.A. as a whole and what would enable the groups in carrying out Tradition 5. For sometime this was a struggle for me, just as I continued to struggle with wanting to be right.

When push came to shove I found out if I didn't put A.A.'s Tradition 5 as my most important reason for serving in General Service I was jeopardizing not only my own sobriety but undermining my groups' reason for being. For groups who do not practice sobriety and carrying the message to the newcomers have a tendency to wither and die and the newcomer in a desperate search for a solution to his drinking problem will surely die.

When Bill Wilson and Dr Bob became concerned for the future of A.A. they wondered if the members and groups could effectively take over the reins of Alcoholics Anonymous, whether they could put aside any differences and make decisions for the good of A.A. as a whole. Could they continue to give

the groups and members the literature and tools that would enable them to carry out the primary purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous? The answer so far has been yes they can.

And finally I realized that participating in A.A. is my purpose, it is my duty to contribute to the conscience of my group, to elect a GSR and listen when he makes a report or asks for a group conscience. It is my responsibility to participate in the 7th Tradition, so that funds will be available to enable the trusted servants in my area and at the General Service Conference make decisions and take the actions that create new literature and new Public Service Announcements directed to the newcomer. It also enables GSO to assist A.A. to get started in different countries. And all of this is so our Primary Purpose can be carried out in groups around our town and around the world.

So I stand here today humbled by the fact that you are here today. That you are ready and able to make hard decisions that will eventually, without you being aware of it, allow some stranger drunk and feeling hopeless, find recovery in this life saving program that we all love so well.

I believe that through mistakes and egos and especially scathingly brilliant ideas we have continued to honor Tradition 5 as the cornerstone of General Service in the San Diego-Imperial Area.

**Guidelines not Rules or Laws – or...Are they? A.A.'s Legacy of Service by Bill W. — Bobbie C., Panel 40**

[Secretary's note: This presentation was transcribed from the recording of the Assembly meeting. It is unclear exactly when Bobbie was and was not quoting directly from written sources. That said, quotation marks will be employed hereunder with seeming inconsistency.

I wanted to share with you some of the things that have been helpful to me, and which might be helpful to you. When I came into service, and even to A.A., I came from a background that had lots of rules, religious-wise and society-wise. I wanted a rule, I wanted you to tell me what to do every

minute, like how do you live between 8 and 12. I wanted to live with my sponsor, and she had to do it hour by hour.

I was attracted into service because I heard the history of A.A. and loved it. I was also attracted by the character of the people, the leaders that I saw. I want to share some of my ideals with you.

In our area, we remember that it's a program of attraction, and we don't want to make it so impossible for our people that they won't be attracted to service. There are so many meetings out there that don't have a GSR, they don't know what we're doing; and your work is so important, to keep the groups informed. I feel sad that I don't see more groups that are informed.

I recently reread "A.A.'s Legacy of Service," and it's just fabulous! It has so many answers in it. As you know, the Twelfth Step, carrying the message, is the basic service that the A.A. fellowship gives. It is our main reason for existence. It talks about service including meeting places, hospital cooperations, intergroup offices; it means pamphlets, books, good publicity of almost all kinds. They call for committees, delegates, trustees and conferences. And not to be forgotten, they need voluntary money contributions from within the fellowship. It's so important to ask, concerning any given service, We therefore pose but one question: Is this service really needed? If it is then maintain it we must, or fail in our mission for those who need and seek A.A. I love that question because I was a teacher and sometimes we would give our students 'busy work' to keep them quiet. I think it's really important to ask ourselves in the area, "is this service really needed?" The most vital services are those that enable us to function as a whole. Mainly the GSO, AAWS and Grapevine Inc., our board of trustees, known legally as the General Service Board of A.A. It goes on to describe the history and the early trials and errors, which you know, and the importance of forming the Conference. I can relate — I'm getting older and I'm going to pass on! We A.A. old timers shouldn't live forever, newer trustees would be virtually unknown to the A.A. groups. Without direct linkage to the groups, future A.A. trustees

couldn't possibly function alone. That meant the need to form a conference representing our membership which would meet yearly with our board of trustees in New York and assume the responsibility for the guardianship of our A.A. Tradition and the direction of our principal service affairs. He describes the development of the Conference and the reasons for it, and the publishing of the book, and all of the money problems, and all the trial and errors of the groups, and the public relations problems when they began publishing.

It was chiefly from correspondence and from our mounting public relations activity that the basic idea for our Traditions came. In late 1945 a good friend suggested that this experience might be codified into a set of general principles, simply stated, that could offer trusted solutions to all of A.A.'s problems of living and working together, and of relating our Society to the world outside.

We operate by some rules, and this is what was given to us at the Conference, showing how the General Service Conference operates: Members...have requested a set of rules under which the Conference operates. The following is an attempt to provide it, but doesn't pretend to be complete: Basically, the Conference operates under as few rules as possible, consistent with the necessity of getting the business done. In fact, that's what the rules are for, to enable the Conference members, as a body, to do what they want to do. When necessary, in the past, the Conference has operated with certain special rules in its Charter, and others which are adopted at its opening session; but in general, under the guidance of Robert's Rules of Order. I didn't know Robert's Rules when I became Area Chairman, or was a DCM, so I needed to learn a little about them. It might seem that the observance of any kind of rules invites conflict. However, the function of the Rules is simply to make it possible for a large body of people to discharge their responsibilities in a limited period of time — which, the case of the Conference, is to express the actual voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society (Concept II), while observing the Warranties of the Conference.

This piece goes on to judge whether Robert's Rules conflicts with this, and the difference between how we operate under Robert's Rules for the purpose of conducting our business and getting things done, and some of the things that are different about how A.A. does it. I'm going to read you just a couple because they're so interesting — at least to me — and maybe they'll be helpful to you in understanding how we do business here sometimes:

1. "As required by the Conference Charter, a quorum of the Conference is two-thirds of all members registered." Robert's Rule is that a majority of the registered members is a quorum.
2. "A.A. assemblies seek substantial unanimity on all important matters of policy. This is interpreted as at least a two-thirds vote. This includes all so-called, 'Conference Advisory Actions,' which, according to the Charter, are binding on the General Service Board." Robert's Rules assume that the decision of the majority is the decision of the assembly. So that's our difference.
3. "After the establishment or rejection of any matter of policy by a two-thirds vote the minority will always be given the opportunity to speak to its opposition." Robert's Rules provide only for minority reports from a committee.
4. "A lot of the detail of Robert's Rules exists to forestall the use of parliamentary maneuvers; that is, the use of the rules to frustrate the wishes of the majority. A.A.'s nature is such that, while Conference members have different opinions on many issues, everyone wants to achieve the group conscience at the assembly. The legitimate rights of the minority are protected by the Third Concept, and it's observance through the Conference.

I'm hoping that some of those thoughts about the difference of how we operate, of why we use Robert's Rules to conduct our business, will encourage you to look at the Concept, and to look

these up in the Service Manual. Those are the things that have helped me so much throughout my service in A.A., and to always remember that there is no authority in A.A. except a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience.

**“Deciding to Stand. Am I really cut out to serve?”  
A.A. Service Manual — Jerry C., Panel 56**

In my case, when I was new to General Service, I was one of those deer in the headlights GSRs.

I had never heard of or seen a Service Manual. I wasn't aware of standing committees, and that it was my duty to serve on one. I thought my DCM, Cheryl F. in District 11 was the most knowledgeable person in the Fellowship, and J.P., our then serving Delegate, was in my view a spiritual Giant.

The idea that I could ever serve in those capacities was beyond my imagination. I could never do those jobs. They required too much knowledge, and way to much work.

But a strange thing happened at the end of my first year as a GSR. I began to appreciate the full meaning of the 12th Step. I saw that Service was a part of carrying the message, and that serving the Fellowship was not an Ego enhancing exercise.

During my second year as a GSR, the opportunity came for me to stand for District 11's DCM. I really had to take a close hard look at my motives for standing.

Did I just want to be on the Area Committee? Would I make the time commitment required? Did I want to feed my Ego by wanting to be in charge, or did I truly have an honest desire to serve? I went to the Service Manual for guidance.

The manual said a DCM should have enough sobriety (generally four to five years) to be eligible to serve as Delegate. WHAT? That freighted me. Not only was I not qualified to be delegate, the idea of that kind of commitment was beyond my comprehension.

Our Service Manual came out again and I re-read Concept IX, especially the section on leadership. That gave me a direction. It told me " Leaders do no drive by mandate, the lead by example."

I discussed this with my sponsor. Yes I was willing to serve, and yes I had the time to serve, and I had the ability to do the job. My sponsor then told me it was not up to me. I should make myself available. The group will decide. The spirituality of our decision making process in the Fellowship is absolutely unique.

The third legacy procedure helps guard against the bulldozing or railroading of a candidate, and is highly successful in eliminating factions or parties because of the wide selection of candidates.

We have seen many times candidates stand for office after office. They suffer the challenge of being passed over again and again until the final election ballot. They have the willingness and the humility to serve. Sometimes that can be daunting. They put their ego aside and shared their service experience. Their only desire is to serve the Fellowship.

There are times when willingness and humility are not enough. There are some jobs where skills are necessary to do the job. For example, a Secretary should know how to type to prepare the minutes. A Treasurer should have the computer skills to process contributions, and prepare the financial reports.

Many times we see members grow into their jobs. They have the honest desire, and the willingness to learn. I have seen members take special classes in accounting, and computer operation.

So the question once again, DECIDING TO SERVE-AM I REALLY CUT OUT TO SERVE.

Look in your heart. Examine your motivations, and let your higher power be the deciding factor.

**“Leadership in A.A. –What? Set Aside my own views?” Concept 9 — J.P., Panel 46**

As I look all the presenters that are up here I realize that I have had the opportunity to serve with each one of them. They are my mentors.

I have been asked to speak on Leadership from the perspective of our 9th Concept, which reads, “Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety. The primary world service leadership once exercised by the founders of A.A. must necessarily be assumed by the Trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous’

So, this Concept addresses the qualities of leadership, the constant need of searching for good leadership and looking at the methods we use in selecting them.

And I’ve been asked to address Bill’s article titled “Leadership in A.A.: Ever a Vital Need”, which was published in a 1959 issue of the Grapevine and appears in the pages of the 9th Concept. Bill used that word Vital in the Big Book.

My sponsor started me look up words and ‘Vital’ was one of those words. The dictionary defines ‘Vital’ as “necessary to the existence, continuance or well being of something; indispensable; essential for a healthy society; of critical importance. So I’m going to be addressing parts of this article as well

We know that Bill realized the need for a link from the groups to the Conference. In his writings he speaks of the basis for our entire structure rests on the dedication and ability of the GSRs to complete the link of communication between the groups and the Conference.

And he spends some time discussing how our GSRs are chosen. For a moment, I’d like to ask the GSRs that are here today and any DCMs, Committee Chairs and officers to look back to the day you were elected as a GSR to your group. Think about the

method by which you were chosen and if your group took its responsibility seriously.

Bill starts by identifying some of the traits of leadership and points out that good leadership cannot function well in an ineffective system and ineffective leadership works terrible in the best of systems. He addresses the question of the need of finding leaders at all levels, not just at the General Service Board level.

I think the reason we’re constantly in need of leaders in A.A. is because we have a spirit of rotation; so necessary and beneficial to society. This is unlike the world around us where individuals serve for years, decades and even generations. We simply serve in a capacity for two years and rotate on.

So, we look at the ongoing need of finding good leaders. Bill said, “We shall be in continued need of these attributes – tolerance, responsibility, flexibility and vision – among our leaders at all levels. He talks a lot about the all important attribute of Vision in leadership. He said that Vision is the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future. And the principles of leadership will be the same whatever the size of the operation.

Our Traditions and Concepts tell us that effective leaders don’t command, they don’t run the show. They know and stick to our purpose. Leadership is about our first tradition - Unity. They listen to all the ideas and allow an informed group conscience to form; understanding that each of us has some good ideas and some not so good ideas. Of course, ample discussion and the group conscience handles both.

Leaders build trust, strive for excellence and we want to follow their lead. They aim to carry out God’s will and do whatever they can, within the bounds of doing what is right for A.A.

Bill mentions that Personal ambition will have to be cast aside, feuds and controversy forgotten. “Who are the best qualified people that we can name?”

This should be the thought of all. He goes on to say when we talk about A.A. leadership we only declare that we ought to select that leadership on the basis of obtaining the best talent we can find. Bill points out that the article was first thought of in connection to world service leadership but it is possible can be useful to anyone who takes an active part in our Society.

Bill said "We have an abundance of men and woman whose dedication, stability, vision and special skills make them capable of dealing with every possible service assignment. We have only to seek these folks out and trust them to serve us."

I believe we seek good, strong effective leaders and we have many to choose from. Just look around the room and observe them in their current positions.

But I think God doesn't seek those with strong leadership skills, he seeks those with willingness and provides them with the necessary skills to lead.

Leadership begins with Willingness and develops over time. Skills are the knowledge and abilities that a person gains throughout their sobriety and through their service. The ability to learn a new skill varies with each individual. Some skills come almost naturally, while others come only by a transition into willingness.

When we elect a GSR, we're electing someone to represent our group. And when we elect a DCM or Standing Committee Chair, we elect that person to represent our District or Standing Committee. We hope they'll rise to the leadership role we have entrusted to them.

But it's more than this. When your group elects a GSR, they're electing a future leader, a future DCM, officer and delegate. It's their responsibility of each member to make sure we're choosing wisely.

I've been involved in service in A.A. in one way or another since I was newly sober. I met many good leaders in the many service commitments I've had.

In my years in service those leaders have shown me that leadership, after all is not about is not about mandates or getting one's way, passing one's personal agenda or leaving ones mark on the assembly for generations to come or even leaving a legacy.

Leadership is about working together, learning to get along and coming together to higher level of unity. It's about our primary purpose of carrying the message. It is about love and service.

This is a perfect topic, two months before our area elections. This Concept talks about developing sound and appropriate methods of choosing these leaders. In our area we utilize the Third Legacy Procedure to elect our Delegate, as well as each of officers. The election assembly is a long day. It's easy to want to get it over with or get caught up in moment. I challenge each to you to consider who you elect and if they're the best person for the position.

I thank God for A.A. and thank A.A. for leading me to a God of my understanding. I thank you for the life I have today and for allowing me to participate in my own recovery.

**"Cultivating an informed group conscience – Listening for the truth" Tradition 2 — Gail N., Panel 58**

I believe that Tradition 1 is actually the most important Tradition. Without unity, we cannot stay focused on carrying the A.A. message of recovery. All the other Traditions show us how to maintain unity. Tradition 2 explains that our ultimate authority is a loving God as He may express Himself through our group members collectively. In an Assembly we may break up into round table discussions, or get report from committees, but these discussions and reports are not the conscience of the Area. A round-table discussion is a great way to cultivate an informed group conscience – to help members of the Assembly to have a broader discussion on an issue. Likewise, listening to the reports from our Committees and ad hoc committees also helps to cultivate our Area conscience by providing as much information and

experience as possible on an issue. However, we don't have a group conscience until we have discussed a matter with the whole Assembly and voted on the issue. Warranty 4 of Concept XII states "That all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity." This is also a part of the operating principles of the San Diego-Imperial Area. Each of us, relying on our own Higher Power, shares the views of our group as well as our own opinion. Each voting member of the Assembly is a contribution to the conscience of this Area. Each person votes for what he/she believes is the very best for A.A. in our Area. Most often the GSR doesn't come to the Assembly with a mandate from his/her Group about how to vote. Your Group may have a strong recommendation on an issue, but when the GSR gets to the Assembly, he/she must keep an open mind to hear all sides before determining what is best for A.A. as a whole.

I believe it would be helpful for each of us to be mindful that "a loving God" does actually express Himself in the decisions we make at these Assemblies. When a vote is taken after having discussion with the whole Assembly, and we have a 2/3 majority in favor or opposed, we can feel pretty confident that this may be God's will for us. However, we are not absolutely sure until the Chair asks if the minority would like to speak to its opposition. Sometimes after hearing the minority opinion, someone in the majority wants to reconsider. Another vote is taken to see if the Assembly would like to re-open discussion. If a majority concur, the discussion begins again. The result of all this discussion is that a decision is made leaving the least amount of dissatisfaction as possible. Everyone should feel that their voice has been heard.

One meaning of the word "cultivate" means to promote or improve the growth of a plant or crop by labor and attention; or to develop or improve by education or training. Both of these meanings imply some effort on my part to help my group members understand the issue. If I'm a GSR, this may take several weeks of short 3-minute 'announcements' at my Group meeting. Or it may take a couple of

discussions at a Group Conscience business meeting of my Group. My experience when I was a GSR, is that it took more than one meeting, more than one short discussion, for group members to comprehend some issues. However, when I have had to work at how to explain or clarify the issue to others – whether it was my Group or the Area Assembly, it helped my own understanding. Thus I became better informed.

Participating in General Service has not come easy for me. As I said earlier, it has taken great effort. But I have invested myself in A.A. because it has given me life. Therefore, the process of searching for God's will for me and for the Assembly has deepened my love for the Fellowship and given me great appreciation for the experience of those who have gone before me. It also has given me a great admiration and gratitude for all of you who are continuing on this path that will ensure the future of Alcoholics Anonymous. Together we continue to search for God's will for us as individuals and for our Fellowship. "He shall sustain us in unity for so long as He may need us."

**"The Importance of Trusting our Servants" Concept 3 — Larry N., Panel 38; Trustee at Large/US 1993-97**

As a traditional means of creating and maintaining working relationships between Groups, Conference, A.A. GSB, AAWS, and GV – and thus insuring their effective leadership, it is suggested that each of these elements be endowed with a traditional "Right of Decision." In this short talk I will share a little of my experience, strength and hope.

Our groups, the ultimate authority of A.A., traditionally allow their GSR the privilege of voting his/her own conscience on Area Assembly motions, even if this would mean that the GSR would be voting differently than the his/her Group's conscience. This is the primary example of the right of decision. When the GSR votes contrary to the group's conscience he/she is expected to explain with a report to the Group. The right of decision is an expression of trust and it creates the expectation of responsibility. I remember well the courage and

love that your trust engendered in me when I served as GSR.

The day I was elected to be the Area Treasurer in the early 80's, a motion was made by Tom B. requiring the treasurer to send a receipt for each contribution. He must have known that I had been a prolific paper hanger (bad check writer) in my drinking days. Still, I felt gratitude with each receipt I sent. As treasurer it was my privilege to participate in the motions leading to our assembly accepting only local A.A. group and member contributions. These were first steps toward our current practice of "corporate poverty." The knowledge that you trusted me with our Area finances encouraged my new honest A.A. way of life.

In preparation for the 38th Conference, my first, the heart of our Area had been expressed at the pre-conference assembly. As I listened to all sides of each issue at the Conference, I knew that I needed to report on all the recommendations, and especially on the one or two items for which my vote had varied from the expressed majority of our assembly. The 11 delegates since I served have behaved in a similar way. And each in their own way, would likely share with you, that your trust was a most treasured aspect of their service. The 3rd Concept is the principle that makes trust a positive force for effective A.A. leadership.

My first conference as your Trustee at Large (1994) included repetitive and lengthy, heartfelt discussion related to the perils and expense and potential loss of our then well known and loved A.A. trademark, the "circle and triangle." In those days, when we saw our circle and triangle on a piece of literature, we knew quickly that it was conference approved. The triangle's equal sides and angles implied strength, and the circle depicted the whole world of A.A. It was treasured by many of us, including myself. However, we (A.A.) had allowed many others to copy and sell it on medallions, coffee cups, jewelry, t-shirts and more. A.A. members had been the purchasers. Sellers were resisting A.A.'s efforts to limit their misuse of our trademark. Should we continue to attempt to protect our circle and triangle legally? Would there be public

controversy? Finally, after very lengthy discussion, the Conference concluded wisely when it gave the General Service Board its trust to decide for A.A. Not too many days later I received a call asking me to cast vote, my right of decision. Should we abandon our treasured trademark? Remembering that the Trademark fit the category of "Intellectual property", and since it was property, I felt that we possibly would find more unity if it were abandoned. A very substantial majority of our board voted similarly. Now the symbol no longer represents A.A. It was replaced by the words "this is A.A. conference approved literature" on our approved publications.

Our only lasting symbol may be the quiet confidence created by the practice of our Traditions – the invisible and indescribable evidence of our fellowship's integrity, a mark of the highest value!

Bill W. concluded his essay on the 3rd Concept with these words. "Our entire A.A. program rests squarely upon the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust A.A., and we trust each other. Therefore, we cannot do less than trust our leaders in service. The "Right of Decision" that we offer them is not only the practical means by which they may act and lead effectively, but it is also the symbol of our implicit confidence."

My heart fills with gratitude for the privilege of serving A.A. in our San Diego-Imperial Area Assembly. May God sustain us in trust, unity and blessed sobriety a day at a time forever.

**Election Area Assembly**  
**8320 La Jolla Scenic Drive N., La Jolla**  
**Minutes of the November 12, 2011 Meeting**

**Meeting Called to Order**

The Assembly was called to order at 8 am by Joel C., Area Delegate, with a moment of silence followed by a recitation of A.A.'s *Declaration of Unity*.

The Twelve Traditions were read in English by Michael and in Spanish by Carmen.

Joel explained to the Assembly how we conduct business for when we process the voting motion.

The roll was called by Michele H., Area Registrar, and she declared the requirements for a quorum had been met. Those not in attendance during the roll call were: Districts 9, 10, 17; Newsletter; North County Intergroup, East County Intergroup, Condado Norte Intergrupo Español, Oficina Central Hispana. There were 111 General Service Representatives, and 43 other voting members.

**Motion: Proposed change to Structure & Guidelines – Remove individual vote callout during elections — second and final vote –**

Connie J., District 12

- **Motion: “... to change the text in section IX on Page 10, after item F of the Area Assembly Structure and Guidelines to read as follows:**

G. Vote handling at Election Assemblies.

1. ~~Each vote will be announced as counted and recorded vote by vote on the tally board.~~ Votes for each round will be totaled prior to being posted.
2. The votes of each round within every ballot shall be kept separate, and saved until the close of the Assembly
3. In case of reported election error(s), the election chair will immediately stop the elections and present the reported error(s) to the Assembly for resolution.”

- **Background and reason:** District 12 submits this motion. During the election of the Alternate Registrar at the April 9th Area Assembly in Brawley, it was our observation that the new voting guidelines take a very long time to elect someone. The concerns:

- a. It will take more than the allotted time to complete elections, which may result in extra cost to the Area for facility rental.
- b. With the current new procedures the length of time to elect each position is a concern– voting members may leave; at the end of the day there may be few left, which may impact the election results.
- c. Another observation in Brawley was the talking, distractions, people walking in and out while the ballots were being called out and voted. For those trying to listen it was almost impossible.

The change that is being suggested does not impact the Area Assembly continuing to use the Third Legacy Procedure.

This motion comes back to the Assembly after having been sent to the groups for consideration by a vote of the Assembly on September 17. It originally came to the Assembly without the recommendation of the Area Committee.

At this point Joel turned the gavel over to Rod B., Pacific Region Trustee, to facilitate the processing of the motion, and to chair the Area Elections.

- **Discussion:**
  - In favor of this motion, want to trust the trusted servants and ballot counters. Will be more efficient with time, and will ensure a good voting electorate at the end of the day.
  - **The question was called with a substantial majority in support of ending debate.**

- **Vote:** 134 in favor, 1 opposed. **The motion passes.** There was no minority opinion expressed.

### **Election of Panel 62 Area Officers**

Rod B., Pacific Region Trustee instructed the Assembly on the Third Legacy Procedure for the elections, as well as who is eligible to vote and to stand for election.

Those persons from other delegate areas who will assist in distributing, collecting, and tallying ballots, and recording vote counts, introduced themselves.

Sallye M., Area 08 past delegate panel 48, explained the reasons why we would or would not proceed to a fifth ballot if no election had occurred by the fourth ballot.

As each position came up for election, Rod read from the *A.A. Service Manual* the duties and qualifications of that position.

Utilizing the Third Legacy Election Procedure outlined in the *A.A. Service Manual*, elections were conducted as follows:

- **Delegate:** Eight members made themselves available. **Tom M.** was elected on the second ballot.
- **Alternate Delegate:** Eight members made themselves available. **Dean B.** was elected on the fourth ballot.
- **Chairperson:** Eight members made themselves available. **Jane G.** was elected on the second ballot.
- **Secretary:** Seven members made themselves available. After the fourth ballot, no election had occurred. A motion was made and seconded to conduct a fifth ballot. The motion failed and **Roxane R.** was elected, her name having been drawn from the hat.
- **Registrar:** Five members made themselves available. **Monty C.** was elected on the second ballot.

- **Treasurer:** Five members made themselves available. **Arturo L.** was elected on the second ballot.
- **Alternate Chairperson:** Nine members made themselves available. **Mike S.** was elected on the third ballot.
- **Alternate Secretary:** Three members made themselves available. **Gonzalo C.** was elected on the fourth ballot.
- **Alternate Registrar:** Five members made themselves available. **Ham H.** was elected on the third ballot.
- **Alternate Treasurer:** Five members made themselves available. After the fourth ballot, no election had occurred. A motion was made to conduct a fifth ballot, but died for lack of a second. **Butch M.** was elected, his name having been drawn from the hat.

Your panel 62 (2012-2013) Area Officers are:

Delegate:	Tom M.
Alternate Delegate:	Dean B.
Chairperson:	Jane G.
Secretary:	Roxane R.
Registrar:	Monty C.
Treasurer:	Arturo L.
Alternate Chairperson:	Mike S.
Alternate Secretary:	Gonzalo C.
Alternate Registrar:	Ham H.
Alternate Treasurer:	Butch M

*Note: elections lasted for the duration of the day until all of the offices were filled, with a break for lunch around noon. Throughout the day, the following activities took place during vote counting, as time and circumstances allowed:*

### **Standing Committee Assignments**

- Accessibilities: Jesus (18)
- Agenda: Tim S. (14)
- Archives: George S.
- CPC: Derek S. (12)
- Finance: Faith
- Grapevine/LaViña: Andrea P., Larry W.
- Literature: Kelly I. (1), Mary P.
- Policy: Craig S., Candy S. (12)

**Trustee's Report** — Rod B., Pacific Region Trustee

Rod, a full-blooded Navajo, is the first trustee from the State of Utah, and the first Native American to serve on the General Service Board. He gave a full report on the actions of the Board, highlighting his own activities. Rod then closed with a recitation of the report he made to the Board at his very first meeting, in which he focused on his own journey from active alcoholism in Salt Lake City to sobriety and the embrace of his native language and culture.

**Delegate's Report: Joel C.**

Joel's written report is submitted as his official report:

"Most A.A. members are primarily interested in their groups, in their own sobriety, and in helping other drunks one-on-one. And that is as it should be." — *The A.A. Service Manual* — p. S23, reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services."

**First Things First**

As we elect a new slate of officers and as I move toward rotation, I reflect on one of my favorite passages in our service literature — the passage above that reminds me to keep my priorities straight. To each of you who are elected today I want to encourage you while you serve as an area officer to maintain your active attendance and participation in your home group, tend to your personal practice of our program of recovery, and continue to welcome the newcomer and to give time to the people whom you sponsor. I know how time consuming area service can be at this level, and how challenging it can be to juggle priorities, but I can assure you that what helped me most to serve as an area officer was going to my home group, practicing the Steps, and spending time with my sponsor and with the men whom I sponsor.

**Sharing gratitude**

Over these two years as your area delegate I have often shared my gratitude with you, especially for my fellow officers. I want to take this opportunity today to do one last gratitude check and to express my thanks to a few more people without whose help I would not have been able to serve. I'm grateful to the members of my home group, the Wednesday Night Fourth Dimension Group, for sharing laughter every week. It is a joyful group, and if you are ever in need of a shot of joy I hope you will join us. We meet at 7:00 pm on Wednesdays at the church on the corner of Park and Lincoln in the North Park neighborhood of San Diego. I'm grateful to my sponsor, Joe C., who knows me so well, for the valuable direction that he has given me always, and especially during these two years; Joe, you keep me on the beam. I'm grateful for the men who share their sobriety with me through sponsorship. We have shared Steps, Traditions, and Concepts together, we have meditated together, we have suffered loss together, and we have lifted each other up. Thanks, guys. Finally, I am grateful for my spouse, Marc, J., for his loving support, for being my companion, and for leading the way to the future through his example of how rich life can be after rotation. I love you, Marc.

**Stimulating interest in general service**

The quotation at the top of this report is from a section of the Service Manual on stimulating interest in general service. After noting that most A.A. members are primarily interested in group life, recovery, and one-on-one 12<sup>th</sup> Step work, the passage goes on to say: "While the work of general service has precisely the same objective — carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers — the connection is not always direct or obvious. Some stimulators are usually needed to get the attention of A.A. members" (*The A.A. Service Manual*, p. S23, reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services). I have tried through my reports during these two years to pass along to the GSRs a few things that they might be able to use to stimulate interest in general service by sharing about new and ongoing literature projects, development of public service

announcements, archives activities, improvements in resources for H&I work, and international developments. Since Rod B., our Pacific Region Trustee, will be giving a report today and will have the latest information from our General Service Board, I will leave it to him to share about these types of things with us today. But I just want to remind everyone who is elected to serve as an area officer today — please do your best through all of your reports over the next two years to give the GSRs resources that they can use to stimulate interest in general service among the members at the home groups.

### **A report to watch for**

As you may be aware the area committee approved the creation of an ad hoc committee a few months ago that is reviewing the Area Assembly Structure and Guidelines, and I was asked by our area chairperson to chair that ad hoc committee. We have been studying whether or not our AAS&G accurately reflects our current practices, how well the AAS&G follows our Traditions and Concepts, and how effectively the AAS&G serves the area. We are not re-writing the AAS&G, but we may have some recommendations for improvements for the area to consider. We expect to deliver our final report to the area committee meeting this month, and there may be a need to gather input from the groups prior to the January area assembly on how to move forward. Please be on the lookout for the report to be delivered to you through the DCMs, and be prepared to gather requested input in a timely manner.

Well, I guess that's it. I know that I will see many of you around as I trudge the road of happy destiny. Thank you for my sobriety. Love and blessings to you all.

### **Chairperson's Report: Dean B.**

Dean's written report is submitted as his official report:

Welcome everyone to today's assembly, especially those that are with us for the first time, either

visitors or Group Service Representatives. Per the Area Structure and Guidelines it is one of my responsibilities to provide a full report of Area Activities at the Assembly. This report includes summaries only so please reach out to the Chairs of the committees for more detail, or the Approved Full Text of Motions when passing this information on to your groups

**The Last Area Assembly** was the Budget and 'Big Day' assembly held on September 17, 2011 in Mission Valley. The day started with a panel of Past Delegates who shared their experience, strength, and hope on general service, the traditions, the steps, and the concepts. General feedback has been that it was a good way to start a day of important business by having a pause and getting a little "grounded" before moving on to "The Business". Thanks to all the Past Delegates who took the time to share with us, and continue to be a source of experience and hope for those of us coming along side.

There were **5 items of business** on the September Assembly agenda as follows:

1. **Motion – proposing a general service conference agenda item** that the conference consider / discuss modification of the Booklet "Living Sober". The motion failed.
2. **Review of 2012 Area Budget for Approval.** The budget passed as presented. Funding for ASL interpretation at 5 area assemblies was included in the approved budget.
3. **Motion- to modify Finance Section of The Area Structure and Guidelines.** This motion is available in hard copy at the assembly and on website at Area8aa.org. The motion was originated by the ASL adhoc committee. The motion was approved to be reviewed by the groups. 2<sup>nd</sup> and Final Vote on the Motion will be at the January 7, 2012 Orientation Assembly. \*\*



4. **Motion- to modify the voting process at Area Elections.** This motion is available in hard copy at this assembly. The motion was approved to be reviewed by the groups. 2<sup>nd</sup> and Final Vote. This motion will be **PART OF TODAY'S OPENING BUSINESS PRIOR TO THE ELECTION.**

5. **Assembly Host Bids for January, March, and May 2012 Assemblies.**

Hosts are:

- January 7, 2012 Orientation Assembly –Districts 8 & 13 @ Mission Valley United Methodist
- March 31, 2012 Pre Conference Assembly – Districts 5, 14 & 18 @ El Cahon Reagan Community Center.
- May 19, 2012 Post Conference (Report Back) Assembly - Districts 16 & 23 Encinitas Community Center.

**The Area Committee** meets monthly on the 3rd Thursday of each month 7pm to 10pm. The meeting is located at 2650 Melbourne, San Diego, CA. All are welcome to attend. To get an item on the agenda contact [Chair@area8aa.org](mailto:Chair@area8aa.org) to get the process started. I will direct you to other committees you may need to coordinate with prior to setting a specific date your item be heard.

Since the Last Area Assembly we have had one area committee meeting. In October some items accomplished were:

- **A non-budgeted expense** was approved in the amount of \$350 for the CPC committee to attend and participate in the Meeting of the Minds Health Fair in San Diego
- **The ASL ad hoc committee** provided an update report. Some of the work they were originally tasked to do has been addressed by funding for ASL interpretation in 2012, however the committee expressed concerns that upon rotation in December the emphasis on serving the deaf community may diminish.

- **Agenda options for the November Election Assembly were discussed.** A sense (informal vote) of the meeting was taken on multiple options. The committee advised me that the option to start the assembly 30 minutes early was most reasonable. This timeframe gives us a chance to complete business regarding voting practices and the remaining elections within one day.

- **The ad hoc committee reviewing Area Committee Assignments** acknowledged they will be ready to give final report by November. Also we were advised that a proposed motion affecting the area structure and guidelines may come with their final report. Information from this effort may be used by the Area Committee to decide how to provide Standing Committees with members in 2012.

- **The ad hoc committee reviewing Area Structures and guidelines** acknowledged they will also be ready give final report by November. The committee solicited input from members of the Area Committee one last time prior to finalizing their report. This committee's recommendations may be used by the next Area Committee Panel to consider if minor or major changes to our Area Guidelines can help us in any way.

- **The Policy Committee announced the revised Area Structure and Guidelines** are close to being finalized. (The document should be complete by November Election Assembly).

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The Translating Committee needs anyone that **Translate (written) Area Documents** from English to Spanish, and visa-versa. Please contact the committee chair [Translation@area8aa.org](mailto:Translation@area8aa.org).

- The Area has ongoing needs to add ASL interpreters and Spanish Interpreters to our availability list. Please contact the area chair [chair@area8aa.org](mailto:chair@area8aa.org).

- Thanks to the IT Committee the Area Website has now been transferred to a new host, and a new look! Please go to [Area8aa.org](http://Area8aa.org) and let the I.T. Committee if errors or omissions since the

changeover. Your patience is appreciated but your comments are welcome too. Contact the committee chair [Computer@Area8aa.org](mailto:Computer@Area8aa.org).

Whether it be obvious or not, **all standing committees** of the Area offer services that benefit our Area in some way. Any of these committees can be contacted through the Area Website. Go to [Area8aa.org](http://Area8aa.org) **Contacts Tab**. On everyone's behalf I would like to thank Finance, Archives, Literature, Newsletter, Grapevine/ LaVina, Accessibilities, Translation, Policy, Agenda and All H&I Committees for their continuous efforts to help Carry The Message. Let's not forget about the efforts at the District Committee level either.

One of the primary purposes of the Area Assembly per our Structure and Guidelines is "To Carry the Message to the Alcoholic who still suffers". Those are not only words. They are actions as demonstrated by all the individual and committee efforts within our San Diego-Imperial Area.

What does that mean? This structure we were given by our founders called General Service must be a lifesaving effort. Maybe not so much always reaching down and grabbing the hand of the suffering, but certainly paving the way anonymously for others to reach that hand. It's still about saving drunks and staying sober because of it.

**Approval of September Area Assembly Minutes** — Veronica S., Area Alternate Secretary  
MSP unanimous to approve as presented.

Past delegates and trustees from the San Diego-Imperial Area were recognized.

Birthdays occurring since the September Big Day Budget Area Assembly meeting were celebrated.

**Ask-It Basket questions** — Rod B.

- **Q:** What is the value of translating A.A. literature into Native American languages if these people already speak English or Spanish?  
**A:** It would be a symbolic action. Some languages are becoming extinct. In Western

Utah there is a small tribe that has four or five elders that still speak the traditional language. There is an effort to preserve these languages so they are not lost forever. There are some Navajos who are more comfortable with their native tongue.

- **Q:** In how many languages is the Big Book published?  
**A:** I want to say, something like 65'ish.

The outgoing Panel 60 officers were assembled at the front of the room and recognized by the Assembly.

In the same manner, the newly elected Panel 62 officers gathered together for the first time before the Assembly.

### **Closing**

Rod closed the meeting with the Responsibility Declaration in English and Spanish.

## **REMINDER**

**New GSR Orientation will begin at 8:00A.M. prior to the Orientation Assembly. All New GSR's are encouraged to attend.**

**Treasurer's Report** — Sallye M., for Ham M., Treasurer

Written report submitted as Ham's official report. Following are some of the highlights:

October Financial Report	October 2011	YTD	2011 budget	Variance with annual budget
Group contributions:	2,729.28	24,804.64	37,959.00	-13,154.36
Individual contributions:	105.00	1,190.65	-	
District contributions:	0.00	144.95	-	
Total contributions:	2,834.28	26,140.24	37,959.00	-11,818.76
Total budgeted expenses	2,195.69	25,157.47	37,959.00	0.00
Contributions less budgeted expenses	638.59	982.77		
Total unbudgeted expenses	300.00	1,683.74	-	166.26
Total expenses:	2,495.69	26,841.21	37,959.00	166.26
Contributions less total expenses:	338.59	-700.97		
Previous month ending balance	9,380.95			
Cash on hand:	9,719.54			

**A.A. RESOURCES AND INFORMATION**

**A.A. Resources**

GSO NY	aa.org
AA Grapevine	aa grapevine.org
AA Central Office	aa sandiego.org
Area 8 San Diego-Imperial	area8aa.org
North County Intergrup	nosdco-aa.org
ACYPAA 2010	acypaa2010.org
Oficina Central Hispana	619-280-7224
Oficina Intergrupal Condado Norte	760-758-6905
Oficina Intergrupal South Bay Area Chula Vista	619-473-0288

**January 7<sup>th</sup> Orientation Assembly 2012**

**Mission Valley United Methodist Linder Hall**

2111 Camino Del Rio South, San Diego CA 92108

**Reminder starts early! Promptly at 8:30!**

# Master Calendar

<b>Event</b>	<b>Host</b>	<b>Date</b>			<b>Location</b>
Traditions Workshop	Dist 4, 5, 14, 19 & 21	<b>Nov 13</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>8:30a</b>	Handlery Hotel – San Diego
“Cruise ship Serenity” Music & Recovery	Dist 1,2, 3,4,16 NSDYPA	<b>Nov 19</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>4:00p</b>	Carlsbad Harding Center Community
<b>ROOTS</b>	ARCHIVES	<b>Nov 20</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>1:00p</b>	La Jolla – Torrey Pines Church
Thanksgiving Alkathon	<i>Dist 8</i>	<b>Nov 24</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>3:00p</b>	Chula Vista – Recovery Home
11 <sup>th</sup> Step Workshop	<i>Dist 8</i>	<b>Dec 3</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>9:00a</b>	Chula Vista- St. John’s Episcopal Church
Holiday Alkathon	<i>Dist 8</i>	<b>Dec 24 - 25</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>1:30p</b>	Chula Vista – Recovery Home
New Year’s Alkathon	<i>Dist 6 &amp; 7</i>	<b>Dec 31-Jan 1</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>4:00p</b>	Hill Crest – Parrish Hall
New Year’s Alkathon	<i>Dist 8</i>	<b>Dec 31-Jan 1</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>1:30p</b>	Chula Vista – Recovery Home
<b>Orientation Assembly</b>	Dist 8 & 13	<b>Jan 7</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>*8:30a</b>	Mission Valley – United Methodist
<b>Area Committee / DCM Training Workshop</b>	Area Chairperson	<b>Jan 28</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>8:00a</b>	Mission Valley – United Methodist
<b>Imperial Valley Round Up</b>	Dist 9	<b>Feb 10-12</b>	<b>2012</b>		Brawley Recreation Center
<b>4 Area DCM Sharing Session</b>	Areas 5, 8, 9, & 93	<b>Feb 12</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>10:00a</b>	Area 93
<b>PRAASA</b>	Pacific Region Areas	<b>March 2-4</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>12:00a</b>	Area 72 Western Washington
<b>Pre Conference Assembly</b>	Dist 5, 14, 18 & 12	<b>March 31</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>*8:30a</b>	El Cahon -Reagan Community Center
<i>H&amp;I Conference</i>	<i>So Cal H&amp;I</i>	<i>April 13-15</i>	<i>2012</i>		San Diego – Bahia Resort
<b>General Service Conference</b>	GSO	<b>April 22-28</b>	<b>2012</b>		New York
<b>Delegate’s Report (Post Conference) Assembly</b>	Dist 16 & 23	<b>May 19</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>*8:30a</b>	Encinitas Community Center
<b>Regional Forum</b>	GSO	<b>Sept 14-16</b>	<b>2012</b>		Fairbanks, Alaska

**Note: \*\*Non-Bolded Events Are Not Sponsored Or Hosted By Area 8 Service Entities, they are listed for planning purposes only. Updated November 1. Information is subject to change, see the calendar on the area website for the most up to date information.**

*Veronica and I believe it has been a joy and a privilege to serve you these past years.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Butch M., Secretary*

*Veronica S., Alternate Secretary*

**NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE**

Chairperson: **Chris N.** ALT Chairperson: **Vacant** English Editor: **Jeff M.** Spanish Editor: **Jeff M.** Secretary: **Vacant**  
 Registrar: **Vacant.** Member and Proofreader: **Gary S.**