



# SAN DIEGO – IMPERIAL AREA ASSEMBLY OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS – AREA 8 NEWSLETTER

**June  
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*Issue*

P.O. Box 3670 San Diego, CA 92163 "Supporting our Future; Growth, Participation, Contributions."

Visit the Area website [www.area08aa.org](http://www.area08aa.org) for minutes from our Area 08 Assembly [click here](#)

## Gone Viral

By Blaine H.,

In the past, who would have thought that someday we would be sheltering in place, maintaining social distance, and not attending A.A. meetings - and thus not hugging our friends and shaking hands with newcomers. But that is our lot, at least for now, with the current pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus. Were this viral pandemic to have occurred only twenty years ago, many may have fallen back into our disease. Sure, we would have the book, hopefully a sponsor, and the telephone to reach out to others in the Fellowship. For many, particularly those who had a solid program, this would have been enough. But for others not so well grounded, who needed face-to-face contact on a regular basis to stay sober, maybe not. And certainly the newcomer would be lost without a physical meeting to stumble into.

No, despite the inconvenience we experience now, we should be grateful for the technology which has allowed us to come together digitally. Many meetings are now available on the video-conferencing software program Zoom with attendance numbers never seen before. Today I count 157 Zoom meetings each week listed on the San Diego Central Office website, as well as 134 on North County's. Area 8 business is conducted on Zoom. Through this medium I have been blessed to be able to attend district and committee meetings remotely. We have held Area Committee meetings, the pre-conference workshops and, in a marvel of modern technology, our first all-digital Area Assembly! This last with both ASL and Spanish interpretation. In fact, the April 4<sup>th</sup> assembly was attended by interested parties from other areas who wished to learn from our techniques. By all accounts it was a great success!

While we are adapting to these changing circumstances locally, the Shelter-in-Place shutdown has caused some of our treasured in-person events to be altered or cancelled. The General Service Conference will most likely be abbreviated and take place remotely, no Big Apple for our Jerry this year! The much-anticipated International Convention, scheduled for July in Detroit, has been totally cancelled and will not be rescheduled. This means that our next International will be 2025 in

Vancouver. The Pacific Regional Forum (August in Las Vegas) has also been killed by the virus.

Despite adding convenience and accessibility during difficult times, the use of digital media has created some roadblocks in our ability to carry the message. Some of you may have attended Zoom meetings that have been "bombed" – infiltrated by unwanted visitors who disrupt the meeting with vulgarity and worse. This is very unpleasant. Also, some worry about anonymity with our names appearing on a list of participants, and the gratification of seeing the faces of our friends is blunted by the knowledge that anyone tuning in can see them too. Certain groups have resorted to sharing meeting ID numbers and passwords among regular members only. How does that clash with our primary purpose? Can the newcomer still find us? Hopefully we can overcome some of these obstacles. Regardless, Alcoholics Anonymous will survive and hopefully be wiser and stronger for it! This unexpected crash course in digital technology may well accelerate our ability to carry out business and that primary purpose.

## Wanted: Help From GSR's

By Jane G., Past Delegate, San Diego-Imperial Area 08, Panel 66

Our area's Policy Committee is working to review and revise the Structure & Guidelines to speak to the GSR as the main audience. We are following the example of AAWS, Inc. in its work to redesign of *The Service Manual* to serve GSRs. It's a lot more exciting than it sounds!

Redesigning the Structure & Guidelines to inform the GSR makes sense when we consider the area is the main hub in the communication structure for the groups we serve. It is difficult to claim we are serving our groups when GSRs don't even know we have an operating tool we call Structure & Guidelines. If GSRs don't understand what we do, they cannot communicate it to the groups. Like *The Service Manual*, our area's Structure & Guidelines were written many years ago. Communicating information on how processes work and who to contact to get things done needs to be developed and made available. Examples of this are posting events to the Master Calendar, and getting flyers translated and uploaded to the website. The committee's first phase is identifying the area "structure", which includes the duties of our area officers

## Wanted: Help From GSR's (Cont.)

and standing committees. Identifying the current duties will be very helpful in the following phase of understanding if the guidelines help us serve the local groups.

All AA members are welcome to participate in this project. In fact, this is a great service opportunity for those of us who feel we know nothing about service. If we can bring understanding of the work of the area to someone who knows nothing about what we do, then we have hit the mark in making participation in service available to all members. Attached 2014 Area 08 pamphlet here:

[Area 8 Pamphlet 2014 FINAL 101614 .docx](#)

## Redesign of the Service Manual

By Roxane R.

The decision for AA World Services, Inc. to conduct a thorough evaluation, update, and redesign of *The Service Manual* was made at the 2018 General Service Conference. The AAWS Publishing Department's progress report on the project notified the 2019 GSC of the challenges identified by The AA Service Manual Working Group.

Download the PDF of the 2018-2020 Service Manual: [https://www.aa.org/assets/en\\_US/en\\_bm-31.pdf](https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/en_bm-31.pdf)

### It's not your imagination— *The Service Manual* is not an easy read!

AAWS acknowledges the content of The Service Manual lacks focus and direction. This condition has occurred because the last full update was in 2000. The past 18 years of piecemeal edits have resulted in a somewhat disjointed and unattractive "textbook". The opening of the book is expected to have some form of "how to use" section to set the tone.

**The most exciting news in the report** is the manual's organizational content will focus on the General Service Representative as the intended reader. AAWS notes the book serves to inform on the wide variety of service positions. The most important person to become knowledgeable of the service structure is the GSR, and in total, they outnumber the population of all other service positions combined.

Other challenges and the collected thoughts toward solution are:

#### 1. Physical format

- Find a binding that allows the book to lie flat in its use as a "workbook" type of resource
- Use large print with 8.5" x 11" pages to provide space for handwritten notes

#### 2. Design

- Adopt a design that facilitates navigation of the contents using a logical topic hierarchy
- Create tabs, color, call-outs, and graphics to better explain complex topics
- Use an easier-to-read font

The draft of the redesign is expected before the end of 2019. Please note it was a 2016 GSC decision to publish *The Service Manual* every two years. The next edition will be 2020-2022.

If you wish to view the full report, please request it from your Past Delegate, San Diego Imperial Area, Roxane R. at [area8delegate68@gmail.com](mailto:area8delegate68@gmail.com).

### Newsletter Submission Guidelines

[newsletter@area8aa.org](mailto:newsletter@area8aa.org)

*We need your fresh ideas!*

Email an article to the newsletter for consideration to be published. Articles are preferred to be service related but can be anything from your personal experience to individual or group viewpoints on AA related matters. 500 words and under are suggested.