

A NEWSLETTER FOR
GSRs AND ALL OTHER
MEMBERS OF A.A.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The AA Preamble
- A Rocky Road
- Delegate's Message
- Online Meetings
- GSR Survey Results



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The AA Preamble |
Change

A Rocky Road to
the Conference

Do Agenda Items |
Mean Anything? 3

Worldwide and
Next Door 4

On Being a GSR 4

area8aa.org



San Diego-Imperial Area 08 Assembly

APRIL 2022 ISSUE

The AA Preamble: People vs. Men and Women

A reaction to the passing of the revised preamble rumbled like an earthquake through many rooms of AA. Above the surface members asked, "Who, when and how did the decision to change the *AA Preamble* come about, and why didn't I know about this?"

The short answers to the questions are, last year, at the 71st General Service Conference, by the Delegates. Other notable motions that moved forward last year were the 4th edition of *Alcoholics Anónimos*, a 5th edition *Big Book*, and hold onto your hat, the translation of the *Big Book* into a plain and simple language.

In the aftermath of the

conference, the General Service Office received many requests to reverse or rescind one or more of the approved motions, with appeals to preserve, unaltered, the text of the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* as originally published. The sentiments were that no changes should be made to Bill's writing, one change could lead to a "slippery slope" of endless changes, that the COVID pandemic didn't allow for a fully informed group conscience, and that the changes are the result of outside issues and therefore not in keeping with [Tradition Ten](#).

Could it really be about the change to the Preamble that is causing a divisive ripple

among the Fellowship? When dissension exists, the underlying problem can be our level of communication, and everyone's right of participation. Participation is taking a part. Did you take part in the discussion to change the Preamble? If your group failed to elect a GSR then chances are, the information was not made available for your group.

The aim of [Tradition One](#) is to ensure cohesion while honoring all voices in an open dialogue. If your group practices Tradition One, they believe this. A.A. is structured to provide a platform for everyone, even those with minority views. As a group pre-

A ROCKY ROAD TO THE CONFERENCE

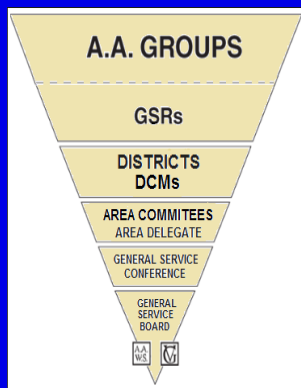
Representatives of 93 Alcoholics Anonymous Areas in the U.S. and Canada meet each year at the General Service Conference, where the 2022 Agenda Items, submitted by the Fellowship, are discussed and voted upon to become the future actions of Alcoholics Anonymous. These items may be the creation of new pieces of literature or changes to existing ones, possibly the adop-

tion of new methods to reach out to suffering alcoholics, or any other item requiring action to be taken.

Locally, the road to the Conference is well established. Our Delegate receives the Agenda Items following the January Board Weekend. They are then distributed to our groups, along with pertinent background material, via the District Committee

Members (DCMs) and General Service Representatives (GSRs). Pre-Conference workshops are conducted and the Pre-Conference Assembly is held at which the representatives of our Groups express their conscience on the items. Non-binding preference votes are taken to help guide our Delegate's decisions at the Conference.

But what about the first



Check out this NEW
Feature added to the
Area 08 Website

GSO Group Directory

LOOK UP YOUR
GROUP ID NUMBER

area8aa.org

(Click [Here!](#))

The AA Preamble: People vs. Men and Women

(Continued from Page 1)

pares to make a decision, all sides must be given an opportunity to speak without judgment or derision. All members of the group must be willing to accept the majority opinion and work together to put any decision into action. This helps prevent the disunity that can undermine not only the group but each member of the group. Communication is not only the delivery of information, to the contrary, it's the receiving end that

matters. A perfect example of this, is hearing someone share their knowledge or experience on a topic, but not understanding or relating to what was stated. Ask for clarity or additional information and share your thoughts and interests to understand what is being communicated. If you are delivering the information, be sure your report is realized before taking a vote.

There is a wide array and volume of information about

AA that can be transmitted by our current communication structure. So, the next time you are caught off guard with matters affecting AA, or you get wind of a conversation that you were absent from, before or after the fact, move towards it. Seek and find the information beforehand, join the conversation, and most of all, think about your fellows and how your participation can help them and countless others. - Bill S., Interested Area Committee Member (ACM)

A ROCKY ROAD TO THE CONFERENCE

(continued from page 1)

Conference? Was the road similarly paved? Absolutely not! The path was marred by much dissension in the ranks. The Alcoholic Foundation was a Board of Trustees created in 1938 primarily so A.A. could establish itself as a non-profit organization, but also because A.A.s didn't trust themselves to make decisions. For years the Board was made up of mostly non-alcoholics. But the Board was not involved in the day-to-day business of A.A. That responsibility fell to Bill, Bob, and the small

staff in the New York office. It became increasingly clear, at least to Bill, that as A.A. grew exponentially, there would be a need for a method by which Alcoholics Anonymous could govern itself. Beginning in 1946 he began to push for some sort of conference to replace the A.A. founders. The need became more pressing in 1948 when Dr. Bob's cancer was determined to be terminal. Bill pressed on and after one particularly inflammatory memo

from him, four Trustees submitted letters of resignation! It should also be noted that at this point Dr. Bob was also against the idea of a conference. He did not relent until Bill's final visit with him, just prior to his death in 1950.

Finally, in November of 1950, a pamphlet was published entitled "Your Third Legacy—Will You Accept It?" It explained the plans and procedures for a General Service Conference. Each state would be able to select one representative

For AA history doesn't stop--it keeps on growing and becoming. As Bill and the early members used to say, "AA isn't an achievement; it's a process, a continuing process." Nell Wing, Sept. 1977 GV

[Click here to receive Grapevine Daily Quote](#)

A Message from the Delegate: Do Agenda Items Mean Anything to Me?

Have you ever wondered what the GSR or trusted servant was talking about when they made a report to the group announcing the “agenda items?” I used to ask myself, “What are they talking about, and do they apply to me?”

Over time I had my glimpse of the General Service Conference through the eyes of the Area Delegate. The agenda items were presented, and I had to figure out a way to help my group understand and respond. I was responsible for sharing my group’s conscience on various topics. My group was less than enthusiastic, which is often the case. I was hurt but it caused me to look at a different way to present to my group members. I decided to go the individual route, talking to members outside the meeting. This worked well for me.

I had to be shown how the items could play a role in the lives of many other people as well as my own life. The process took a while to understand. Awareness made me feel like I was doing something for the greater good. The longer I stay sober, the more I want to be involved.

As a member in my group, I get to listen to input from members who have been around the rooms awhile. Some of their thoughts and opinions

are the same as mine and some are not. Being in general service has taught me to listen first and then form my opinion.

Listening and sharing with other members about the topics that will be discussed at the Conference is the backbone of General Service. We are not trying to change anyone’s mind, rather to get insight that will lead to “substantial unanimity,” or common agreement

I must remember when forming my opinion, to ask myself if this will be for the greater good? Thinking about something that might affect AA has a whole isn’t easy sometimes. We are innately self-centered. The decisions we make may have a lasting effect on the newcomer that hasn’t made it to the rooms. It may also affect our current members throughout AA, not just in San Diego.

The agenda items help to create new literature, set policies and procedures, and develop avenues for people to reach us who are still suffering. The Delegate gets to represent the Area with 92 other Delegates. Armed with facts, the Delegate should be ready to participate in the discussion. He is aware of his groups’ conscience through the members of his Area.

Some items make it from the

committee to the floor of the Conference while others go back to the committee for reworking or without consideration based on perceived need. This process seems to be one of the most spiritual processes that I have ever experienced.

Getting different opinions and thoughts on the agenda topics is vital. Sharing where the items come from and how they make it to the Conference is helpful. An agenda item can come from anyone. Getting support from your area and maybe surrounding areas is a strong component went constructing an item for consideration.

Do the agenda items mean anything to me? For me, they do. My hope is that every person will connect with at least one item. Bring your group’s conscience to the assembly and be ready to share its importance to your group. No matter your opinion, it can be stated. We all do not have to agree, but we each get to join the discussion. That is the magic of General Service.

—Monty C., Area 8 Delegate

“Our very first concern should be with those sufferers that we are still unable to reach.”
Bill Wilson at the GSC, NYC, 1965



A ROCKY ROAD

(Continued from page 2)

(Delegate), with the more populous states given additional representatives. There would be two Panels of Delegates, elected in alternate years. That remains essentially the same procedure we use today.

Beginning in 1951, a series of four “Experimental Conferences” were held. Alcoholics governing themselves was a novel idea and needed a valid test before finally

being put into place. In 1954, the name of the Alcoholic Foundation was officially changed to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, and finally, in 1955, at the Convention in St Louis, the reins of A.A. were officially turned over to the Fellowship in the form of the General Service Conference. The road had been anything but smooth, just like sobriety. —Blaine H.

Worldwide and Next Door Online

To those of us who were not part of the online meeting world prior to the pandemic, online meetings seem like a new invention. AA online groups began around 1986 using an email-only format. The Lamp-Lighters group formed in 1990 and is still going. The Online Inter-group of AA (OIAA) formed around 1995. <https://aa-intergroup.org/>

In January 2020, OIAA had a list of 110 groups, which exploded to more than 4500 meetings by January 2022. One would think that with the world reopening from the pandemic, the number of online meetings would decline. But, as of mid-March 2022, the number of online groups listed with OIAA in-

creased by another 500. We know many online meetings do not list themselves and there are a wide range of internet tools and apps in use for what we call "online."

The Tehran Group in Iran is one online group that embraces guest speakers from around the world. I am one of many San Diego members who have been their guests. Over the past year, I have spoken to the group no less than 20 times. My experience in speaking to this group has been wonderful. I was overwhelmed by the warm reception and sincere appreciation this group has for the message and AA's Traditions. But this is not an easy speaking assignment.

The meeting is conducted in Farsi with a highly professional interpreter. The only person with whom the speaker has interaction is the interpreter. The group requests those who want to tell their personal story have at least 10 years of sobriety.

The members of this group love AA and they have read AA's literature! The group is hungry for speakers who want to share their personal story, discuss AA's Traditions, and deliver presentations on AA's history. Don't pass on this opportunity to carry the message outside the U.S. and Canada. If you want to speak on any of those topics, please contact Jane at:

area8contact@gmail.com.

Despite sometimes having an arrogant exterior, an alcoholic is very much capable of such feelings as love, affection, intimacy and caring. However, these feelings don't usually involve anyone else.—Bob M., Green Valley,



Letters to the editor:

newsletter@area8aa.org

Letter from the Editor—GSRs and the Conference

I have been serving Area 08 since I became a GSR over 25 years ago. I have seen participation ebb and flow in the Area. In this issue of our area newsletter, the committee decided to report on GSR activity related to the upcoming General Service Conference. We sent out a 3-question survey by text: 1. Are you a member of any Area 8 Standing Committee? 2. What 2022 Conference Agenda Items did you present to your group? And 3. Of the 2022 Conference Agenda Items presented, about which items were your group members most interested? It was an easy survey where the respondents could simply mark their answers in a box. There were some underlying motives for the questionnaire, one being that we might increase readership of the newsletter if GSRs knew their answers would be published.

The results of the survey have been tabulated and though there were few respondents in number, the information is still valuable. Right away we discovered that only 3 of the respondents are members on an Area Committee. It is apparent that the GSR commitment is not being fully explained to incoming GSRs. The only way we can staff our committees is to engage GSRs. This is where the GSR begins to understand the workings of General Service. It is crucial to the Area. We also discovered that the 2022 Conference Agenda Items are not likely presented to groups in 35% of the respondents. The final question allows us to be hopeful that those participants who presented the items were able to say which ones the groups were most interested. In ten of the groups represented, their groups were

most interested in the Literature Agenda Item R, "Discuss changes to the text of the book, "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" as directed by the 71st General Service Conference. And in second place, Grapevine/LaVina Agenda Item D, "Discuss the wide-ranging impact the Preamble had on our A.A. Fellowship."

In thinking about these two items, I can draw from experience in my own home group. These two items were "hot" topics. Last year's elected GSR presented a report on some of the agenda topics but did not include these two items. They may have had their reasons, or they might not have had enough information to give a full report on critical agenda topics. Attending a Pre-Conference Workshop would have given them useful information. These events are under-attended though well-advertised and strongly encouraged. They have both in-person and zoom dates. What else can the area do to elevate participation?

If your group is uninformed, the best thing you can do as a member of your group is to seek the answers yourself and let your group know what is at stake or better yet, stand for the commitment as GSR. Is your group fully represented? *Respondents and District:* Chase B, 8, Old Town, 4, District 14, Jack J, 17, District 2, Marcela R, 15, Diana C, 19, Adan O, 15, Nancy N, 11, Christina L, 1, Rick R/Angie, 19, Paul S, 5, Natalie, 6, Greg B, 20, Colleen B, 16, Eve M, 12, John B, 6, and Emily B, 7. Thank you for participating!