

# The Assembly Reporter

## General Service News for the Group

SEPTEMBER  
2023 ISSUE

**San Diego— Imperial  
Area 08 Assembly  
of Alcoholics  
Anonymous  
(SDIAA)**

[www.area8aa.org](http://www.area8aa.org)

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to District 2, 19 & 23  
for their financial  
contribution to sup-  
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## Area Elections – PANEL 74 (2024–2025)

Every two years in the month of September the spirit of rotation is recognized with an assembly election for 10 area officers. Each serve a 2-year term beginning on January 1<sup>st</sup>. The positions are Delegate, Alt. Delegate, Area Chair, Alt. Area Chair, Treasurer, Alt. Treasurer, Registrar, Alt. Registrar, Secretary, and Alt. Secretary.

The basic requirements begin with a humble desire and commitment to serve the Fellowship. Qualified nominees are those who have served the Area within the past 24 months as a District Committee Member (DCM), a Standing Committee Chair, or an Officer of a different position. Nominees should have a good understanding of the spiritual principles of service, the A.A. service structure matched by service experience, of course knowledge of the duties and responsibilities for the office they are running for, and preferably, computer skills, email and internet access appropriate for the duties of the position. No member is denied the opportunity to serve based on their computer access and com-

petencies, though a willingness to learn and acquire tools that may be necessary to meet the area's needs will be presumed. Nominees should also have a certain

extent or luxury of time and support from their families and/or significant others, sometimes even employers, as these positions can require a great deal of time, travel, and supporting participation in multiple fashions. Regarding associated costs when serving the Fellowship (in any capacity,) it is stated in the service manual that "an individual's finances should not be a barrier to service." Every member should have the opportunity to experience and benefit from service. Those who serve are provided the necessary tools and are reimbursed for related expenses, including travel and mileage. - Editor



Look for Election Results at [www.area8aa.org](http://www.area8aa.org)

## Third Legacy Procedure

The third legacy procedure is a special type of electoral procedure considered to be unique to A.A., and at first glance, appears to introduce a strong element of chance into a matter that should depend solely on the judgment of the majority. In practice, however, it has proved highly successful in eliminating the influence of factions or parties that seem to thrive on most political scenes. The railroading of a candidate for election is made difficult, if not impossible, since voters have a wide selection of candidates to choose from. More importantly, a second-place candidate who may be extremely well qualified but without early popular support is encouraged to stay in the balloting rather than withdraw.

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## Nominations

Nominations are established by qualified servants who answer just one question, are you available to serve? A yes response places them on the ballot for the position of their choosing. However, it is suggested that nominees stand for each office, not necessarily only the position they want. This, in the spirit of anonymity, the foundation of all our traditions, focuses on humility and self-sacrifice.

**In A.A. we don't choose the qualified  
we qualify the chosen**

Though, members who know because of their family circumstances or work obligations, that they cannot provide the time needed, for example, of a delegate, chair, or other time-consuming commitments, they may rightfully opt to only stand for certain positions, and this

Continued on page 3

## From the General Service Office (GSO)

A.A. Guidelines are compiled from the shared experience of A.A. members in the various areas. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference (U.S. and Canada). In keeping with our Tradition of Autonomy, except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole, most decisions are made by the group conscience of the members involved. The purpose of these Guidelines is to assist in reaching an informed group conscience.

A.A.'s far-flung Twelfth Step activities, carrying the message to the next sufferer, are the very lifeblood of our A.A. adventure. Without this vital activity, we would soon become anemic; we would literally wither and die.

Now where do A.A.'s services — worldwide, area, local — fit into our scheme of things?

Why should we provide these functions with money? The answer is simple enough. Every single A.A. service is designed to make more and better Twelfth Step work possible, whether it be a group meeting place, a central or intergroup office to arrange hospitaliza-

tion and sponsorship, or the world service Headquarters [now the General Service Office] to maintain unity and effectiveness all over the globe.

Though not costly, these service agencies are absolutely essential to our continued expansion — to our survival as a Fellowship. Their costs are a collective obligation that rests squarely upon all of us. Our support of services actually amounts to recognition on our part that A.A. must everywhere function in full strength — and that, under our Tradition of self-support, we are all going to foot the bill.

*- Bill W., October 1967 Grapevine*

## SUPPORTING A.A.'s STRUCTURE

### Why do A.A. Groups Support A.A.'s Essential Services?

A.A.'s want our Fellowship to endure, and to be readily available for the still-suffering alcoholic to come. An A.A. group makes this possible by taking care of its basic group expenses: rent, refreshments, A.A. literature, etc. After meeting these basic group expenses and providing a meeting place, many groups participate by supporting the central or intergroup office in their locale, the area and district general service committees, and the General Service Office. (GSO)

### How Can Groups Participate?

To help support A.A.'s essential services, the General Service Conference suggests that individual groups, through an informed group conscience, adopt a specific contribution plan tailored to meet the group's financial situation. Once the basic group expenses have been taken care of (rent, refreshments, A.A. literature, local meetings lists), and a "prudent reserve" has been set aside to cover unexpected expenses, the group may decide to further carry the message by sending money to the following A.A. service entities:

- The local district, which communicates directly with the groups, providing the District group conscience for the area assemblies, and serving as a link between the area delegates and the General Service Representative (GSR).
- The area committee, which coordinates vital A.A. activities over a broad geographic area; sends a delegate to the annual General Service Conference; holds area assemblies to determine the needs of the Fellowship; and provides information at all levels of service.
- The local intergroup or central office, which may provide phone service for the Twelfth Step calls and other inquiries; coordination of group activities; A.A. literature sales; institutions work; public information and cooperation with the professional community activities.
- A.A.'s General Service Office, which functions as a storehouse of A.A. information, communicating with members and groups in the U.S. and Canada, and sometimes around the world; publishes A.A.'s literature; and supplies information and experience to professionals and others interested in A.A.

## WHERE MONEY AND SPIRITUALITY MIX

Members celebrate sobriety by giving time, energy and money in support of our Twelfth Step — carrying the message — the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship offers. Members assure that group expenses are paid by putting money into the basket passed at each meeting. It is each member's responsibility to support the services that have been requested by the A.A. Fellowship, to help facilitate A.A.'s vital Twelfth Step. Contributions are made in a spirit of sacrifice, and they honor A.A.'s code of "love and service." Contributions also underscore the spiritual nature of our Fellowship and our mutual love and trust. We have found that these contributions are as important to each member as they are to the service centers supported.

## CONTRIBUTIONS AND SELF SUPPORT

A.A.'s Seventh Tradition states: "Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." This means that only A.A. members contribute financially to A.A. — and even



A.A. members are limited in the amount they can contribute. This keeps A.A. free of outside influences that might divert us from our primary purpose — to help the alcoholic who still suffers. The amount of the contribution is secondary to the spiritual connection that unites all groups around the world.

[www.aa.org/aa-contributions-self-support](http://www.aa.org/aa-contributions-self-support)

## A.A. Resources

**box 459**

GSO Newsletter

[aa.org/box-459](http://aa.org/box-459)

**Quarterly  
Report  
from GSO**

[aa.org/quarterly-reports-from-gso](http://aa.org/quarterly-reports-from-gso)



**LinkedIn**

Alcoholics Anonymous  
A.A.W.S.



**AAGRAPEVINE  
PODCAST**

[aagrapevine.org/  
podcast](http://aagrapevine.org/podcast)

**A.A. on  
YouTube**

[youtube.com/  
@alcoholicsanony-  
mousworldse1373](http://youtube.com/@alcoholicsanonymousworldse1373)

**Text & Audio  
Big Book**

[aa.org/the-big-book](http://aa.org/the-big-book)

**Text & Audio  
12 & 12**

[aa.org/twelve-steps-  
twelve-traditions](http://aa.org/twelve-steps-twelve-traditions)



Online Meetings 24/7

## A Call for an Area Group Conscience BUDGET ASSEMBLY NOVEMBER 11

Each year at the helm of the Area Committee that is made up of its Officer's, Standing Committee Chairs, and District Committee Members (DCMs), a proposed annual budget is presented to the General Service Representatives (GSRs) who account for 2/3rds of the voting assembly. They are asked to prepare for the budget assembly vote in November by bringing the proposed budget to their groups for a review, understanding of purpose, and most importantly, to serve as the democratic voice of the Area by developing and communicating an informed group conscience. The service structure is clear that the groups are the authority on matters

affecting the Area, the Conference, and of course, A.A. as a whole. Therefore, a great responsibility for decision such as finances, relies not in the hands of our trusted servants, as it often may seem so, but rather the groups that allows for our trusted servants to carry into action the conscience of our groups. Conversely, without the group conscience, our leaders cannot effectively ensure that Tradition Two is adhered to, that *for our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.* - Editor

## Operating Principles SAN DIEGO - IMPERIAL AREA ASSEMBLY (SDIAA)

In all its proceedings, the SDIAA shall observe the spirit of A.A. Traditions by:

- A. Taking great care that the Assembly never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power;<sup>1</sup>
- B. That sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle;<sup>2</sup>
- C. That none of the Assembly members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others;<sup>3</sup>
- D. That all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity;<sup>4</sup>
- E. That no Assembly action ever be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy;<sup>5</sup>
- F. That though the Assembly may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and;
- G. That like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Assembly itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.<sup>6</sup>

[San Diego – Imperial Area Assembly Structure and Guidelines \(Page 3\)](#)

\*Footnote 1-6 are the Six Warranties of Article 12 (Concept XII) A.A. Service Manual (Page C48)

## Area Officers

There is no greater example of great sacrifice and love than the services delivered by each area officer. Those who stand for election participate in a great act of courage to make themselves available for the winding road of their 2-year commitment while juggling their time with family, employment, and A.A. meetings. Service at any level offers experiences that expand spiritual growth. The specific growth available in each individual's experience is guided by a person's own Higher Power. The experiences come as one moves through time in the commitment to service.

- Jane G., Past Delegate, Panel 68

## Nominations

Continued from page 1

is fine and prudent.

Nominees address the assembly with a brief introduction, stating their sobriety date, their role in sponsorship, service history, and typically express their humble desire to be of service as the assembly sees fit. Nominees in general are well-advised to steer away from boasting their professional experience so not to diminish others from consideration. There is a saying in A.A. to encourage people to make themselves available for area service; "in A.A., we don't choose the qualified, we qualify the chosen." That said, if a nominee's professional skills, e.g., a CPA standing for treasurer or others with executive secretary or other administrative skills that are pertinent to the position, assuming they have the other service qualifications, it is okay to mention them and when applicable, encouraged. - Editor



## The Area Budget

### FISCAL MANAGEMENT OF TWELVE STEP WORK

#### Practices and Procedures of the Area

A.A. areas are a major part of the overall service structure and are responsible for conducting 12th Step services in their local geography. To follow the guiding spiritual principle of remaining democratic in thought and action, Area 08 relies upon the groups' participation to develop a budget and ideas for improving our Fellowship, especially local 12th Step services only it can identify are needed.

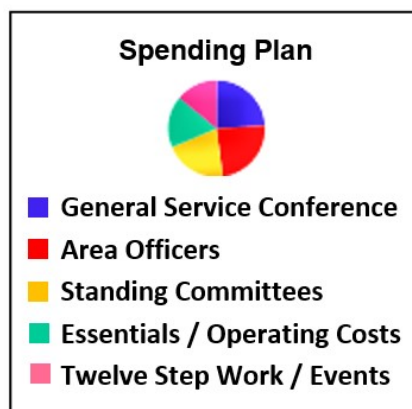
The budgeting process is facilitated by the Area treasurer and the finance committee, who begin with the collection of proposed spending plans or *budget requests* from area officers and standing committee chairs. The *budget requests* consist of itemized expenditures, e.g., mileage reimbursement for travel, supplies, photo copies, attending area and regional events, and plans to facilitate and/or attend 12th Step events and workshops throughout the upcoming year. The Area's *essential or operating expenses* are also calculated, e.g., rent, video conferencing, capital equipment (computers, audio and visual equipment), software and subscriptions, plus an annual "suggested" contribution of \$2,400 to the General Service Conference (GSC) that helps defray the overall costs of the Conference.

The budget for the Area's 12th Step services can only be as good as the information received to create the budget. The challenge is there is a lengthy period of time between the collection of *budget requests* and their approval. The changing information on available 12th Step work and the health of contributions to fund it requires continuous communication with the groups. The final draft of the budget is reviewed by the members of the Area Committee Meeting (ACM) and then delivered by the DCMs to the General Service Representatives (GSRs). It is then formally presented by the treasurer at the September assembly who may offer additional insights to ensure an informed group conscience prior to the budget assembly in November.

These details may expand on the line items that show "by whom and how much" is to be spent. The information may not include the "what and why" for the expenditure. Some line items are self-explanatory, but some are not. To be appropriately considered, the proposed budget ought to identify items reduced or cut altogether from the original *budget requests*.

#### About the Budget

The Area budget is more than an accounting tool to monitor and manage its funds. It is a year-long spending plan; a roadmap to how Area officers and standing committees intend to meet the purpose of the Area in its efforts to support the 12th Step work of our local Fellowship.



The Area receives contributions from the groups, districts, service entities, and individual members. All funds support the coordination of local 12th Step work and participation in the year round cycle of the GSC.

The Area maintains a prudent reserve of \$5,000 (approx. 8-10% of the budget) to ensure that the work of the Area will not be deterred should anticipated (guestimated) contributions fall short.

#### Balancing a Budget vs. Contributions

Drafting an Area budget is an extremely challenging task. The current guidelines state that the budget cannot allow its expenditures to exceed its anticipated contributions. The amount of contributions can only be estimated and is completely dependent upon effective communication of the Area's activities. This method is consistent with A.A. Traditions that places faith in

the membership to recognize and support the needs and work of the Area.

#### An Informed Group Conscience

Every decision that goes into drafting a budget ought to place the needs and desires of the groups first. The needs of the groups can only be considered with strong participation of the GSRs. GSRs should have a strong understanding of A.A.'s Financial Guidelines (see page 2), the Area Operating Principles (see page 3), and the purpose of the Area. Just like all other parts of the general service structure, the Area carries out 12th Step work that groups cannot do for themselves. A few examples is the work performed by the Area standing committee's such as Accessibilities, Area Newsletter, Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC), Information and Technology, Language translation services, Literature, and Grapevine / La Viña, etc.

An informed group conscience implies that all pertinent information has been communicated and members have had the opportunity to ask questions, voice their concerns and objectivity. Groups that vote in favor of a budget are at the same time expressing an intent to support the Area's efforts with their group contributions to the best of their ability.

#### Unbudgeted Requests / New Ideas for Carrying the Message

The guesswork of anticipated contributions will limit the approval of the total budgeted amount. The Area has the ability to consider new information and ideas for 12th Step work that presents itself outside of the budget planning cycle. All information that needs to be considered for the budget will not always be available at the time when the *budget requests* are collected. When a need arises or a new idea to carry the message surfaces, an unbudgeted expense or a *call for action* to the groups for funding can be brought for consideration. The ability to consider and approve unbudgeted expenses is vital to the smooth functioning of the Area's 12th Step work.

- Newsletter Editorial Team