

The Assembly Reporter

General Service News for the Group

NOVEMBER
2023 ISSUE

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

www.area8aa.org

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Area 08 Elected Officers – Panel 74 January 1, 2024 – December 2025

OFFICE	NAME	HOME	OFFICE	NAME	HOME
Area Chair	Carrie E..	District 16	Alt. Registrar	Paul K.	District 14
Alt. Area Chair	Nihura M.	District 08	Secretary	Angelina S.	District 11
Delegate	Richard O.	District 15	Alt. Secretary	Richard R.	District 08
Alt. Delegate	Adrian O.	District 19	Treasurer	Rob R.	District 06
Registrar	Alan R.	District 16	Alt. Treasurer	Cheryl F.	District 10

Email addresses for Area Officers and Committee Chairs can be found under [Contacts](#) at www.area8aa.org

Leadership in A.A. EVER A VITAL NEED

*Excerpts from Bill W.'s article
in the April 1959 Grapevine.*

Somewhere in our literature there is a statement to this effect: "Our leaders do not drive by mandate: they lead by example." In effect, we are saying to them, "Act for us, but don't boss us..."

Therefore, a leader in A.A. service is a *person* who can personally put principles, plans, and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back *them* up and help with *their* job. When a leader power-drives us badly, we rebel; but when *they* too meekly becomes an order-taker and *they* exercise no judgment of *their* own — well, *they* really aren't a leader at all...

Good leadership originates plans, policies, and ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its services. But in new and important matters, it will nevertheless consult widely before taking

decisions and actions. Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better, and it will give credit to the source...

"progress is nearly always
characterized by a series of
improving compromises."

Good leadership never passes the buck. Once assured that it has, or can obtain, sufficient general backing, it freely takes decisions and puts them into action forthwith, provided, of course, that such action be within the framework of its defined authority and responsibility...

Another qualification for leadership 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.

Compromise comes hard to us all-or-nothing drunks. Nevertheless, we must never lose sight of the fact that progress is nearly always characterized by a series of improving compromises. We cannot, however, compromise always. Now and then, it is truly necessary to stick flat-footed to one's conviction about an issue until it is settled. These are situations for keen timing and careful discrimination as to which course to take...

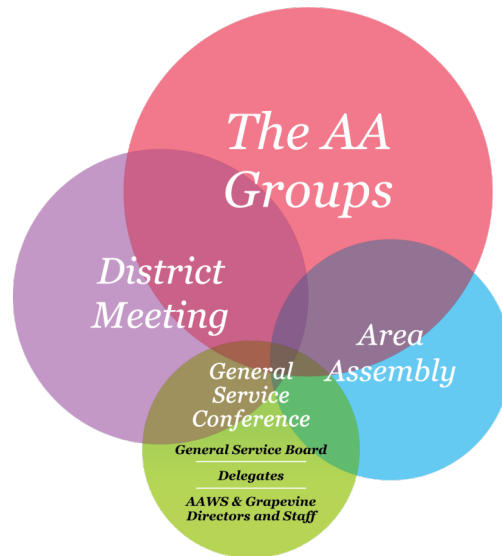
Leadership is often called upon to face heavy and sometimes long-continued criticism. This is an acid test. There are always the constructive critics, our friends indeed. We ought never fail to give them a careful hearing. We should be willing to let them modify our opinions or change them completely. Often, too, we shall have to disagree and then stand fast without losing their friendship. - Editor

The Fellowship of A.A. LOVE OF SERVICE

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. This is of course our primary purpose. At the same time, and equally important, it is also a Fellowship that relies on its members to maintain its structure and organization.

General service is and must be organized to the best of our ability in order for the Fellowship (as a whole) to move forward and remain relative to the generations to come. This is how the Fellowship has sustained itself and grown from two members to over two million.

General service begins with the groups electing a General Service Representative (GSR) who becomes a



member of their District. The District (currently 23 within the Area) elects a Chair who becomes a District Committee Member (DCM). They become a

member of the Area Committee (ACM.) Members who serve on the Area Standing Committees (currently 13 within the Area) elect a Chair and they too become a member of the ACM. The panel of 10 elected officers completes the body of the ACM.

When participating in general service, members almost always experience firsthand the feeling of being “a part of the whole.” For me, it came at my first Pacific Region of Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (PRAASA), where 1,700+ general service members gathered in one place at one time for a weekend of sharing information and ideas about carrying the message of A.A. It was a remarkable experience that I will never forget. This experience connected me to A.A. and to my fellows more than any other event or occasion. - Editor

Stimulating Interest in General Service

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. 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 — to show them that service can add a rich dimension to their sober lives and Twelfth Step work, and that their participation is vital to the future of A.A.

Good communication is of vital importance. In personal Twelfth Step work, there is no end to communication. The sponsor talks with the drunk; speakers share their experience; we share with each other. But when it comes to general service work, communication has a tendency to break down. It can take hard work to get the attention of alcoholics, but with a crea-

tive approach, they can be encouraged to take time out from the nuts and bolts of recovery to think about another phase of their new lives. Once A.A. members are well informed about service, they often want to become involved and to take on their own service responsibilities.

In many areas, the delegate and area committee members make themselves available to visit groups or district meetings and talk about general service. Workshops on the Traditions, Concepts or other aspects of service are often an effective way of spreading the word of service. Sometimes two or more districts will work together to sponsor a service event.

Here is the experience of two areas: “We let committee members be responsible for running sharing sessions in their districts, then reporting on them at the monthly assembly. We created as many jobs as possible for G.S.R.s and committee members and

encouraged visitors to our assemblies, so they could see what was being done.”

Video meetings: “Altogether, we showed service and informational videos 239 times at group meetings. We have no records of the hundreds of questions about general services that were answered during that period.”

Reactivating districts: Frequently, there is a need within an area to attempt to reactivate districts or groups that have become inactive or are unrepresented. Areas encourage participation in general service in many ways, especially by direct contact with groups by district/area officers to provide information about service events and opportunities to carry the message beyond the group level. Sometimes there is district-to-district sponsorship in which an active district shares its experience and suggestions to “jump start” activity among groups within the inactive neighboring district.

A.A. Resources

box 459

GSO Newsletter

aa.org/box-459

**Quarterly
Report
from GSO**

aa.org/quarterly-reports-from-gso



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**AAGRAPEVINE
PODCAST**

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

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YouTube**

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

**Text & Audio
Big Book**

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

The Archives Committee

The Archives Committee was voted into existence in 1985. Our purpose was the same then, as it is now. "To collect, preserve and share the history and heritage of A.A. in San Diego and Imperial County." In 2005, the San Diego Central Office offered a room to be store and display a valuable collection of San Diego A.A. history. The prized possession is a Big Book signed by Bill Wilson.

The Archives committee has achieved excellence in the collecting department! So much so that Archives has a storage unit of filing cabinets full of material collected. Books, tapes, flyers, magazines, photos, meeting records going back to 1954, Central Office business documents, H&I committee documents, PRAASA documents, Spring Roundup documents, contributions from past delegates, documenting their journey. How do we go about sharing this in an organized fashion? The Archives Workbook, which is consulted regularly, leads us through the steps of creating an inventory.



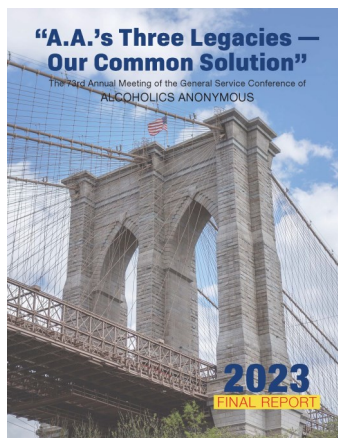
Over the last few months, we have started the inventory, spending many hours in the Archives Room sorting old newsletters (Viewpoint, Coordinator, etc.) dating back to 1954. At the same time, we are transferring historic audio tapes of speakers and events into an MP3 file. Our goal is to digitally preserve materials and better catalog our archives for an improved viewing.

The Archives Committee provides a well-stocked display of archives at the annual SD Spring Round Up, and hosts the [Annual ROOTS](#) (Remember Our Old Timers' Stories) event. This year on Nov. 19th four speakers with over 40 years of continuous sobriety will share their experience, strength and hope with local Fellowship. The event is a SD tradition and a way to celebrate the longevity of A.A. and our Old Timers. Flyers are available at [area8aa.org - Calanders](http://area8aa.org-Calanders).

Our committee currently has 8 members and we are growing. Anyone is welcome to volunteer for any of our projects. Feel free to contact our committee at Archives@area8aa.org.

We're not a glum lot! – Heidi H., Archives Chair

General Service Conference Report 2023



The [Final Conference Report](#) provides a complete record of reports, presentations, workshops and all actions taken by the Conference.

[www.aa.org/2023-general-service-
conference-final-report](http://www.aa.org/2023-general-service-conference-final-report)

Armed Services Committee

The ASC was formed several years ago and is the newest standing committee in Area 08.

There is a huge military population (active duty, retired, dependents, and veterans) in the San Diego area and our goals are to raise awareness of the presence of alcoholism within the military, to foster the establishment of regular A.A. meetings on our local military bases, and to support other efforts to carry the message to the men and women in uniform.

Currently there are five A.A. meetings on base at Camp Pendleton, one at Miramar (virtual), and one at the Naval Air Facility in El Centro. We have actively participated in workshops for veterans including the North County Standdown and, most recently, had a display at the Carlsbad Labor Day Picnic which three active duty marines from our committee. We meet virtually on the 3rd Sunday of the month at 2:30 PM. Zoom coordinates: 8272 094 4400 PW: asc2020. No military experience required! – Blain H., Committee Chair

Carrie E., Panel 74 Area Chair Elect

H.O.W. I Got Here. It's not like I wanted this. But I was available. As a member of this fellowship, it is my duty to make myself available to be of service, not if I want to, not if I think I am qualified for the position, but simply if I feel I am available to complete the duties of this position to the best of my ability. I need to take an Honest look at my life and of my current responsibilities, be Open to trying something new and maybe getting uncomfortable, and then Willing to take a leap of faith and trust in my higher power. I won't get anything I can't handle with that guidance.

Times, they are a-changin'... we, as stewards of AA, are continuing to charge forth in this new post Covid millennia and we must change with them. Traditions are important, both with a capital T and lowercase t. But the only thing constant in life is change. And what must we change in AA, everything. That being said, don't freak out, oh you of the old guard. As I said, tradi-

tions are important. We must always remember our primary purpose and how best to continue forwarding that message in an ever-changing world. Luckily, my 17 year old high school senior, who wasn't even born when I began my general service journey, extols the merits of industrial engineering where efficiency is key. Yes, yes, I know in general service it's known as slow-briety, but as the former queen of calling the question, there are times when if you've heard an opinion once, you don't need to hear it re-stated in 50 different ways from 50 different people. I'm just saying.

It is also important to remember that it's principles before personalities, 'cause there are a Lot of strong personalities in general service. The groups, as guided by their collective conscience, have the ultimate authority, as that is how we hear the word of God.

Nice to meet you. *My name is Carrie*, I'm an alcoholic and your incoming panel 74 Area Chair.

Experience, Strength, and Hope

"I remember coming back to the rooms this time and being pretty obstinate about attending meetings. I was here, but still had a resentment about you AA'ers and the suggestions that I was being asked to take. That being said, I knew that something had to be different this time; I had to have something "fresh" to help keep me here. My journey in Service started by answering the call to an announcement at the end of the men's meeting that I was attending at the time. From PI Committee volunteer to Panel 74 Alt-Delegate elect, I have remained firmly planted in the middle of the herd. My experience in General Service has enabled me to achieve a more sound perspective on what part I play in the greater whole, and what "I am Responsible" means to me. I would like to think that I am a better A.A. Group member, employee, father, and husband because of my involvement, Thank God for good sponsorship and all three of our Fellowship's Legacies." - *Adrian O.*

The Meaning of General Service

Today, there are approximately 2 million members of Alcoholics Anonymous, represented in 125,000 groups spread across approximately 180 countries. More than 40 million copies of our basic text *Alcoholics Anonymous* have been distributed in over 70 languages. Indeed, A.A. has come a long way since the May day in 1935 when our co-founders, Dr. Bob and Bill W., met for the very first time. So how is it that Alcoholics Anonymous has grown into the worldwide Fellowship that we see today? The obvious answer is that many people have found sobriety through A.A.'s program of recovery. But there's another reason, too: general service.

To those serving the Fellowship for the first time, the term "general service" may be unfamiliar. From the earliest days of A.A., Bill W. envisioned our message of hope and recovery reaching sick and suffering alcoholics around the world. After all, alcoholism is a respecter of nothing — least of all the borders between nations. And yet, A.A.

groups and intergroup/central offices were not well equipped to reach beyond their respective communities. Their focus, and rightly so, was — and is — local. So in A.A.'s early years, Bill and Dr. Bob assumed the overall leadership role. Yet, it didn't take long for them to start to wonder: who will take over for us?

Bill came up with a bold solution. The early leadership of A.A. would be succeeded not by new *people*, but by the collective conscience of the groups in A.A.

Bill proposed a plan to create a "service structure" to facilitate Twelfth Step work across the country and around the world. This structure would bring to bear the collective conscience of the groups on matters affecting "A.A. as a whole." At the heart of this structure would be the A.A. groups themselves, providing both the conscience and financial support for A.A. services throughout the Fellowship. It would be a structure to take the place of govern-

ment in A.A., ensuring that the full voice of A.A. would be heard. Today, we call the service structure that developed from Bill's plan the General Service Conference structure, or simply, general service.

...it will always be a "work in progress" as it reflects the way our "unorganized" Fellowship organizes itself around the ever-changing methods and processes of our vital Twelfth Step work. We are never done finding new and more effective ways of reaching out to newcomers looking for help.

And so, as you embark on your own journey in general service, know that the Fellowship as a whole works because of the time and effort you give it. Many who have come before you will say it is the most rewarding service they've done. Given the worldwide Fellowship that A.A. has become, due in no small part to those efforts, it's easy to see why.

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