



The Mid Southern California Area 9 Newsletter

The Monthly General Service Newsletter for Area 9 of the General Service Conference
P.O.Box 51446, Irvine, CA 92619-1446 www.msca09aa.org

August 2008

MSCA Area 9 includes all AA groups in the counties of Los Angeles (South of Rosecrans Ave.), San Bernardino, Riverside, and Orange.

What is the reason and purpose for the Mid-southern California Area 09?

The traditions state the following:

4. With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.

5. Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose--- that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

I have been coming to MSCA 09 assemblies and ASC's since the end of 1999 and have this question – is the only purpose of this Area the act of electing a delegate to go to the General Service Conference? What about the newcomer who needs to find AA? Is that not part of our job at the Area level or are we above that and leave that to the individual groups or to the central office. We have people always asking how to get more general service reps to go to the assemblies, yet provide no clear function of the need for the assemblies and reason for the groups to really want to be a part of.

Now individual committees do seem to function within the spirit of traditions four and five but I believe that the Area as a whole is lacking. What is the reason to discuss at length agenda items that are out of order or have no place on the agenda based on past rulings and votes and bylaws and guidelines that already address the stated item? Why do certain members of the fellowship think that the assembly is the proper forum for the airing of dirty laundry? Why are some personalities more bent on changing the process than abiding by the guidelines that the assembly body had voted on in the past?

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Delegates Corner

Hello everyone;

These past 7 month have been wonderful; my trip to the conference in late April was a huge eye opener for me. I experienced so much that I find at times it hard to put into words. The warm receptions that have been given to me at all of the report backs are heartfelt and greatly appreciated.

I am looking forward to attending the Pacific Regional Forum later this month in Spokane Washington. I have been given the topic of AA and the Internet and I am still unsure as to whether or not I will be speaking on this topic on a panel or if I will be moderating a roundtable discussion as of yet, but I'm certainly looking forward to the opportunity to participate.

I have included a couple of passages from what I have been reading for my mediations through out this month. I ask that you read these couple of paragraphs from one of Bill W. writings published in an October 1947 editions of the A.A. Grapevines. I find his writing so timeless and always appropriate always.

Let me if there is anything that I can do for you and as always...

Let me know what you think.

@yourservice, Joe B.

"Perhaps we A.A.s can become a new kind of human society. To a degree hitherto unknown, A.A. may be able to function upon the power of its own fundamental principles rather than upon the prestige or inspiration of a highly personalized leadership. Thus the whole can become of transcending importance over any part; continued unity and success can then mostly depend upon God as we understand him working vitally in thousands of hearts rather than a few."

"But," some will say, "how shall we make such a vision actually work when most societies have to rely so greatly on management, money, and heavily-publicized leadership exercising powerful personal suasion?" Yet incredibly, we are beginning to see our

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What is the reason continued from p.1 col.2

Past delegates have told me on more than one occasion that to believe in the process as it is the glue that keeps us together. To change the process is to detach the fellowship. I wonder if that statement may come true. **WHAT DOES THE AREA OFFER THE NEWCOMER?** How do we keep that glue together? Do we vote the way our groups would want us to vote (for the good of AA) or do we let others influence the decisions we make. Do we vote with the interest of AA as a whole at heart or do we vote selfishly for things that are in our favor or for things that make it easier for us with disregard to the feelings of others? Do we vote at all? Are we doing all we can for the alcoholic who still suffers? How is the Area helping the newcomer? I would like to find the answer. Would this be a good topic for the on line forum on the web site or would it be a sore subject to some?

Alex N

A member of Alcoholics Anonymous

Tradition 8

Our A.A. experience has taught us that:

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional. We define professionalism as the occupation of counseling alcoholics for fees or hire. But we may employ alcoholics where they are going to perform those services for which we might otherwise have to engage nonalcoholics. Such special services may be well recompensed. But our usual A.A. Twelfth Step work is never to be paid for.

Concept VIII (long form)

The Trustees of the General Service Board act in two primary capacities: (a) With respect to the larger matters of over-all policy and finance, they are the principal planners and administrators. They and their primary committees directly manage these affairs. (b) But with respect to our separately incorporated and constantly active services, the relation of the Trustees is mainly that of full stock ownership and of custodial oversight which they exercise through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.

50 Years Ago FROM THE AA GRAPEVINE AUGUST 1958

(Reprinted with permission.)

Responsibility Is More Than Once

WHAT are the responsibilities of AA and what are we going to make of them? Responsibilities are not fulfilled in a single act, but in many, and what we make of them depends on the individual.

Becoming a member of AA is not entirely an individual affair nor is it just a matter of a new member making some temporary promises soon to be forgotten. Becoming a member of AA involves every member of the group.

Our spiritual convictions of love for God and man will have another outlet for expression and the community will reap the benefit as we practice our new way of life (the Twelve Steps). Should one member fail in any of his responsibilities to the group, just to that degree the group will be hurt.

For this reason I believe that before any prospective members are given the opportunity of fellowship with the group, they should be given the opportunity to read the AA Big Book; then they would not commit themselves blindly to the program.

When AA finds us, we begin by preparing to understand what it really involves. As we attend meetings and read the book gradually we comprehend more about our fellowship's usefulness, our love for it and our activity in it. We learn how to work with one another and find a feeling of oneness with our own group.

I think loyalty to each other and to the group as a whole is one of the main principles. It takes the finest of characters to be loyal at all times. It requires honesty, open-mindedness, willingness, and many kindred virtues. It is founded on love. It involves having a true estimate of the good to be found in each member, and loyalty to the Steps.

We should know what it is to practice these principles. It is disconcerting to the fellowship as a whole to have members who do not put into practice the AA principles - to the best of their ability. Before we can give service we must be loyal. This responsibility of service carries a world of opportunities.

Humble, tireless members have blazed the trail ahead for us. It is our responsibility to do everything in our power to help perpetuate these principles. Education is a necessity. We must change our thought pattern and to do so we must learn to practice AA principles by retraining ourselves. It is our responsibility to try to use and improve ourselves with the guidance of the Twelve Steps.

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50 years ago Grapevine ... continued from page 2

I think that gratitude for our group is one of the responsibilities all of us should share. I do not think it just happened that our founders decided to form the AA program. Because it is founded on spiritual principles and the belief in a higher power--God as we understand Him--it is a power for good.

If we prize our membership, we must protect it by loving service and we need dedicate ourselves anew to the principles for which it stands.

N.W.

Galesburg, Illinois

Mid-Southern California Area 09 of AA presents a workshop with Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community

This workshop seeks to share with other AA members, community professionals, and the general public what Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community are doing to assist alcoholics who are seeking recovery and to demonstrate how A.A. cooperates and shares experience, strength and hope.

When: September 27, 2008

Time: 8:30 am coffee and donuts

9:00 - 4:30 workshop

includes Nick M.'s famous spaghetti lunch

Cost: FREE

Where: 1st Evangelical Free Church

North Campus

2904 N. Brea Blvd.

Suite 190

Fullerton, CA 92835

This event will be bilingual and will have translation equipment available.

Further Information:

Santiago S., CPC Spanish Co-Chair, 714/585-6379

Michael M., CPC Chair 714/686-7360

What: Numerous Area 09 Committees working together to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to those professionals that may come in contact with alcoholics.

Who: Several speakers from various professions who will speak on their experience with their clientele and AA.

From the 57 Freeway, take the Imperial Highway exit and go west. **Turn left (south) on Brea Boulevard. North Campus is located on the left before crossing Rolling Hills Drive.**

Delegate's Corner .. continued from p.1, col.2

vision come alive. Even though we persist in looking with misgiving on any large accumulation of money or personal prestige in the name of Alcoholics Anonymous, we do continue to grow despite the absence of those sometimes unstable factors upon which other human endeavors must so often depend.

Why is this possible? Is it because we are a superior people? Well, hardly! Far from being better than average, we are surely much more fallible. Strangely enough, our group strength seems to stem from our individual and ever potential weakness. We are alcoholics. Even though now recovered, we are never too far removed from the possibility of fresh personal disaster. Each knows he must observe a high degree of honesty, humility, and tolerance, or else drink again. For us of A.A. to drink is to die; to love God and fellow man is to live.

Bill W. October 1947 Grapevine

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Joke

A man in a hot air balloon realizes he is lost. He reduces height and spots a man below.

He goes closer and yells out, "Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I'd meet him half an hour ago, but I don't know where I am!"

The man below says, "Yes. You are in a hot air balloon, hovering about thirty feet above the ground. You are at latitude forty-two degrees north and longitude eighty degrees west."

"You must be a sponsor," says the balloonist.

"I am," replies the man, "How did you know?"

"Well," says the lost man, "everything you told me is technically correct, but I have no idea what to make of your information, and the fact is I'm still lost."

The ground man says, "You must be a sponsee."

The reply, "Why, yes, I am. How did you know?"

"Well," replies the man on the ground, "you don't know where you are or where you are going. You have made a promise which you have no idea how to keep, and you expect me to solve your problem. The fact is that you are in the same position you were in before we met, but now is somehow my fault."

Special Needs?

By Steve S., past Area 42 Special Needs Committee Chair

Alcoholics unanimously support carrying the message to anyone who wants or needs it. In practice, however, this is often a challenge.

What do we mean when we use the term "Special Needs"? A *Special Need* is anything that impairs or interferes with the ability to carry or receive the message of Alcoholics Anonymous.

In general there are two groupings:

Isolated groups: Those separated by language, geography, culture, race, sex, incarceration etc., and

Isolated individuals: e.g. the blind, deaf, immobile, mentally ill, illiterate, etc.

GSO, and Hospitals and Institutions serve the first group.

The second group is generally referred to as Special Needs and is serviced by Public Information and/or Cooperation with the Professional Community committees.

Why the Challenge? Following are some I've come up with:

Resistances:

What are special needs and what should a Special Needs Committee be doing? Lack of definition and direction cause Areas, Districts and Groups to look to GSO for direction. The problem, however, I fear is much closer to home. How often do we seek to sponsor an alcoholic with mental illness or mental retardation? How often are these alcoholics accused of disrupting or ruining our meetings? How many of us in our zeal "to protect AA" have railed at the cost of ASL signers for one or two deaf members who often don't show up?

My information for the following comes from two sources: first my observations over the last 23 years, and secondly, from my own 10th step.

One thing all alcoholics have in common is denial. Synonyms include excuses and worse rationalization.

Rationalization is made up of two words.... rational and.... lies. We use rational excuses to avoid the truth. Again I share my 10th step with you. If you can identify, great, if not your prayers will be gratefully accepted. My primary fear is of being overwhelmed or being sucked dry, followed closely by being inadequate for the job, being powerless and ignorant, I am all for special needs if someone else does it. Or, I'll be happy to do it, just tell me what to do.

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Special Needs? ... continued from col. 1

Example: I was at this individual's first AA meeting after being released from rehab. He was asked to share and did so with an intense colorful preaching style punctuated with rhymes and odd associations. Since then he has promoted himself as a circuit speaker with his story and style changing little in the last ten years. He travels from meeting to meeting, he always shares first, talking for 10 or 15 minutes about his prowess as a speaker, misquoting the Big Book, and promoting himself as a spiritual giant. I, like many others, could barely tolerate his presence and were appalled by his arrogance and self-centeredness. I shared in a way to clearly, but indirectly, be critical of his message. Following the meeting he accosted me and began railing for 45 minutes. His speech was rambling, disorganized and bizarre and I realized that he was frankly psychotic. I suddenly realized that I was seeing a miracle. A frankly psychotic individual who was sober and doing the best he could. I have seen this person many times since then, and I always see in him the power of the program and am reminded of my own prejudice.

Actions:

There is a group of alcoholics that is composed of whiners; they feel different, they require a lot of effort and understanding. They frequently slip, are irresponsible and demanding. They don't listen and rarely come to meetings. They are restless, irritable and discontented and think of the ease and comfort that comes at once from the first few drinks. Very few want to sponsor them and even fewer want to give them financial support. ----- I'm not talking about *you*. I'm talking about the deaf.

My worst nightmare is waking up and not having an AA meeting to go to.

There are essentially none for the deaf. If we do not have regular available ASL meetings and communicate this to the deaf community, no one will come, or have anyplace to come back to.

Bill W. said, "*Sober alcoholics are tighter than the bark on a tree.*" I know this is true. When I served as Finance Chair for Area 09 I used the following rational lies: "We can't afford more ASL meetings." "The money would be better spent to carry a wider message." "The deaf don't show up, are irresponsible and therefore a waste of AA's money." All of this with a feeling of self-righteousness.

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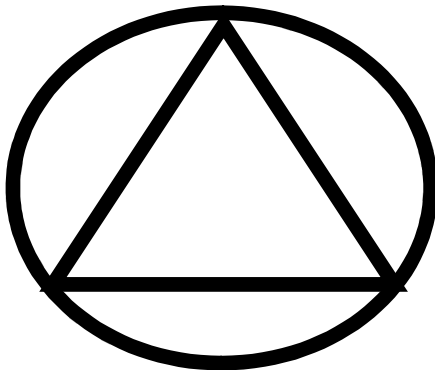
Special Needs? ...continued from previous page

Similar rational-ies were heard in regards to our Spanish-speaking members with their need for interpreters and translating equipment. No one today would argue that the Spanish Community has given us much more than we have given to it.

AA *must* find a way to make our program as available to the deaf as it was for us. Like the Spanish Community I suspect they will give us much more in return than we have given them.

We don't need to do this all at once. Like AA in 1935 we can start small and learn better methods with education and experience. But start we must. There are only 29/93 Areas that have Special Needs Committees. The example must start at the top. All Areas and districts should have SNC's, and education and support must filter down to the groups where most of the work ultimately will be done. Committee members may be drawn from those with special needs or those with an interest in service. Without regularly meeting committees and members no effective SNC will be possible.

I am responsible--when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA to always be there--and for that I am responsible



MSCA Website Usage

During the month of May, 2008, our MSCA website (msca09aa.org) received an average of 350 visitors (sessions) per day.

District 5 Public Information

On June 7, 2008 the public information committee of District 5 was able to provide an information booth at the annual Community Organizations & Public Services Expo. This was the 19th year of this City of Orange event. It had many community service groups providing information about their organizations. The police and fire department had displays and demonstrations throughout the day. At our booth we had 6 volunteers during the day staffing the booth. We were able to provide literature in English and Spanish to those that stopped to get some information for "a friend", and we gave out Orange County meeting directories. With around 8,000 people in attendance and a nice sunny day everyone seemed to have a good time.

I would like to thank the Public Information desk at GSO for all their help in providing literature for this event. The comic books are always a hit with kids. The meeting directories always are a must have for the visitors who do stop at the booth.

The Public Information committee thanks all the volunteers and visitors who came to this event. We are planning on being involved in many more community sponsored expos and events. The next Public Information event scheduled is for July 12 in the City of Orange at the Friendly Center. This is a community health and resource fair. We will have literature in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. In the month of August we are making plans to be at the International Street Fair in the City of Orange during the Labor Day weekend. This event had an attendance of over 400,000 people last year and I am sure that more than a few were practicing alcoholics.

The PI committee is always willing to be of service when asked. If you know of a group or organization that is hosting a health or community fair and would be interested in having an AA booth at the event please let us know. Send your requests to:

Public Information
P.O. Box 3374
Tustin, CA 92681-3374

*Thanks
Alex N.
District 5 Public Information*

Aug. 10 ASC

201 N. Bradford Ave.,
Placentia, CA 92870-
5650

Directions to From
the intersection of the
91 and 57 Freeways,
Head north on the 57.
Take the Chapman Ave
Exit, exit 6B, toward
Fullerton.
Turn Right onto E.
Chapman Ave. Drive
0.6 mi.
Turn Left onto N.
Bradford Ave. Drive
0.1 mi.

Upcoming Events

Aug. 10, 2008, Sunday, ASC (*The ASC will vote on which proposals to put onto the next Assembly Agenda*), (District 15), Backs Community Center, 201 N. Bradford, Placentia, CA 92870.
Schedule: 9-10 am Delegate's Sharing Session, also 9-10 am GSR School (for New GSRs) and DCM School (for new DCM's)

August 29, 30, and 31, 2008: 2008 Pacific Regional Forum -
Doubletree Hotel Spokane City Center, 322 N. Spokane Falls Court, Spokane, WA 99201 (registration information can be found on our MSCA website, msca09aa.org)

Sep. 14, Sunday, Assembly (**GSRs vote**), (District 7)

Oct. 12, Sunday, ASC (*The ASC will present proposals, but no vote will be taken on them*), (District 7)

Nov. 8, 2008, Servathon (Saturday) (District 3)

Dec. 14, 2008, Sunday, ASC (*The ASC will vote on which proposals to put onto the next Assembly Agenda*), District 18

Panel 58 Area Officers

Delegate: Joe B, 714-423-3808,
delegate2008@msca09aa.org
Alternate Delegate: Mike M
Chair: Jason S
Secretary: Ruth D
Treasurer: Linda H
Registrar: Cesar F

Schedule for most MSCA Assemblies/ASCs

9:00 am....GSR/DCM/DCMC Schools,
Delegate's Rpt
10:30...ASC or Assembly mtg
Ca 1 pm.....Lunch
Ca 1:30 pm...Committee mtgs
3:30 pm...Committee mtgs Adjourn

The MSCA Assembly includes permanent committees responsible for conducting much of the AA business activity in the Area. We have Standing and Coordinate Committees. Chairs and Co-Chairs of the Standing committees are listed below.

Panel 58 Area Standing Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs, et al.

Archives Chair...Joseph H
CEC Chair...Rick H

Area Communications Committee Chair...Linda C
Area Communications Committee Co-chair...tdb
Newsletter Subcommittee Chair...Steve S
Electronic Media Sub-Committee Chair...Henry B
Webservant...Becky B
Equipment Subcommittee Chair...tdb
Translation Subcommittee Chair...Jorge

Convention Liaison...Mike
Convention Liaison, Spn..Jose A
Corrections Chair...Patrick C
CPC Chir...Michael M
CPC Co-Chair, Span...Santiago S
DCM School...Scott R

DCM School Spanishtdb
Finance Committee Chair...Joseph M
Grapevine Chair...Kimberli A
La Viña Chair...Angela R
GSR School...John H
GSR School, Spanish... Paco G
Literature Chair...tdb
Literature Co-Chair, Spanish ...tdb
Public Information Chair...Kay M
Public Info., Sp...Francisco D
Registration...David T
Special Needs Chair...tdb
Special Needs Co-Chair, Spanish....tdb
Treatment Facilities Chair...Al F

Sound Dude... Raul C
Coffee person...Mauricio T

Please send articles or information for the Area Newsletter to newsletter2008@msca09aa.org