



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

January 2009

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

The GSR – Part I Oh No, Not the GSR!!

Yep, the GSR – The General Service Representative. In fact, dear reader, you are going to be subjected to two articles about the GSR – one this month and one in the next MSCA Newsletter. The first article will relate my experience, strength and hope as a GSR, (including an opinion or two). The second article, will introduce to the reader, a moving presentation by a non-alcoholic, of his look at the General Service Conference. Why two articles – well, Bill W. described the GSR as probably the most important job in A.A. Who am I to disagree?

In my first Home Group, a munchkin-like man by the name of Ken '45 continuously disrupted our meetings week after week with an insistence that the group elect an Alternate GSR because the GSR we had elected wasn't showing up at the District and Area meetings. After listening to him one more time, I volunteered to be the Alternate GSR

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Check out Page S34!

Have you had a chance to look at the new Service Manual? It's the brown one with pink lettering on the cover...the one that says it reflects the actions of the 2008 General Service Conference.

The Service Manual is one of the few pieces of AA literature that gets routinely updated and changed each year. Do you know how you can tell that something has changed? There is a black line in the outside margin next to the portion that has been changed or updated. Like the one to the right of this paragraph.

There are several changes made as a result of actions at the General Service Conference, and you can find them for yourself... but one is particularly interesting: Check out pages S34 and S35. There is a new District information update form and suggestions about using it. Check it out!!

Delegate's Corner

Hello everyone

As I sit here typing (or pecking away with two fingers; unless thumbs count as fingers [if they do then four fingers]) this article for our newsletter, waxing reflectively, I think back to all of the AA's who have been such an active and pivotal part of my recovery. There are too many to name and much harder for me to get down on paper. So without naming names, I want to thank everyone who has touched my life in this, my greatest chapter: "Sobriety/Recovery". You know... I could have missed it all!

Another year in the bag and off into 2009!

In late January-early-February, because I was selected as Delegate Chair, I will be off to New York for the General Service Board Weekend. I am looking forward to rejoining some new friends I met last spring at the conference and once again have an opportunity to learn more about how this wonderful process of love and service works on a global level.

I have read, listened and shared a lot up to this point, but it seems that every morning when I wake up and my feet hit the floor there is another challenge or revelation of God's loving expression for me to accept and take action upon. Every time I think that my gargantuan bag of gratitude is full and couldn't possibly hold any more... there always seems to be room for more.

Have any of you received your January edition of the Grapevine or La Vina? Check it out. Along with some great articles on treatment centers in the Grapevine like "The Power of H. & I." and "Treatment, Toddlers, Traditions," we also have article contributions from within MSCA 09.

In the January/February addition of La Vina there is a very touching story "Bring the Stars to You" that I hope everyone has an opportunity to read. And an article that I can relate so closely to entitled "I Lead a Good Life Thanks to My AA Service"

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The GSR – Part I ... continued from p. 1 col. 1

simply to shut him up! I went to my first District meeting in May 1990 and met some wonderful people that very first night. They seemed to know what they were doing. I admired their commitment to a job they thought was important to AA's welfare – I didn't see it, but they did. The guy who was chairing the meeting, (the late Ron P.) announced that our District would be hosting the Area Service Committee meeting, (ASC) Sunday, June 10th. He asked for volunteers to help host the meeting, and I was immediately volunteered by the munchkin, Ken '45.

When I showed up at the ASC, I was shocked to find out that the meeting would last from 9:30 in the morning until 4:00 in the afternoon. My first General Service miracle – I didn't leave! A very enthusiastic gentleman by the name of Alan R. was giving an orientation for new GSRs – once again, he seemed to know what he was talking about and he was extremely committed to what he was doing. That seemed to be a constant among these people!

The big discussion of the day was about whether a new Spanish-language district should be formed to serve the AA Groups in Riverside County. I remember with great clarity, the gratitude of the Spanish-speaking members who had asked for the new district. They were grateful we were even considering the proposal! I fell in love with the Spanish-speaking AA community on that day. I didn't understand much about what was going on, but I understood gratitude! We also celebrated the 55th birthday of Alcoholics Anonymous that day with a big cake shaped and iced to look like a giant Big Book. One month later I became the GSR for my Home Group and the rest is history.

All the discussions have not been as captivating as the discussions at that first area meeting. The tone of the discussion has sometimes descended to the level of personalities before principles. The number of groups represented in General Service has continued to decline. I have gotten older and the road trips seem to be longer. But the people - thank God for the people!

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PRAASA coming Mar. 6-8

The 42nd PRAASA will be held in Oakland, California on March 6th-8th, 2009. The on-line registration system is completed, and can be accessed at www.praasa.org. You may either register on-line (following the instructions on that website) or you may download and print out the forms from this website for filling-out and snail-mailing.

The GSR – Part I ... continued from col. 1

Nowhere is gratitude for A.A. more evident or demonstrated so profoundly, as among the people who do this work. Gratitude for A.A. is the only possible reason why anybody would stick around for a 2-year commitment. At the end of two years, I gave up my commitment with mixed emotions. Then, that munchkin, Ken '45, nominated me for Editor of the Newsletter of the Area Assembly, and I have been in General Service, with one commitment or another ever since. Thanks, Ken.

The politics of AA? I only hear that from people who haven't done their two years. The Big Book says that Love and Tolerance is our code – we get to learn and practice both principles in General Service. I have loved my time in General Service – and the people - thank God for the people!

Nick M. – Past Delegate, Panel 48

Dec. 14, 2008 Area Service Committee Meeting Summary

1. **Area Chair** announced that Chairpersons are needed for Special Needs and Public Information Committees and Communications Equipment Sub-Committee.
2. **Delegate** reported that the new GSO General Manager is **Phyllis H** (another past Pacific Region Trustee!) and asked that the fellowship gather input on the benefits and liabilities, both spiritual and practical, of fully funding GSO services to the fellowship through the voluntary contributions of A.A. members.
3. **The Treasurer** reported that there the Area has taken in 17% less this year than in 2007.
4. **Communications Committee** asked that all documents for translation be sent to ACC chairperson, Linda C.
5. **New Business:** Discussion of suggestions for amendments and changes to the Area Guidelines has been tabled until the next ASC.

What is PRAASA?

PRAASA is the Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly. It is a yearly assembly held in different parts of the Pacific Region of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The purpose of PRAASA is to develop greater unity among the members, groups, and Areas of the Pacific Region; to encourage the exchange of ideas and experiences; and to provide an opportunity for members to discuss pertinent aspects of AA. The Assembly and the PRAASA committee should always foster the Recovery, Unity and Service legacies of AA.

50 YEARS AGO IN THE GRAPEVINE:

The Importance of Group Membership

(from AA Grapevine, December 1958)

ONE thing that has attracted me to AA is that there are no "musts." Everything is done on a suggested basis. If there is anything I must do it is up to me to make the decision--no one else will tell me I must do anything. I have found, however, since working at this new way of life that I am continually changing my attitudes and my thinking. I believe I must do certain things to maintain contented sobriety. One of these is that I must belong to an AA group of my choice and take an active part in its discussions and functions.

When I met AA there was no group in the town I was living in. So I joined a group some forty miles away and took an active part by attending the meetings regularly for some ten months. During this time I met an AA member from Toronto who was moving to Western Ontario. I convinced him he and his family should live in Strathroy. Within a month there was a new group going with two members--Dick and myself.

This group has increased in membership since that day--now we have eight active members. These eight are all married so we have sixteen out to all our open meetings. From this the girls decided they would like to start an AI-Anon Family Group which meets once a week. While the girls have their meeting the alcoholics decided they would like to have a discussion group and get into the working part of this fellowship. So, in three short months a group starting with two alcoholics now has a weekly open meeting, a weekly discussion meeting, and our wives have formed an AI-Anon Group.

At the time this group was founded there was a Loner listed in the town in the AA World Directory. He was contacted and within a week joined the group--and his wife joined AI-Anon. It is amazing to see the difference in this man who had almost ten years of sobriety as a lone member. The AA group fellowship and group therapy has rounded out his working of the AA program so that he would be the first to admit he has more contentment and peace of mind than he ever had before.

Belonging to a group cultivates a deeper kind of fellowship which many of us want and all of us need. Often we need courage, and we catch it from others who are really working the program. Often we need to know that others are facing just our kind of difficulties and opportunities, and to learn from them how to do something and how not to do it.

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50 YEARS AGO... continued from col. 1

Is living for you a tragedy or an opportunity--or does it mean just nothing? Belonging to a group makes life an opportunity for me, life as I find it today, in "this 24."

What I need is something to encourage the best in me while it helps to keep me humble about the worst in me. This I find in my membership in the local group of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Dave W.

Strathroy, Ontario

Tradition 1

Our A.A. experience has taught us that:

Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.

Concept I (long form)

The final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

New Forum Topic

The most recent Area 9 website forum topic is: "2009 General Conference Theme: Our Commitment to Carry A.A.'s Message--Enthusiasm and Gratitude in Action"

The Area 9 Forum (see www.msca09aa.org) is a place where you can say what's on your mind about AA topics, and respond to what others are writing on that topic. Area 9 meetings and workshops have long been forums for sharing opinions on AA General Service, and we hope you will participate in this internet medium. As always, in AA discussions, let's make sure we treat each other with respect even when we disagree.

Website (www.msca09aa.org) usage

In November, 2008, our website experienced an average of 182 sessions (visitors) per day, and an average of 1573 hits per day. The page entitled "How to Find an AA Meeting" is still the most often visited page on our website. The 2nd most often visited page is the Calendar of Events page.

Area 09 Registrar Update for 2009 – 2010 A.A. Directories

My name is Cesar F. and I am an Alcoholic, I have the honor and privilege of being the Registrar for Mid-Southern Ca. Area 09. My Home Group is "La Experiencia" (The Experience) in Home Gardens Ca.

I want to start off by sharing some of my experience, strength and hope of my early days in AA. Then, I'd like to close this article with information on group updates and the AA Directories.

I have to be honest as I share this with you. Admitting that I was an alcoholic was the most important decision of my life, and coming to General Service affirms that decision. I found people like you that helped me get to know myself better, in my home group especially. I didn't always welcome suggestions that I got from other members; being of service, getting a sponsor, being consistent at attending AA meetings, etc. I finally asked someone to be my sponsor and I started complaining to him about the behavior of some of the members. For example, I would complain about the person that showed up late to the meeting, the one that kept disrupting the meeting, the one that didn't do any kind of Service, the one that was always criticizing, in short, everybody. My sponsor very wisely said to me: in AA, we cannot govern anybody, neither can we give orders, we are a community of equals and we can lead only by our own example. He said, "If you don't like what those people do, just don't do what they do." And that is how I began to work the program and I stopped drinking.

Since I was introduced to General Service, I have been very impressed... and interestingly enough, whenever I have taken a service position, not knowing what I'm getting myself into, I have always completed the commitment, inspired only by the desire to serve this great community that has saved my life. AA gave me back my dignity. I know now that by practicing the principles of this beautiful program of AA one becomes more human. I'm lucky to know the people in Area 09 who give so much of their time in a voluntary way e.g., GSRs, DCMCs, DCMs, Standing Committee Chairs and everyone who makes it possible for Area 09 to be one of the most outstanding Areas in the US and Canada. We stand out because of the diversity of our events and meetings and most of all for allowing the Spanish-Speaking community to be an integral part of the area...*my hat is off to all of you*. The work that we do with mutual respect and harmony is certainly a big factor that makes me want to continue in general service.

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Area 09 Registrar ... continued from col 1

The group update forms (also known as Update Forms for the 2009-2010 Directories) describe with accuracy how many groups each district has, if they are active or not, incomplete, duplicates, and unknown.

As your Area Registrar I will begin to distribute this information to the DCMC's or the District Registrars at the January '09 Assembly (see events page of the Newsletter). Updated Forms can be returned to me directly, by snail mail, email or directly to GSO.

According to the Fellowship New Vision Database (the program we use to do group updates) we now have 33 Groups under the "Incomplete" status, which means that we are missing information.

There are 176 groups under the "Merged" status which means that 2 different groups or meetings are using the same group name or the same registration number at GSO.

There are 306 groups under the "Unknown" status which means that these groups don't have a GSR or a contact and it is not known if they are active.

I know that there are quite a few in number, but I want to encourage all of you to reduce the number of Unknown, Incomplete, and Duplicate groups in 2009. My plan is to give each district a package of its groups and "Update Forms" separately to make it easier to locate these types of groups mentioned above.

I also had the honor of assigning 57 new groups to their corresponding districts in 2008. Along with our delegate Joe B. we've helped GSO to make sure that a registration number is given to each new group and also making sure the groups go through the same process that was recommended by the 1990 General Service Conference.

Lastly, by DCMs' or Districts Registrars' request in 2008 I have requested deletion from the System Fellowship New Vision Database at the GSO Records Dept. of 150 groups that no longer exist and still appear to be active groups.

Thanks to the Editor and Layout Editor of the Newsletter and the Translation Sub-committee for all the hard work.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of Area 09.

*Servicio: a Legacy of Amor,
Cesar F, Panel 58 Area 09 Registrar*

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

The Grapevine and La Vina are in need of articles submissions from the fellowship. In this month's edition of La Vina there is an urgent call for articles on **Newcomers, AA in prison, Women in AA and Remaining sober during the Holidays.**

If you would like more information on how to write an article for the Grapevine or La Vina, please see the Grapevine or La Vina committee chairs. I know they will be more than happy to help.

And speaking of the Grapevine: here is an excerpt from an article that I read on the **Grapevine Digital Archive.** Check it out and let me know what you think. I just can't get enough of this stuff!

Thank you all for this wonderful opportunity to serve.

Bill W. 1946 Grapevine article.

Ours Not to Judge

The first edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous makes this brief statement about membership: "The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking. We are not allied with any particular faith, sect or denomination nor do we oppose anyone. We simply wish to be helpful to those who are afflicted." This expressed our feeling as of 1939, the year our book was published.

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Delegate's Corner ... continued from col. 1 this page

Since that day all kinds of experiments with membership have been tried. The number of membership rules which have been made (and mostly broken!) are legion. Two or three years ago the Central Office [now GSO] asked the groups to list their membership rules and send them in. After they arrived we set them all down. They took a great many sheets of paper. A little reflection upon these many rules brought us to an astonishing conclusion. If all of these edicts had been in force everywhere at once it would have been practically impossible for any alcoholic to have ever joined Alcoholics Anonymous. About nine-tenths of our oldest and best members could never have got by!

Who'd Have Lasted?

In some cases we would have been too discouraged by the demands made upon us. Most of the early members of A.A. would have been thrown out because they slipped too much, because their morals were too bad, because they had mental as well as alcoholic difficulties. Or, believe it or not, because they did not come from the so-called better classes of society. We oldsters could have been excluded for our failure to read the book Alcoholics Anonymous or the refusal of our sponsor to vouch for us as a candidate. And so on ad infinitum. The way our "worthy" alcoholics have sometime tried to judge the "less worthy" is, as we look back on it, rather comical. Imagine, if you can, one alcoholic judging another!

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MSCA Assembly, Jan. 11, 2009
 Clubhouse 2
 24112 Moulton PKWY.
 Laguna Woods, CA 92653

(Leisure World Clubhouse Two, Gate 12)

Directions:
 From the 5 fwy South, exit El Toro Rd, turn left at stop sign (Ave Carlota), turn right at El Toro Rd (1st street), straight to Moulton Parkway, turn right, straight to Gate 12 entrance, turn right. Entrance at guard shack.
 From the 5 fwy North, exit El Toro Rd, turn left on El Toro, straight to Moulton Parkway, turn right, straight to Gate 12 entrance, turn right. Entrance at guard shack.

Upcoming Events

<u>Host:</u>	<u>Date:</u>	<u>Event Type:</u>	<u>Day:</u>
District 6	01-11-09	ASSEMBLY 24112 Moulton PKWY.Laguna Woods, CA 92653	SUNDAY
Dist 19	02-08-09	ASC	SUNDAY
	Mar. 6-8	PRAASA, Oakland, California	
Dist 21	03-15-09	ASC (<i>vote which proposals to put onto Assembly Agenda</i>)	SUNDAY
Dist 8	04-05-09	PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP	SUNDAY
Dist 25	05-17-09	ASSEMBLY	SUNDAY
Dist 24	06-14-09	ASC	SUNDAY
Dist 23 & 11	07-12-09	FORO de MSCA	SUNDAY
Dist 14	08-09-09	ASC (<i>vote which proposals to put onto Assembly Agenda</i>)	SUNDAY
Dist 2	09-13-09	ASSEMBLY	SUNDAY
Special Two Day Event:			
Area 9	10-10-09	MSC AREA 9 50TH ANNIVERSARY	SATURDAY
District12	10-11-09	ELECTION ASSEMBLY	SUNDAY
District 17	11-08-09	ASC	SUNDAY
District 9	11-14-09R	SERVATHON	SATURDAY
District 30	12-13-09	ASC (<i>vote which proposals to put onto Assembly Agenda</i>)	SUNDAY

Panel 58 Area Officers

Delegate: Joe B, 714-423-3808,
 delegate2008@msca09aa.org
 Alternate Delegate: Mike M

Chair: Jason S Treasurer: Linda H
 Secretary: Ruth D 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	Finance Committee Chair...Joseph M
CEC Chair...Rick H	Grapevine Chair...Kimberli A
	La Viña Chair...Angela R
Communications Committee Chair...Linda C	GSR School...John H
Newsletter Subcommittee Chair...Steve S	GSR School, Spanish... Paco G
Electronic Media Sub-Committee Chair...Henry B	Literature Chair...tdb
Web Coordinator...Becky B	Literature Co-Chair, Spanish ...tdb
Equipment Subcommittee Chair...tdb	Public Information Chair...Kay M
Translation Subcommittee Chair...Jorge	Public Info., Sp...Francisco D
	Registration...David T
Convention Liaison...Mike	Special Needs Chair...tdb
Convention Liaison, Spn..Jose A	Special Needs Co-Chair, Spanish....tdb
Corrections Chair...Patrick C	Treatment Facilities Chair...Al F
CPC Chir...Michael M	
CPC Co-Chair, Span...Santiago S	
DCM School...Scott R	Sound Dude... Raul C
DCM School Spanishtdb	Coffee person...Mauricio T

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