



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

March 2009

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

TRIBUTE TO PRAASA, 2008!!

Onward to Oakland 2009!!

I have been sober since February, 1993, and I have not experienced what I experienced in, of all places, Anchorage, Alaska last weekend. I have taken the steps. I have taken scores of people through the steps. I have gone to countless meetings and done a lot of service...Secretary, coffee maker, greeter, etc. I have seen the light come on, as well as seen it go out in people over the past fifteen years. But what I saw, heard and felt in Alaska will have a lasting impression on my life and on my recovery forever.

... continued on p.3, cl. 1

General Service Experience

By Ruth D.

I was so excited to become a GSR, finally after 8.5 years of sobriety. I called the secretary of my Monday nite step study to let her know I was interested in the position. Although the meeting had not had a representative for quite a number of years I was concerned about being able to secure my position in general service. I was voted in and able to attend my first district meeting which was in district 5.

... Continued on p.4, col. 2

From the Archives.....

DOCTORS IN AA

Many non-alcoholics doctors have helped Alcoholics Anonymous over the years. Here are just three of them.

Dr. John L Norris 1904-1989

From 1943 to 1969, Dr. Norris was medical director of the Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester, N.Y. During that time, Dr. Norris created the first Employee Assistance Program, establishing a model not only for corporations, but also for school systems worldwide.

...continued on p.5, col.1

Delegate's Corner

Hello every one;

It was suggested to me that I might want to share with you one of the correspondences that I have had the privilege of responding to recently. And give you all a chance to see where and how we may have opportunities to be of service to those that still stumble in the darkness, maybe even those that sit next to us in a meeting. And maybe... just maybe... help them into the light

Please, let me know what you think.

Subject: TROUBLE IN MEETING

Dear Joe,

I emailed New York with this letter below; they advised me to contact you

What are your thoughts?

M.

We currently have an individual attending our meeting who is a transient and is under the influence of alcohol most of the time. He comes regularly and identifies himself as an alcoholic. Often he talks to himself and makes comments when others share; he is not intending to be rude he just is not aware of his actions at all times. Some in the group want to keep him out of the meeting or at the very least control how he acts in the meeting. We had a steering committee meeting to discuss this issue and it was not resolved. Another steering committee meeting is scheduled for March 6th to continue this discussion.

This has been my home group for 22 years. Some of the people in this meeting are not only forgetting where they came from but also going against the 12 traditions of AA. Traditions 1, 2 and 3 especially address this issue.

... continued p.2, col.1



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

Is there anything you can provide me that I can take to the steering committee meeting to reinforce the AA traditions; mainly that we cannot remove someone from the meeting nor control them; that the only requirement is that they identify themselves as an alcoholic. I know we have the Twelve and Twelve book however if you have any additional information it would be very helpful.

As a side note; this individual is no more disruptive than any of the others in attendance; he just looks and sounds different and therefore is not being accepted. He is the perfect example of "but by the grace of God there go I".

Dear M.;

Thank you for this opportunity to be of service; We all agree with what Doug R. from GSO has shared with you about General services position on settling internal matters affecting groups. "We" (GSO) "have not been given any authority to arbitrate in local group matters. The General Service Conference of A.A. which as you may be aware represents the group conscience of A.A. in the U.S. and Canada has directed G.S.O. not to become involved in local disputes or misunderstandings" and that included me. I cannot and should not mediate yours or your group challenges, the groups are the ones that run AA. But I can share with you a little of my story...

When I first darkened the doors of AA I was homeless and drinking, I was drinking before and after the meetings for almost 3 months (or at least I was told it was around 3 months). Showing up at meetings stinking to high heaven not only from being unbathed for months, but from alcohol oozing from my every pore in my body. I was a coffee spilling, table pounding, trashcan kicking drunken bum who had pushed everyone including my family to a point that they didn't want me around anymore. (My Mom told me that she couldn't watch me kill myself anymore, I was too painful for her to bear)

At that point, I was angry, lonely and drunk all of the time. Now I consider myself one of the lucky ones, the group that I stumbled into never once told me to leave, or that I was unwelcome or that I stay away from the group until I was sober. Meeting after meeting they kept telling me "keep coming back Joe... it gets better." Or "don't leave before the miracle happens" I was about as unlovable as anyone could get, or at least I thought so.

... continued next column

Delegate's Corner ... continued from col 1

You see when I got here I didn't believe I was an alcoholic, all I needed was a little shelter from the storm, a place to hang until the heat was off. I never intended to get sober, but you see I caught alcoholism not from drinking nearly a half a gallon of vodka every day for practically two years. I caught alcoholism through my ears! By just sitting in the rooms of AA, and through my eyes! By watching the members of that group doing what they always seemed to be talking about in those meetings!

That was over 18 years ago now. I know back then the recovery homes and spin dries were not as established as they are nowadays. Today I witness newcomers show up all bright and shiny as a new penny. And isn't that wonderful that not everybody has to go all the way to the bottom to find recovery? But every once in a while I have the remarkable fortune to have a low bottom drunk come into the meeting and into my life and I am able to give back what was given to me... Love and Tolerance; Hope!

On the other hand; the group should protect themselves from predators and dangerous people that might hurt someone if not checked, don't you feel that is also the responsibility of the group?

I am inclosing the traditions checklist that is available through the GSO's website, read them with your group and answer some of the questions it asks. You may ask your group if they may wish to do a group inventory. There is an outline of that inventory in the pamphlet (that I have also included) "The AA Group" in a chapter called "Principles before Personalities" on page 27.

As was stated by Doug earlier, this decision belongs to your group. To have an informed group conscience, it is vital to bring as much information as possible to your steering committee or group, and encourage others in your group to bring any and all information they may have to share also. It has been my experience that virtually all of this information is found somewhere within our literature.

I belong to a group that has done this inventory and checklist and it has helped us to better focus on our primary purpose. Which we found to be in two parts "to stay Sober" and to "help others achieve sobriety"

I hope this information is useful to you and your group. And if you have any other questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact me.

It's easy to love the lovely.

@yourservice

Joe B. – Panel 58 Delegate Mid-Southern California Area 9

Tribute to PRAASA Continued from p.1, col.1

PRAASA which stands for, Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly, is held once a year in a host city, where GSR's, DCM's, DCMC's, Delegates, Past Delegates, Committee Chairs, and other Service position people meet to discuss ideas and experience about service. Service Assembly? Who wants to get with a bunch of dried up AAs and talk about service? I have heard about this event for years, and always judged its effectiveness against that of just going to a meeting and sharing solution. I realized how small I have been making myself with that kind of thinking.

Many gathered, there, to exchange ideas and solutions that they have found to be effective as they have served their various areas. One trusted servant, a lady who lived 200 miles away in a little Russia town, had to travel half way around the world just to get there for this experience. From her home town, she traveled to Moscow. Then, from Moscow to Atlanta, Georgia. From Atlanta to Seattle. And from there, she was able to get to Anchorage...200 miles away from her home....We all cried! My only concern for years has been that I know someone is being born today who will need AA in 20 years, and I just want AA to be there. But after this experience, I know there are many working to make that dream a reality. I have pages and pages of notes, numbers, directories and new friends from all around the Pacific Region, and a new kindled fire for Alcoholics Anonymous.

I have an immense gratitude for the knowledge that lives will be affected...lives will be saved...lives will become fed by that Power that presides over us all. This Assembly of Alcoholics represented the vine, rooted and nurtured in the Spirit of Love and Service that connects all AA members to one and other in the most divine way. These people humbly gathered to discuss how we can better serve AA, with care, gratitude, and a sense of service, under the guidance of God as He expresses Himself in our collective consciousness.

I thank those of you who are in service, who have gently nudged me into this new chamber in my recovery...the Chamber of General Service! My life has been impacted and will continue as I decompress over the next few weeks. I am truly blessed to be in an area of the country where we have such a strong commitment to service. Through H&I, Intergroup and General Service, I know the message is getting to the still sick alcoholic who wants to recover. I thank each and every one of you who serve AA so that AA can serve God.

An Alcoholic from Costa Mesa

Concept 3: The Right of Decision

Concept 3 - To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A. -- the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives -- with a traditional "Right of Decision." "C'mon, you're telling me I have a "right of decision"? Well, fine, then I am making the decision to stay as far away as possible from any of that political crap! What does that have to do with my sobriety?!"

That's right, you have the "right of decision". And as long as you sit comfortably in your home group and don't participate in service outside the group, you don't have to worry about any "right of decision". You've made your decision - the same decision that the majority of A.A. members make - I'm not going to get involved in all that politics!

Of course, there just might be a downside to that thinking. While everyone who participates in service outside the home group is making decisions that effect all of A.A., including your home group, you sit ignorantly by on the sidelines. (*Now, don't get mad at me for calling you ignorant, I'm just quoting Herbert Spencer, from appendix II of the Big Book*).

"But there are no decisions they make that affect me". Well, that could be true, but do you have a Big Book? A fourth edition? That was a decision that was made in the year 2000 to add 23 new stories, and maybe remove one or more of your favorites. And when you turn to page 449 in your Big Book, does it give you that sage advice on acceptance, like it always has? Or is that missing from page 449?

"What happened to it? Who said **they**, (yes, it's **them** again!) could change that"? Why, you did, of course, when you abrogated your right of decision and gave it to others, you know those political types.

"Well, that's in the past, there's nothing I can do about that". Uh-huh. Did you know that we have discussed modifying a piece of A.A. literature to say that "only those with a drinking problem may attend closed A.A. meetings".? Whatever happened to "a desire to stop drinking" - our 3rd Tradition?

Well, those groups that send GSR's and Intergroup Reps to the monthly meetings will make those decisions, and your group has an Intergroup Rep, so you can tell your Rep how to vote on everything. Uh, not quite. That is the heart of the "right of decision". Your rep is vested with the right to make the best decision for all of A.A., which sometimes differs with what the group would prefer. It happens more often than you think. When your Rep gets to the monthly meeting, they will hear a diversity of experience that they might not hear in your home group. Based on this new experience, the Rep is vested with the "Right of Decision".

Nick M., Past Delegate, Panel 48

Concept 4

Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional "Right of Participation," taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

Huh!? Simply put, those trusted servants who do the actual work should not be denied the right to participate, through exercising a vote in matters being discussed. There are 11 paid staff positions at the General Service Office where one of the requirements for employment in any of those positions is that the person be an A.A. member - probably the only place in the world where employment depends upon the applicant for the position being an alcoholic. Can you imagine the resume or the employment application? These employees of G.S.O. work the year around in a very narrowly proscribed field - Public Information, Cooperation with the Professional Community, Corrections, Treatment, and the General Service Conference.

As an example, when the employee on the Corrections desk comes to work in the morning, the entire day will usually be spent working with our Correctional Facilities literature and Correctional Facilities Committees and Hospitals and Institutions Committees throughout the United States and Canada. Their job is to help those committees do the best job they possibly can to reach the alcoholic who still suffers while incarcerated. Each year at the General Service Conference, these 11 staff members share their experience with the Delegates of the General Service Conference in the field in which they are working at the General Service Office. They are as busy, sometimes more so, than any Delegate or Trustee member of the General Service Conference. This concept says that when the time comes to vote on recommendations or proposals from the floor, these 11 staff members are full voting members of the General Service Conference.

This also works outside very well outside the General Service Conference. If you elect people in your Home Group and give them responsibility, they should have a voting right in all group matters - a right of full participation.

We still retain Bill W.'s quest that 2/3 of the General Service Conference be composed of Delegates elected by the Groups, and the people who are often most knowledgeable about the matters being discussed and voted upon have full voting representation. What a concept! Who thinks up this stuff?

Nick M., Past Delegate, Panel 48

General Service Exp. ... continued from p. 1, col. 1

My expectation was that I would not know anyone as the information I had heard was it was "all" politics in general service. I was sure I didn't know any of these politicians. Upon my arrival and to my surprise I did know some of these people. In fact I had met them in my own meetings that I had been attending, imagine that! There was a gentleman I saw who gave these reports who had only 1½ years of sobriety and he was on fire for general service and I wanted what he had. When I arrived another old friend welcomed me by saying hey I remember you, you gave me this, at that point he laid his key chain down and showed me a 1 yr chip I had given him some years prior. I was reminded that this is how this program works. We share our experience, strength, and hope with each other and we get to keep what we have. I don't get to decide what others do with that stuff I freely share it's just my duty to share it if I want to keep it.

That meeting that I attended was 6.5 years ago and I have found my purpose in general service. I found by attending the events sponsored by the Area 09, GSO and other Area's I learned the most about general service. I am referring to the 4-Area DCM Sharing Sessions, PRAASA, Regional Forum, The Foro, The Servathon, Heritage Day and Archives Open House. There seems always to be some event to attend, it's my experience that whether new or old that by attending something is gained. The biggest mistake I made was letting other people's lack of experience and vast amount of judgment of general service base my opinion on what I should do. When I took that leap and had my own experience my uninformed judgment changed to true experience.

I love Alcoholics Anonymous. What a great opportunity to continue that given ability to change and grow. I hope I never think I have learned enough or know enough that I clog up the process with unnecessary rigidity. I'm so grateful for Bill's foresight to see the need for general service. It has been my great honor to serve Area 09 as your Secretary. I have been given the opportunity to learn prayer and meditation as never before and thus been given a closeness to my creator I may not have been given otherwise. As I travel to Area 64 I will be taking all of you with me. I hope to find a home there in Area 64 and perhaps serve as their delegate one day. I thank all of you more than you can know.

*With much love
Ruth D.*

DOCTORS IN AA .. Continued from p.1, col.1

He was chairman of Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller's Advisory Council on Alcoholism from 1961 to 1971

He was a Class A trustee of Alcoholics Anonymous for 27 years and its chairman from 1962 to 1979. He is credited with stabilizing A.A. after the death of one of its co-founders, William Griffith Wilson. He also gave Bill's eulogy when he passed away in 1971.

At the 1966 Conference he called upon the delegates to take responsibility for the future of AA and purposed the Board be recast to 14 alcoholic Trustees and 7 nonalcoholic Trustees and that the board assume the primary role in conduct of AA's world affairs.

His favorite expression was "Sponsor Your Doctor." He is credited with introducing the term "Bridging the Gap." He gave a report in 1978 entitled ".Bridging the Gap Between Active Treatment and AA and Normal Living." In his report he cited statistics about relapse and that the first 90 days was the most critical for the alcoholic being released from treatment.

Regional Forums originated in 1975 at his suggestion.

April 16, 1973 - Dr. Jack Norris, Chairman of the A.A. General Service Board, presents President Richard M Nixon with the one-millionth copy of the "Big Book". A special leather bound edition. He gave it back to AA and is in the Archives at GSO. His widow, Eleanor, received the 15th millionth copy of the Big Book in 1995 at the International Convention in San Diego.

Dr. Leonard Strong

Bill's brother-in-law. He was the husband of Bill's sister Dorothy. Was an osteopath doctor. He stuck by Bill in the lowest times; He was Bill's doctor and confidant, gave Bill physical examination in 1928, confronted Bill about drinking; arranged Bill's 1st admission into Towns Hospital in 1933 and paid the bill; set up appointment for Bill with Willard Richardson, a friend of John D. Rockefeller; essential link for A.A. people to John D. Rockefeller Jr.; One of the trustees on first board of the Alcoholic Foundation

1938 April - The Board of Trustees was formed and comprised of three non-alcoholic members: Willard Richardson, Frank Amos and Dr. Leonard Strong. The Board was also to have two alcoholic members; Dr. Bob and a New York member who, at a later date, returned to drinking and was forced to resign. The Foundation was formed in May 1938. He was a trustee until 1954 when he resigned from board due to question of more alcoholics than non-alcoholics on board, served as Board of Trustees secretary, died April 24, 1989

DOCTORS IN AA .. Continued from Col. 1

He indirectly helped Clarence Snyder get sober. Lenard was the physician of Clarence's sister-in-law, Virginia. She mentioned to her doctor that she thought her brother in law in Cleveland Ohio might have a drinking problem. He gave her information of a physician in Akron Ohio that might just help; Dr Bob. She gave her sister Dorothy, Clarence's wife, the information and the seed got planted.

Dr. Harry Tiebout

Dr. Harry M. Tiebout, a psychiatrist, was an early pioneer in coupling the principles and philosophy of Alcoholics Anonymous with psychiatric knowledge of alcoholism. A strong supporter of A.A. throughout his life, he consistently worked for acceptance of his views concerning alcoholism the medical and psychiatric professions. He served on the Board of Trustees for A.A. from 1957 to 1966, and was chairman of the National Council on Alcoholism in 1950.

1939: Dr. Harry Tiebout endorsed AA, the first psychiatrist to do so.

Dr. Tiebout was also Bill Wilson's psychiatrist, and he treated Bill for many years. In the mid-nineteen-forties, Bill went into a deep fit of chronic clinical depression that lasted for more than eleven years.

Dr. Tiebout ran an alcoholic treatment program at Blythewood Sanitarium, a residential treatment facility in Greenwich, Connecticut. July 14 1939, he had Ms. Marty Mann as a patient when he received a multilith copy of the first edition of the A.A. book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. He gave it to Marty Mann to read which she promptly threw it at the doctor. She later read it and became a true believer in A.A., as she described in her story "Women Suffer Too." in the second edition of the *Big Book*.

He felt the four elements were essential to recovery in A.A.: "hitting bottom, surrender, ego-reduction, and maintenance of humility" Dr. Tiebout died April 2, 1966

Tradition 3 (long form)

Our A.A. experience has taught us that:

Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.

March 15 ASC

West High School, 20401
Victor St., Torrance, CA
90503

Directions

From Orange County, take 91 freeway west until it ends. Continue straight onto Artesia Blvd/CA-91. Turn left at CA 107/Hawthorne Blvd and drive 1.7 mi.

Turn right at Del Amo Blvd. and drive .7 mi

Turn left at Victor St. and drive .1 mi.

West High School will be on the right.

Upcoming Events

Date:	Event Type:	Day:
Mar. 6-8	PRAASA, Oakland, California, Pacific Region	Fri-Sun
Mar. 15	ASC (vote which proposals to put onto Assembly Agenda), Dist 21, West High in Torrance. - 20401 Victor Street, Torrance, CA 90503	Sun
Apr 5	PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP, Dist 8	Sun
May 17	ASSEMBLY, Dist 25	Sun
June 14	ASC (Proposals will be presented but not voted on), Dist 24	Sun
July 12	FORO de MSCA, Dist 23 & 11	Sun
Aug. 9	ASC (vote which proposals to put onto Assembly Agenda), Dist 14	Sun
Sept. 13	ASSEMBLY, Dist 2	Sun
Special Two Day Event:		
Oct. 10	MSC AREA 9 50TH ANNIVERSARY, Area 9	Sat
Oct. 11	ELECTION ASSEMBLY, District12	Sun
Nov. 8	ASC (Proposals will be presented but not voted on), District 17	Sun
Nov. 14	SERVATHON, District 9	Sat
Dec. 13	ASC (vote which proposals to put onto Assembly Agenda), District 30	Sun

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 am..... Committee Mtgs
11:30 am... Lunch
12 noon ... ASC or Assembly mtg

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

Communications Committee Chair...Linda C
Newsletter Subcommittee Chair...Steve S
Electronic Media Sub-Committee Chair...Henry B
Web Coordinator...Becky B
Equipment Subcommittee Chair...tdb
Translation Subcommittee Chair...Jorge

Convention Liaison...Mike
Convention Liaison, Spn...Jose A
Corrections Chair...Alex N
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... Ernesto M
Literature Co-Chair, Spanish ...tdb
Public Information Chair...tdb
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