

## **GSR Orientation**

### **What does a G.S.R. do?**

The general service representative (G.S.R.) has the job of linking his/her group with A.A. as a whole. The G.S.R. represents the voice of the group conscience, reporting the group's thoughts to the district committee member (D.C.M.) and to the delegate, who passes them on to the conference. This communication is a two-way street, making the G.S.R. responsible for bringing back to the group Conference Actions that affect A.A. unity, health and growth. Only when a G.S.R. keeps the group informed, and communicates the group conscience can the Conference truly act for A.A. as a whole

### **What are the basic duties of the G.S.R.?**

- attend monthly Joint service meetings
- Attend district meetings.
- Attend area committee meetings/ assemblies.
- G.S.R. 's serve as the mail and email contact with the General Service Office, and they are listed in the A.A. Directories as contacts for their groups.
- G.S.R. 's serve as the mail and email contact with their district committee member and with the area committee.
- G.S.R. 's supply their D.C.M. 's with up-to-date group information which is related to G.S.O. and Area for inclusion in the directories and for G.S.O. mailings
- They participate in district and area service meetings; often help with planning for area get togethers and conventions. Following these events, they make reports to their groups for the benefit of those who could not attend.

### **The G.S.R. Kit**

When G.S.O. has been notified, the new G.S.R. receives a kit containing a covering memo, The A.A. Service Manual with the Twelve Concepts for World Service, useful pamphlets and leaflets, and a literature order form

### **What is an alternate G.S.R.?**

What does he/she do? An alternate G.S.R. should be elected at the same time as the G.S.R. in case the G.S.R. is unable to attend all district and area meetings. Alternates should be encouraged to assist, participate, and share in the responsibilities of the G.S.R., attending district and area meetings when feasible, depending on local needs.

### **District and Area meetings for the GSR to attend**

There are many important district and area meetings that a GSR may attend. These workshops/meetings will give each GSR the opportunity to gather information he/she can take back to their home group. This information will allow each member of the home group to be better informed and thus will lead to "an informed group conscience". These meetings include, though are not limited to: the qly district meetings, Standing Committee Workshops, especially the mock conference at March Area meeting when we review the Conference agenda, GSR

School (fun in the fellowship), assemblies/quarterlies, and the delegates' report at the state conference.

### **About those A.A. group problems**

Group problems are often evidence of a healthy, desirable diversity of opinion among the group members. Almost every group problem has a resolution, which usually can be reached through the mechanism of an informed group conscience. Importantly, a good sense of humor, cooling-off periods, patience, courtesy, willingness to listen and to wait – plus a sense of fairness and trust in a “Power greater than ourselves” – have been found far more effective than legalistic arguments or personal accusations. (The A.A. Group pamphlet, page 28) Good ways to work out group problems is through working the 12 Traditions and a group inventory.

### **Tradition 7 and why it is important to A.A. as a whole?**

There are no dues or fees for membership in A.A., but we do have expenses. In keeping with the Seventh Tradition a group may “pass the basket” in order to cover expenses such as rent, refreshments, A.A. Conference-approved books, pamphlets and meeting lists, and contributions to services provided by the local intergroup (central office), district and area, and the General Service Office. A.A. members are free to contribute whatever they wish, up to a maximum of \$3,000 each in a given year. (Self-Support pamphlet page 9)

A.A. groups contribute enough to cover about two-thirds of the service expenses (services provided to all registered groups by G.S.O. whether or not \*\*\*\*\* they make a contribution). The rest is covered by publishing income, which is in excess of that required for publishing expenses.

The number and extent of group services have increased over the years, but the real cost of service per group has decreased consistently owing to the growth of the Fellowship. However, all groups do not contribute to the support of the service work. About fifty-five percent do not. This places a heavier burden on the groups that do. More important than the dollar amount of contributions, is that group participation in this part of A.A. service work makes groups members of the A.A. community.

It cost approximately \$104.00\*\*\*\*\* per group per year for the G.S.R. and all the information that comes out from G.S.O. Of each dollar contributed, 39 cents goes to cover Group Services. This includes Box 4-5- 9, A.A. directories, the French literature service, Spanish services, and the Records and Contributions departments. Four cents goes toward public information activities; 5 cents toward cooperation with the professional community activities; 2 cents to treatment facilities activities; 4 cents toward correctional facilities services; 9 cents to Loners/overseas services; 13 cents for the General Service Conference; 6 cents for Regional Forums; 6 cents for Archives; 4 cents for Spanish services; and 8 cents support the activities of the General Service Board.

The average contribution per group is \$76.00 per year. The shortfall is made up by income from A.A. publications. (Self-Support pamphlet, June 2000 Ed.) (G), page 11, this is the most current information on line.

### **What is an informed A.A. group conscience?**

The group conscience is the collective conscience of the group membership and thus represents substantial unanimity on an issue before definitive action is taken. This is achieved by the group members through the sharing of full information, individual points of view and the practice of A.A. principles. To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions with an open mind.

On sensitive issues; the group works slowly discouraging formal motions until a clear sense of its collective view emerges. Placing principles before personalities, the membership is wary of dominant opinions. Its voice is heard when a well-informed group arrives at a decision. The result rests on more than a 'yes' or 'no' count- precisely because it is the spiritual expression of the group conscience. The term "informed" group conscience" implies the pertinent information has been studied and all views have been heard before the group votes. (The AA Group pamphlet pages 28-29)

### **What is the "Right of Decision?"**

Every trusted servant and every A.A. entities at all levels of service have the right "to decide" how they will interpret and apply their own authority and responsibility to each particular problem or situation as it arises." That is, they can "decide which problem they will dispose of themselves and upon which matters they will report, consult, or ask specific directions." This is the essence of "The Right of Decision."

This right also means the Fellowship must have trust in its "trusted servants." If the groups instruct their G.S.R.s rather than giving them a "Right of Decision," then the area conference loses the full participation of its members.

If the G.S.R.s instructs the area delegates rather than giving them a "Right of Decision," then the General Service Conference Service Conference loses the full participation of all the delegates. As Bill pointed out, "our Conference delegates are primarily the servants of A.A. as they should... cast their votes... according to the best dictates of their own judgment and conscience at that time."

Bill warned against using "The Right of Decision" as an excuse for failure to make the proper reports of action taken; or for exceeding a clearly defined authority; or for failing to consult the proper people before making an important decision. But he concludes: "Our entire A.A. program rests squarely upon the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust A.A., and we trust each other." (The Twelve Concepts for World Services Illustrated, Concept III)

### **Who is the "Area Committee?"**

Basically, the area committee is composed of all district committee members (D.C.M.) area officers, and the chairs of area service committees. There should be enough district and committee members to ensure good communication between the committee and the groups. In the absence of a D.C.M., the Alt. D.C.M. is a voting member.

### **What is an Area Quarterly Meeting?**

An Area Quarterly Meeting is a 1 day service meeting. DCM's, GSR's or AA members may bring motions and concerns before the area committee. These motions are then looked at by the Area Committee to make sure that they are clear, concise and have to do with Area business. Upon a vote of substantial unanimity (2/3 majority). District and home group concerns can also be

brought to the quarterly in an effort to gather the experience of others. It is beneficial for the G.S.R. to attend quarterlies, though they cannot vote, they can still be informed of important background information for their home groups. The DCM may not know what the GSR's group would ask. The GSR would.

A typical agenda for a quarterly includes elected and appointed officer reports, Assembly reports, special committee reports, D.C.M. sharing. Then after lunch the discussion starts on the motions brought forward by the districts. Each potential agenda item is discussed thoroughly before any vote is taken.

### **What is an Area Assembly?**

An Area Assembly is any meeting of area G.S.R.s. The Area Assembly is the mainspring of the Conference structure- the democratic voice of the movement expressing itself.

An elections assembly is held at least once every two years to choose a delegate and area officers. It is scheduled in September following the Qtly Area Committee Meeting. (Generally, the newly elected delegate and officers take office as of January 1.)

A Non-Election Assembly is when no election is scheduled. These assembly meetings GSR's vote on the upcoming budget for the next year

### **What does the Delegate do?**

The delegate has a demanding job, not only because a large amount of time and work are involved, but because it is the delegate's responsibility to serve the US/Canada Conference as a whole. As voting members of the Conference, delegates bring to its deliberation the experience and viewpoints of their own areas. Yet they are not representatives of their areas in usual political sense; after hearing all points of view and becoming fully informed during Conference discussion, they vote in the best interest of A.A. as a whole.

### **What are the delegate duties?**

Though the high point is the Conference meeting, the delegate's job goes on year – round and involves all aspects of the Conference structure. The delegate should:

- Communicate the actions of the Conference to the area committee members and encourage them to pass on this information, to groups and to intergroups and central offices. If an area is too large for the delegate to cover in person, he or she will ask area officers and committee members to share the load.
- Be prepared to attend all area, state/provincial, and regional service meetings and assemblies. From these meetings, delegates come to better understand their own area and can make suggestions for the conference agenda. Here, too, they come in contact with A.A. members who might not be reached otherwise.
- Work closely with committee members and officers, sharing experience throughout the year. After G.S.R.s and committee members have reported on the conference to their home groups and districts, learn from these A.A.'s how groups and members have reacted.
- Provide leadership in solving local problems involving the AA Traditions
- Keep the alternate delegate fully informed and active, so that the alternate can replace the delegate in an emergency.

These are only a few duties of the delegate. For the complete list of the delegate's duties please see chapter 6 "The Delegate" in the A.A. Service Manual