

# District 43

## Centre/Clinton County

### Area 59

### Eastern Pennsylvania

### General Service Area

## General Service Structure Manual

### 2021-2022

*...The only AUTHORITY, then, is that which is first expressed in the group conscience and which is then communicated – and here is where the idea of the Conference structure begins – by the group to AA as a whole.*

*(Bill W., 2003-2004 reprinted from AA Service Manual p.S22)*

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*Revised: November 4, 2021*

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INTRODUCTION PAGE

### *A.A.'s Legacy of Service*

*“Our Twelfth Step—carrying the message—is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven’t been given the truth may die. Hence, an A.A. Service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer – ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.’s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service.”*

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### *Introduction*

*The basic unit in Alcoholics Anonymous is the group, which is autonomous, except in matters affecting other AA groups or the Fellowship as a whole. These groups are combined into Districts. Each group elects a General Service Representative (GSR) to attend the monthly meeting of the District in which it is geographically located. The GSRs elect a District Committee Member (DCM) to represent the collective “group conscience” of the District and to participate in service activities of the Area Committee. (Area 59, 2004, p.14)*

### **Purpose of Document**

**Our goal is that members will gain a solid understanding of what District is, how it operates & how to get involved.**

**No action by a prior District Committee is binding on an incoming panel. Each newly elected DCM may make recommendations for the incoming Committee’s consideration. This manual, then, is for use as a guide; a reference and a resource for what has worked in the past. It is subject to change as new, and perhaps better, ways of carrying the message are revealed through our ongoing collective experience.**

**This document will be emailed out by the secretary to all current district committee members on the roster each month along with the minutes. No printed versions will be provided.**

## **District Overview**

### ***Our Mission:***

To provide stewardship of AA's primary purpose and 12 Traditions through group representation and consensus, while representing District 43 at the Area and General Service Office level.

### ***The mission includes, but is not limited to, the following:***

1. Getting your group's voice heard at the District level
2. Conducting workshops about topics consistent with A.A. Steps, Traditions, and Concepts
3. Sharing information with groups on Area and District Events & Issues
4. Maintaining and coordinating archives
5. Update & maintain a current meeting list on our website
6. Conducting official District business such as electing officers & selecting subcommittee members
7. Serve as a resource to outside agencies such as prisons, institutions, hospitals, etc.

## **The District Committee**

The District Committee is made up of the District Officers (DCM, ADCM, Treasurer, Secretary, Officer at Large, and Web Servant) and the General Service Representatives (GSRs) of each group in the District who elect to participate.

### **General Service Representative (GSR)**

GSRs represent their home group and are nominated and elected by their group members. GSRs serve for two years (elected in November of the even years) and the term frequently runs concurrently with those of Committee members and the Area Delegate. The GSR links their group with A.A. The GSR represents the voice of the group conscience, reporting the group's thoughts to the District members and Delegate who passes them on to the Conference. The GSR keeps their group informed of

news from the District meetings and other groups. Groups are also encouraged to elect Alternate GSRs and to have them attend District meetings. Experienced Alternate GSRs can provide group continuity in the absence of the GSR.

***Qualifications:***

- Willingness to serve.
- Usually have at least 2 years of sobriety.
- Time available for attendance at District meetings and events and attendance at annual Area Conference.
- Confidence of their group's conscience and the ability to listen to all points of view.

***District level duties:***

- Keep your group members informed about general service activities in local communities and AA worldwide.
- Assist group in applying the Twelve Traditions.
- Participate in monthly District meetings and report back to their group.
- Serve on a District subcommittee as specified by the DCM.
- Keep the District informed about group changes via the website, the group change form & group history guidelines.
- Participate in the election of new District Officers.
- Inform the District Committee of group problems and experiences.
- Attend GSR orientation workshops run by the District and be familiar with the District Structure manual.

***Area level duties:***

- Participate in Pre-Conference Sharing Session.
- Attend one mini-assembly each year to hear The Delegate's report.
- Attend the annual Area Convention.
- Vote in the election of new officers who will serve Area 59.

(Many groups are now financially supporting their GSR to attend service functions.)

**NOTE:** GSRs are encouraged to attend other Area functions whenever possible. This allows GSRs to experience how the Conference structure works and meet the Area Officers and other DCMs. It is beneficial to meet the Officers and DCMs because these are the people that the GSRs will probably be voting for come election time.

***The District Committee Member – DCM***

***The DCM is an essential link between the group's GSR and the Area's Delegate to the General Service Conference. (Bill W., 2003-2004, pg. S51)***

***Qualifications:***

- The DCM has typically served as a General Service Representative (GSR) and is elected by other GSRs to take responsibility for District activities.
- The DCM should have the time, energy, and skills to serve the District well.
- The DCM usually has four or five years of sobriety for election.
- If serving as the DCM, it is suggested that the member not serve as their group's GSR.

***District Level Duties:***

- Functions as chairperson at District business meetings.
- Actively listens to group representatives and practices this skill to hear the District conscience and focus discussion in a forward and productive manner.
- Informs GSRs and groups of pertinent events in Area 59.

- Conveys Area information & questions to District GSRs and collects the group's conscience.
- Carries the collective conscience of the A.A. groups in their District.
- Informs the designated area officer of all District and group changes, including new groups.
- Submits a brief report outlining District activities to the area secretary at the quarterly Area Committee meeting; informs the District of area and conference activities; informs the area of District and group changes; and serves on an area subcommittee.
- Stays in touch with groups by regularly attending meetings of groups in District 43.
- Organizes members into subcommittees and advises them.
- Prior to each District meeting the DCM reminds Committee chairs to present their reports.
- Oversees the election of new District officers.
- At the end of the 2 year panel the DCM will present a list of information & recommendations for the incoming DCM.
- The DCM may not make a motion but may vote in elections and on motions.

***The DCM is required to attend the following events***

- Monthly District meetings
- All quarterly area meetings
- Appropriate planning and mini assemblies
- DCM orientation
- Pre Conference sharing session
- Area Inventory
- Convention and Assembly

***It is suggested that the DCM attend the following events***

- NERAASA- Northeastern Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly
- NERF- Northeast Regional Forum

Note: See also Service Manual— page S32—for more information about the DCMs duties.

***The Alternate District Committee Member (ADCM)***

***The ADCM serves as a backup for the DCM. If the latter resigns – or for any reason is unable to serve – the alternate steps in. (Bill W., 2003-2004, p. S51)***

***Qualifications:***

- The ADCM has typically served as a General Service Representative (GSR) and is elected by other GSRs at a District election to take responsibility for District activities.
- If serving as the ADCM, it is suggested that the member not serve as their group's GSR.
- The ADCM should have the time, energy, and skills to serve the District well.
- The ADCM usually has four or five years of sobriety for election.
- Stay in touch with groups by regularly attending meetings of groups in District 43.
- Fill in as necessary for other District officers at District meetings.

***District level duties:***

- Attends monthly District meetings.
- Acts as liaison with St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in State College and meetings held there, including coordinating closures and meeting changes.
- Advises subcommittees as assigned.
- Is encouraged to assist, participate, and share in the DCMs responsibilities, attending District and Area functions whenever possible.
- Attends yearly Area Convention/Assembly.
- It is suggested the ADCM chairs several District meetings in the second year of the panel to prepare to serve as DCM.
- Chairs Structure Committee and is very familiar with the District Structure manual.

- The ADCM may not make a motion but may vote in elections and on motions, although may make a motion when acting as a subcommittee member, subcommittee chair or as a GSR member.

***Area level duties:***

- Attends all Area Events with the DCM, and substitutes when the DCM can't be there.
- Is encouraged to attend other Area Activities such as NERAASA, NERF.

**The District Secretary**

**The Secretary** records and prepares the minutes at the District meeting and distributes them to the GSRs, the District Officers, and the Area Officers.

***Qualifications:***

- It is recommended that the secretary be elected from past or present GSRs.
- Some background in general office work and computer knowledge is helpful.
- If serving as Secretary, it is suggested that the member not serve as their group's GSR.

***District level duties:***

- Submits previous month's meeting minutes to the DCM at least two weeks prior to the District meeting.
- Submits previous month's meeting minutes to the GSRs and Area officers at least one week prior to the District meeting.
- Takes roll and minutes at each District meeting.
- Notates any changes made to the minutes.
- Submits final minutes from the previous District meeting to Area Officers and serving District members.
- Maintains and updates the District Roster (phone/email list of the current GSRs & officers).
- Serves on a District subcommittee.
- The Secretary may not make a motion but may vote in elections and on motions, although may make a motion when acting as a subcommittee member, subcommittee chair or as a GSR member.
- Sends via email each month to current members on the roster: the minutes, current roster & current structure manual.

**The District Treasurer**

**The Treasurer** should be a responsible person who can keep good records. (Bill W., 2003-2004, p. S60)

***Qualifications:***

- It is recommended that the treasurer be elected from past or present GSRs.

- Basic accounting skills are beneficial. The Treasurer must be able to record and acknowledge group contributions and maintain the District's bank account.
- If serving as Treasurer, it is suggested that the member not serve as their group's GSR.

***District level duties:***

- Pays all of the bills incurred by the District. Collects & deposits contributions. Checks PO Box in Lemont.
- Submits financial report (summary, balances/expenses, district contributions, & pink can contributions) to the District panel for approval at District business meetings via spreadsheet documents (as pdfs) at least 1 week before the district meeting.
- Keeps monthly bank statements/documents (paper & online) for District records and the treasury spreadsheet
- Checks the Paypal account and transfers money when necessary along with documenting it in the district spreadsheet
- Pay any approved expense documented by receipt. (Approved expenses include, but are not limited to, rent, committee work, workshop expenses, literature purchases or donations, approved Public Information announcements, copying charges for reports, and business meeting information distributed by the officers.)
- Serves on a District subcommittee.
- The Treasurer may not make a motion but may vote in elections and on motions, although may make a motion when acting as a subcommittee member, subcommittee chair or as a GSR member.

**The District Officer-At-Large**

The Officer-At-Large (OAL) *should be prepared to temporarily assume any District officer service position, except DCM, when the position has been vacated or the officer is unable or unwilling to perform their duties. (See District Service Vacancies.)*

***Qualifications:***

- It is recommended that the OAL be elected from past or present GSRs.
- If serving as the Officer-At-Large, it is suggested that the member not serve as their group's GSR.

***District level duties:***

- Is responsible for scheduling upcoming locations for District Meetings & notifying the district committee.
- Contact the host group's GSR or other member to help set up for the District meeting.
- Run the district zoom account and host the monthly zoom meetings when they are online.
- The OAL serves on a District subcommittee.
- Sets up and facilitates an ad hoc committee to implement a GSR orientation workshop within the first three months of a new panel.
- The OAL may not make a motion but may vote in elections and on motions, although may make a motion when acting as a subcommittee member, subcommittee chair or as a GSR member.

**The Web Servant**

***Qualifications:***

- It is recommended that the Web Servant have some background in web design.
- If serving as the Web Servant, it is suggested that the member not serve as their group's GSR.

***District level duties:***

- Maintains the website by adding changes to events, groups or general information provided by the District panel or a member or committee.
- This person will also be in charge of making sure payments are made to the internet service provider and then get reimbursed by the treasurer.

- Reads the emails sent to the District website and answers or forwards them to a District member that can answer the question or provide the service needed.
- The Web Servant may not make a motion but may vote in elections and on motions, although may make a motion when acting as a subcommittee member, subcommittee chair or as a GSR member.

The purpose of [www.district43.com](http://www.district43.com) is to facilitate 12th step work. We publicize our meeting list to help members and potential members find our meeting groups. We disseminate information for District-sponsored recovery events and business meetings. The website acts as a channel for inquiries from the public at large and allows us to return information in a timely yet anonymous manner. In keeping with AA's singleness of purpose, upholding the traditions, and following guidelines outlined by GSO, the D43 website should NOT link to or promote any non-AA or non-GSO approved events, organizations or literature. GSO guidelines can be found in publication at MG-18 at [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org).

**NOTE:** The panel of officers are encouraged to attend Area functions whenever possible, especially The Pre-Conference Assembly and the Mini-Assembly. This allows them to experience how the Conference structure works and meet the Area Officers and other DCMs.

### **District Subcommittee Chairperson Positions**

It is District 43's desire to maintain seven standing subcommittees: Archives, Corrections & Institutions, Cooperation with the Professional Community, Structure, Public Information, Visitation and Website subcommittee. All GSRs are asked to serve on a subcommittee and other AA members are encouraged to join & help with Committee work. Please announce this service opportunity at your home groups. The chairperson is usually a GSR selected by the DCM although exceptions may be made. Subcommittees have been created by, and are responsible to, the District Committee. Each Committee is permitted to spend up to \$50.00 each quarter without needing prior approval from the District. Any policy or decision made through a Committee should be presented at the District. It is suggested that the Committee should meet sometime before the District meeting and the chair should be prepared to report on the work of the Committee and make any motions coming from the committee at the district meeting. The committee chairs should contact the web servant to get the committee meeting dates/times posted on the website. These positions rotate when the panel does. The District Panel may form other ad hoc subcommittees as needed to address temporary issues and opportunities. All ad hoc subcommittees expire upon fulfillment of their specific duties. At the end of each 2 year panel each Committee, guided by the chair, will present a list of information/guidance & recommendations for their incoming Committee.

### **Archives Subcommittee:**

This Committee is responsible for encouraging fellow GSRs to collect ongoing updates on group histories. They maintain and document the history of the District. Maintains the District archive display. All documents and materials will be stored at the current clubhouse (Armenara office building) in addition to being transferred to digital copies.

### **Corrections & Institutions Subcommittee:**

This Committee is responsible for staying in touch with all of our local jails & institutions. They are responsible for assigning a contact person for each place in order to serve that facility weekly. They are responsible for signing up members to attend weekly and maintaining communication within the facility. They are also active in participating in the meetings held at our jails & institutions and recruiting others to go. They maintain the inventory of pamphlets & literature at various institutions. They help educate institutions & GSRs on Bridging the Gap. They should also review the volunteer instructions for accuracy that are posted on the web and announce volunteer opportunities at meetings.

### **Cooperation with the Professional Community Subcommittee:**

This Committee is responsible for working with community groups in need of info about AA. Examples include providing speakers at the Youth Offenders Program and at classes on campus. CPC updates the hotline list in January & June of each year by getting names from each home group's GSR.

### **Structure Subcommittee:**

This Committee is responsible for the ongoing review of the District structure as well as updating the structure manual. The ADCM serves as the chair of this Committee. The members consist of current GSRs, panel members and past District Committee members—the most recent past DCM should specifically be invited to be on the Committee since he/she has just been involved in the District and understands how it runs.



***District 43 Structure Manual: Review and/or change***

It is anticipated that changes to the structure manual and the administrative guidance within it will be necessary. It is recommended that the Structure Committee be a standing Committee within the District and that it conduct a review of the manual each year. The Structure Committee is responsible for bringing recommended changes to the District for consideration, motions, debate and a vote. The manual will be changed by a substantial unanimity of the panel members present. Proposals to change the structure manual can be brought to the Structure Committee at any time. The Structure Manual will be emailed to members of the District Committee on the current roster each month by the secretary (instead of having printed versions).

***Public Information Subcommittee:***

This Committee is responsible for making sure the public places currently displaying pamphlets are replaced when needed. They also work on ways to get word of AA out into the public through public service announcements and literature placed at schools, grocery stores, libraries, hotels, etc.

***Visitation Subcommittee:***

This Committee is responsible for visiting groups in an effort to reach those currently inactive in the District and provide information about the role and benefits of having an active GSR. When visiting a group, we should provide the following: Visitation Letter, Current Meeting Minutes, Group Change Form, New Group Form, Group History Form, and a Current Meeting List. This Committee can also be instrumental in verifying if specific meetings are still being held. (See sample letter in appendix).

***Website Subcommittee:***

This committee is responsible for maintaining the District43.com website domain to accurately reflect the current AA meetings and events that pertain to District 43. In addition, this committee is responsible for accurately reflecting the AA traditions in the continued maintenance and updates within the website. Changes beyond general maintenance to the District43.com website that affect District 43 or AA as a whole will be brought to the District 43 monthly district meeting for a collective group conscious before proceeding with said changes.

***District Committee Procedures***

***District Meeting Format and Agenda***

Preparation and maintenance of the format and agenda is the responsibility of the DCM. The DCM is responsible for preparing the agenda for each meeting. Copies are given at the start of each meeting to all acting GSRs. Temporary changes of format require a majority vote after an appropriate motion. It is suggested that all major proposals or unusual discussion issues be forwarded to the District Officers through the DCM prior to the business meeting. Each month the Tradition (long form) corresponding to the month is read and discussed by a volunteer from the previous month.

**The regular District 43 business meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month beginning at 6:45 PM.**

Meeting locations rotate in order to give other groups the opportunity to host and to make the District meeting more accessible to all groups in our District. **In case of unusual circumstances, the district committee (officers) can decide to cancel or re-schedule the business meeting.** It then becomes the duty of the officers, under direction and assistance of the DCM, to notify all GSRs possible under the circumstances. It is suggested that the months of nominations and elections be held at St Andrew’s with an alternative location in case of closure due to weather.

**DISTRICT 43 MEETING AGENDA**

**Date**  
**Location**

OPENING: Serenity Prayer  
WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

**OFFICERS REPORTS**

Officer-at-Large:  
Secretary:  
Treasurer:  
Web Servant:

ADCM:  
DCM:

### **Tradition of the Month (Short and Long Form)-**

#### **GSR SUMMARIES & ACTIONS:**

(A Summary is an announcement. An Action is something you would like input on or to hear the group's experience on the issue.)

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Archives:  
Corrections & Institutions:  
CPC:  
PI:  
Structure:  
Visitation:  
Website:

**OLD BUSINESS:**  
**NEW BUSINESS:**

RESPONSIBILITY PLEDGE

## **District Budget & Finances**

### **Reimbursement**

Reimbursement for legitimate expenses by District Officers is allowed to permit anyone, regardless of financial status, to serve as a district officer without concern for money.

#### ***Guidelines for reimbursement are as follows:***

- Area Meetings (quarterly): DCM (or alternate) will be reimbursed for mileage and tolls.
- Area Functions, as "required" by the Area Committee: DCM will be reimbursed for mileage and tolls. The DCM will announce these functions at the beginning of each year.
- Annual Area Convention/Assembly: DCM & ADCM will be reimbursed for registration fees, meals, accommodations and mileage/tolls.
- Mini Assemblies: DCM (or alternate) will be reimbursed for registration fees, meals, mileage and tolls to attend one Mini Assembly.
- NERAASA (yearly): DCM (or alternate) may be reimbursed for registration fees, meals, accommodations and mileage/tolls. (reimbursement limit is \$500—look at location for both years of the panel and plan accordingly).
- Routine Business Expenses: All officers may be reimbursed for postage, copying and/or printing expenses.
- All Committee Chairs may be reimbursed for any expenses from Committee work. (The first \$50.00 does not need prior approval.)
- The visitation chair will be reimbursed for mileage when they visit outlying meetings.
- Reimbursements require receipts.

Mileage will be reimbursed at a rate of \$.35 per mile plus tolls.

Unless otherwise stated, anyone attending any other function is considered to be doing so as a contribution to service and self-improvement, without expectation of compensation.

The district voted to use district funds (not pink can) to purchase 6 Grapevine subscriptions (every 2 years) for the institutions that are served by the corrections committee. (Centre co, Clinton co, Meadows, Detention Center, Benner & Rockview) \*\* as of 2020 those subscriptions were only being shared with the facilities that were accepting print materials from the outside)

### **Working Reserve**

District 43 maintains a working reserve. The target amount of the working reserve should be a three months average of the prior panel's expenses. The working reserve is \$1200.00.

### **Where to Send Group Contributions**

**The General Service Pamphlet** "Self Support, Where Spirituality and Money Meet." Suggests that after a group pays its basic expenses such as meeting room rent, AA literature, refreshments, and retains a working reserve "emergency fund," the group divides the remaining funds on a regular basis toward essential AA services. It further suggests several options for the division of these remaining funds depending on the group's local needs which is arrived at through its *group conscience*.

In Eastern Pennsylvania, one option used is known as "The 40-30-30 Plan\*":

40% to the **District (43)**

30% to **Area 59**

30% to the **General Service Office** in New York

### **District 43 Mailing Address**

District 43

P.O. Box 912

Lemont, PA

16851-0912

Or donations can be made online using PayPal or Zelle at [District43aa@gmail.com](mailto:District43aa@gmail.com)

### **GSO Mailing Address**

**A.A. World Services, Inc.**

P.O. Box 459

New York, NY 10163

Or donations can be made online at [aa.org](http://aa.org)

### **Area Treasurer Mailing Address**

Check with the DCM or Area Website [Area59aa.org](http://Area59aa.org) for current Area Treasurers mailing address. Donations can be made online.

### **Budget Surplus**

Any surplus over the working reserve can be forwarded to the next panel but in the spirit of the 7th tradition, we do not hold onto extra money. The current panel can vote on how to spend any extra funds (e.g., distribute to GSO or Area).

## **Voting on Motions and Officer Elections**

### **Quorum**

All major decisions (change in structure, group conscience on a major A.A. issues as determined by the DCM) that affect structure or policy (not committee or officer work) need to be discussed in new and then old business for at least 3 consecutive months.

### **District Voting Procedures**

Please see the following flow chart on voting procedures. Each current GSR or designates (ie.,an ALT GSR or homegroup member filling in) and current District officers in attendance at business meetings shall have one vote. If a District officer is representing a group, that officer still has only one vote. In general, a simple majority of eligible voting members present is required for District business and District elections unless otherwise specified. However, in matters judged to affect groups or A.A. as a whole, a substantial unanimity vote may be called for by the DCM and voted upon by those in attendance. Only GSRs or designates (ie.,an ALT GSR or homegroup member filling in) may make motions at District business meetings. Committee Chairs can also make motions from their committee. The ADCM, OAL, Secretary and Webservant may not make a motion, although may make a motion when acting as a subcommittee member, subcommittee chair or as a GSR member. It is expected that visitors (i.e., non-AA members) not enter into discussion during the regular meeting. Non-voting members can share their experience if it is unique and relevant to the discussion. District officers may request that a GSR make a motion. The DCM may recognize the motion and call for a second to the motion. After a second to the motion is made, discussion on the motion will be entertained. Discussion may be offered by a voting member of the meeting only after being recognized by the DCM. It is expected that discussion be limited to the motion on the floor and to be no more than two minutes (The ADCM or a District officer other than the Secretary may be appointed to time the remarks). It is expected that those participating in the discussion limit their remarks to content different from previous remarks on the motion so as to avoid deviation or repetition. The DCM will determine the method of casting votes: show of hands, voice, or paper ballot. After the final vote, minority opinions will be heard, and the DCM will ask if there is anyone who wants to change their vote. If there are a small number of changes, they may be taken by poll; or, if there appears to be many changes, a new vote may be called for. Only eligible voters may question, or appeal. The Secretary will use the roll sheet to determine the number of votes necessary for approval and be responsible for vote recording and counting.

**NOTE:** All important decisions in the District are reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity (2/3 present majority vote). Business needing the GSRs approval is carried by the GSR to his or her group where a sense of the group conscience is taken and its consensus is presented at the following District Meeting. (Area 59, 2004, p.15).

Regarding those issues in which the groups will be consulted, it is suggested that GSRs come to the District Meetings informed of their group's conscience with the intention of doing what is best for the District and AA as a whole. There may be times when the GSR will hear additional information during a discussion that may affect the way he or she votes.

### **Substantial Unanimity**

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 group members through the sharing of full information, individual points of view, and the practice of AA 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 that all pertinent information has been studied and all views have been heard before the group votes. (The AA Group, 2005, p. 34-35).

### **Concept III: The Right of Decision**

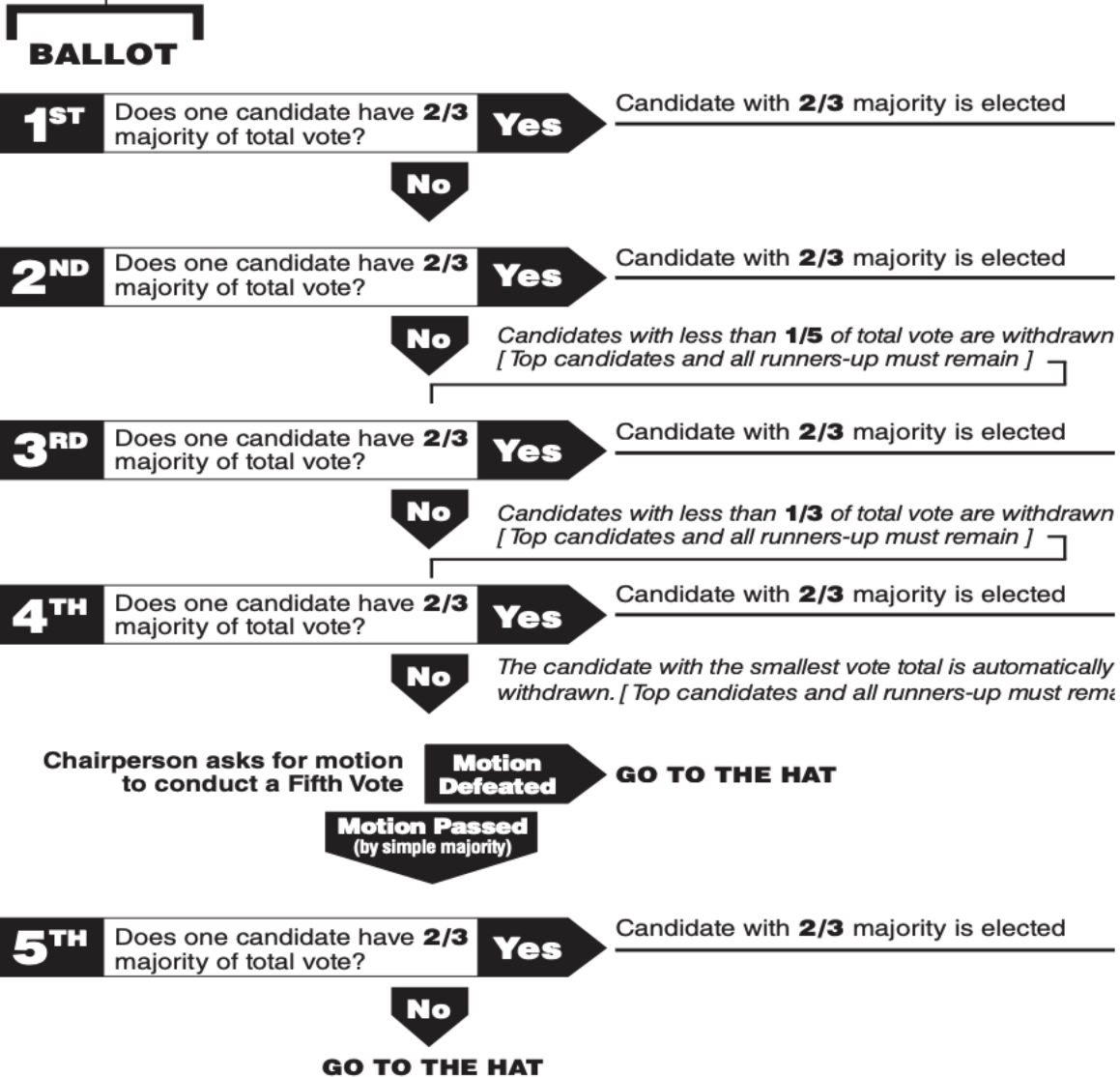
AA principles have been devised to continuously balance the right relation between the ultimate authority of the groups and delegated responsibility of the GSR. It should be the traditional right of the District Committee to decide which problems they will dispose of themselves and upon which matters they will report, consult, or ask specific directions. (Bill W., 2003-2004, p. 13)

Our entire AA Program rests squarely upon the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust AA, and we trust each other. Therefore, we cannot do less than trust our leaders in service. The “Right of Decision” that we offer them is not only the practical means by which they may act and lead effectively, but it is also the symbol of our implicit confidence. (Bill W., 2003-2004, p. 17)

### **Limits on Discussion**

Each separate Group Representative will be allowed up to two minutes to present his or her viewpoint. No member is entitled to the floor for a second time in the debate on the same motion on the same day as long as any other member who has not spoken on this motion desires the floor.

# The Third Legacy Procedure



## Election of District Officers

All District 43 Officers serve a term of office of two years, coinciding with the terms of the delegate and Committee officers of Area 59. Therefore, all District 43 officers are elected at the business meeting held on the second Tuesday of November during even numbered years. An announcement should be made at the September District meeting that the elections will be held in November and that they can consult the structure manual or current officers for more details if they are thinking of making themselves available for officer service. The order of election is DCM, ADCM, Secretary, Treasurer, Officer at Large, and Web Servant.

Current GSRs, or group representatives, who are present, are eligible to vote so that each group gets one vote. (Note: If the GSR is not able to attend the election, the group's alternate GSR or designate may vote in their place.) Current District Officers are also eligible to vote.

## **Qualifications and Required Vote**

All nominees should have been a GSR (either past or present), or have held a District Office.

All nominees are elected by a minimum of a two-thirds majority vote.

It is suggested that nominees for DCM and ADCM have at least 4-5 years of sobriety and have the time and energy to serve the District well. Polling is done by the DCM or his or her designee.

The election procedure is modeled after the **Third Legacy Procedure** and is as follows: (See Appendix for voting procedure flow chart)

1. Call for nominees: The eligible District Officers and GSRs present will be polled as to whether or not they choose to “decline” or “accept” becoming a nominee for the District position.
2. Written ballots are then cast even if only one person stands. All votes are counted by the DCM. If a candidate receives a two-third majority vote (DCM and ADCM) or a simple majority vote (Secretary, Treasurer, Officer at Large and Webmaster), they are elected.
3. If the required majority is not achieved after the first ballot, a second ballot is taken.
4. After the second ballot, (assuming no candidate receives the necessary majority on the first ballot), any candidate having less than one-fifth of the vote is automatically withdrawn, except that the top two candidates remain. In case of a tie for second place, the top candidate and tied second-place candidates remain.
5. After the third ballot, candidates with less than one-third of the total vote are automatically withdrawn, except that the top two candidates remain. In case of a tie for second place, the top candidate and tied second-place candidates remain. A fourth ballot is conducted.
6. After the fourth ballot, if no candidate has the required majority, the DCM asks for a motion, second, and majority of hands on conducting a fifth and final ballot. If this motion is defeated, balloting is over and we go to the “hat” immediately. In case there are ties for second place, the top candidate and tied second-place candidates remain. If not, the candidate with the smallest total is dropped. If the motion carries, a fifth and final ballot will be conducted.
7. If no election occurs by this time, the DCM announces the choice will be made by lot (from the hat).
8. Lots are then drawn by the DCM, and the first one “out of the hat” becomes the new officer.

The new DCM and ADCM will take their seats at the Area 59 meeting in December and the District 43 meeting in January. The Secretary, Treasurer & Officer at Large take their seats at the January District meeting.

## **District Service Vacancies**

In the event that a District service position is vacated—with the exception of the DCM—the OAL will step in until the District Committee elects a new officer. In the event of an unforeseen emergency with the DCM, the Alternate will immediately take charge of the District and hold an election for a replacement ADCM.

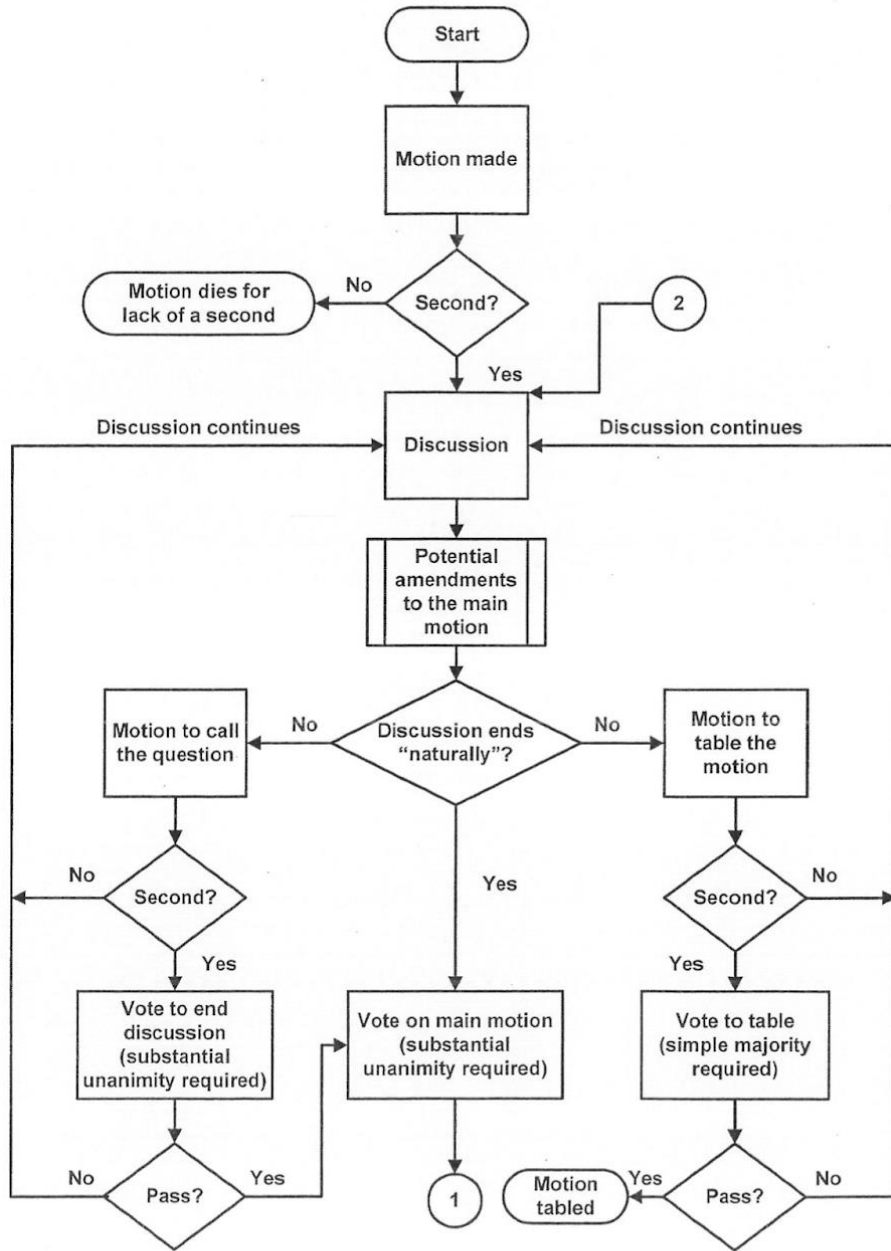
## **Default/Absence of a District Officer**

A District officer that has an unexcused absence from attending District business meetings or is unable to perform the duties of that position for a period of 2 consecutive months may be replaced. If a District officer is absent for a district meeting then their replacement will fully assume their duties for that meeting.-

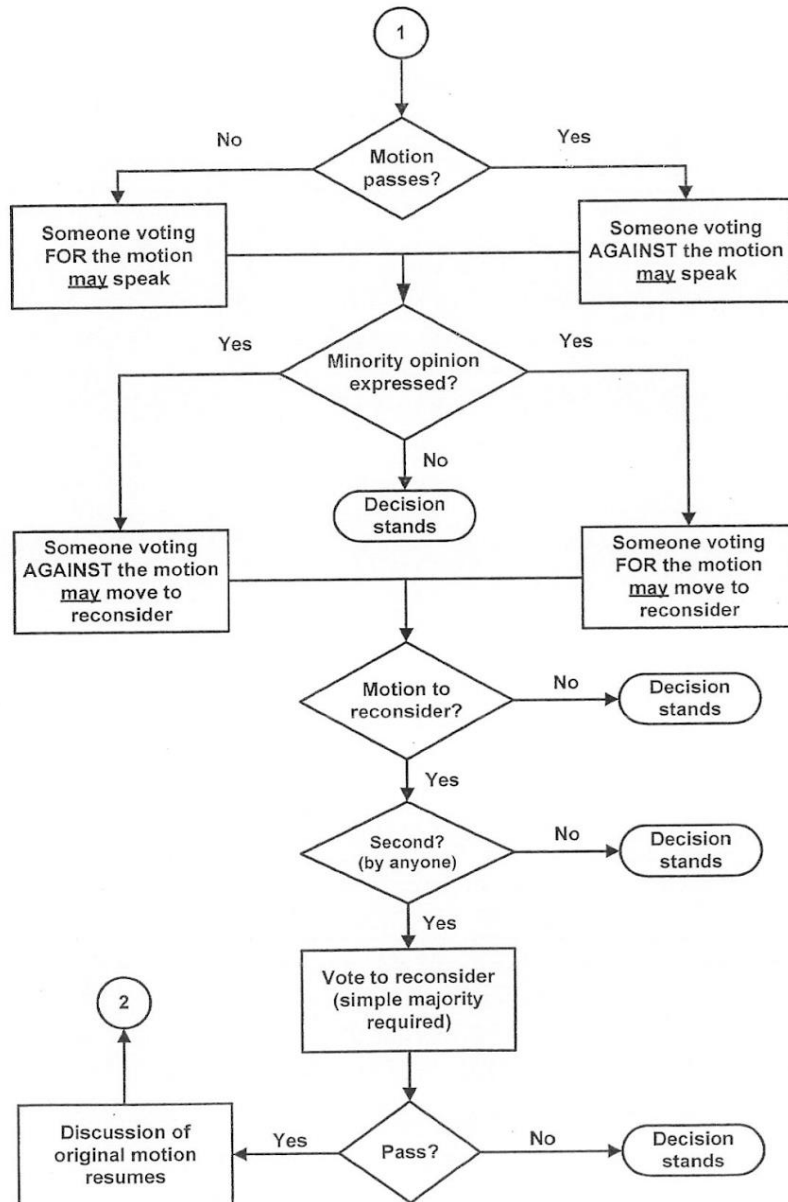
## **Misuse of Office**

A District officer is expected to fulfill the duties as outlined in the Structure Manual with guidance from the AA Service Manual while abiding by the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. If a situation arises in which an officer is violating the Traditions, it may be brought to the attention of the District Committee. If there is sufficient concern, any member of the current panel could move to remove the violator from their position. Substantial unanimity vote is needed for removal from position.

## Our Voting Procedure







**Parliamentary Procedure on Points and Motions**

In the course of conducting business at District 43, many motions are made. Clarity and information on the motion is often needed. The following procedure on points and motions will be helpful to the GSR as she/he takes part in the ongoing debates at

this level. Although District 43 does not go by strict parliamentary procedure, it is often invoked to facilitate discussion. Following these guides will provide an orderly course of conducting business.

**Points-** *The* following two points are always in order:

**Points of Order**

A question about process, or objection and suggestion of alternative process. May include a request for the facilitator to rule on the process.

**Point of Information**

Question on the Motion. A request for information on a specific question, either about process or about the content of a motion. (This is not a way to get the floor to say something you think people should know.)

**Motions**

Only the Chair may recognize a motion. All motions must be seconded, and are adopted by a majority vote rule unless otherwise required. All motions may be debated unless otherwise determined. Motions are in order of precedence, i.e. do not call for a Motion to Adjourn while a Motion to End Debate and Call the Vote is under consideration; this is “Out of Order”.

**Main Motion**

This is the issue or proposal that is being debated and amended. The sponsor (proposer) of the motion may withdraw the motion from the consideration anytime during discussion prior to a calling of the vote.

**Motion to Table the Question**

Allows the body to postpone the debate on the issue until a specified time. The tabled motion is moved to “Old Business” on the agenda for a specified proceeding.

**Motion to End Debate and Call the Vote**

Applies only to the motion on the floor. This Motion is NOT debatable. Approval requires a 2/3 vote.

**Motion to Appeal the Decision**

Not debatable; goes to immediate vote. Allows the body to overrule a decision made by the Chair.

**Motion to Amend**

Must be voted for by a majority to be considered and by substantial unanimity vote to be passed. If the sponsor of the motion accepts the amendment as “friendly”, it may be accepted without a format (procedural) vote; this is a way of including a consensus-building process into procedure without endless debate. Once the main motion is made it is the property of the body (all eligible members present) to amend.

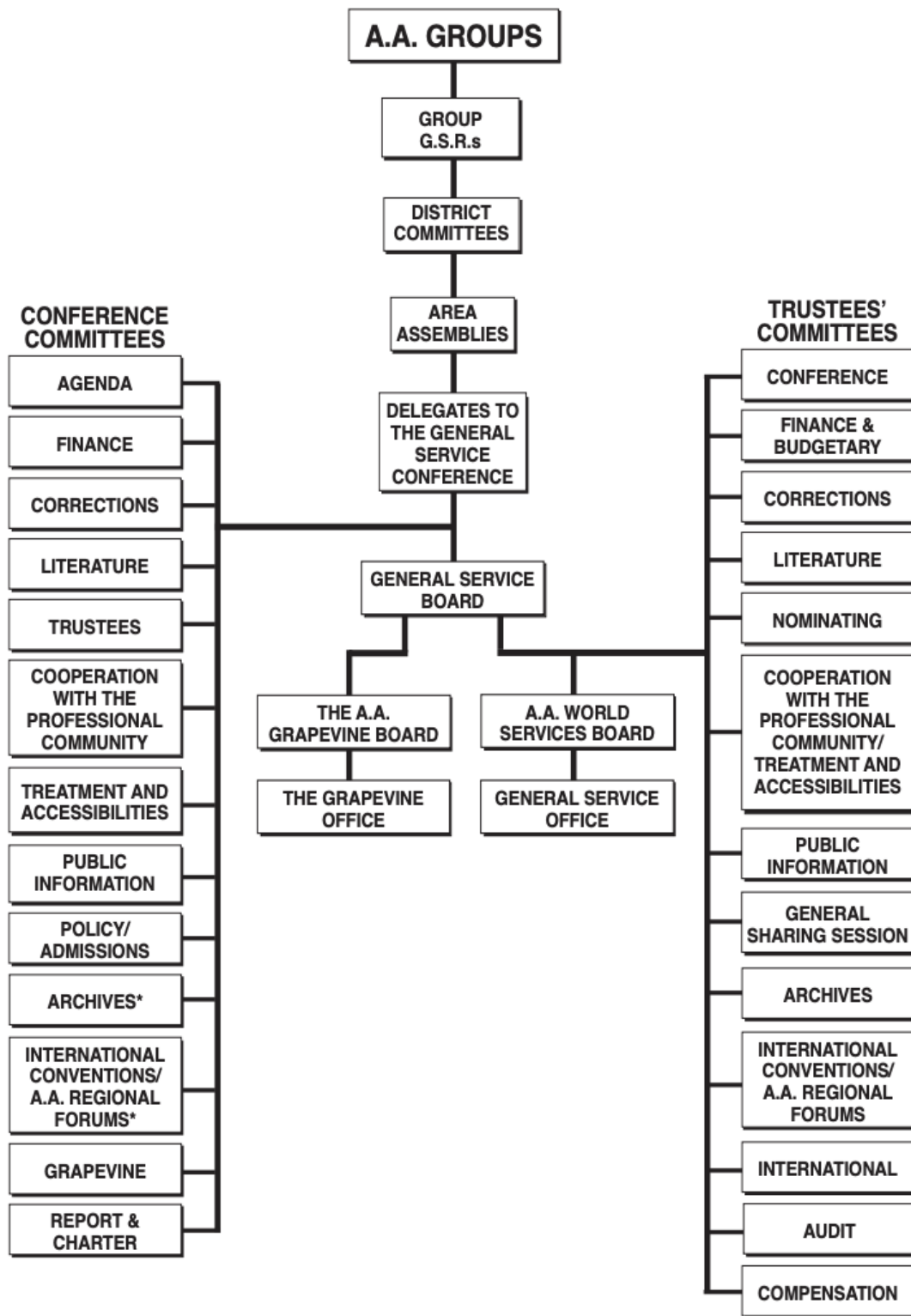
**Motion to Refer to Committee**

Applies only to the main motion. Refers questions to a specific group with a specific time and purpose.

**Motion to Adjourn**

Not debatable, goes to immediate majority vote.

## The General Service Conference Structure (U.S. and Canada)



\*Secondary committee.

## **Events/Activities**

### **Area Meetings**

Are held quarterly. The Area Committee consists of the DCMs and seven area officers: delegate, alternate delegate, chairperson, secretary, treasurer, web servant and officer-at-large. The Area Committee—perhaps more than any other group of people in AA—is responsible for the health of the Conference structure and, by the same token, for growth and harmony in our beloved Fellowship... Through its elected delegate, it learns firsthand what is happening in AA world services. Through the members of the Committee, it is close to District and local scenes. (Bill W., 2003-2004, p. S58)

### **The Area Convention/Assembly**

Is held annually in the fall of each year. This event is open to the general membership and, in addition to hosting the Area Assembly, provides informative workshops, meetings and fellowship for all. The Assembly meeting convenes on Saturday and, although all members are welcome, only Area and District Committee members may participate in the discussion. Most groups make it financially possible for GSRs to attend this function. An Election Assembly takes place every even year within the convention weekend for the purpose of electing a new Area Panel of officers: Delegate, Alternate Delegate, Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and Officer-At-Large.

### **General Service Conference**

The deliberative body known as the Conference is made up of elected Area Delegates from the US and Canada - together with the trustees, directors and staff of GSO. It is the method by which AAs collective group conscience can speak forcefully and put its desires for worldwide services into effect. The Conference is held each April in New York. (A full explanation of the Conference is contained in The AA Service Manual.)

### **Mini-Assemblies**

Are held each year in Eastern Pennsylvania primarily to hear the Delegate's General Service Conference Report. Mini-Assemblies also provide an opportunity for the fellowship to meet the Area Officers and other District Committee Members. This event may also include workshops of interest to members. Most groups make it financially possible for GSRs to attend this function. (Area 59, 2004, p. 17)

### **NERAASA**

Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service. Attendees include the Northeast Regional Trustee, the current Northeast Regional Delegates, Area Committee members, DCMs, GSRs and Intergroup/Central Office Representatives. Issues and concerns affecting AA as a whole are discussed, as well as pertinent aspects of recovery, unity and service common to the Areas of the Northeast Region. There are workshops on the upcoming Conference topics and roundtables for each service position. Many Districts financially support their DCMs attendance at these highly informational service weekends. An informed group is a healthy group.

## **Events/Activities Cont.**

### **NERF**

The Northeast Regional Forum is a weekend sharing session designed to improve communication and participation between our AA service workers and the General Service Office. It is held every other year and the cost is underwritten by GSO. The Forum provides an opportunity for GSO to talk to the Fellowship about what goes on there. It is a very informative event.

### **Pre-Conference Sharing Session**

This event precedes the Annual General Service Conference and is hosted by our Area 59. Conference agenda items are presented and discussed within the area membership for the purpose of giving our Delegate a sense of the Area's collective conscience on selected issues before he attends the actual Conference.

## **THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

**Service Material from the General Service Office**

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**THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**  
(SHORT FORM)

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need to always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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**Service Material from the General Service Office**

### **The 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous - LONG FORM**

#### **Our A.A. experience has taught us that:**

1. 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.

2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.

3. 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.

4. With respect to its own affairs, each A.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.

6. Problems of money, property, and authority may easily divert us from our primary spiritual aim. We think, therefore, that any considerable property of genuine use to A.A. should be separately incorporated and managed, thus dividing the material from the spiritual. An A.A. group, as such, should never go into business. Secondary aids to A.A., such as clubs or hospitals which require much property or administration, ought to be incorporated and so set apart that, if necessary, they can be freely discarded by the groups. Hence such facilities ought not to use the A.A. name. Their management should be the sole responsibility of those people who financially support them. For clubs, A.A. managers are usually preferred. But hospitals, as well as other places of recuperation, ought to be well outside A.A.- and medically supervised. While an A.A. group may cooperate with anyone, such cooperation ought never go so far as affiliation or endorsement, actual or implied. An A.A. group can bind itself to no one.

7. The A.A. groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members. We think that each group should soon achieve this ideal; that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous, whether by groups, clubs, hospitals, or

other 2 outside agencies; that acceptance of large gifts from any source, or of contributions carrying any obligation whatever, is unwise. Then too, we view with much concern those A.A. treasuries which continue, beyond working reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated A.A. purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority.

8. 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 may otherwise have to engage nonalcoholics. Such special services may be well recompensed. But our usual A.A. "12th Step" work is never to be paid for.

9. Each A.A. group needs the least possible organization. Rotating leadership is the best. The small group may elect its secretary, the large group its rotating committee, and the groups of a large metropolitan area their central or intergroup committee, which often employs a full-time secretary. The trustees of the General Service Board are, in effect, our A.A. General Service Committee. They are the custodians of our A.A. Tradition and the receivers of voluntary A.A. contributions by which we maintain our A.A. General Service Office at New York. They are authorized by the groups to handle our overall public relations and they guarantee the integrity of our principle newspaper, the A.A. Grapevine. All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles; they do not govern. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness.

10. No A.A. group or member should ever, in such a way as to implicate A.A., express any opinion on outside controversial issues—particularly those of politics, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no views whatsoever.

11. Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never a need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.

12. And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.

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## **THE TWELVE CONCEPTS FOR WORLD SERVICE (SHORT FORM)**

The Twelve Concepts for World Service were written by A.A.'s co-founder Bill W., and were adopted by the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1962.

The Concepts are an interpretation of A.A.'s world service structure as it emerged through A.A.'s early history and experience. The short form of the Concepts reads:

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



2. The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole society in its world affairs.
3. To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.—the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staff, committees, and executives—with a traditional “Right of Decision.”
4. At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional “Right of Participation,” allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.
5. Throughout our structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.
6. The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.
7. The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.
8. The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of over-all policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.
9. Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.
10. Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.
11. The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staff, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.
12. The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its working financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government; that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

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Hi,

I am here today to give you background information on our local AA District, and what we can do for you. Your group is part of District 43, which covers Centre County and parts of Clinton County. District 43 is then represented by Area 59, which covers Eastern Pennsylvania. Although Area 59 is the smallest Area geographically, we have the largest membership. As part of District 43, your group has the option of electing a General Service Representative (GSR) to be the voice of your group. If you choose not to have a GSR to represent your group at the District level, we want you to know that we are still here to help. Please do not hesitate to contact us through the sources at the end of this letter.

The following is a general outline from our District Structure Manual

Our Mission:

To provide stewardship of AA's primary purpose and 12 Traditions through group representation and consensus, while representing District 43 at the Area and General Service Office levels.

This mission includes; but is not limited to:

1. Getting your group's voice heard at the District level
2. Conducting workshops about topics consistent with AA's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts.
3. Sharing information with groups on Area and District events and issues.
4. Maintaining and coordinating archives.

5. Updating and maintaining a current meeting list on our website.
6. Conducting official District business; such as electing officers and selecting subcommittee members.
7. Serving as a resource to outside agencies; such as prisons, institutions, and hospitals.

Attached, there is a copy of the most recent District meeting minutes.  
District meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month.  
All are welcome to attend District meetings.

Also, there is a Group Change Form. This form is used to keep the GSO group listing, as well as our own meeting lists, as updated and current as possible. Without the most current information, AA's may not be able to find us. Please fill out a Group Change Form if you have any changes.

Remember: Our website is [www.District43.com](http://www.District43.com). The website is a host for all of the information on our District, as well as a link to the Area website. There you can post or find events, see the latest District meeting minutes, contact the District panel with questions/concerns, and always find the most current meeting list (in a printable tri-fold brochure style--great for literature racks).

If you have any questions, or there is anything that District can do to help your group, please do not hesitate to call or email us at:

AA Hotline: 814-237-3757

Email: [info@District43.com](mailto:info@District43.com)  
Index of Revisions:

Website: [www.District43.com](http://www.District43.com)

### **INDEX OF CHANGES made to the Structure Manual**

#### **Feb 2019**

All updates from 2013-2018 minutes were incorporated into the 2019-2020 Structure Manual.

**Spring 2020** all procedural info was changed to match the current practice

#### **Sept 2020 the following changes were made:**

Budget surplus Revision: Any surplus over the working reserve can be forwarded to the next panel but in the spirit of the 7- tradition, we do not hold onto extra money. The current panel can vote on how to spend any extra funds (e.g., distribute to GSO or Area).

Revised 'prudent reserve' to 'working reserve' throughout

Revision: In case of unusual circumstances, the district committee can decide to cancel or re-schedule the business meeting.

Revision: All major decisions (change in structure, group conscience on a major A.A. issues as determined by the DCM) that affect structure or policy (not committee or officer work) need to be discussed in new and then old business for at least 3 consecutive months.

Revision: A District officer that has an unexcused absence from attending District business meetings or is unable to perform the duties of that position for a period of 2 consecutive months may be replaced. If a District officer is absent for a district meeting then their replacement will fully assume their duties for that meeting.

Revision: A District officer is expected to fulfill the duties as outlined in the Structure Manual with guidance from the AA Service Manual while abiding by the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

#### **Fall 2020:**

Zoom coordinator was given to the officer: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **3/25/2021:**

Archives committee document and material storage location updated (pg.9; archives committee)

District subcommittee chairperson positions changed from six to seven. Website subcommittee included in list of district subcommittees (pg.10; district subcommittee chairperson positions)

**4/29/2021**

District meeting start time of 7:15 changed to 6:45 as per April group conscience decision at District Meeting. (pg.11 District Committee Procedures)

**7/8/21**

Website subcommittee description added under subcommittee sections. (pg.11)

**9/9/21**

"...although may make a motion when acting as a subcommittee member, subcommittee chair or as a GSR member." added to ADCM, Secretary, OAL, Treasurer and Webservant district duties description (pg.7-9) regarding motions.

**10/7/21**

Copy edited, added periods, Em Dashes, deleted extra spaces, reformatted paragraphs were needed.

**11/4/21**

Archives storage location updated (pg.10)