

Grapevine/La Viña Standing Committee Guidelines for Mid-Southern California Area 09

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Article I. Background Information

The following is taken from “A Guide to AA Grapevine” © AA Grapevine, Inc.

“AA Grapevine and La Viña are the international journals of Alcoholics Anonymous, including a monthly magazine and a website. A collection of articles written and illustrated by members and others interested in AA, Grapevine reflects the diversity of experience and thought found in the Fellowship and the power of the AA way of life. La Viña is AA’s bimonthly Spanish-language magazine. AA Grapevine, Inc. is the name of one of the two operating corporations of the General Service Board. The other is AA World Services, Inc. (AAWS). AA Grapevine, Inc. publishes Grapevine, La Viña, aagrapevine.org, and its collections of members’ stories in books, CDs, and other formats.

“Originally known as a ‘meeting in print,’ AA Grapevine communicates the experience, strength, and hope of its contributors and reflects a broad geographic spectrum of current AA experience with recovery, unity, and service. Founded in 1944, Grapevine does not receive group contributions, but is supported entirely through subscription sales and additional income derived from the sale of Grapevine items.

“The Fellowship brought a request for a Spanish-language edition of Grapevine within the United States and Canada to the General Service Conference again in 1995. The Conference endorsed the idea, and three months later, a special edition of Grapevine was produced in Spanish. After a plan for the new magazine was approved by the trustees’ Finance Committee, Grapevine began working on a regular bimonthly publication for Spanish-speaking members of Alcoholics Anonymous in the U.S. and Canada. Called La Viña to echo the title of the English magazine, the first issue came off the press in June 1996 and formally became a bimonthly magazine in 2001.

“In 1986, the General Service Conference reaffirmed the magazine’s place in AA with an advisory action that states: Since each issue of the Grapevine [and La Viña] cannot go through the Conference-approval process, the Conference recognizes the AA Grapevine as the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous.”

Article II. Statement of Purpose

The Purpose of the Grapevine/La Viña Standing Committee (Committee) is to promote knowledge and sales of Grapevine (English) and La Viña (Spanish) products, including hard copy materials; magazines and books, audio versions of those products, as well as electronic materials; on-line magazines and archival materials. A 1985 Conference Action recommended that “Grapevine

committees seek ways to work with Public Information, Cooperation with the Professional Community, Correctional Facilities, Treatment Facilities, and other service committees, with the aim of increasing the use of the Grapevine as a tool in carrying the message.”

The following purpose of the Mid-Southern California Grapevine/La Viña Committee is taken from the Area 09 website (“msca09aa.org” in January 2015):

1. Increase the awareness of the magazines in the Districts and the Area as a whole.
2. Encourage participation in the magazines, such as:
 - a. Writing articles for Grapevine and La Viña; and,
 - b. Writing letters about what members read in the magazines.
3. Increase the Mid-Southern California Area 09 Grapevine and La Viña subscriptions.
4. Support conventions and meetings with Grapevine and La Viña displays and information.

Article III. Committee Officers

The Area 09 Grapevine Chair and Area 09 La Viña Chair are elected at the Area Service Committee in October of a given odd-numbered year (e.g., 2015, 2017, 2019, etc.), and serve two-year terms beginning in January of the next even-numbered year (e.g., 2016-2018, 2020-2022, etc.). It is suggested that a potential Chair nominee has at least two years sobriety and be capable to represent Grapevine or La Viña given the available budget and other guidance described herein. Given its function to reach the Spanish-speaking community, it is recommended that the La Viña Chair speak and read Spanish. Though not required, it is recommended that both the Grapevine and La Viña Chairs formally register with AA in New York for these positions using the website, “gvr@agrapevine.org.” Note that “Chair” is a term that applies to these positions at the Area level; at the Group and District levels, those positions are referred to as “Grapevine Representatives” (GVR) and “La Viña Representatives” (RLV).

Whereas, GVRs and RLVs act as advocates for Grapevine and La Viña at the Group and District levels, alerting their groups to the use of magazines and miscellaneous products as recovery tools, Chairs function in this manner at the Area 09 level. Originally GVRs focused on Grapevine and RLVs on La Viña. But as awareness of the needs of Spanish-speaking AAs throughout the United States has grown, some representatives have begun to work with both magazines and refer to themselves as GVR/RLVs. It is preferable, though not mandatory, that these dual-service representatives be bilingual.

At present, there is no formal committee associated with the Grapevine/La Viña Standing Committee; rather, all AA members at Area Service Assemblies (ASAs) and Area Service Committees (ASCs) function as the committee for that particular meeting. Anyone having a desire to serve as a committee member may do so.

Outgoing Chairs for both Grapevine and La Viña are encouraged to serve as service sponsors for the incoming Chairs until which time the incoming members are familiar with their responsibilities and become somewhat autonomous.

Article IV. Committee Meetings and Other Functions

Standing Committee Meetings and/or Round Tables occur at Area 09 monthly functions, including ASAs, ASCs, Servathons, Foros, etc. If unable to attend an official Area 09 function, the Chair should enlist another willing member to attend on their behalf so that Grapevine and La Viña are represented at all monthly Area 09 public meetings. The Chair or their representative generally arrives 30 minutes early and sets up the Grapevine and La Viña Displays that are property of Area 09. It is encouraged that the Chairs remain at the meetings until they end so that they may answer any pertinent questions relating to Grapevine/La Viña publications and continue to provide related materials immediately after the meeting. During the meetings, the Chairs or their alternatives will preside over Standing Committee Meetings and/or Round Tables.

The Chair reserves the right to amend the Grapevine and La Viña Displays in any appropriate manner that supports the Statement of Purpose given herein. Chairs are encouraged to update their Displays as necessary to ensure they reflect the latest information from New York. Chairs will maintain Displays in good working order and pass them on to the incoming Chair at two-year intervals. In addition to Displays, Chairs are encouraged to print pertinent materials from aagrapevine.org (e.g., subscription forms, GvR registration forms, Grapevine newsletters, catalogues of available materials, etc.) and make them available at Area 09 functions. Grapevine and La Viña Chairs receive complimentary subscription(s), newly published books, wall calendars, etc. during their terms of service, which they should have available at various functions as examples of Grapevine and La Viña products.

The Chair may also formally represent Area 09 at the Group and District levels, including Open and Closed AA participation and speaker meetings, Conventions, Round Ups, Round Tables, Grapevine Writer's Workshops, PRAASAs and "mini-PRAASAs" (generally conducted at the District level), Regional Forums, Servathons, and similar AA functions, either at their discretion or upon invitation, in support of the Statement of Purpose given herein. The Chairs should look for and be receptive to opportunities to represent Grapevine and La Viña at these and other AA functions, particularly when invited to participate.

Article V. Budget and Expenditures

Each year separate, annual budgets are proposed for both the Grapevine and La Viña Committees at the Area Service Committee (ASC) in August and subsequently approved, with or without modification, at the Area Service Assembly (ASA) in January. The Chairs use their discretion in how these funds are expended and are responsible to ensure that the expenditures support the Statement of Purpose given herein. Chairs are responsible to ensure that their collective, annual reimbursements do not exceed the separate, annual budgets for Grapevine and La Viña. If Chairs see that their annual budgets could be exceeded, they may formally request that their budget be increased. The Chairs may recommend to the Finance Committee that subsequent budgets be increased, if necessary, to accommodate increased workloads, commitments, and visits.

There is no requirement that the Chairs restrict their activities to the Area 09 geographic region; however, reimbursements should be restricted to only those activities that occur within Mid-Southern California. So, for example, a Chair may attend a Conference outside Area 9, set up the Grapevine Display, and promote Grapevine during that event at their discretion and not be

reimbursed; reimbursements must necessarily be restricted to those activities that occur within the Area 09 region. Typical reimbursements include mileage, motels, conference fees, copying, and supplies; dining expenses are generally not reimbursed. Chairs typically submit formal reimbursement (“Statement of Expenses”) requests to the Area 09 Treasurer during formal functions, although these requests may be provided electronically at anytime.

Article VI. Changes and Suspension of Guidelines

Changes in these Guidelines will be subject to the approval of two-thirds of the members present after the changes are discussed at two consecutive regular Area Service Committee meetings. Upon approval by three-fourths of the Area Service Committee present, these Guidelines or any part thereof may be suspended temporarily as necessary.