



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

May 2011

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

Special Needs

In page S1 of our Service Manual Bill states: "Is this service really needed? If it is, then maintain it we must, or fail in our mission to those who need and seek A.A."

What are special needs? How are they defined? And Where do we find them? What is the role of the Special Needs and Accessibility committee in AA as a whole? We know that Special Needs and Accessibility is now part of the Cooperation with the Professional Community and Treatment. By broadening the scope of the committee, this new committee has taken responsibility for the 2009 Conference Advisory Action which states:

The request for the formulation of a recovery pamphlet for new or potential new members with their own special needs and include stories of AA members with a variety of disabilities such as autism, brain damage, learning disabilities, blindness, deafness or hearing impairments or wheelchair accessibility. It is here that the following questions arise:

Is your group accessible to all? are all made to fill welcome? Do meetings provide full access to the A.A. message/ for the deaf/ hard to hearing

Does your group pay for the interpreter at meeting? for the blind/visually impaired

Do meetings have brail literature and /or literature on tape /cd?

Are there members willing to be of service at your meeting?

When I first came to general service around 1991 I found a need at the area level and I think it was a special need. In my opinion, since my arrival as a General Services Rep. to Area 9 we had a small minority of maybe 4 to 6 Spanish Speaking members that showed up to area meetings. Very few reports were given by the Spanish Speaking members. Rarely did anyone volunteer to serve and served only when they felt like it and very few of us we're actually involved at the area level in any way.

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Delegate's Corner

"*When are you going to grow up.*" asked the frustrated kindergarten teacher of her astonished class.

"*Not in your lifetime, if you continue to teach kindergarten,*" might have been an appropriate answer.

As I stay sober, year after year, I am sometimes tempted to ask, "*When are we in A.A. going to grow up??*"

The only hope for the kindergarten teacher and his class is that he will continue to try to bring his best educated and most compassionate skills to the class of five-year-olds and understand that his role is one of many mentors who will, if they all do their jobs with care, responsibility, and care, each contribute something to the maturation of these children. If he loses his temper because the children aren't "growing up" or he throws in the towel because the new class each year must start at the beginning again, he will be missing the opportunity to be part of the greater effort for an informed, caring and educated member of society.

As I look at A.A. today, I see many sponsors who take their role very seriously... people who know that the next newcomer has no more information or understanding about recovery from alcoholism nor about the organization of Alcoholics Anonymous than the last newcomer did.

These dedicated sponsors take on the responsibility of not only walking the newcomer through the Steps, but of introducing them to the customs of A.A. including group etiquette; principles of open mindedness; introduction to the literature (including but not at all limited to the Big Book); gentle presentation of the history of the principles in our Traditions; what role Intergroups play in our fellowship; how Hospitals and Institutions work carries the message; demonstrates the importance of honesty,

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Editorial: On the 5th Tradition

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.

Says the old proverb, "Shoemaker, stick to thy last." Trite, yes. But very true for us of A.A. How well we need to heed the principle that it is better to do one thing supremely well than many things badly.

Because it has now become plain enough that only a recovered alcoholic can do much for a sick alcoholic, a tremendous responsibility has descended upon us all, an obligation so great that it amounts to a sacred trust. For to our kind, those who suffer alcoholism, recovery is a matter of life or death. So the society of Alcoholics Anonymous cannot, it dare not ever be diverted from its primary purpose.

Temptation to do otherwise will come aplenty. Seeing fine works afoot in the field of alcohol, we shall be sorely tempted to loan out the name and credit of Alcoholics Anonymous to them; as a movement we shall be beset to finance and endorse other causes. Should our present success continue, people will commence to assert that A.A. is a brand new way of life, maybe a new religion, capable of saving the world. We shall be told it is our bounden duty to show modern society how it ought to live.

Oh, how very attractive these projects and ideas can be! How flattering to imagine that we might be chosen to demonstrate that olden mystic promise: "The first shall be last and the last shall be first." Fantastic, you say. Yet some of our well-wishers have begun to say such things.

Fortunately most of us are convinced that these are perilous speculations, alluring ingredients of that new heady wine we are now being offered, each bottle marked "Success"!

Of this subtle vintage may we never drink too deeply. May we never forget that we live by the Grace of God--on borrowed time; that anonymity is better than acclaim; that for us as a movement poverty is better than wealth.

And may we reflect with ever deepening conviction, that we shall never be at our best except when we hew only to the primary spiritual aim of A.A.--"*That of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers alcoholism.*"

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

courtesy, anonymity and attraction; opens the door to the A.A. worldwide through general service.

These dedicated and exemplary sponsors understand that *all* of the weaknesses and difficulties that A.A. has as an organization (local and not so local) can be addressed with wise, loving, educated and informed sponsorship.

The harvest of narrow, uninformed, biased, and sloppy sponsorship is a fellowship that is uninformed, fearful and ignorant.

But how many of us really care enough about AA as a whole to devote the time, effort, and dedication to thoroughly sponsor a newcomer into the full responsibility of AA membership??

When are we going to grow up?

Movie Night At the Archives

Bring your lawn chairs or chaise lounges and enjoy a classic movie about alcoholism.

Show Time: Doors open at 7:00PM. The movie starts at 7:30PM. Stay after and tour the archives.

Cost: FREE! *Bring your lawn chairs or chaise lounge and enjoy classic Hollywood movies about AA in our own unique theater. Refreshments will be available.*

2011 Schedule

Father Martin's Chalk Talk	Sat.-- May 21
One Too Many (1950)	Sat.-- Jun 18
When A Man Loves A Woman (1994)	Sat.-- Jul 16
28 Days (2000)	Sat.-- Aug 20

(All features include cartoons)

**7111 Arlington Ave, Suite B , Riverside CA
951 785-0845**

(Next to the Airport in the Riverside Air Park)



Special Needs ... continued from p.1, col.1

I believed this happened mostly because there were no guidelines to explain the duties and responsibilities of people who spoke only Spanish and wanted to serve in area standing committees. One of the first things that came about as a way to address our (special) needs was simultaneous interpretation. However, we started out with newcomer volunteers helping us out but we couldn't really count on them showing up. If we asked why did they were late or why they didn't show up at all. They would say they were only volunteers and they didn't have to do crap.

We had already started our inter-district meeting of the Spanish-speaking districts of area 9. The reason that came about was due to the idea of trying to further discuss the motions at the area among ourselves. I guess it's the equivalent to a huge geographic district with sub-districts all in Spanish.

We needed to be knowledgeable and informed. Thank God for the men and women of genius who saw our needs and came up with the idea of organizing a Spanish Forum. We wanted to encourage more Spanish speaking members to attend area assemblies and have a better idea of what general service is all about . Over time the area has become aware of our needs and opted to have the Spanish forum be an area event where all business is conducted in Spanish with English translation. As a result of this open heart and open mind at the area level, we now have Spanish Co-Chairs for most of the area standing committees.

Today all the members are much more integrated in the area with two different cultures and two languages. This was something that seemed almost impossible for us in those early years. The Spanish speaking districts in the area still have their separate meetings but we are all united in the area as a whole. We have seen our fellow alcoholics in the area fight in order to meet the needs of other members; we've had ASL interpreters (American Sign Language), Spanish interpreters and the CEC (Cooperation with the Elderly Community Committee just to name a few.

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Special Needs ... continued from previous column

Personally, I have had the opportunity to continue learning how to better serve community's needs in my area. We've had fellow alcoholics who are responsible for translating the area newsletter and all the standing committee guidelines. When we first started out there we were only three fellow volunteers a year later one of them called and told me that he would no longer be available to help us out. One other member told me he was moving back to his country in Central America. Both of them knew more about computers than all of us combined. However, someone in my home group puts it this way: "the show will go on with or without you" and I think he is right.

Today we have a wide variety of bilingual members that are responsible for many of the service positions that we could not do before due to language barriers. We have H & I, CCP, PI, La Viña co-chairs, Conventions and Archives Liaisons. I have the honor of being the Archives liaison of this panel.

The same thing happened at PRAASA 1999 in Kona, Hawaii proposed. We had a motion that called for the following PRAASA to have simultaneous translation into Spanish. I know it was a great challenge at first because we had to encourage more members, do extra work and spend more money but I think it was worth it, don't you? I believe there was also ASL translation available for those who needed it. Thankfully and by the grace of God all these things have become a reality even here at PRAASA. We are grateful for the efforts and the willingness to serve of countless Alcoholics who care about the special needs of others.

Another one of my service commitments is to go to carry the message at a DUI school where people attend their first, second and up to their fifth or sixth offense for driving under the influence. Most of the men and women that are sent there for the first time say it was bad luck and they don't have a very good impression about alcoholics anonymous either. I hear that it is mandatory for them to visit the alcohol induced deaths at the morgue, alcoholic wards in hospitals and still end up going back to A.A. for a second and third time.

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Special Needs ... continued from p. 3, col. 2

What the counselor does with the people who have been arrested more than one time; he will make them read from the big book and the twelve and twelve and write a small report.

Finally, it is my opinion that we still have a lot of work to do in the area of special needs. First, we need to re-educate ourselves in order to do a better job with people with court cards. Second, and no less important is the need to continue educating the medical professionals, law enforcement and anyone who deals directly with alcoholics who are about to walk through the doors of A.A.

Third, we are reminded in the theme of the 2011 Conference which states our purpose for the years to come: "We are responsible for A.A.'s future; let it begin with us."

Thank you for this opportunity to share.

Raul C

From the AA Grapevine, June 1951:

Delegate's Impressions (CALIFORNIA 1951)

WHAT impressed me so profoundly was finding so much being done for us AAs with so few facilities and so few people. Just a few small offices containing the Service Secretaries, The Grapevine and Works Publishing Inc. Like so many AAs, I was aware that our General Service Headquarters performed certain services for us, but what amazed me was the unbelievable extent of these services. I sincerely hope that every AA in the world will get a first hand report of how far reaching those services are and how vital a part they play in our continued success as a movement.

Another revelation to me was the extent of Bill's activities in guiding AA's affairs and how dependent we all have been in getting the right direction at those sometimes crucial moments.

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~Tradition Checklist~

Tradition Five: Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Do I ever cop out by saying, "I'm not a group, so this or that Tradition doesn't apply to me"?

Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the *limitations* of AA help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?

Have I today imposed on any AA member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?

Am I willing to twelfth-step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?

Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?

Do I remember that AA old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them?

~Concept Checklist~

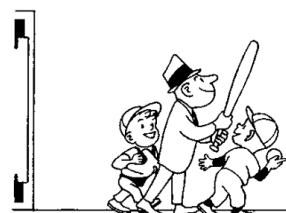
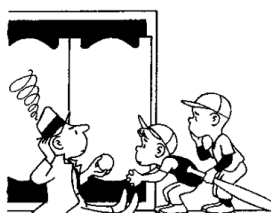
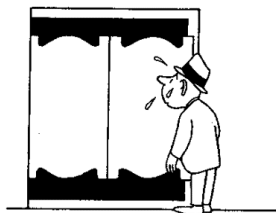
Concept V: Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

Do we encourage the minority opinion, the "Right of Appeal", to be heard at our home group, district committee meetings, area assemblies and the Conference?

What does our group accept as "substantial unanimity"?

Has our group experienced the "tyranny of the majority" or the "tyranny of the minority"?

Does our group understand the importance of all points of view being heard before a vote is taken?



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Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.): How it Works

Twice a year a memo is sent to each delegate and correctional facilities chairs asking for outside AA members to write to incarcerated AA members on an individual basis.

There is an on-going need for outside A.A. members to correspond with the still-suffering alcoholic behind the walls.

Some of the most frequently asked questions are answered in this memo and you are encouraged to share this opportunity for service with members of your district and your home group.

How it (C.C.S.) works!

An outside A.A. wishing to volunteer to participate in the C.C.S. should send his or her full name and address to the Corrections Desk at G.S.O., Grand Central Station, P.O. Box 459, NY, NY 10163. G.S.O. will link the A.A. member with an A.A. member serving time in a prison located ideally at least 2 regions away (e.g., an A.A. living in the NE region would be linked with an A.A. member from the S.W. or Pacific region). When matches which allow for a 2 region separation cannot be achieved, outsiders are matched with insiders residing at least 2 states away.

The outsider makes the initial contact. The name and location of an incarcerated A.A. member is mailed to the outside A.A. member who then writes a letter to begin the relationship. In this way, an outsider can choose the method he or she would prefer the insider to use when responding. A few methods have been used with no reported problems: incarcerated A.A. members are asked to respond to 1) a personal P.O. Box; 2) with permission, a group, district, or area P.O. Box; 3) with permission a Central/Intergroup office P.O. Box; or 4) the A.A. member's home address. (Important: Correctional institutions require that a person use his or her full name when corresponding with an inmate. Outside A.A.s should not use first names only or last initials.)

What A.A. does and does not do

Many incarcerated alcoholics who request this service will be newcomers and will not be familiar with the A.A. way. Instead of a vehicle for sharing experience, strength, and hope, initially many may use the C.C.S. to try to cultivate a more traditional

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CCS ...continued from previous column

pen-pal relationship. Remember, just as we once were, these newcomers may be very needy emotionally and financially. So, A.A.s should try not to be discouraged by someone who, in the beginning, writes for all the wrong reasons. A letter gently explaining what an A.A. member can and cannot offer will most often be followed by a more appropriate response from an incarcerated alcoholic looking for A.A. help.

Is there a waiting list?

If you volunteer for the C.C.S. and don't receive the name of a person to correspond with immediately, please know that it can take as little as two weeks and as long as a few months to receive your first inside correspondent's name, depending on the flow of requests coming in from inside A.A. members. No matter how short or long the wait, your willingness to participate is invaluable.

What to do if you get 'no response' to your first letter...

Frequently, I hear from A.A. members who have signed up, written to the inside A.A. member, and then received no response. This can be frustrating. A common assumption is that the inside member is no longer interested. This may be true, but it may also not be the case at all. Here are some other reasons we know of that may keep an inside member from responding quickly:

Postage. Many of us take for granted how easy it is to get a stamp to mail a letter. Your correspondent may have written you a great letter already, but just can't mail it yet!

Delayed or failed delivery. Your letter may have arrived in a prison mail room, but has not yet arrived in the A.A. member's hands. Or maybe it has never arrived, for whatever reason.

Relocation. A.A. members behind the walls may be moved to another cell, another unit, or another prison. This can happen without notice. Often mail is forwarded, but it can take time.

Fear. Remember when you first asked that A.A. member for his or her phone number, and then didn't call for several weeks? That same kind of nervousness can happen with A.A. members behind the walls.

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It's too late now. If fear makes the inside member hesitate, it may also lead to this kind of thinking. Such thoughts can make any further effort seem pointless.

Some outside C.C.S. participants have shared that sending a second, brief letter that basically lets the inside member know that you're still hoping to hear from him/her might make all the difference in the world.

Still no response?

Of course, sometimes no amount of effort makes any difference. If you are convinced the link is not going to respond, we hope you'll follow the suggestion of our Big Book – "Search out another alcoholic and try again." Contact the Corrections Desk and ask for another link!

How can I spread the word?

While we are blessed with many new volunteers each week, the fact is that requests from the inside come in every week too, and the number of requests from inside correctional facilities often outpaces the number of A.A. members on the outside currently available for correspondence.

The solution is simple, but it requires "action and more action" as our Big Book reminds us. Please consider the following suggestions provided by A.A. members on how to increase participation:

Continue to inform A.A. members of this vital service – and not just those newly-initiated to general service. Many long-time members have said that they've "never heard of" this wonderful opportunity!

Have CCS flyers (F-26) available at district and area events. Ask the Area Chair for a few moments of floor time to share experience and information.

Make the CCS flyers (F-26) available to local groups and ask the group secretary or chair if you can have a few minutes to explain the service. Leave extra flyers behind and ask the group to continue announcing it, since the need for willing AAs on the outside is constant.

Encourage members who are already corresponding to consider taking on more than one correspondent.

Have *you* signed up yet?

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Attend a meeting on the Twelfth Step and share about CCS.

Finally, the Corrections Correspondence sign-up brochure (F-26) offers several very useful tips for A.A.s when starting, developing, or maintaining a good A.A. relationship with the still suffering alcoholic behind the walls. You can download and print copies of the F-26 flyer (for AAs on the outside) from G.S.O.'s Web site at www.aa.org through this link: http://www.aa.org/pdf/products/F-26_CorrectionsCorr.pdf

Feel free to copy and distribute this brochure, or contact the Corrections Desk if you would like some hard copies mailed to you.

Delegate's Impressions ...continued from p.4, col. 2

I know how frightening it is to all of us to think of Bill ever leaving; I know also he can never be replaced. But Bill believes and I gather that Dr. Bob also believed, that he and Bill can be replaced by a principle, that being the Collective Conscience of AA speaking through the delegates of the General Service Conference. I am convinced, now that the first Conference has ended, that this will come to pass; given time the Collective Conscience of AA has a vehicle with which to guide AA affairs in the years to come.

Another revelation, and this struck deep, was the immeasurable contribution of the non-alcoholic Trustees. This alcoholic, like most, does AA work by reason of grim necessity--he'd rather live than die. But our "nons" on the Board of Trustees have given years of talented, selfless service without compensation, or recognition. . .just working quietly and anonymously giving of themselves, that we might live. No other motive than love and devotion. . .truly a labor of love. My admiration, respect and gratitude to them is boundless.

This writer believes he is expressing the unanimous feeling of all the conferees in saying, "God bless all of you there in New York and thank you for the grand way you treated us and the great and vital work you are doing."

C.W., California 1951

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Delegates 61st Conference Report Back Assembly

May 22, Sunday , GSRs vote,
Lime Street Elementary School,
16852 Lime Street, Hesperia, CA 92345

Schedule for Assembly

9:00 - 10:00 am – Committees Meet
10:15 – 11:30 am – Business Meeting
11:30 – 12:00 - Lunch
12:15 - Finish Business (if necessary)
followed by Delegate's report from the
61st General Service Conference

Directions:

From Orange County or L.A. County:

Take the 91 or the 60 or the 10 East to the `5 Freeway.

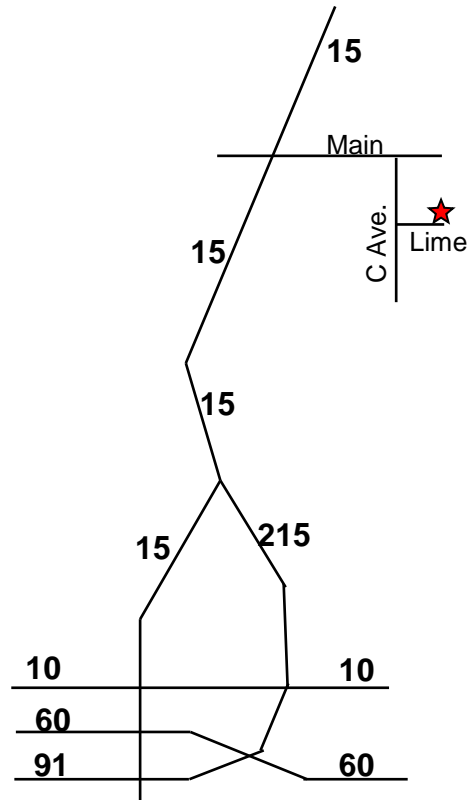
Take I-15 N toward Barstow.

Take Exit 143 (which is about 36 miles from the 60 Freeway) toward Main St.

Turn right onto main St. and drive 4.7 miles.

Turn right onto C Ave. and drive 1.1 mi.

Turn left onto Lime St. and drive 0.3 mi. Destination is on the left.



What is the difference between Assemblies and ASCs?

Assemblies: GSRs vote

First ASC after each Assembly: *The ASC members will present proposals, but no vote will be taken on them.*

Second ASC after each Assembly: *ASC members will vote on which proposals to put on the agenda for the next Assembly (for GSRs to vote on)*

Who are the ASC Members?

The MSCA ASC is made up of Area Officers, DCMC's, past Delegates, Alternate DCMC's, DCM's, other District Officer's, Standing and Coordinate Committee Chairs and Cochairs.

What's the Purpose of an ASC?

1. Identifying, defining, and discussing Area, District and Group problems and issues.
2. Obtaining the consensus of each District and its Groups.
3. Acting as an advisory Committee to the Assembly, Executive Committee and Delegate.
4. Establishing The agenda for the next assembly

Schedule for May 22nd Assembly

9:00 - 10:00 am – Committees Meet
10:15 – 11:30 am – Business Meeting
11:30 – 12:00 - Lunch
12:15 - Finish Business (if necessary)
followed by Delegate's report from
the 61st General Service Conference

Panel 60 Area Officers

Linda C., Delegate
Cesar F., Alt. Delegate
Jeryl T., Chairperson
Sharon K., Secretary
Joseph M., Treasurer
Michael M., Registrar

Upcoming Events

Date - Event:

May 1 – Archives Open House, 7111 Arlington Ave.,
Suite B, Riverside, 10 am – 3 pm
May 22 – Sunday – Assembly, GSRs vote, Lime Street
Elementary School, 16852 Lime Street, Hesperia,
CA 92345
June 12 – Sunday – ASC, (Proposals will be presented
but not voted on), City Hall, 21815 Pioneer Bl.,
Hawaiian Gardens, CA 90716
June 19 – Sunday - AA Grapevine Writers Workshop,
7111 Arlington Ave., Suite B, Riverside, 2pm – 5pm
July 17 – Sunday – Foro
Aug. 14 – Sunday – ASC, *ASC members will vote on
which proposals to put on the agenda for the next
Assembly (for GSRs to vote on).*
Sep. 11 – Sunday – Assembly, GSRs vote
Oct. 9 – Sunday – Election Assembly, GSRs vote
Nov. 6 – Sunday – Servathon
Nov 20 - Sunday - Area Service Committee (ASC)
District 4
Dec. 11 - Sunday - Area Service Committee (ASC)
District 30

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 60 Area Standing Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs, et al.

Archives Chair... Joseph H	Finance Committee Chair... Jim B
CEC Chair... Doug W	Grapevine Chair... Doug M
Communications Committee Chair...Jesus O	La Viña Chair... Mauricio T
Newsletter Subcommittee Chair...Joe B	GSR School... David B
Layout Editor...Nancy R	GSR School, Spanish... Renaldo A
Electronic Media Sub-Committee Chair...Jim C	Literature Chair... Ernesto M
Web Coordinator...Rainer F	Literature Co-Chair, Spanish ... tbd
Equipment Subcommittee Chair... open	Public Information Chair... Keith S
Translation Subcommittee Chair...Santiago S	Public Info., Sp... .. Marcelo C
Convention Liaison... Bob D	Registration Chair... Devon F
Convention Liaison, Span... tbd	Special Needs Chair...Scott R
Corrections Chair... Alex O	Special Needs Co-Chair, Spanish...tbd
CPC Chair... Bill G	Treatment Facilities Chair... John O
CPC Co-Chair, Span... Martin G	Archivist... Pete B
DCM School... Terry S	Coffee person... Paco G
DCM School Spanish ... tbd	Sound Dudes...Leandro L & Raul C

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