



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.area09.org

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

September 2011

Flag-wavers Anonymous?

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

THERE IS no doubt that Alcoholics Anonymous could have a lot of political clout if it chose to move in that direction. A few banners, a few rest stations, and we would be ready for a march to the Capitol.

Organizations do it all the time--groups with far less worldwide respect and prestige. So why shouldn't we? The first thing we would have to do is decide on a cause.

Cause one: the wet-dry issue. Bring back Prohibition? But hold on. One camp says that if people want to drink, nobody has a right to stop them; the other, that alcohol is harmful to alcoholic and nonalcoholic alike and should be banned forever. If taking a stand on the matter had been a requirement for AA membership, which side would I have chosen? Chances are that my old people-pleasing pattern would have had me espousing both sides. In the old days, people-pleasing used to help keep me drunk.

Cause two: Laws should be passed to assure adequate jobs and housing for all alcoholics, drinking or not. What? Are we in disagreement again? One camp says that since alcoholism is a disease we did not ask for, it should be up to the government to take care of us; the other, that we may not be responsible for having the disease, but we are responsible for seeking recovery.

If I had been confronted by that issue when I came into Alcoholics Anonymous, in 1960, something tells me that I would have veered toward the position of making the government responsible. Why not? My pattern was to shift my own responsibilities onto others--a pattern that helped keep me drinking and added to my burden of guilt; if I had found a group of people who would legitimize that old pattern, I shudder to think how short a time I would have stayed sober.

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Delegate's Corner

MSCA Elections: October 9, 2011

Are you eligible, able, available, and have the experience to serve as one of the officers/directors of the Mid-Southern California Area Assembly? *If you don't know, your best bet is to download the "What's It All About?" pamphlet from our area website. You will find the answer on page 10.*

Are you eligible to vote at the election assembly? *Again, the answer is on page 10 of the What's It All About pamphlet.*

Did you know that the Mid-Southern California Area Assembly is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit member corporation? Did you know that our area officers (delegate, alternate delegate, treasurer, registrar, secretary and chair) are also the legal directors of that corporation?

Care, loyalty and obedience! What an order, I can't go through with it! Seriously, though, California, along with many other states, has codified the responsibilities of nonprofit board members under these three main "duties".

Duty of care means that board members should attend board meetings and be informed about the activities of MSCA in order to be able to make informed and independent decisions when voting. It also means that board members must make reasonable and thoughtful decisions.

Duty of loyalty is a standard that requires a board member to act in good faith, be faithful to MSCA and pursue its best interests. It means that board members must be dedicated to MSCA's mission and put its interests above self-interest.

Duty of obedience requires the board to act in accordance with MSCA's policies, and in furtherance of its goals as stated in the mission statement, articles of incorporation and bylaws. In addition, the board must comply with state and federal laws. The duty of obedience forbids acts outside the scope of corporate powers.

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These aren't standards set by MSCA or by A.A., but by the State of California to comply with the non-taxable status of our organization. The names and addresses of the members of the board are a matter of public record and available to anyone who is interested in that information.

"My sponsor said I should be available for everything."

Yes, there are those who come to the election assembly with this daunting suggestion. I would, however, like to make an argument for another perspective: one that, I believe, is healthier for both the area and the trusted servants who serve it.

The great soccer coach, Marcello Lippi, is quoted as saying, *"I did have outstanding players, big players, but their greatest skill is to have been able to put their ability at the service of the others."*

John Wooden, the renown football coach, is quoted as having said, *"I'm not looking for great players; I'm looking for players who make the team great."*

Team players, people who can work well together, people who love our fellowship and want to put the welfare of the area ahead of their own are certainly the vision and ideal members of our leadership positions...and many, many of us qualify in those qualities.

But I don't believe that either John Wooden or Marcello Lippi would have even considered a person who had never played ball before, or was employed at some other full-time job, or who hadn't reached a certain level of competence in the field, no matter how skilled they were in teamwork.

For any of the board positions, think about whether you have the time for it: monthly board meetings, area meetings, visitations to districts and coordinate committees, PRAASA, foros and forums, and other events in our area and neighboring ones. This is a two-year commitment, and a great and wonderful privilege. Those who have put their hearts into these positions have raved about the gifts exceeding the giving a hundred fold. But it is frustrating and discouraging if you don't have the time for it.

If you are thinking about making yourself available as Treasurer, it is very, very helpful to have some accounting or bookkeeping and computer skills...or know someone *very willing* who will do it for you. The treasurer, along with the finance committee, is responsible to oversee the fiscal responsibility of the corporation. We have had treasurers in the past who had never kept an accurate checkbook balance, and found it extremely difficult to pick it up "on the job" so to speak.

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The Chairperson of the area, not only should have experience with parliamentary procedures, consulting with districts about meeting dates and times, and running board and area meetings, but, according to the Service Manual, "the chairperson, more than any other officer, keeps the delegate informed about what is going on in the area, and makes sure that committee members are aware of what goes on in world services."

The area Secretary must have good working computer knowledge and be familiar with email. The secretary keeps the legal records of the area, including membership lists and rosters, as well as taking and distributing minutes of all area meetings. A secretary needs to be well organized, have minute taking skills, and often acts as a liaison between the committee members and the officers.

The Registrar also needs a good knowledge of computer skills and time to work with district registrars and groups who need special attention concerning their listing at the area and General Service Office.

The Alternate Delegate must keep in constant contact with the delegate and stay informed about the area's business at all levels. There are specific organizational duties spelled out in our guidelines that the Alternate Delegate carries out during the term, but first and foremost the Alternate Delegate must be prepared, if the need arises, to step into the role of delegate.

The area committee (or what we call the Board of Officers) is responsible for the health and harmony of the area, and, by extension, for the fellowship as a whole.

Again in the Service Manual, it talks about "able and willing" workers. Many of us are willing...sometimes to a fault, I think, to make a commitment without thoroughly thinking through whether we are "able" to carry it out.

All of this is NOT to say that we all need to be experts in the skills and abilities of any given position...as has been widely and wisely said, "We'll know how to do the job when it's time to rotate." And it is true, of course, that we cannot be fully informed and fully prepared for *any* job in or out of AA until we have had experience with it.

But some level of ability and experience, and above all, enough time, will, in my opinion make for a healthy area and happy board members.

So please take into consideration another one of John Wooden's quotes, *"If you don't have the time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?"*

Linda C.

Flag-wavers Anonymous? ... continued from p. 1, col. 1

Cause three: legislation to restrict the use of alcoholic beverages to certain parts of restaurants and airplanes. What, more disagreement? One camp says that since we give a lot of business to restaurants and since we are sober now and able to travel more often, they ought to give us special consideration. But from another camp comes the cry that nobody made us drink, nobody made us quit drinking, and nobody owes us anything.

How long would I have stayed sober, I wonder, identifying myself at AA meetings by saying, "My name is B---- and I am in favor of legislation to restrict alcoholic beverages to"?

Meanwhile, interested non-AAs would look on with dismay. "If only they had stuck to their experience," people would say. "If only they had stayed with the one thing they knew best--recovery from alcoholism."

We sober alcoholics in AA--all one million plus--may have any number of shortcomings among us: We may become overzealous sometimes, stop listening, and attempt to steamroller a prospect into sobriety; we may imagine, at times, that ours is the only recovery program around; we may even occasionally take it into our heads that what we have in AA is the only bona fide pipeline to God. But there is one defect that we, as a fellowship, do not have: We are not suicidal.

As the "Twelve and Twelve" points out, we seemed to know instinctively from the start that, in order to survive, we had to avoid involving ourselves in other causes or in public fights, no matter how proper or justified they might seem. The history of the Washingtonian Society of alcoholics, which rose and fell within the 1840s, demonstrated clearly that we had to develop single-mindedness and not be swerved for one moment from our goal of staying sober and helping other alcoholics to get sober. Our own early history showed us that our best course of action would be to stand on our own two feet and to practice self-government based on the principle of rotation; and that the best way to avoid, or at least to minimize, controversy at the public level would be to abandon our personal identities at the public level. Over forty-five years later, how well that program of action has succeeded is a matter of record.

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Flag-wavers Anonymous? ... continued from previous column

I look back on my early years in AA (when I was still convinced that I knew what was good for everybody else) and regret to remember the high esteem I had of myself as a diagnostician. Not only did I advise newcomers to stop taking doctor-prescribed medication, but I also told them that aspirin was harmful and vitamins were useless.

I was at an AA meeting recently when a newcomer told us that he had been in a serious accident and was suffering a lot of pain, and that his doctor, who was not sympathetic toward the concept of I was at an AA meeting recently when a newcomer told us that he had been in a serious accident and was suffering a lot of pain, and that his doctor, who was not sympathetic toward the concept of alcoholism as a disease, had prescribed painkillers. The newcomer's question was whether he should take them. After the meeting, someone told him how to obtain the name of a doctor who had an understanding of alcoholism, and made it very clear that it was one AA member talking to another--that Alcoholics Anonymous had absolutely no connection with the physician's art or with the physician himself.

At least, I no longer play doctor. But every once in a while, what I hear myself saying does not sound like the kind of AA sharing I am used to. It does not even sound like advice. Rather, I sound like someone who has full comprehension of "the AA position" on all manner of subjects, from the need for improved alcoholism education in schools to aid for the starving nations of the world. I must be on constant guard against this form of self-aggrandizement. It pokes its head up at the darnedest times, whether I am talking to an AA group, to a non-AA person, or one-on-one to a newcomer. In my unthinking enthusiasm, I can wind up smack in the middle of my old habit pattern of imagining I know everything. That kind of undisciplined enthusiasm can be the source of misinformation about Alcoholics Anonymous--and goodness knows, there is enough misinformation about us among the general public without my adding to it.

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Flag-wavers Anonymous? ... continued

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Within AA, the Tenth is a source of so much comfort. It is largely thanks to this Tradition that I can attend AA meetings in peace. I would like to propose that we celebrate the space outside the doors of our meeting rooms--the space where we can leave the hundred issues that bombard us all day long--where we can leave everything except our desire to stay sober. Thanks to the Tenth Tradition, we have ample space in the entryways to our meetings, no matter how small the rooms themselves may be.

W. H.

Manhattan, New York

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Ocooberfest

District 15 will sponsor an **Ocooberfest** on October 22, 2011 from 12 PM - 5 PM @ the Aguirre Building in Placentia at the Champion Sports Complex on 505 Jefferson Ave. (The main cross streets are Rose and Alta Vista).

Come and have free Brats and Root Beer. Play "Are you Smarter than a GSR?"; "Stump the Archivist" and more ... enjoy an afternoon of Family fun and fellowship.

*GSR grateful to be in service,
Kathleen A*

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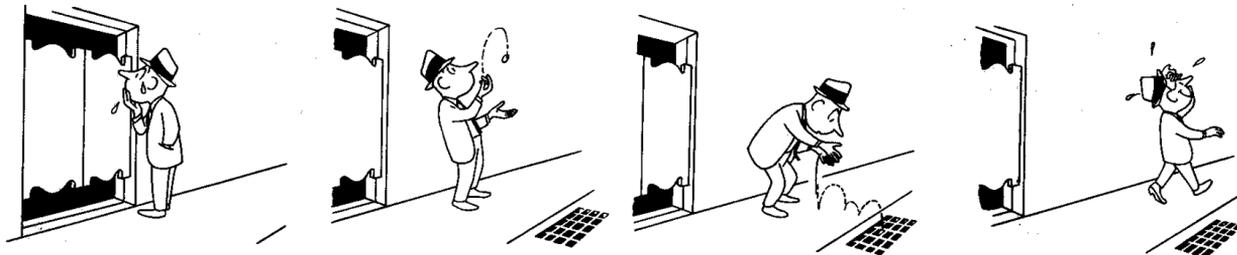
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Schedule for most MSCA Assemblies/ASCs

9:00 am....Delegate's Sharing*
10:15 am..... GSR School, and
Committee Meetings
11:30 am... Lunch
12 noon ... ASC or Assembly meeting

* Please note that The Delegate's Sharing now goes from 9:00 to 10:00 and the GSR School and committees start their meetings at 10:15

Upcoming Events

Date - Event:

Sep. 11 – Sunday – Assembly, GSRs vote, Knights of Columbus #4488, 1729 E. Base Line St., San Bernardino, CA, 92411

Oct. 9 – Sunday – Election Assembly, (District 8)
GSRs vote

Nov. 6 – Sunday – Servathon

Nov 20 - Sunday - Area Service Committee (ASC)
District 4

Dec. 11 - Sunday - Area Service Committee (ASC)
District 30

Panel 60 Area Officers

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

Concept IX (long form)

Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety. The primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders of A.A., must necessarily be assumed by the Trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

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
CEC Chair... Doug W

Communications Committee Chair...Jesus O
Newsletter Subcommittee Chair...Joe B
Layout Editor...Nancy R
Electronic Media Sub-Committee Chair...Jim C
Web Coordinator...Rainer F
Equipment Subcommittee Chair... Kris C
Translation Subcommittee Chair...Santiago S

Convention Liaison... Bob D
Convention Liaison, Span... tbd
Corrections Chair... Alex O
CPC Chair... Bill G
CPC Co-Chair, Span... Martin G
DCM School... Terry S
DCM School Spanish ... tbd

Finance Committee Chair... Jim B
Grapevine Chair... Doug M
La Viña Chair... Mauricio T
GSR School... David B
GSR School, Spanish... Renaldo A
Literature Chair... Ernesto M
Literature Co-Chair, Spanish ... tbd
Public Information Chair... Keith S
Public Info., Sp... .. Marcelo C
Registration Chair... Devon F
Special Needs Chair...Scott R
Special Needs Co-Chair, Spanish...tbd
Treatment Facilities Chair... John O

Archivist... Pete B
Coffee person... Paco G
Sound Dudes...Leandro L & Raul C

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