

# **DISTRICT 30**

CALIFORNIA NORTHERN INTERIOR AREA

## *GROUP SECRETARY'S HANDBOOK*

April 2026

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Many A.A.s from Amador and Calaveras Counties, as well as A.A.s from other areas, have provided suggestions and work on this handbook over many years - another way to PASS IT ON. Your suggestions and comments are welcomed and appreciated.

## **INTRODUCTION**

If you are a newly elected group secretary, congratulations! If you are interested in becoming a group secretary or are interested in what a group secretary does, welcome! It can be a wonderful and rewarding experience for you. Action is the magic word to insure sobriety.

Your responsibilities can be large or small, depending on your Group's suggested procedures and your desire for service; from making coffee, paying the rent, and passing the basket, to keeping records of money received and paid out - all may be part of a secretary's routine. Most important, you will symbolize A.A. for the newcomer in making them feel welcome.

This handbook is designed to answer some of the questions you may have about your specific responsibilities as secretary and about A.A. in general.

Never hesitate to ask your group's GSR or someone else for help.

## **RESPONSIBILITY DECLARATION**

*I am responsible. . .  
When anyone anywhere  
reaches out for help. I want  
the hand of A.A. always to be there.  
And for that; I am responsible.*

Copyright by The A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

## **PERMISSION TO QUOTE FROM A.A. MATERIAL**

On August 28, 1995, the then-District Committee Member (DCM) called the General Service Office (GSO) in New York and spoke to Valerie about quoting from *The A.A. Service Manual*, A. A. pamphlets, *The A.A. Grapevine* and other A.A. material. She said OK but to show where the information came from. She checked with the Grapevine Office Manager, Naomi, and she gave permission also.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF A GROUP SECRETARY

Responsibilities for a group secretary are set by the group conscience. Duties will vary from one group to another. It is recommended that the group conscience determine how many months continuous sobriety a group secretary should have. Additionally, the group secretary should be a member of the group and commit to attend all meetings during the term of office.

### ***What Qualities Do We Look for in an A.A. Secretary?***

- A commitment to sobriety is essential. A group may set a requirement for current continuous sobriety. In District 30, a minimum of 6 months has worked well.
- A willingness to ask questions, seek advice from former secretaries, a sponsor, the GSR, and written materials, such as the pamphlet *The A.A. Group* or *The Group Handbook*, which have excellent material on what secretaries do or do not do.
- A willingness to serve, be reliable in opening the door and being there for every meeting. The Secretary makes the first impression of A.A. on the newcomer.
- A willingness to abide by decisions made by group conscience as to the format of the meeting and other decisions made for the common welfare comes first. The Secretary is but a trusted servant and does not govern.
- A dedication to the principles and traditions of A.A., remembering that our common welfare comes first; we have but one ultimate authority, a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience; and our primary purpose is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

### ***What Does an A.A. Meeting Secretary Do?***

#### ***Basic Duties***

- Arrives early and **OPENS** the meeting on time.
- May also be responsible for opening the doors to the meeting place on time or ensuring that it is done.
- May be responsible for getting the coffee ready and that the room is orderly and clean.
- Enlists the help of other members to perform some of the routine duties, (making coffee, refilling cups during meetings, passing baskets, cleaning up after the meeting, etc.).
- May be responsible for setting out the A.A. literature. (Note – *The A.A. Grapevine* is not Conference-approved. The Grapevine is published monthly, so it cannot be approved by the Conference, which meets once a year.)
- Hands out reading assignments to members before meeting.
- Makes visitors feel welcome.
- Passes sign-up sheet (in groups that use one) for those who wish to share.
- Asks for A.A. related announcements, requests reports from Treasurer, GSR, and H&I Representative as group conscience indicates.
- Posts or makes written announcements available for members to read.
- Conducts meeting according to format approved by group conscience. According to Tradition Four "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole." It may structure its format in any way that follows the Twelve Traditions.
- When meetings require a Chair or speaker, obtain said chairperson or speaker as indicated by group conscience. In these cases, the Secretary introduces the Chair who shares experience, strength and hope for a time limit set by group conscience and then leads the discussion afterwards. In some groups the Chair may lead the entire meeting.
- Passes the 7th Tradition basket. After the meeting, counts the money, records and deposits or gives money to treasurer as group conscience dictates.
- **CLOSES** the meeting on time so that all may share in closure.

- May be responsible for making sure facilities are clean, chairs and dishes put away, appliance and lights off and the facility is locked when leaving. This is an important part of recovery and service to our group and it also pleases the landlord.
- May act as chairperson during group conscience or business meetings, if the group does not have a General Service Representative (GSR).
- Handles correspondence with other groups, Central Office, General Service Office, and any other related correspondence, including news items from *By The Way*, the CCFAA newsletter, or *Keeping in Touch*, the Delta Intergroup newsletter.
- Assists the newly elected secretary for a couple of meetings. (Don't just throw them the keys!)

### ***Additional Duties***

If the group does not have any trusted servants other than Secretary, some additional duties may be as follows:

- Pays rent and other group bills ON TIME, maintains good relations with the landlord.
- Keeps monthly financial record and reports to the group as group conscience dictates.
- Purchases and maintains literature supply.
- Purchases and maintains supplies - coffee, cups, sugar, cream etc.
- Maintains a Birthday Book if group conscience dictates.

### ***Encouraging Group Participation***

The Secretary encourages group participation. Many methods are used. Here are a few:

- If a sign-in sheet is used, start at the top and call on people in order in which they signed or randomly.
- Call on people in order they are seated, going around the room.
- Ask A.A. visitors to share early in the meeting.
- Ask for volunteers.
- Use a tag system. Each person who shares then calls on someone else.
- Use a combination of whatever works! Consider the size of the group and treat impartially.
- Don't insist that everyone shares at a meeting; staying within the time parameters is important. A group conscience may extend the meeting time if needed.
- Secretaries **should not** interrupt the discussion to interject their own thoughts. The Secretary will typically participate last in the discussion unless called upon.
- Commenting on sharing is not required or desirable and may cause people to stop sharing.

### ***How Do We Elect a Secretary?***

Before nominating a candidate for Secretary, the group should determine whether the person would be available to serve if elected.

- Sometimes the Secretary is elected by group acclamation.
- An election may be conducted in the form of the "Third Legacy Procedure" election, described in *The A.A. Service Manual*, Chapter I "The General Service Conference Structure" (What is 'Third Legacy Procedure?'); Chapter IV "The Area Committee (A Typical Election Assembly Agenda).
- "Railroading" or "Nominating" without a members approval is a poor method of recruiting a Secretary because the person may not or will not be able to commit time to the job.

## ***When Things Go Wrong***

If anything affects the welfare of the group, it is to be brought to the business meeting, group conscience meeting or steering committee meeting so a group conscience may be taken. Problems are best handled by group conscience.

## ***Some Problems***

### ***Expenses***

If expenses are not met the Secretary or Treasurer informs the group and asks for suggested ways to acquire increased contributions.

### ***Calling on Non-A.A.s to Share in a Meeting***

If it is an open meeting (open to the public), non-A.A.s usually can be called upon although some groups may ask that sharing be limited to alcoholics only. Some groups call on non-A.A.'s after all A.A.s have had a chance to speak. If it is **closed meeting** (alcoholics only), no non-A.A.'s should not be present.

### ***Crosstalk***

Most groups discourage crosstalk—interrupting one another, engaging in discussion, or making uninvited comments on someone else's sharing. The Secretary or another member invites those participating in crosstalk to continue their discussion outside or after the meeting.

### ***Meeting Domination***

The group's meeting format, which the Secretary reads at the beginning of the meeting, may suggest that sharing be limited to \_\_\_ minutes (set by group conscience) so that many or all will have an opportunity to share. If the meeting is being dominated by an individual the secretary may interrupt at some point simply by saying "Thank you \_\_\_\_\_ but we would like to give an opportunity for everyone at the meeting to have a chance to share" That will usually help the person sharing to wrap it up.

### ***Chair Dominating the Meeting***

Before the meeting begins, the Secretary may inform the Chair to speak for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes (set by group conscience) and that you will remind him or her if he or she speaks too long. It is a good line of practice to inform the chair of the time set aside for the chair before the meeting starts so that it is fresh in the mind of the chair person before they share. You can also let the chair know that you will give some kind of signal like pointing to the wrist or sliding a watch in front of the chair person so they are prompted to wrap it up. Even regulars at a meeting should be informed of this time.

### ***Secretary Dominating the Meeting***

The Secretary usually participates last, unless called upon by the Chair. The Secretary should inform the Chair whether the Chair or the Secretary is to call on and thank members for sharing. Commenting on sharing is not required or desirable. Please be mindful that this is a service commitment, however if you are in absolute need of sharing keep it to the recovery topic and the time limit set for all other members at the meeting.

### ***Uncontrolled Drunkenness or Violence***

The welfare of the group comes first. The Secretary is in charge of the meeting and may ask for group assistance and/or group conscience when disturbances occur. People may be asked to leave or be accompanied out of the meeting if they are disruptive. Call 911 only when absolutely necessary. The Secretary should interrupt the person who is disrupting the meeting with a "Thank you \_\_\_\_\_. It is our desire for you to be here to hear the message of recovery that has helped us. We want you to stay but we do need to allow others in the meeting to share. We would be very

happy to talk with you after the meeting". If the disturbance continues without a solution, you may take a Group Conscience to CLOSE the meeting and disburse.

### ***Singleness of Purpose***

Bill W wrote in *Grapevine* articles about A.A.'s singleness of purpose:

- "Our first duty, as a fellowship, is to insure our own survival. Therefore, we have to avoid distractions and multipurpose activities."
- "We have to confine our membership to alcoholics, and we have to confine our A.A. groups to a single purpose. If we don't stick to these principles, we shall almost surely collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone."
- "We cannot give A.A. membership to nonalcoholic addicts. But, like anyone else, they should be able to attend open meetings, provided, of course, that the groups themselves are willing."

For suggestions, see:

The long form of Tradition Three; *Language of the Heart*" pp 4-5, 79-80, 93, 223 & 317; *A.A. Comes of Age*, pp 102-103, 190, 192, 199 & 203; *Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*, p 240; and the pamphlets *The A.A. Group* and *Problems Other Than Alcohol*.

## **GROUPS AND MEETINGS**

Groups in Amador and Calaveras Counties make up District 30, California Northern Interior Area (CNIA 07), Pacific Region, of the General Service Conference. A Group may elect a GSR who is the communication link between the Group and the District.

### ***What is an A.A. Group?***

An A.A. group consists of two or more alcoholics who gather together for meetings on a regular basis. These meetings are the basic source of recovery for the alcoholic who wants to stop drinking.

According to our Twelve Traditions, a group is fully self-supporting, has no outside affiliations, and has no opinions on outside issues. Because A.A.'s public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion, the group members maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV and film.

In *The A.A. Service Manual, Chapter I, "The Group and its General Service Representative"* (What is an A.A. Group?), the long Form of Tradition Three and a section of the explanation of Warranty Six, Concept XII, aptly describe what an A.A. group is:

Tradition Three (long form): "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."

Warranty Six explanation (in part): ". . .much attention has been drawn to the extraordinary liberties which the A.A. Traditions accord to the individual member and to his group: no penalties to be inflicted for nonconformity to A.A. principles; no fees or dues to be levied - voluntary contributions only; no member to be expelled from A.A. - membership always to be the choice of the individual; each A.A. group to conduct its internal affairs as it wishes - it being merely requested to abstain from acts that might injure A.A. as a whole; and finally that any group or alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group provided that, as a group, they have no other purpose or affiliation."

### ***The Home Group***

Experience has shown that for most A.A. members, membership in an A.A. group known as a "Home Group" is vital in maintaining sobriety through Alcoholics Anonymous. In the early days of the Fellowship, A.A. members actually met in the homes of fellow members and shared their experience, strength and hope with one another. From this Home Group they went on to help

newcomers seeking sobriety through A.A. The concept of the Home Group has grown to thousands of groups through which the Home Group member helps others to recover from alcoholism. Alcoholics have found sobriety, fellowship, service work and the true joy of good living through their own A.A. groups. Traditionally, most A.A. members through the years have found it important to belong to a Home Group. This is the group where they may accept service responsibilities and try to sustain friendships. Although all A.A. members are usually welcomed at all groups and feel at home at any of these meetings, the concept of the Home Group has remained the strongest bond between the A.A. members and the Fellowship.

The Home Group concept affords the A.A. Home Group member the privilege and right to vote upon issues which may affect not only his or her Home Group but also A.A. as a whole. It is the very basis of our service structure. Concept I states, "The final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. World Services should always reside in the collective conscience of our fellows." Obviously, as with all group conscience matters, each A.A. member has one vote, and this would be through his or her Home Group.

An A.A. member from one area stated the following about her Home Group:

"This is the group where I accept responsibility for being informed and available. My group cannot be in a contest designed for individuals, group rivalry, or competition to see which group is the biggest, or who stays sober the longest, or which group contributes the most service, or who is the most sought-after speaker.

" . . .part of my commitment is to show up at my 'Home Group' meetings, greet newcomers at the door, and to be available to the newcomer not only for them, but also for me. These are the people who know me, who listen to me, and steer me straight when I am going off in left field. This 'Home Group' cares about me, and thus I can care about the newcomers that come to my group. When a newcomer walks in I want them to have the very best that A.A. has to offer, just like I had.

If each of us stays active in our 'Home Group.' making coffee, rotating onto committees, opening and closing up buildings, taking the Steps and following the Traditions our 'Home Group' will not only survive, it will be there for days, months and years to come offering all of us the loving joyful and free life that A.A. has to give, not only to us, but to all who follow us in this life of giving.

### ***Service Delivery at the Group Level***

All A.A. groups listed at the General Service Office are treated alike. Groups that can contribute nothing for services received are given the same attention as groups that contribute a great deal. Also, all registered groups receive Box 459, A.A.'s bimonthly newsletter, at no charge.

The staff at the General Service Office respond to requests from A.A.s for shared experience on a wide range of issues from how to handle a disruptive A.A. group member to taking a group inventory.

According to the 2024 *Final Conference Report* (page 130), 40.72% of the A.A. groups in CNIA contribute to the General Service Office. This is slightly better than the 31.64% for the US and Canada as a whole.

### ***Group Trusted Servants***

Some examples of trusted servants a group may have, other than Secretary, include:

- Treasurer
- General Service Representative (GSR)
- Literature Person
- Alternate General Service Representative (Alt. GSR)
- Supply Person (buys coffee, sugar, cups etc.)
- Birthday or Anniversary Chairperson.
- Grapevine Representative (GvR)
- Greeter

### **Rotation of Trusted Servants**

Rotation is one of the important principles in the structure and operation of a group and indeed throughout the fellowship. It means that an individual, no matter how competent, must not serve too long as a secretary or a member of a service committee. Pass the privilege of being trusted servants to others so they may get into action to insure their sobriety. The terms of service as secretary is decided by group conscience. In District 30 a 6-month service term seems to work well for weekly meetings.

### **Starting a New Group or Meeting**

If you are interested in starting a new group or a new meeting, contact District 30 for assistance and guidance.

### **Meeting or a Group?**

For information, please refer to the pamphlets *The A.A. Group, Problems Other Than Alcohol*; and the book *Language of the Heart*, p 222.

### **Your Group's Meeting Format**

The following is the long form of Tradition Four:

With respect to its own affairs, each 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.

*Alcoholics Anonymous*, Fourth Edition p 563

The meeting format for any group has been approved by group conscience. The format may take any form provided it follows the Twelve Traditions. Examples of formats may be found elsewhere in this handbook, but no group need follow them. Your group's format should be followed as dictated by informed group conscience and be changed only by informed group conscience.

### **The Informed Group Conscience**

#### **Group Conscience is defined by:**

Tradition Two - 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.

#### Concepts

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

IV. 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.

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.

XII. Warranty Four: "That all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible by substantial unanimity."

The above seems to indicate that:

- There are no "authorities" other than a Higher Power.
- Everyone has the right to share, every opinion counts, and every home group member has the right to vote. Ask everyone to share and set a time limit, if necessary, so all may share.
- Members should be open and willing to listen.
- While any A.A. member may join in the discussion, when it comes to voting, only Home group members should vote. As stated in *The A.A. Service Manual, Chapter I, "The Group and its General Service Representative"* (The Home Group), "As with all group conscience matters, each member has one vote."

- After a vote, voters in the minority should be given another opportunity to be heard.
- A two-thirds (two-to-one) majority should usually constitute substantial unanimity. See Substantial Unanimity below.
- We have no rules, so it may be that a given problem may be brought up for an informed group conscience from time to time. Some people suggest that an informed group conscience requires knowledge of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts and the topic being considered.

### ***Substantial Unanimity***

*The A.A. Service Manual & the Twelve Concepts for World Service*, Warranty Four (in part), states, "In passing it should be noted that the Conference will sometimes have to decide, with respect to a particular question, what the requirements of substantial unanimity are going to be - whether a two-thirds, three-quarters, or even greater majority, will be required to settle a particular question. Such an advance agreement can, of course, be had on a simple majority vote."

### ***Business, Group Conscience or Steering Committee Meetings***

Groups usually take their group consciences during a business meeting, group conscience meeting or steering committee meeting. These meetings may be held at any time; however, many groups set aside a specific day and time for these meetings so all who wish to can attend. These meetings may be held before, after or during a regular meeting or any other time.

In large fellowships with many meetings, secretaries of each meeting ought to attend all business meetings, depending, again, upon the group's conscience.

### ***Group Financial Responsibilities***

#### ***Group Contributions***

Traditions 1, 4 and 7 should be reviewed and each group ought to contribute for services it receives. Generally, the first responsibility is for group expenses to ensure that the meeting can take place. Without a meeting everything else is moot. Group expenses include rent, insurance, books, literature, GSR and Intergroup Representative expenses for attending meetings, and refreshments such as coffee.

#### ***Group Bank Accounts***

Whether a group chooses to have bank checking and/or savings accounts is a matter of group choice. Some groups have so little money they believe the accounts to be unnecessary. The group treasurer pays cash, buys money orders or uses a personal checking account to pay bills. Some groups choose to maintain a substantial prudent reserve (the amount determined by group conscience) for rent, insurance and the like so they use bank accounts.

The use of personal social security numbers on group accounts could cause legal problems for the bank, the group and the person whose social security number was being used. It was pointed out that the person could possibly be responsible for a tax liability with the IRS, and should the person die or have financial problems the account could be seized.

If your group has bank accounts and has not already done so or chooses to begin to use bank accounts, it is suggested that you contact your DCM or the IRS at (800) 829-1040 and get IRS Form *SS-4 Application for Employer Identification Number* for use on your accounts. See the Appendix for a description of the form and how to complete it.

#### ***Group Support of General Service Representative (GSR)***

Experience is now indicating that many groups are now financially supporting their general service representatives to attend service functions.

### **Treasurer**

For the peace of mind and protection of the group it is suggested each group have a treasurer who reports monthly to the group. The treasurer may also be responsible for:

- Paying all bills for which the group is invoiced, such as rent, literature, and supplies.
- Collecting and recording all 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition contributions.
- Distributing funds to other A.A. services as directed by group conscience.

Due to the nature of a treasurer's responsibilities the group may set suggested requirements for the position, such as:

- Must be a Home Group member.
- Must have maintained \_\_\_\_\_ years of current continuous sobriety (set by group conscience)

If your group does not have a treasurer, then this is an important part of your job as secretary.

### **Other A.A. Services Supported by Contributions**

- California Northern Interior Area District 30 (Amador and Calaveras Counties).  
District 30 of CNIA provides local meeting directories. Delta Intergroup helps District 30 with our local 24-hour A.A. Hotline at (209) 464-1594.
- Central California Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous (CCFAA) (Sacramento Central Office)
- Delta Intergroup (Stockton Central Office)  
(Note: Most groups contribute to one or the other of the above and some groups contribute to both).
- California Northern Interior Area (CNIA)  
CNIA provides your group with the linkage to other groups and A.A. as whole. Each year the Area Delegate attends the General Service Conference, in New York, where your group's concerns and suggestions can be made known and heard.
- General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. (New York)  
The General Service Office (GSO) of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc., provides us with uniform literature, experience of groups worldwide and other services that the groups cannot provide for themselves.

The pamphlet *Self-Supporting Through Our Own Contributions* makes suggestions on how 7th Tradition funds may be distributed. These are guidelines and each group should determine where it receives its services and how much to give. District 30 provides services often delivered through an intergroup or central office, including meeting directories, and supports Delta Intergroup Hotline. For that reason, District 30 may receive a greater share of a group's distribution. District currently suggests that a group consider contributing as follows:

- 55% to District 30.
- 25% to General Service Office.
- 10% to California Northern Interior Area.
- 5% to Delta Intergroup.
- 5% to Central California Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

See the Appendix for a list of names and addresses to which to send contributions.

### **Open and Closed Meetings**

The 1987 General Service Conference made this statement available as an A.A. service piece for those groups who wish to use it. (F-17)

### ***This is an open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous***

This is an open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are glad you are all here – especially newcomers. In keeping with our singleness of purpose and our Third Tradition which states that

“The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking,” we ask that all who participate confine their discussion to their problems with alcohol.

### ***This is a closed meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous***

This is a closed meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. In support of A.A.’s singleness of purpose, attendance at closed meetings is limited to persons who have a desire to stop drinking. If you think you have a problem with alcohol, you are welcome to attend this meeting. We ask that when discussing our problems, we confine ourselves to those problems as they relate to alcoholism.

Tradition 4 states: “Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.” and Tradition 2 states, “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.” Putting the traditions into practice will allow the individual group to decide by group conscious the suggested format they would like to implement for their meeting regarding ***open and closed*** meeting guidelines.

### ***Other Sources of Help***

- General Service Representative
- Pamphlets *The A.A. Group*, *The Twelve Traditions Illustrated*, *The Twelve Concepts Illustrated*
- Your recovery sponsor, your service sponsor

### ***A Final Reminder***

**The Secretary is, as Tradition Two tells us, a trusted servant who does not govern.**

**However, the Secretary’s position is most important.**

**The Secretary may be the first person a newcomer meets in A.A.**

**The Secretary sets the tone of the meeting with a friendly, open and impartial manner.**

**Being of service has many rewards and, best of all, it keeps us sober.**

***GOOD LUCK!***

## A SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR CONDUCTING AN A.A. MEETING

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. This is the regular meeting of the \_\_\_\_\_ Group of Alcoholics Anonymous. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am an alcoholic and your secretary.

Let us open the meeting with a moment of silence to do with as you wish followed by the Serenity Prayer.

GOD, GRANT ME THE SERENITY  
TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE,  
THE COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN,  
AND THE WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.

The following is the definition of Alcoholics Anonymous:

"Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety."

I have asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read "How it Works" from Chapter 5 of our A.A. book.

I have asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read the Twelve Traditions.

[Some groups may also read "More About Alcoholism" or the "Promises.]"

If it is the custom of the group, ask any new members to introduce themselves by their first names only, and welcome them.

Ask any visitors to introduce themselves.

Make regular A.A. announcements, including availability of free literature, books for sale. Ask if any member present has any A.A. announcements.

Introduce the Chairperson or Speaker for the evening. (If yours is a discussion type meeting, the Chairperson for the evening may also conduct the discussion.)

Pass the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition basket. (Usually, the Secretary precedes this by saying something like: "We have no dues or fees in A.A., we are self-supporting through our own contributions. This self-support includes our rent for this room, the coffee and refreshments, contributions to the Central Office and to General Service in New York.") If your group passes the basket during the meeting, a Secretary may want to make some type of statement before turning the meeting over to the Chairperson.

Thank the Speaker or Chairperson, as well as any other members who participated in reading "How It Works", the Traditions, and other material.

Close the meeting with a prayer of your choice.

**Note:** Make every effort to open and close the meeting on time. Be sure to tell your Chairperson or Speaker what time the coffee or smoke break is (if any) and what time the chair should finish.

The only purpose of the foregoing format is to be of some assistance to Group Secretaries. There are many possible formats; this one is common but by no means universal. Variations are:

- Speaker Meeting
- Step Study Meeting
- Book Study Meeting
- Grapevine Meeting

***Another Meeting Format (from the A.A. Grapevine)***

“We are a rowdy meeting where everyone joins in and participates and has a good time staying sober. The format of the meeting is to open with the preamble, then start a basket around the room to collect questions related to A.A. while we read the Serenity Prayer, parts of Chapters Three and Five from the Big Book, and the Twelve Traditions (we read the long form of the Twelve Traditions). Then we pass out chips, recognize birthdays, the leader qualifies, we take a 10-minute coffee break, and then read the questions aloud, inviting anyone to answer as he or she understands the questions. Near the end of the meeting, we have reports from the secretary, treasurer, GSR, Intergroup Rep, and GvR. Then we close with the Lord's Prayer.”

From these two examples, you can see the wide latitude that is available to each group in setting its own format. Each group should work on its own format for a meeting.

On the next pages are printed selected excerpts from A.A. literature which groups may choose to read at the beginning of meetings.

## **THE A.A. PREAMBLE**

As noted in the above "suggested format" the A.A. Preamble is often read at the beginning of a meeting as a definition of Alcoholics Anonymous:

"Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses or opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety."

Copyright by The A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

## CHAPTER 5 - HOW IT WORKS

RARELY HAVE WE seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it then you are ready to take certain steps. At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with alcohol - cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power; that One is God. May you find Him now!

Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon.

Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:

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.

Many of us exclaimed, "What an order! I can't go through with it." Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

- (a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.
- (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.
- (c) That God could and would if He were sought.

Reprinted from *Alcoholics Anonymous*, pp 58-60

## CHAPTER 3 - MORE ABOUT ALCOHOLISM

MOST OF US have been unwilling to admit we were real alcoholics. No person likes to think he is bodily and mentally different from his fellows. Therefore, it is not surprising that our drinking careers have been characterized by countless vain attempts to prove we could drink like other people. The idea that somehow, someday he will control and enjoy his drinking is the great obsession of every abnormal drinker. The persistence of this illusion is astonishing. Many pursue it into the gates of insanity or death.

We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in recovery. The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed.

We alcoholics are men and women who have lost the ability to control our drinking. We know that no real alcoholic ever recovers control. All of us felt at times that we were regaining control, but such intervals - usually brief - were inevitably followed by still less control, which led in time to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization. We are convinced to a man that alcoholics of our type are in the grip of a progressive illness. Over any considerable period we get worse, never better.

We are like men who have lost their legs; they never grow new ones. Neither does there appear to be any kind of treatment which will make alcoholics of our kind like other men. We have tried every imaginable remedy. In some instances there has been brief recovery, followed always by a still worse relapse. Physicians who are familiar with alcoholism agree there is no such thing as making a normal drinker out of an alcoholic. Science may one day accomplish this, but it hasn't done so yet.

Despite all we can say, many who are real alcoholics are not going to believe they are in that class. By every form of self-deception and experimentation, they will try to prove themselves exceptions to the rule, therefore nonalcoholic. If anyone who is showing inability to control his drinking can do the right-about-face and drink like a gentleman, our hats are off to him. Heaven knows, we have tried hard enough and long enough to drink like other people!

Here are some of the methods we have tried: Drinking beer only, limiting the number of drinks, never drinking alone, never drinking in the morning, drinking only at home, never having it in the house, never drinking during business hours, drinking only at parties, switching from scotch to brandy, drinking only natural wines, agreeing to resign if ever drunk on the job, taking a trip, not taking a trip, swearing off forever (with and without a solemn oath), taking more physical exercise, reading inspirational books, going to health farms and sanitariums, accepting voluntary commitment to asylums - we could increase the list ad infinitum.

Reprinted from *Alcoholics Anonymous*, pp 30-31

## THE A.A. TRADITION

To those now in its fold, Alcoholics Anonymous has made the difference between misery and sobriety, and often the difference between life and death. A.A. can, of course, mean just as much to uncounted alcoholics not yet reached.

Therefore, no society of men and women ever had a more urgent need for continuous effectiveness and permanent unity. We alcoholics see that we must work together and hang together, else most of us will finally die alone.

The "12 Traditions" of Alcoholics Anonymous are, we A.A.s believe, the best answers that our experience has yet given to those ever urgent questions, "How can A.A. best function?" and, "How can A.A. best stay whole and so survive?"

Reprinted from *Alcoholics Anonymous*, Fourth Edition p 561

### ***The Twelve Traditions (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 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.

Reprinted from *Alcoholics Anonymous*, Fourth Edition p 562

## **THE PROMISES**

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

Reprinted from *Alcoholics Anonymous*, pp 83-84

## THE CHALLENGE OF THE SEVENTH TRADITION

“Passing the basket” or “passing the hat” is the way that A.A. members meet their own group’s expenses and also make contributions which assist other parts of Alcoholics Anonymous in carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. A group’s first responsibility is to maintain itself. Other A.A. entities which need support are discussed below.

### ***A Summary of A.A. Services***

Bill W. said, "There was a place in A.A. where spirituality and money would mix, and that was in the hat"!

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 163

The General Service Board is concerned about the problem of using publishing income to support the group services of the General Service Office and the work of the General Service Board. Historically, the sale of literature has produced income to help support service activities since 1940. At one time we could say that money came from the A.A. member, either as contributions or through purchase of books. In recent years, an increasing amount of publishing income has come from sale of literature to outside agencies. We welcome this wider distribution of our message but can no longer overlook the fact that outsiders are providing financial help for our Twelfth Step work.

When members put money in the basket they do Twelfth Step work. This Twelfth Step work includes carrying the A.A. message through literature, audiovisual materials and information, as well as with direct contact with other countries worldwide, Loners, the public, the media and friends in the professional community.

When A.A. services become fully supported by contributions, literature can be sold at cost making our message more readily available and thus enabling us to fulfill our primary purpose.

### ***Historical Background of Self-Support***

A.A.'s evolving Tradition of self-support was to move a long way from the financially desperate period, around 1938, when Bill and others around him wished silently and urgently that John D. Rockefeller would bestow the fledgling Fellowship with large donations.

In 1947, Bill said "Voluntary contributions or pledges of A.A. members ought to be A.A.'s principal support, and, eventually, its sole support." In the beginning A.A. desperately needed a little outside help (which, he noted, made possible the Alcoholic Foundation, the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and the General Office) times had now changed. He sensed ". . . a very powerful feeling. . . spreading among us that A.A. ought not to be takers from society, any longer. Instead, let us be givers." Additionally, the news that every A.A. group had become self-supporting would create invaluable goodwill in the outside world.

The General Headquarters, predecessor to GSO, published a monthly newsletter for distribution to the Fellowship. In the February 1949 issue, the purpose of voluntary contributions was defined:

- To meet the expenses of General Headquarters, which operated a plan of service to alcoholics the world over.
- To meet those expenses of General Headquarters incurred in its operations as a coordinating center for all A.A. groups.

The article emphasized the voluntary nature of the contributions - they were "not dues or fees." It also stated that such contributions would ". . . be used for A.A. operating expenses only."

In September 1950, lack of voluntary contributions led Bill to issue to the Fellowship a five-page plea for support, including a request that the group secretaries call a special business meeting for the purpose of reading his (Bill's) written plea. ". . .Without A.A.'s Services we'd often fumble that new man (or woman) just coming in the door; without our Services, we'd certainly spoil the main chance of those millions who don't yet know."

In November 1957, Bill wrote the *A.A. Grapevine* article entitled "Respecting Money", in which he juxtaposed outside contributions and self-support: "Our spiritual way of life is safe for future generations if, as a society, we resist the temptation to receive money from the outside world. But this leaves us with a responsibility, one that every member ought to understand. We cannot skimp when the treasurer of our group passes the hat. Our groups, our areas and A.A. as a whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and our bills paid."

Ten years later, as if in conclusion, Bill wrote in the *A.A. Grapevine*: "Both these principles we understand: that A.A. wants no charity: that we support our own services. We understand but we sometimes forget."

### ***What's Wrong With This Picture?***

(Our thanks to San Diego Imperial Area Treasurer for this material)

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2010	<b>2026</b>
Coffee	\$ .05	\$ .15	\$ .35	\$ .50	\$2.00	\$4.50
Soda Pop	\$ .10	\$ .20	\$ .35	\$ .50	\$1.50	\$2.50
Gasoline	\$ .22	\$ .65	\$ .90	\$1.10	\$3.30	\$5.75
Cigarettes	\$ .25	\$ .65	\$1.40	\$2.00	\$6.50	\$10.00
Inflation	\$1.00	---	---	\$4.13	\$15.00+	\$20.00+
 A.A. Basket	 \$1.00	 \$1.00	 \$1.00	 \$1.00	 \$1.00	 <b>\$1.00</b>

**... A DOLLAR DOESN'T DO IT.**

BREAK THE BUCK BARRIER!

### ***Central Offices***

#### ***Responsibilities of a Central Office***

A Central Office's responsibilities may include the funding and performance of the following:

- Schedules – Schedules of meetings in the area covered by the Central Office are compiled and updated frequently.
- Newsletter - This is a way members of all meetings in the Central Office area have to communicate with each other. Every group can put events, birthdays or meeting changes in the newsletter, which is typically distributed monthly.
- Telephone - The office staff answer hundreds of calls from A.A. members who need information or want help with group problems. Out-of-town visitors frequently say that Central Office is the first place they call upon arrival in the area. Telephone coverage is available 24 hours per day at most Central Offices.
- Twelfth Step work - Twelfth Step calls are answered, then Twelfth Steppers are contacted to talk to the person at length or go to see him or her.
- Literature - The Central Office sells literature to groups in its service area. It is often available in several languages.
- Public Information - The Central Office is called whenever schools or private groups want information or presentations about Alcoholics Anonymous. The office relays the requests to the local Public Information Chair who schedules A.A. members to serve the public needs. Pamphlets are sent to people who request written information.

- Unity and Entertainment - The Central Office may sponsor an annual picnic or banquet. This is to provide activities where all groups can work together, promoting intergroup unity and fun.

### ***Delta Intergroup***

Delta Intergroup is a Central Office to which most groups in District 30 belong. The office is located at 1115 Robinhood Drive, Stockton CA 95207, telephone (209) 464-1509. Delta Intergroup publishes the monthly newsletter *KEEPING IN TOUCH*.

### **CCFAA**

Central California Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous (CCFAA) is the Sacramento area Intergroup Central Office to which some of the groups in District 30 belong. The office is located at 9960 Business Park Dr. Ste. 110 Sacramento, CA 95827 (916) 454-1771. CCFAA publishes the monthly newsletter *BY THE WAY*.

### ***District 30***

Any group in District 30 is welcome to avail itself of the services of the Central Offices. However, because of the distances involved and the proximity of different groups to different Central Offices, District 30 has assumed some of the responsibilities of Central Offices. These include the Delta Intergroup 24 Hour Hotline, (209) 464-1594, maintaining directories for District 30 meetings, and publishing this Handbook and the monthly *CNIA DISTRICT 30 NEWLSETTER*. For this reason, your group's contributions to the District may vary from those suggested in the pamphlet *Self-Supporting Through Our Own Contributions*. Your GSR can inform you more fully.

### ***Hospitals and Institutions (H&I)***

The only purpose of the Hospital and Institution Committee of the Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous is to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the alcoholic who is confined. The activities of this Committee are based on and governed by following the Twelve Traditions of A.A.

It is the express desire of this Committee that all persons with specific assignments and responsibilities have a minimum of two years continuous and immediate sobriety.

Remember always, these suggestions are based on "that which experience has taught us". It is the intention of your Committee, through these suggestions, to simplify and unify the procedure for those who are interested, and participating, in this type of 12th Step Work

Of necessity, our Committee is organized, in an endeavor to avoid confusion and duplication of effort. This is a service committee, and our responsibility has many facets, most important of which are:

- To the patient or inmate group within a facility.
- To the facility, courteous acceptance and compliance with its wishes.
  - To the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous: namely, conducting ourselves in a manner above reproach, to ensure that we will not say or do anything that will reflect unfavorably upon the Committee or A.A. as a whole.

Since our program is one of attraction rather than promotion, we serve these facilities at the invitation of the administration, ever conscious of the admonition "cooperation not affiliation."

As members of this Committee, we cannot and do not speak for A.A.; however, each of us who participates is automatically representative of A.A. We maintain our sobriety through adherence to a program embodied in our Twelve Suggested Steps of Recovery and to try to practice these principles in all our affairs. In view of this, we will:

- Respect full anonymity of inside members at all times.
- Respect the rules and regulations as outlined by the Administration.
- Refrain from using profanity, unrelated and off-color jokes, prolonged monologues of drunk stories and other types of self-indulgence.
- Respect full anonymity of inside members at all times.
- Not intercede in behalf of any individual or group of individuals affected by the decisions of the official family.
- Not engage in any controversy over management, treatment or personnel, being ever mindful of the single purpose of this Committee.

Just a few words on the purpose of the "Pink Cans". Northern California traditionally has had these collection cans passed or available at meetings. The H&I Committee, as it has come to be known, asks ONLY for change to be put into the cans as a donation to buy literature for distribution in those facilities, ONLY. Because of the necessity of rules and regulations in dealing with prisons and hospitals, it has become a separate entity. Therefore the money collected in those cans is sent to a separate address listed on the can label to be used by that committee only.

## **A.A.'s WORLD SERVICES**

The Twelve Concepts for World Service can be found in *The A.A. Service Manual Combined With Twelve Concepts for World Service*. Your GSR has a current copy.

### ***The Twelve Concepts (Short Form)***

- I. Final Responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.
- II. 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.
- III. To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A. the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives with a traditional "Right of Decision."
- IV. 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.
- 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.
- VI. 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.
- VII. 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. purpose for final effectiveness.
- VIII. The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. They have a custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all directors of these entities.
- IX. 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.
- X. Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.
- XI. The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.
- XII. 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 prudent 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, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

### **A.A. Services**

With A.A. all over the world, we must have some way of furnishing them with literature and information. To do this job, we have:

#### ***The General Service Conference***

"When, in 1955, the A.A. groups confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or in Article 12 of the Conference Charter the actual voice and the effective conscience for our whole Society."

Concept II of *The Twelve Concepts for World Service*.

The current Conference Structure for the United States and Canada can be found in *The A.A. Service Manual*, (2024-2026) Introduction "Welcome to General Service".

***The General Services Board (a Board of Trustees) Chapter 8 of the A.A. Service Manual (2024-2026)***

It safeguards the Traditions and service funds. It oversees the operating service units, and General Service Office, A.A. World Services, Inc. and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. The full description of the General Service Board can be found in the above reference to the current Conference Charter.

***The General Service Office (GSO) Chapter 12 of the A.A. Service Manual (2024-2026)***

GSO handles inquiries from groups and the general public. Prepares literature, issues periodic bulletins, corresponds with "loners", (people in remote places where there are no meetings), and corresponds with institutional groups. GSO also holds the annual General Service Conference, in April, to which the CNIA Area Delegate can carry your group's concerns and suggestions. It is at this Conference where "Conference Approved" literature gets approved. (For a more information on what GSO does see *The A.A. Service Manual*, Chapter X, "The General Service Office").

***A.A. World Services, Inc. Chapter 10 of the A.A. Service Manual (2024-2026)***

Handles all details involved in the publication and distribution of A.A.'s basic texts *Alcoholics Anonymous*, *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, *As Bill Sees It*, *Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*, *Pass It On*, *The Language of the Heart*, and *Daily Reflections* as well as booklets and pamphlets.

***A.A. Grapevine, Inc. Chapter 11 of the A.A. Service Manual (2024-2026)***

Publishes and distributes the monthly magazine *A.A. Grapevine*. This magazine is also called the "Meeting in Print", and it contains stories from contemporary as well as old-time A.A.'s.

## GLOSSARY

**Central (Intergroup) Office** – A local office that provides services to and is supported by the A.A. groups in the community it serves.

**CNIA** - California Northern Interior Area of Alcoholics Anonymous, also known as Area 07 of the General Service Conference. CNIA includes most of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys as well as the Western foothills of the Sierra. For maps and additional information on CNIA see CNIA GSR Handbook and *The A.A. Service Manual*.

**CPC** - Cooperation with the Professional Community (often combined with PI as PI/CPC)

**DCM** - District Committee Member (the link between the Groups and the Area)

**District 30** – Comprised of A.A. Groups in Amador and Calaveras Counties. In June 2010, there were 40 groups holding a total of about 78 weekly meetings.

**GSO** – The headquarters of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York NY 10163.

**GSR** - General Service Representative (an A.A. member elected by a Group to represent the Group Conscience at District and Area meetings)

**GvR** – Grapevine Representative for a Group or District. The *AA Grapevine* is published by The AA Grapevine, Inc., 475 Riverside Drive, New York NY 10115. A subscription to this monthly journal costs \$15 per year. Individuals and groups may subscribe.

**H&I** – The Hospital and Institution Committee of NCCAA

**NCCAA** - Northern California Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous covers a larger area than CNIA and CNCA (California Northern Coastal Area) combined. This organization has been in existence longer than GSO. NCCAA holds three conferences per year. Each county is entitled to an NCCA.A. Zone Chairperson. For more information see the Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous - Purpose, Structure, Functions, handbook.

**PI** - Public Information

# APPENDIX

## 1. Obtaining an EIN Number

In the past, any A.A. group which kept its treasury in a bank account could use a Social Security number as a "Tax ID," often the SSN of the group's then-treasurer when the group opened the account. **This is not allowed today**, and, in fact, was never a wise practice: the SSN-holder was forever liable for the account, not the group.

A Tax ID number is still needed to open an account, however, and the correct number is an EIN or Employer Identification Number. EINs are assigned to organizations, not individuals. The Internal Revenue Service issues an EIN upon receipt of a properly prepared SS4 form. Contact the IRS at 800 829-3676 to get IRS Form *SS-4 Application for Employer Identification Number*. To prepare this form, fill in ONLY the following:

Line 1: Fill in the name of the group. This should be the same name under which the group is registered, as well as the name on the group's checking account.

Lines 4a & 4b: Fill in the MAILING address of the group. If the group doesn't have a mailing address, use either the address of a long-time member or, alternatively, use the District 30 mailing address.

Line 4c: Fill in the county in which the group is located.

Line 8a: Check "Other nonprofit organization (specify)" and fill in "Alcoholics Anonymous."

Line 9: Check "Banking purpose (specify)" and fill in "Opening Account."

Line 10: Fill in the date the group started. This does not have to be exact; even "Early 1980s; date unknown" works fine. If you don't know, make a guess.

Line 11: Fill in the last month of the group's fiscal year. In most cases this will be December. If your group doesn't have a fiscal year, it's still December.

Line 15: Check "No."

Line 16: Check "Other (specify)" and fill in "Alcoholics Anonymous community."

Line 17a: Check "No."

Bottom/right: Business Telephone Number: Fill in the telephone number of the current treasurer or secretary. If neither wants the number listed, use that of a long-term member.

Bottom/right: Fax Telephone Number. This is really important: the IRS will fax back the completed form if they have a number.

Bottom/left: Name and Title: Fill in the name of your group's treasurer, whose title is "Treasurer." Please don't get in a squabble over broken anonymity. This does not involve a violation of the Traditions. Don't use an initial for the last name.

Bottom: The Group's treasurer signs and dates the form, legibly. (It doesn't matter if your treasurer rotates out next week. All they want is the current name.)

When you've completed the form, return it to the IRS as indicated on said form. In approximately one week, the IRS will return a copy of the form to the fax number you listed, with an EIN in the upper right-hand corner. Take that copy to the bank when you open your group's account.

## **2. Where to Send Group Contributions for A.A. Services [updated 04/2026]**

**PLEASE WRITE YOUR GROUP'S SIX-DIGIT GSO NUMBER ON YOUR CHECK AND ON THE ENVELOPE TO BE SURE THAT YOUR GROUP'S CONTRIBUTION IS CREDITED PROPERLY. SEE YOUR DCM OR DISTRICT TREASURER IF YOU DON'T KNOW THE NUMBER.**

CNIA District 30  
PO Box 43  
Murphys, CA 95247

California Northern Interior Area 07 (CNIA)  
P.O. Box 161712  
Sacramento, CA 95816-1712

(Note - The two above may change in January of even-numbered years.)

General Service Board  
P.O. Box 2407  
James A. Farley Station  
New York, NY 10116-2407  
1 (212) 870-3023

Central California Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous (CCFAA)  
9960 Business Park Dr. #110  
Sacramento, CA 95827  
1 (916) 454-1771

Delta Intergroup  
1115 Robinhood Drive, Unit B3  
Stockton, CA 95207  
1 (209) 464-1594 **24 Hour HELP Line**

NorCal H&I  
P.O. Box 192490  
San Francisco, CA 94119-2490