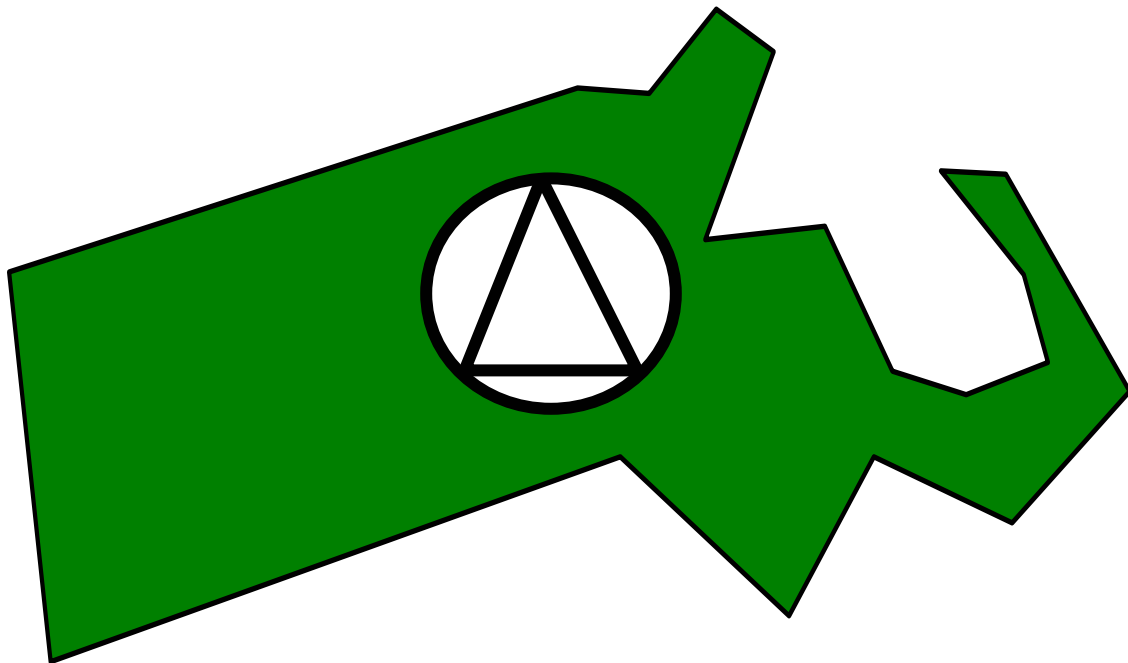


# **General Service Committee of Eastern Massachusetts**



## **Area 30 Handbook**

Revised by the Area Assembly September 13, 2009



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## **Welcome to the Area Committee.**

GENERAL SERVICE COMMITTEE OF EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS (Area 30) adheres to the principles and the traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. As a general rule, we follow the suggestions for an area committee as outlined in the AA Service Manual. However, in the more than forty plus years of our existence, Area 30 has developed a body of principles, practices, and procedures appropriate to the specific needs of Eastern Massachusetts. These relationships, by now traditional, have served us well as we function as a whole.

OUR GROWTH HAS BEEN RAPID. In just the past decade, as a result of AA's Twelfth Step work, the membership within Area 30 and the number of new groups formed have both increased considerably. Experience has taught us that we can neither look through those forty plus years of area meeting minutes looking for a relevant motion passed, nor can we retain in our collective memories all the experience and knowledge that has been passed on to us verbally. Unless supported by an objective summary of past action and experience, responding to issues with "... that's part of our area structure!" has become insufficient and unsatisfactory. Therefore, we have collected in this handbook the basic aspects and relationships of our area structure.

OUR COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE has provided us a set of basic service principles and procedures that serve as the operating guidelines for our various committees: At the same time, actions can be taken to improve and/or change these guidelines and to meet new needs or situations. We encourage the readers of this Handbook to share their suggestions and questions with the Alternate Area Chairperson. The September 29, 1996 assembly delegated the responsibility of updating and implementing all changes approved by the General Service Committee of Eastern Massachusetts (Area 30) Assembly. This Handbook, then, is for use as a guide - a reference and a resource - for what has worked in the past. It is subject to change by our collective group conscience, and we hope will be amended as better ways are found to carry out our primary purpose; to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

To all the GSRs, DCMs, Committee Chairpersons, and Area Officers who led the way, making this handbook possible, we express our appreciation and gratitude.

THE AREA HANDBOOK COMMITTEE <sup>1</sup>

The General Service Assembly of Eastern Massachusetts first adopted this Handbook on September 29, 1996 and subsequently approved its first revision on September 10, 2000 a second revision on November 4, 2001, the third revision on September 29, 2002, the fourth revision on November 6, 2005 and this fifth revision on September 9, 2007.

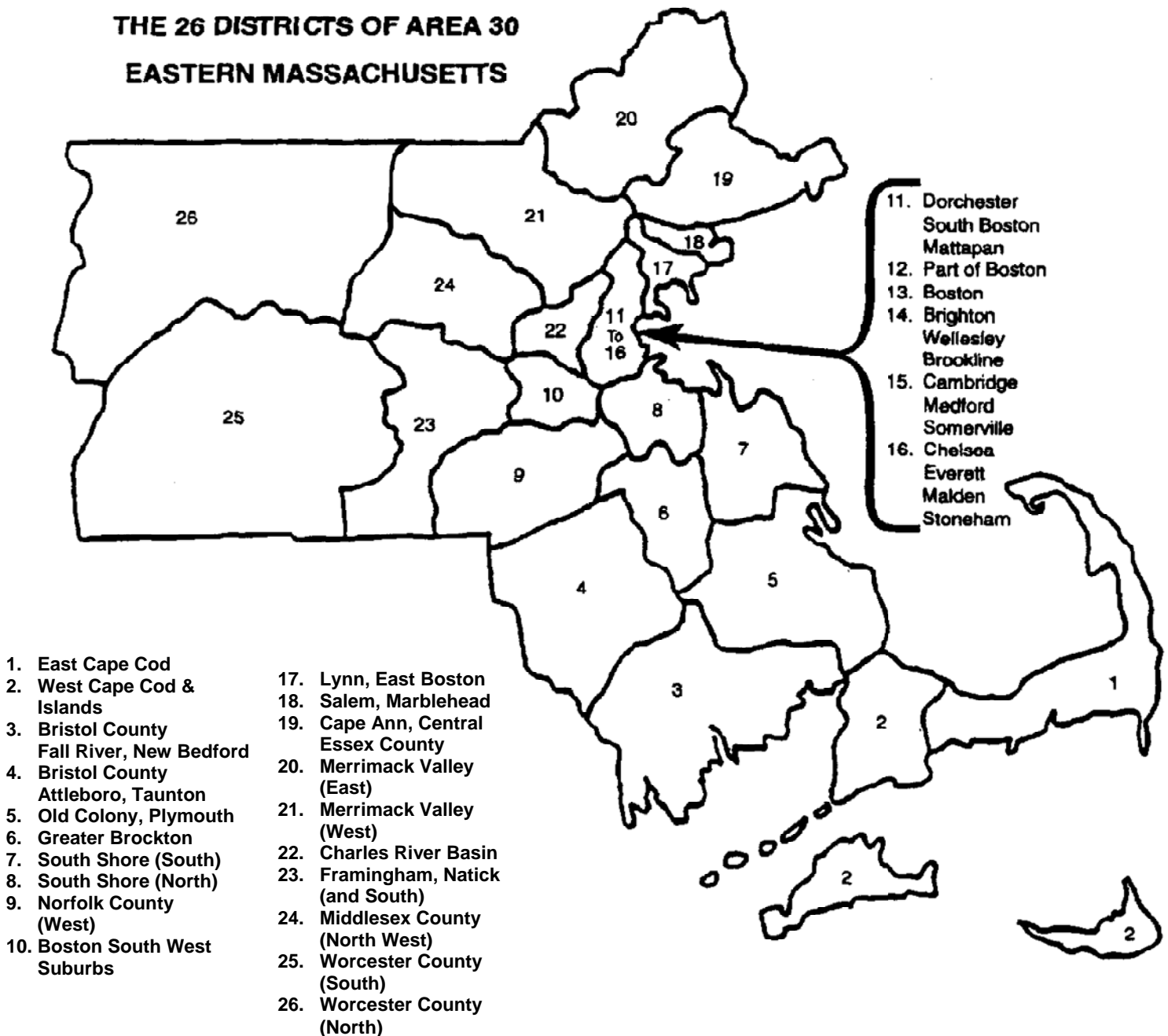
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<sup>1</sup> The Area 30 Handbook Committee was disbanded after completion of the Handbook and its approval at the Area Assembly on September 29, 1996.

## I. Districts and Map of Eastern Massachusetts (Area 30).

The District Committee is the vital link between the AA groups and AA as a whole. A district is a geographical region within an area containing a number of groups. The districts in Area 30 were created in 1975 and reaffirmed at the November 1990 Election Assembly. There are currently twenty-six districts and two Spanish non-geographical districts in Area 30. Each District elects a District Committee Member (DCM). The GSRs and the DCMs have regularly scheduled meetings to share with each other their experience, strength, and hope related to the twelfth step work that occurs within its district. The District Committee (GSRs and DCMs) also familiarizes itself with the Twelve Traditions and the related service work that occurs at the Area and Worldwide level.

### THE 26 DISTRICTS OF AREA 30 EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS



## II. What is the Role of the GSR (General Service Representative) in AA's Service Structure?<sup>2</sup>

The GSR has the job of linking his or her group with AA as a whole. The GSR has experience with the group and represents the voice of the group conscience. The GSR attends district meetings and reports the group's wishes to the District Committee Member. The GSR also attends the Area Assembly as part of the larger group conscience. Here the GSR has the opportunity to share their group's concerns and ideas with the Area 30 Delegate (who passes them on to the General Service Conference).

A GSR needs a good ear for listening. Whatever "authority" there is in AA resides in the group conscience. Through an informed group conscience and active participation, a GSR can share what a group needs and what a group thinks about a situation. The GSR can pass this information along to where it will be most useful in policy-making.

This sharing and participation is a two-way street, allowing the GSR to bring back to the group the problems and remedies that affect AA unity, health, and growth. By keeping the group informed, and expressing the group conscience, the GSR serves the group and helps to ensure that the General Service Conference is acting for AA as a whole.

As part of their activities within their own groups, the GSRs work with the treasurer to develop practical plans for its groups' support of various service committees. GSRs encourage the groups to support the area, district committees, the local central offices or intergroups, and GSO. They are familiar with the pamphlet F-3: "Self-Support" and encourage a "*regular contribution plan*," as determined by the group.

The GSR also knows Pamphlet P-16: "*The AA Group*" through and through and helps new group secretaries and chairpersons to use it. When a new group is forming nearby, they can be of great help in advising its members about GSO services.

\*For additional information, see also: *The AA Service Manual*, 2000-2001 ed., page S23.

One thing to remember in your work as a GSR, is that a sense of humor is most important to your service commitment and sobriety (Rule 62). We take our program of recovery and our sobriety seriously; we do not take our personal hurts or the rejection of our opinions too seriously. As Dr. Bob said: "Let us also remember to guard that erring member the tongue, and if we must use it, let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance."

\* Reprinted from Dr. Bob's brief remarks on Sunday, July 3, 1950, at the First International AA Convention in Cleveland, Ohio with permission of AA World Services, Inc.

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<sup>2</sup> For additional suggestions and guidelines, please refer to Pamphlet P-19: "GSR (General Service Representative)," and Pamphlet P-16: "*The AA Group*."

### **A) What is an Informed AA Group Conscience?**

The Group Conscience is the collective conscience of the group membership and thus represents substantial unanimity (2/3<sup>rds</sup>) on an issue before definitive action is taken. This is achieved by the group members through sharing of full information, individual points of view, and the practice of AA principles. To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions with an open mind.

On sensitive issues, the group works slowly - discouraging formal motions until a clear sense of its collective view emerges. Placing principles before personalities, the membership is wary of dominant opinions. Its voice is heard when a well-informed group arrives at a decision. The result rests on more than a "yes" or "no" count - precisely because it is the spiritual expression of the group conscience. The term "*informed* group conscience" implies that pertinent information has been studied and all views have been heard before the group votes.

\*Reprinted from Pamphlet P-16: "*The AA Group*," June, 1996, pages 34 – 35, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.

The difference between a group conscience and a majority vote, or group opinion, is that one or more of the elements of a group conscience described above is missing.

## **B) How to Sign up as a New GSR (General Service Representative).**

In order to receive all mailings and notices as a GSR, you can register with your local DCM and they in turn can pass the necessary information along to the Area 30 Registrar. The DCM can collect and pass on updated information on groups and GSRs to the Area 30 Registrar and the Registrar can then send along the updates to the General Service Office for AA Directories and mailings to groups. The DCMs may also send along updates directly to GSO with copies given to the Area Registrar.

By providing your mailing address at Assemblies, the Area Secretary can then mail minutes of that Assembly to you.

The “**Change of Information**” and “**New Group Registration**” forms may be obtained from your DCM or the Area Registrar. Your group service number may be found by consulting the “Eastern United States AA Directory” or by asking the Area Registrar, the Area Treasurer, or your DCM.

It is extremely important to sign up, because GSO will mail each new Group a GSR kit for new GSRs and their groups, which will provide additional information.

REMEMBER registration of your group with your local Central Service/Intergroup Office is only for that committee. While the group information from Central Service Office/Intergroup is shared with Districts and the Area, records are separate from New York (GSO), the Area, and the District.

\*For additional information, see also: “*The AA Service Manual*,” 2000-2001 ed., pages S25 - S27.

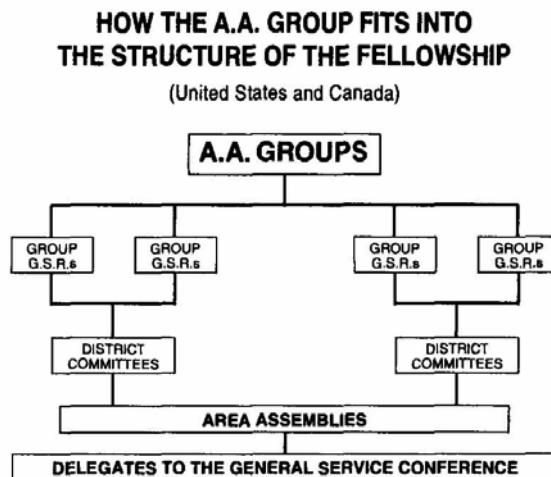
### III. What is the Role of the DCM (District Committee Member) in AA's Service Structure?

The district committee member (DCM) is an essential link between the group GSR and the Area Delegate to the General Service Conference. As leader of the district committee, made up of all GSRs in the district, the DCM is exposed to the group conscience of that district. As a member of the area committee, he or she is able to pass on that district's thinking to the delegate and the committee<sup>3</sup>.

\*Reprinted from: "*The AA Service Manual*," 2000-2001 ed., page S28, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.

The DCM's basic responsibilities can be summed up by:

1. Holding regular monthly meetings of all GSRs in the district.
2. Assisting the delegate in obtaining group information in time to meet the deadline for the appropriate AA directory.
3. Keeping GSRs informed about General Service Conference activities.
4. Getting GSRs acquainted with "The AA Service Manual," and
5. With Box 4-5-9 - making sure subscriptions are coming to GSRs.
6. Keeping groups informed about Conference-approved books and pamphlets.
7. Holding workshops on almost any service activity.
8. Helping make the Conference reports to groups, in situations where the delegate could not.
9. Getting GSRs acquainted with the guidelines from GSO, and
10. With "Twelve Concepts for World Service," the conference committee workbooks, and any other service material.
11. And, of course, making a regular practice of talking to groups (new and old) on the responsibilities of general service work.



\*Reprinted from Pamphlet P-16: "*The AA Group*," June, 1996, page 39, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.

<sup>3</sup> For additional suggestions and guidelines, please refer to Pamphlet F-12: "*Your DCM (District Committee Member)*."

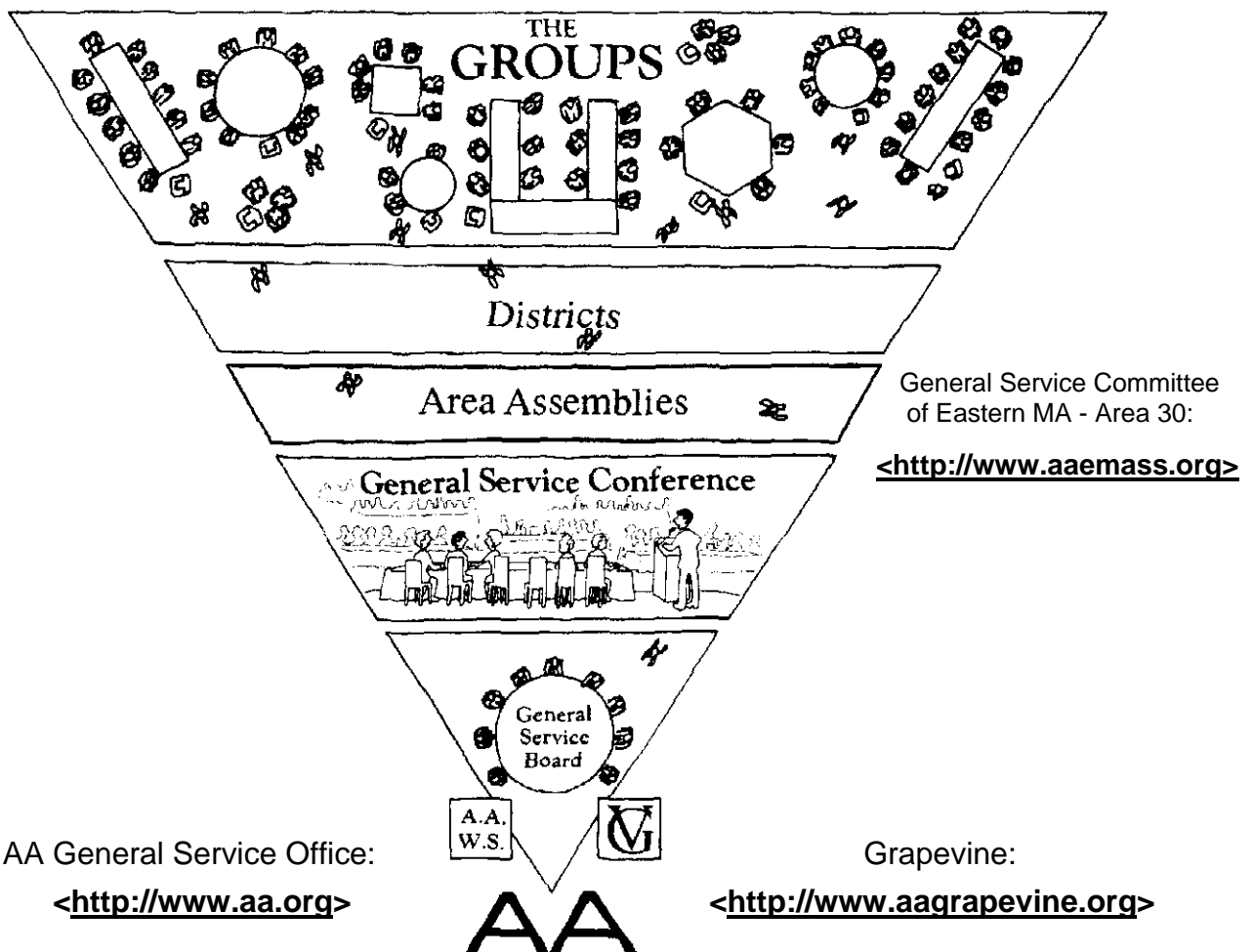
#### IV. What is the Purpose of the Area Assembly?

The purpose of the Area Assembly is the same as the purpose of an AA group: to carry the AA message to the still suffering alcoholic. Primarily, the way this is done is by electing a delegate to serve as the representative of the Area to the General Service Conference. The Area Delegate attends the annual meeting of the Conference primarily to render a service to World AA, to ensure that AA continues to function as a whole.

Each Delegate brings to the Conference the viewpoints of their own areas. The Area Assembly therefore is the opportunity for the DCMs and the individual groups (through GSRs) to share their experience with each other as well as with the Delegate.

The Assembly promotes a well-informed Delegate, who in turn can better represent the area. It also creates well-informed groups and AA members regarding local and world problems that are affecting AA as a whole. The information, therefore, flows in a continuous motion throughout the service structure.

\*Reprinted from Pamphlet P-8: *"The Twelve Concepts for World Service Illustrated,"* July, 2001, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.



AA General Service Office:  
<<http://www.aa.org>>

Grapevine:  
<<http://www.aagrapevine.org>>

## **A) Purpose.**

A well-attended AA Assembly can:

- ◆ Stimulate AA group involvement and participation in the assembly.
- ◆ Allow for free, open and unrestricted dialogue among AA groups in the area.
- ◆ Safeguard against "railroading" and "log rolling" of one individual's or group's specific agenda or course of action.
- ◆ Assure the right of the minority to be heard.
- ◆ Remind the groups of the need to make contributions to the service committees, e.g., District, Area, General Service Office, and Central Service / Intergroups.
- ◆ Provide a forum for the AA groups to inform the Delegate of what items are of concern to the AA groups.
- ◆ Ensure that the voice of the AA groups is heard within the AA service structure.
- ◆ Ensure that the Area assembly does not act as a governing body over anyone.
- ◆ Pool the financial and human resources to stimulate "carrying the AA message" where it is beyond one group's resource and ability to do this.
- ◆ Act as a guardian of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of AA.
- ◆ Introduce the Twelve Concepts of World Service.
- ◆ Foster the spirit of The Three Legacies:

**Recovery, Unity, and Service.**

## **B) Area Assembly Meeting Agenda.**

In Area 30, there are five Assemblies each year during the two-year term of office. Working with the Area Chairperson, Districts host area assemblies at local facilities; therefore, the locations of assemblies are rotated around the area. Assemblies are held on Sundays. Every two years, an Election Assembly is held in a more central location to maximize optional use of public transportation and to foster greater participation. Please see: "Section X. Assembly Schedule," page 23, for specific topics.

A typical Agenda follows:

9:00 AM	Registration
9:30 AM	Orientation for new GSRs & DCMs
10:00 AM	I. Call to Order Readings: Daily Reflections, Tradition, and Concept
	II. Welcome & Anniversaries
	III. Secretary's Roll Call and Report
	IV. Treasurer's Report
	V. Area Report
	VI. Area Calendar
	VII. Delegate's Report
10:30 AM	Old Business / New Business
11:00 AM	Presentations: Conference Committees Regional Event Report backs
11:30 AM	Topic of Assembly to be addressed
12:00 PM	Lunch (provided by the Host District*)
1:00 PM	Topic of Assembly continues / Workshops
3:30 PM	"Ask It Basket" / "What's on Your Mind?"
4:00 PM	Adjournment

\*The Area subsidizes Assemblies.

## V. Who Are All These People at the Area Assembly?

The Area Assembly is made up of the following trusted servants:

- GSRs from the districts.
  - District Committee Members (DCMs) from the 26 Districts plus two Spanish Districts.
  - Six Standing Committee Chairpersons:
    - Mass. State Convention (One year position for the Immediate Past Delegate),
    - Messenger,
    - Registrar,
    - Service Seminars,
    - Special Needs and
    - Website.
  - Seven Conference Committee Chairpersons and Alternates:
    - Archives,
    - Cooperation with Professional Community,
    - Correctional Facilities (Joint with Central Service),
    - Grapevine,
    - Literature,
    - Public Information (Joint with Central Service), and
    - Treatment Facilities (Joint with Central Service / Intergroups).
  - Area 30 Committee Officers and Alternates:
    - Secretary and Alternate\*
    - Treasurer and Alternate\*
    - Chairperson and Alternate\*
    - Delegate and Alternate to General Service Conference\*
    - \*(Elected at the Election Area Assembly).
  - Liaisons from MSCYPAA, ICYPAA, Boston Central Service, Intergroups and other interested members of the fellowship.
- *The AA Service Manual* provides additional information on these service positions and committees. In addition, Conference Committee workbooks are another resource available.
- Principle of Representation: Suggests GSRs be 2/3<sup>rds</sup> of voting members at the Assembly (Conference has guideline of 2/3<sup>rds</sup> of Conference being Area Delegates).
- Any person attending has a **"Voice."**
- Voting members are listed under Eligibility to Vote on page 13.

## **VI. How We Conduct Business in Area 30.**

Generally speaking, we follow “Robert's Rules of Order,” and proceed on an informal basis as possible consistent with the rights of all concerned. For instance, some members may be inexperienced in parliamentary procedures and feel too intimidated to speak up. Therefore, over the years, the Area has adopted some amendments to Robert's Rules that help it proceed more closely in accordance with the spiritual nature of our Fellowship as embodied in our Traditions and Concepts.

Nevertheless, Rules of Order (or procedural guidelines) are essential guides along our path toward an informed group conscience. Agreed-upon procedural guidelines ensure the practice of “principles before personalities” while business is being conducted. A free-form discussion may appear to be the most open and easy way to conduct business, but it has the tendency to degenerate into argument and personality conflict. Rules of Order help to keep the discussion focused, and allow business to proceed in a successful and spiritual manner.

### The Role of the Chair:

The chair ensures that all persons have an equal opportunity to be heard, and that all speakers are listened to politely and respectfully. The chair acts primarily as a moderator, calling on speakers in order, and occasionally re-stating the motion or a pertinent piece of information. The chair should only state the apparent feeling of the assembly or parts of the assembly if it may help the discussion. The chair may inform the assembly of the effect that a particular vote may have but this should only be done after discussion has ended. The chair tries to discourage outbursts from members during or after other member's remarks, and tries to discourage inflammatory remarks from the floor.

The chair should not speak in favor or against any motion, and should not express personal opinions regarding the discussion. In those rare instances where the chair “steps down as chair” to address (add to a discussion either pro or con) a main motion, the assembly should be clearly informed that the chair is speaking as a member and not as chair. The chair cannot make or second any motions. The chair may make or second nominations.

### The Role of the Body:

In the interest of “placing principles before personalities” while effectively addressing the business of the Area, it is suggested that discussion from the floor be directed to the merits of the pending question. Speakers should address their remarks to the chair, maintain a courteous tone, and - especially in reference to any divergence of opinion - avoid interjecting personal notes into the discussion. Personal criticism, inflammatory remarks, and outbursts during or after a statement should be avoided.

## **A) General (Continued on Next Page).**

Everyone is entitled to, and should, express his or her group's concerns. However, it is not necessary to go to the mike and merely repeat or paraphrase earlier comments by other members. Also, remember that saving "minority opinions" for after the vote, when there is no rebuttal, can force the assembly body to reconsider a question that might well have been decided during its initial discussion. A thorough discussion that includes all pros and cons often leads to a fully informed group conscience.

### Tips, Hints and a Word of Caution:

Address only one motion at a time. Fully discuss motions before voting. Avoid premature actions (e.g., amending motions early in the discussion or hastily calling the question) as they divert attention from the subject at hand, thus confusing and/or delaying assembly business.

### Making A Motion:

Items of business to be voted on by the Area Assembly are brought to the floor in the form of a motion of a voting member. A motion is made in the form of: "I move that..." or "I make a motion that..." The motion may be of a substantive nature, or it may consist in expressing a certain view, or it may direct that a particular issue be investigated and reported on at a future date. When a motion is made, a second is required. Seconding a motion is done in the form of: "I second that motion."

If properly seconded, the Chairperson (or the Secretary) states the main motion and general discussion begins.

### General Rules of Discussion:

- Immediately after the chair has stated the main motion, the maker of the motion is given the opportunity to speak first.
- Then, the chairperson recognizes those who wish to speak on the motion. For example, they may line up at a microphone and speak in order, alternating speakers between two microphones, if available; or, the chairperson will otherwise make a reasonable effort to recognize speakers in the order in which they raise their hands, if seated.
- In cases where the chair knows that people wishing to speak have opposing opinions, the chair may let the floor alternate, as much as possible, between those favoring and those opposing a measure.
- Although it is not a policy, it is sometimes suggested that each person speaking limit discussion to no more than two (2) minutes.
- No one may speak for a second time on a topic until all that wish to have spoken for the first time.
- When every member wishing to speak has been called upon twice, it is appropriate for the chair to end discussion and put the question to a vote.
- Voting is by a show of hands or ballot.

## **A) General (Continued on Next Page).**

### Calling the Question:

When a member who has properly obtained the floor believes that the discussion has been exhausted and that no new or substantive points are being made, they may call the question. Calling the question brings discussion to a halt while members decide whether to proceed directly to a vote (the question) or go on with the discussion. A motion to call the question:

- Must be made in order at the microphone, although it is the custom of the area to let all speak before a question is called,
- Requires a second,
- Is not debatable,
- Requires a 2/3<sup>rds</sup> vote to pass,
- The speaker can only call the question without making any other comments on the main motion, and
- Does not include a minority voice after the vote.

If calling the question is passed discussion ceases and the members proceed immediately to vote on the main motion before them. If calling the question is not passed, then discussion on the main motion resumes.

### Motion to Table (but see also Motion to Postpone to a Definite Time, p.14):

Tabling a motion delays or postpones a discussion to a later time. A motion to table should only be used to lay the pending question aside when something else of immediate urgency has arisen. It is not proper to use this motion simply to end discussion on a motion. A motion to table:

- Requires a motion and a second,
- Is not debatable,
- Needs only a simple majority to pass, and
- Does not include a minority voice after the vote.

If the motion to table passes, the main motion would than be discussed later during the meeting (or placed under old business at the next meeting).

### To Take from the Table:

To remove from the table a motion that has been previously tabled. Once a motion is tabled, the motion to remove from the table may be made at the same or a later meeting. This returns the motion for further consideration; it is neither debatable nor amendable; it can have no subsidiary motion applied, and it takes precedence over any main motion. It has been the custom in Area 30 to automatically remove an item from the table upon the next regular meeting of an assembly or committee.

## **A) General (Concluded from Previous Page).**

### Eligibility to Vote at an Area Assembly:

All GSRs or their alternates (one vote per group); DCMs or their alternates; Area Officers and their Alternates; Area Conference Committee Chairs or their alternates; and, Standing Committee Chairpersons or their alternates are eligible to vote.

### Eligibility to Vote at the Area Committee:

All DCMs or their alternates; Area Officers and their Alternates; Area Conference Committee Chairs or their alternates; and, Standing Committee Chairpersons or their alternates are eligible to vote.

### Substantial Unanimity:

All matters of policy require substantial unanimity, that is, a 2/3<sup>rds</sup> vote. Any actions, including amendments that affect an assembly action or motions that might result in such an action, also require a 2/3<sup>rds</sup> majority.

Because the number of members present in the hall during an assembly varies from time to time, the phrase "2/3<sup>rds</sup> vote" is taken to mean two-thirds vote of the voting members in the hall at that the time the vote is called.

After the establishment or rejection of any matter of policy by a 2/3<sup>rds</sup> vote, the minority will always be given the opportunity to speak. Then, after a reasonable length of time for discussion, the chairperson will ask if anyone who had voted with the majority wishes to change their vote.

### Reconsideration:

A request to reconsider after the vote must be made by someone who voted in the majority and after hearing minority opinions, wishes to change his or her vote. A motion to reconsider:

- Requires a second,
- Is not debatable (i.e. no discussion),
- Only a simple majority is required to pass,
- No action may be reconsidered twice,
- If the motion to reconsider does not pass then the vote on the main motion carries and we move on to the next item of business
- If the majority votes to reconsider, full discussion, pro and con, is resumed (Discussion is limited to the consideration of the main motion), and
- Does not include a minority voice after the vote.

## **B) Subsidiary Motions.**

### Amend:

A motion to amend is used to modify, within certain limits, the wording of a main motion. It is not used to substantially change the intent of a motion. It is made by any member of the assembly who has properly obtained the floor. It requires a second, and is debatable. After debate on the amendment, the chair will call for a vote on the amendment, after which debate resumes on the main motion. A majority vote is required to amend.

### Point of Information:

Any person attending the assembly can raise a “point of information.” This is made when a member desires clarification of details. The member may interrupt the speaker and need not obtain the floor.

### Point of Order:

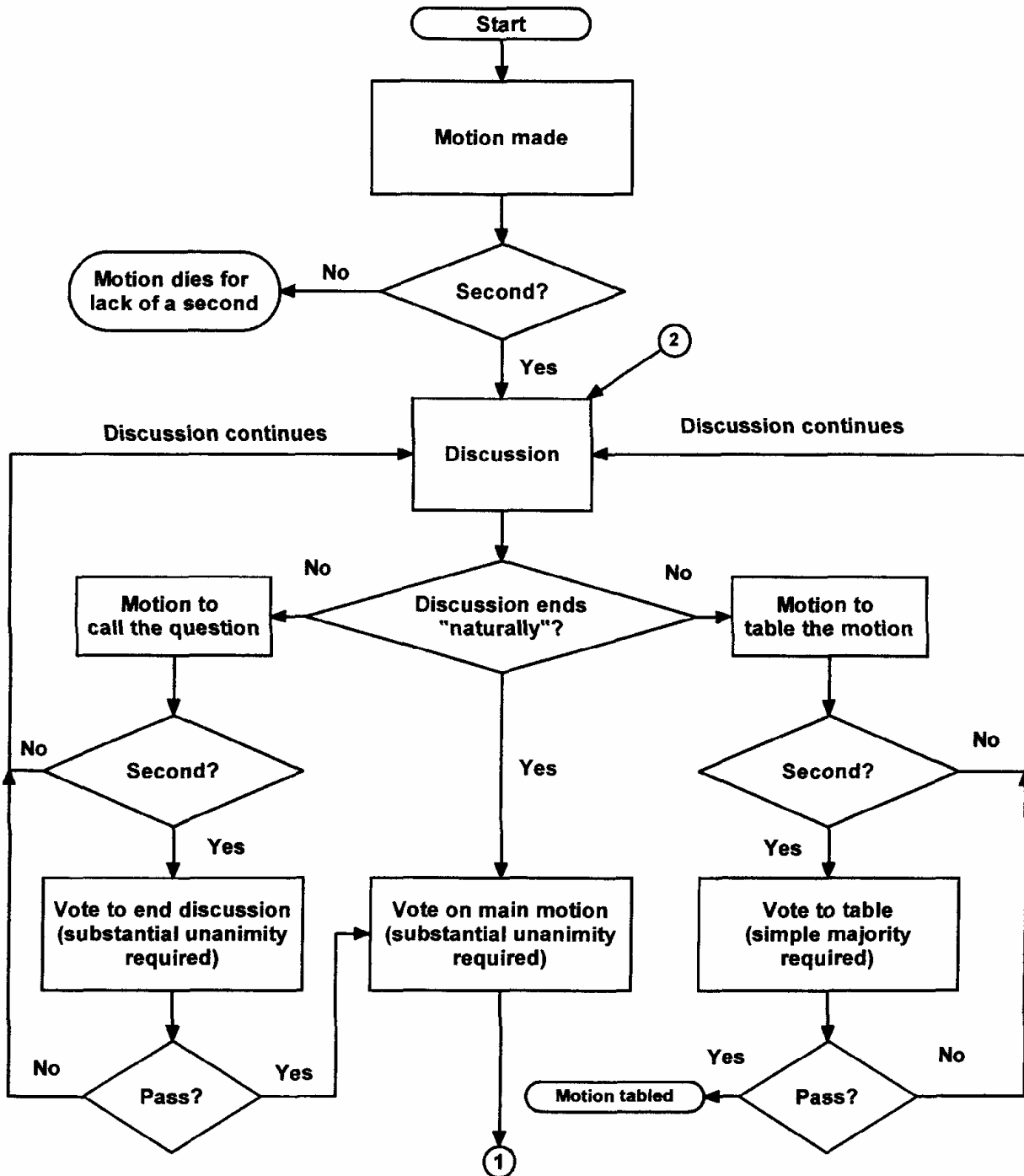
A Speaker should not be interrupted while speaking, except in certain special situations. The most common of these is for a “point of order.” This may be called by any member of the assembly when a breach of rules of the assembly is noticed, such as discussion beginning on a motion that has not received a second, when one is needed. A point of order may also be called if a speaker begins to discuss an issue not before the assembly, or begins to make personal comments or attacks upon another member. After a point of order has been raised, the chair calls upon the person to explain the point. The chair then rules whether or not the point “is well taken” or “is not well taken,” and will instruct the original speaker to re-direct their remarks, or simply allow the speaker to continue.

The chair does not need to call a point of order if they believe that the discussion is moving away from the topic. The chair politely informs the speaker and requests that the speaker confines their remarks to the question at hand.

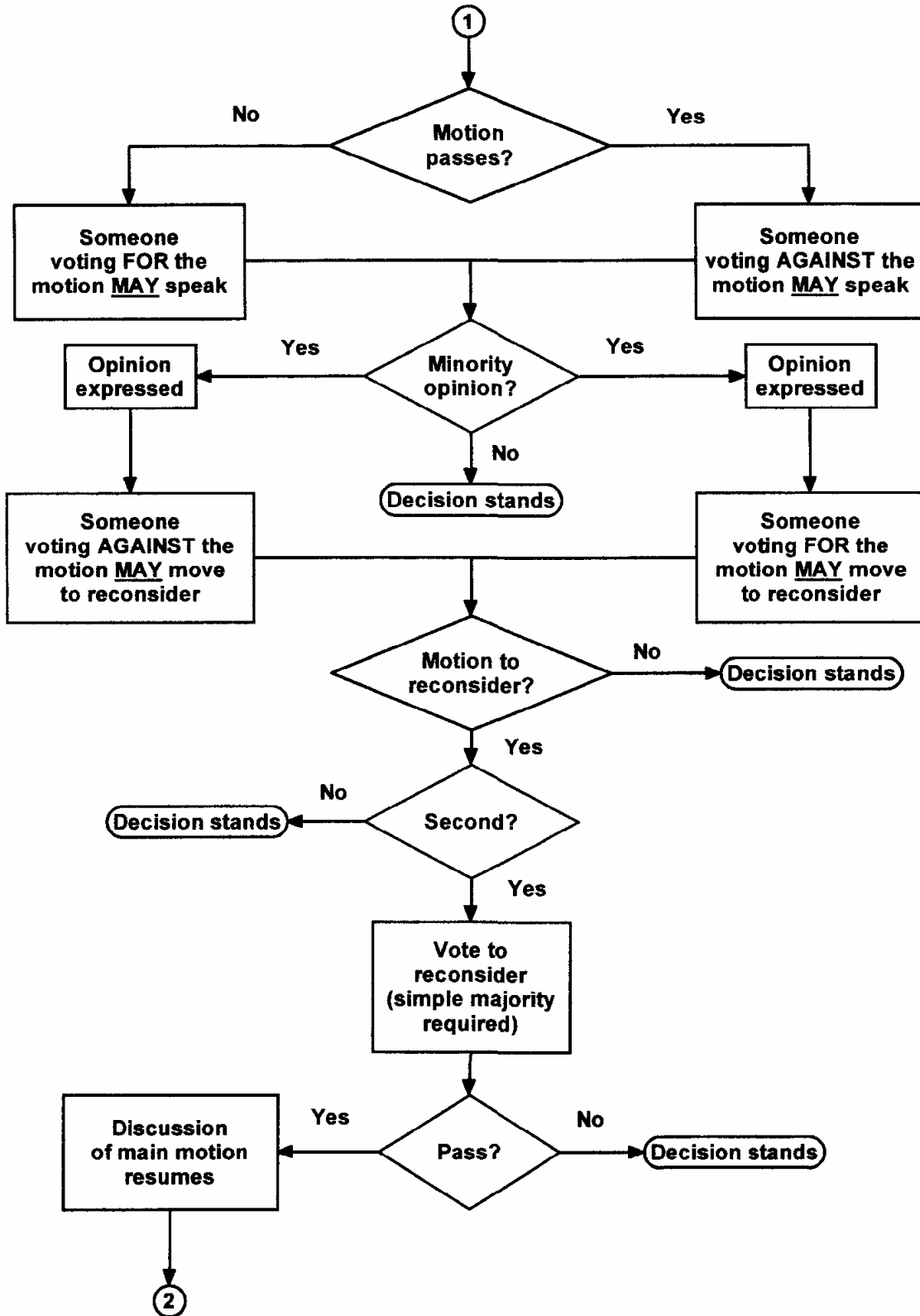
### Postpone to a Definite Time:

If a member who has properly obtained the floor believes that a matter being discussed requires more consideration or discussion before a decision can be made, the member may move to “postpone to a definite time” the matter being discussed. This motion requires a second and is debatable. The chair calls for a vote after debate upon the merits of postponing a decision. A simple majority is needed to carry this motion. This motion is frequently confused with a motion to “lay on the table” a question.

C) Flowchart of a Motion (Continued on Next Page).



C) Flowchart of a Motion (Concluded from Previous Page).



## **D) Third Legacy Procedure (Continued on Next Page).**

Suggested ***Third Legacy Procedure*** format for  
General Service Area 30 Assembly Elections:

- 1) Election for the position of Area 30 Delegate is held first, followed in order by Alternate Delegate; Area Chairperson; Alternate Chair; Area Treasurer; Alternate Treasurer; Area Secretary; and, Alternate Secretary.
- 2) The Chair of our Election Assembly reads aloud to the Assembly body a brief description of duties and responsibilities of each position.
- 3) Using the current Area 30 roster, the Chairperson calls out the names of those who are eligible to stand for election to an Area 30 position.
  - a. Each individual states his or her intention to stand for each position.
  - b. An individual cannot stand for election to a position in which he or she has previously served a full two-year term.
  - c. Names on the roster that are not called out by the Chair of our Assembly include liaisons and contacts from other service entities (GSO, Central Office/Intergroups; MSCYPAA; Al-Anon; etc.).
  - d. When seeking candidates for elected positions beyond the boundaries of Area 30 such as Northeast Regional Trustee, the Chair asks if *anyone* is willing to stand for that position (rather than calling out names).
  - e. All past members of our Area 30 Committee are eligible to stand for elected positions at the Assembly (noting the exception in point **b**).
  - f. If no current or former member of the Area 30 Committee stands for a position, the chair may then ask if there are any other individuals present who wish to stand for the position.
- 4) The names of those willing to stand are listed on the blackboard.
- 5) Candidates are requested to give a brief verbal summary of their experience in AA service work (sometimes called a service resume) to the body.
- 6) Voting members of our Area 30 Assembly (refer to the previous section titled Eligibility to Vote) then write their choice of candidate on paper ballots (with varying colors for each ballot) and non-voting assistants collect the ballots.
- 7) The tellers count the votes and write the results on the blackboard.

### **D) Third Legacy Procedure (Concluded From Previous Page).**

AA's Third Legacy Procedure is a special type of electoral procedure, used primarily for the election of Delegates, and Regional and At-large Trustees. It is considered to be unique to AA and, at first glance, appears to introduce a strong element of chance into a matter that should depend solely on the judgement of the majority. In practice, however, it has proved highly successful in eliminating the influence of factions or parties that seem to thrive on most political scenes. The "railroading" of a candidate for election is made difficult, if not impossible, since voters have a wide selection of candidates to choose from. More importantly, a second-place candidate who may be extremely well qualified but without popular support is encouraged to stay in the balloting rather than withdraw.

Third Legacy Procedure is as follows:

- The names of eligible candidates are posted on a board. All voting members (of the area or conference body) cast written ballots, one choice to a ballot. The tally for each candidate is posted on the board.
- The first candidate to receive two-thirds of the total vote is elected.
- Withdrawals start after the second ballot. If any candidate has less than one-fifth of the total vote, his or her name is automatically withdrawn<sup>4</sup>--except that the top two candidates must remain. (In case of ties for second place, the top candidate and all tied runners-up remain as candidates.)
- After the third ballot, candidates with less than one-third of the total vote will be withdrawn automatically, except the two top candidates remain. (In case there are ties for second place, the top candidate and all tied runners-up remain as candidates.)
- After the fourth ballot, if no candidate has two-thirds of the total vote, the candidate with the smallest total is automatically withdrawn, except that the top two candidates remain. At this point, the chairperson asks for a motion, second, and a simple majority of hands on conducting a fifth and final ballot. If this motion is defeated, balloting is over and the choice is made by lot - "going to the hat" - immediately. If the motion carries, a fifth and final ballot is conducted.
- If after the fifth ballot no election occurs, the chairperson announces that the choice will be made by lot (from the hat). At this point, balloting usually involves only the top two or three candidates.
- Lots are then drawn by the teller, and the first one "out of the hat" is the delegate (or trustee or other officer).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>The 1969 General Service Conference approved the change from optional to automatic withdrawal of candidates.

<sup>5</sup>The above Third Legacy Procedure is reprinted from: "*The AA Service Manual*," 2000-2001 ed., pages S20 - S21, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.

E) The Evolution of a Conference Advisory Action.

<b>EVOLUTION OF A CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTION</b>	
<p><b>1</b> An idea, suggestion, question, concern or subject comes from A.A. members, G.S.R.'s, D.C.M.'s, Area Committee members, Delegates, Trustees or G.S.O./G.V. staff, and may be shared or discussed at the group, district and Area Assembly and sent to the .....</p>	<p><b>Conference Coordinator G.S.O.</b></p>
<p><b>2</b> The idea is reviewed by the G.S.O./G.V. Staff and forwarded to .....</p>	<p><b>Appropriate Trustees' Committee</b></p>
<p><b>3</b> which then may refer the matter to the .....</p>	<p><b>Appropriate Conference Committee</b></p>
<p><b>4</b> which meets during the General Service Conference week and makes <b>recommendations</b> that are presented in the Committee Report to the .....</p>	<p><b>General Service Conference</b></p>
<p><b>5</b> If a Conference Committee recommendation is approved, after full floor discussion, it becomes a <b>Conference Advisory Action</b>, which becomes binding when approved by the .....</p>	<p><b>General Service Board</b></p>
<p>"Were it not for Committees it is doubtful that any Conference could get over a fraction of the ground it now covers. As the Conference has grown in size and influence the Committees' importance has grown even more ....." —from <i>The A.A. Service Manual</i>.</p>	

\*Reprinted from: "Preserving Our Fellowship – Our Challenge: The Forty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous," 1996, Final Report, page 9, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.

## **VII. Guiding Principles.**

1. The Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts.
2. We very well know that the penalty for extensive disobedience to these principles is death to the individual and dissolution for the group.
3. An even greater force for AA unity is the compelling love that we have for our fellow members and for the principles upon which our lives today are founded.
4. Therefore, we believe that we see in our fellowship a spiritualized society characterized by enough enlightenment, responsibility and love of God and humanity, to ensure that our democracy of world service will work under all conditions if we have the courage "to carry the message" and the wisdom to hear.
5. Spirit of Fellowship, Love and Service, Respect, Humility, Acceptance, and Tolerance.
6. 12 Steps and 12 Traditions - principles by which AA members recover and by which their society functions.
7. The Area Assembly is the voice of the group conscience, guardian of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, perpetuator of general and world service of our society.
8. The Area Assembly is a service body only; never a government of AA.
9. The structure starts with group conscience - with the AA group. Group representatives (GSRs) pass the group conscience to the DCMs and the Area Delegate.
10. AA is more than a set of principles; it is a society for alcoholics in action, banded together to solve their common problem and to help fellow sufferers in recovery from alcoholism.
11. Our Twelfth Step - carrying the AA message - is the basic service that the AA Fellowship gives. This is our principle aim and the main reason for our existence.
12. An AA service is anything what-so-ever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer. These services whether performed by individuals, groups, areas, or AA as a whole, are utterly vital to our existence and growth. The sum total of these services is our Third Legacy of Service.

## VIII. Finance.

In the spirit of the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition, the General Service Committee of Eastern Massachusetts Area 30 Committee is funded solely through the contributions of the AA Groups within its boundaries. The Finance Committee acts in an advisory capacity, whose voting members include: elected Area Officers and their Alternates, Conference and Standing Committee Chairpersons or their alternates, and the Immediate Past Delegate. Alternate Chairpersons are encouraged to participate on this Committee. The Area Treasurer chairs the Finance Committee. Minutes are kept of meetings and are available to anyone upon request.

Each year the Finance Committee prepares a budget proposal for presentation in November to the Area Committee. It is then brought back to the Districts and groups for discussion and review. A formal presentation is then made at the first Area Assembly of the year held in January. The Area Treasurer, as Finance Committee Chairperson, makes the presentation. By vote of the Assembly, the Budget is approved, rejected, or modified. The Budget then becomes the active operating plan for Area 30.

### Guiding Principles:

- All officers and committees are endowed with the traditional "right of decision" as well as the responsibility to manage funds in a prudent manner - with reports being made and kept.
- Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority with the scope of such authority well defined. Final authority rests with an informed group conscience.
- Service is its own reward.
- The ability to perform service should not be limited by personal funds.
- Expenses incurred while conducting business at the request of the Area should be fully reimbursed.
- The choice to be reimbursed should be left to the individual.
- The intent of the Area is to encourage anyone, who is willing and able to perform service, to do so by removing personal finances as a limiting factor.
- The Area budget should be set at adequate and reasonable levels to cover expected expenses.
- The Prudent Reserve is established by Area Assembly vote.

## IX. Service Sponsor.

### Why:

Just as we all needed guidance as we began our journey of recovery, AAs new to *service to AA beyond the home group* also need someone who has "been there," to walk with them as they take this next step into the "magnificent reality" of Alcoholics Anonymous.

### Who:

If your "recovery" sponsor has experience in general service 12<sup>th</sup> Step Work, then he/she may readily fill this additional role. However, often that is not the case. Just as with recovery, AA's First Legacy, first hand knowledge and experience in AA's Third Legacy is necessary as a service sponsor guides you along this new and unfamiliar path peppered with its own terminology, literature, such as "*The AA Service Manual*," actual "guidelines," as well as the Twelve Concepts for World Service.

Many new General Service Representatives (GSRs) will look to an experienced District Committee Member (DCM) or an Area Officer for service sponsorship. A group or district representative to a Conference Committee such as Corrections, Grapevine, etc. may seek out a seasoned committee member. Past Area Delegates often fill this role not only for those beginning service as GSRs, DCMs, etc., but also for current Area Delegates and Area Officers as well.

### How Does it Work:

As with recovery, about as well as you want it to! A service sponsor can only be of value if used. For example, new GSRs, overwhelmed with information, frequently step down after a month or two because they did not have someone to turn to (service sponsor) who could ease them through those first questions: Where to begin? How to give a report to the group? How to blend these new responsibilities into an already full life? Frequency of contact with a service sponsor varies greatly not only with individuals but with different service positions. Some may stay in touch 2 to 3 times a month. Others are OK with less. There are no hard and fast rules.

As time goes on and you are attracted into yet another aspect of general service, you may decide to ask someone else to guide you. It is not uncommon, particularly if the person sponsoring you does not have that experience. Sponsors in AA, recovery or service, are simply channels of and to information. Unlike recovery, it is not unusual for women to be service sponsors to men and vice versa, primarily due to the small percentage of AA's who participate in AA's Third Legacy of Service.

Enjoy the journey!

## **X. Assembly Schedule.**

<b><u>Odd Year</u></b>	<b><u>Even Year</u></b>
January – Kick-Off and Conference Committees	January – Kick-Off and Conference Committees
April – Pre-Conference	April – Pre-Conference
June – Post Conference	June – Post Conference
September – Workshop	September – Workshop
November – Workshop	November – Delegate / Officer Elections

## **Calendar of Events**

<b><u>Odd Year</u></b>	<b><u>Even Year</u></b>
February – NERAASA	February – NERAASA
April – Conference	April – Conference
June – Northeast Regional Forum	
October - Northeast Regional Convention	October – Northeast Regional Convention
November – Mass State Convention (Area 31, Western Mass is responsible for Service Committee Displays.)	November – Mass State Convention (Area 30, Eastern Mass is responsible for Service Committee Displays.)

## XI. Glossary of Terms (Continued on Next Page).

12 Steps: A group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole.  
(Reprinted from: “*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous*,” Foreword, page 15, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.)

12 Traditions: AA's Twelve Traditions apply to the life of the Fellowship itself. They outline the means by which AA maintains its unity and relates itself to the world about it, the way it lives and grows.  
(Reprinted from: “*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous*,” Foreword, page 15, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.)

AA: Alcoholics Anonymous.

AAWS\*: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. one of the two operating corporations of the General Service Board; oversees the operations of the General Service Office and serves as the publishing company for Conference-approved and service literature.

Ad-hoc Committee: A limited-duration committee serving the General Service Committee of Eastern Massachusetts (Area 30), formed for a specific purpose.

Alternate: A service worker who, at group, district, or area level, assists, supports and participates in service responsibilities, and who is able to assume the position they are alternate for, if the need arises.

Annual Conference: The annual meeting of 93 Area Delegates, 21 Trustees, and directors of AA World Service, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc., and staffs of both GSO and the Grapevine.

Anonymity: Real humility at work ... an all pervading spiritual quality ... the greatest safeguard that AA can ever have.  
(Reprinted from: “*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous*,” Tradition Twelve, page 187, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.)

Archives: A Committee that preserves the history and documents of AA.

\*Reprinted from: “*The AA Service Manual*,” 2000-2001 ed., pages S18 – S20, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.

## XI. Glossary of Terms (Continued on Next Page).

Area Assembly: A General Service Area 30 meeting at which all Area Officers, Committee Chairs, District Committee Members (DCMs), and General Service Representatives (GSRs) are expected to participate, and to which any interested individual AA is invited.

Area Committee: The Area Committee conducts General Service Committee of Eastern Massachusetts (Area 30) business in between Area Assemblies. It is responsible for the health of the Conference Structure and for growth and harmony in our Fellowship. The Area Committee is in a middle position between the local districts and (though the Delegate) the AA General Service Conference.

Area: A geographical division within a state (US) or province (Canada). A Conference delegate comes from an area. Normally there is one area to a state or province except in heavily populated places, where there maybe two, three, or more areas in the state or province. (Massachusetts has 2 and a part of a 3<sup>rd</sup>.)

At-Large: No geographic confines.

Conference\*: The General Service Conference; this can mean either the structure involving committee members, GSRs and delegates in an area, or the annual meeting of Conference delegates each April in New York.

### Conference-approved Literature, Videos, and Films\*:

Pamphlets, books, videos and films produced under the auspices of various Conference and trustees' committees which the appropriate Conference committees have reviewed and recommended to the Conference for its approval, and which have been approved by the Conference.

### Conference Committees:

Twelve Step committees serving specific needs e.g., Correctional Facilities, Public Information, Grapevine, etc. Each committee serves the area as a whole, some being joint with Central Service/Intergroups.

CF: Correctional Facilities.

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## XI. Glossary of Terms (Continued on Next Page).

- CPC\*: Cooperation with the Professional Community. CPC committees at the district, area, trustee, and Conference level help carry the message to professionals who work with alcoholics.
- DCM\*: District Committee Member. An experienced GSR, elected by other GSRs, to represent the groups of their district in area committee meetings and to coordinate service activities in the district.
- Delegate\*: The man or woman elected (by the Area Assembly) every other year to represent the area at the annual Conference meeting in New York and to bring back to the area the results of that meeting.
- Director (nontrustee)\*: Member of the corporate board of either AAWS or the Grapevine; directors are selected for business or professional experience that relates to the activities of the corporation. (The directorate of both corporate boards also includes trustee and AA staff.)
- District\*: A division, within an area, represented by committee member(s).
- District Committee: Consists of a General Service Representative (GSR) from each Group within a District, the District Committee Members (DCMs), and such other officers as the Districts may elect or appoint.
- First Legacy: Recovery, as embodied in the 12 steps.
- FORUM: A meeting held in a region every two years ... a presentation by the staff of GSO. The Northeast Regional forum is held every odd year.
- General Service Board:  
The General Service Board (the Trustees) is the chief service arm of the Conference and is essentially custodial in its character. Excepting for decisions upon matters of policy, finance, or AA Traditions liable to seriously affect AA as a whole, the General Service Board has entire freedom of action in the routine conduct of the policy and business affairs of the AA service corporations.
- General Services\*: Movement-wide services, performed by anyone in the General Service structure (GSR, DCM, delegate, etc.).

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## **XI. Glossary of Terms (Continued on Next Page).**

- Grapevine\*: The AA Grapevine, the international monthly journal of Alcoholics Anonymous. The AA Grapevine, Inc. is one of the two operating corporations of the General Service Board and is responsible for Grapevine operations and finance.
- GSO\*: The General Service Office, which provides services to groups in the US and Canada and publishes AA literature.
- GSR\*: General Service Representative. The group contact with the General Service Office; voting member of the area assembly.
- GVC: Grapevine Committee purpose is to heighten the awareness at the Area, District, Group, and Individual Member level of the spiritual value of the Grapevine and its specialty items as sobriety tools.
- GvR\*: Grapevine representative: the group or district contact with the Grapevine office.
- ICYPAA: International Conference of Young People in AA.
- Immediate Past Delegate:  
The Immediate Past Delegate serves as the chair of the Massachusetts State Convention for the first year after he/she rotates out of the office.
- Intergroup/Central Service:  
An AA service office that involves partnership among groups in a community - just as AA Groups themselves are partnerships of individuals. It is established to carry out certain functions common to all the groups - functions that are best handled by a local centralized office - and it is usually maintained, supervised, and supported by these groups in their general interest. It exists to aid the groups in their common purpose of carrying the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
- JCFC: Joint Correctional Facilities Committee.
- JPI: Joint Public Information Committee.
- JTFC: Joint Treatment Facilities Committee.
- La Viña: Bimonthly Spanish-language magazine published by the A.A. Grapevine.

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## XI. Glossary of Terms (Continued on Next Page).

<u>Liaisons:</u>	A representative sent to or received from another Service Entity, such as a Central Service/Intergroup office.
<u>Literature:</u>	Conference-approved literature and other literature carrying the AA message.
<u>MSCYPAA:</u>	Massachusetts State Conference of Young People in AA.
<u>NECYPAA:</u>	New England Conference of Young People in AA.
<u>NERAASA:</u>	Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly. Held each year the last weekend in February at rotating locations. Hosted by the areas in the Northeast Region.
<u>PI*:</u>	Public Information (joint with Central Service) PI committees at the district, area, trustee, and Conference level help carry the message by working with the media.
<u>Region*:</u>	A grouping of several areas from which a regional trustee comes to the board of trustees. There are six regions in the United States and two in Canada.
<u>Second Legacy:</u>	Unity, as embodied in the 12 Traditions.
<u>Service Sponsor:</u>	Service guide and advisor.
<u>Sharing Session*:</u>	A group, district, area, or Conference committee meeting in which everyone is invited to contribute ideas and comments on AA matters, and during which no actions are taken.
<u>Sponsor:</u>	Recovery guide and advisor.
<u>Standing Committee:</u>	A continuing committee serving Eastern Massachusetts General Service Area 30, other than a Conference Committee. The Standing Committees are (a) Convention, (b) Messenger, (c) Registrar, (d) Service Seminars, (e) Special Needs and (f) Website.
<u>TF:</u>	Treatment Facilities.

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## XI. Glossary of Terms (Concluded from Previous Page).

Third Legacy: AAs Third Legacy is Service, the sum total of all AA services, from a Twelfth Step call to coast-to-coast and worldwide service activities. The first two Legacies are Recovery and Unity.

### Third Legacy Procedure\*

AA's Third Legacy Procedure is a special type of electoral procedure, used primarily for the election of delegates and regional and at-large trustees.

Trustee: Members of the General Service Board - 21 in total. 7 Class A, Nonalcoholic Trustees; 14 Class B, Alcoholic Trustees. Of the 14 Alcoholic Trustees, 8 are Regional, 4 are General Service, and 2 are Trustees At-Large (US and Canada).

Twelve Concepts: The Twelve Concepts for World Service reveal the evolution by which it has arrived at its present form and they detail the experience and reasoning on which our operation stands today.

\*Reprinted from: "*The AA Service Manual*," 2000-2001 ed., pages S18 – S20, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.