

A note from the editor

We start this Newsletter with a contribution from one of our GSRs, reporting on one of the Workshops that are always held before the Area Assemblies (all welcome, not just GSRs). It's an opportunity to find out how AA *as a whole* works, and how you and your group fit into that structure.

The featured article this week is taken from the AA Group Handbook and provides some basic information about the

functioning of the Group. The section on the informed group conscience was included in a previous issue, but it is important enough to include again.

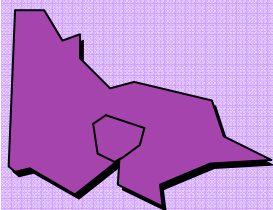
Many of us are using social networking technologies these days and GSO (North America) has provided some guidelines on staying within the traditions and protecting anonymity, not only your own, but those of your AA cyber 'friends', as

others can make the connections if you are not discreet. This was also a topic at the National Convention in Coff's Harbour this year and recordings are available.

The deadline for any articles/reports for the January 2010 edition is 16th December.

Subscribe or get in touch with the editor at

areadnewsletter@gmail.com



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Service Sponsorship Workshop Report

Before our Area D Assembly in August, we had a Workshop on Service Sponsorship. We got to learn that it's not just about 'the steps' but the traditions that keep the fellowship alive and how AA works. The workshop was run by a facilitator with two guest speakers and group participation.

Benefits of *being* a service sponsor

Covered the three legacies, recovery, unity and service. There are all sorts of positions and jobs to do from dishwasher to ashtray emptier to general service board representative. A service sponsor can help find where the sponsee fits in. The sponsor can use the service manual and guidelines when they don't know the answer (don't have to make up the answers!). It's important to give sponsees the full picture.

How and why we do things can be complex and we need guidance on this.

Sponsees drive sponsors to learn as they ask questions and then they (the sponsors) have to find out!

Benefits of *having* a service sponsor

This guest speaker always loved AA and being a helper so doing service suited her. She became a GSR due to rotation and then someone suggested becoming a DCM. She spoke to a lot of older sober members and then the thought came to ask someone to be her service sponsor. The benefits of doing service and having a service sponsor are:- confidence in self and AA; knowledge of how to apply traditions and guidelines; sets an example; service sponsor contacted the US to find an answer; appreciation of AA; enthusiasm escalates; growth; friendship gained.

Go to a service sponsor if you don't clearly understand or have conflicting ideas, usually has a lot more experience and/or clearer view.

The book *AA comes of Age* is a useful resource to read up on how the traditions were developed.

What can Area do to encourage service sponsorship?

Can develop a listing of people with service experience at Area or District level so that there is a starting point of who to contact when needing guidance in particular areas of service.

Can 'apprentice' people in service positions as alternates so that they get to know how positions work.

The Job of the GSR

Is to go back to the group and encourage group members to participate in Forums, Area etc and promote what is going on.

Quote from the workshop '*the way we do service together is more important than what we achieve*'

Contributed by Karen W., GSR, Northern Exposure.

The AA Group—the final voice of the fellowship



Alcoholics Anonymous has been called an "upside down" organisation because the ultimate responsibility and final authority for world services resides with the groups—rather than with our General Service Board or our National Office or the General Service Office in New York.

The entire structure of AA depends upon the participation and conscience of the individual groups, and how each of these groups conducts its affairs has a ripple effect on AA everywhere. So we are always conscious that, as individuals, we are responsible for our own sobriety and, as a group, for carrying the AA message to the suffering alcoholic who reaches out to us for help.

AA has no central authority; there is minimal organisation, a handful of Traditions instead of laws. As co-founder Bill W noted in 1960, "We obey [the Twelve Traditions] willingly because we ought to and because we want to. Perhaps the secret of their power lies in the fact that these life-giving communications spring out of living experience and are rooted in love."

AA is shaped by the collective voice of its local groups and their representatives to the General Service Conference, which works toward unanimity on matters vital to the fellowship. Each group functions independently, except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.

AA's essential group work is done by alcoholics who are themselves recovering in the fellowship, and each of us is entitled to do our AA service in the way we think best within the spirit of the Traditions. This means that we function as a democracy, with all plans for group action approved by the majority voice. No single individual is appointed to act for the group or for Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

Each group is as unique as a thumbprint, and the ways of carrying the message of sobriety vary not just from group to group but from region to region. Acting autonomously, each group charts its own course. The better informed the members, the stronger and more cohesive the group—and the greater the assurance that when a newcomer reaches out for help, the hand of AA will be there.

Most of us cannot recover unless there is a group. As Bill W. said, "Realization dawns on each member that he is but a small part of a great whole... He learns that the clamour of desires and ambitions within him must be silenced whenever these could damage the group. It becomes plain that the group must survive or the individual will not."

The AA home group

Traditionally, most AA members through the years have found it valuable to belong to one group which they call their "home group." This is the group where they attend regularly, accept service responsibilities and sustain friendships. And although all AA members are welcome at all groups and feel at home at any of these meetings, the concept of the home group has still remained the strongest bond between the AA member and the fellowship.

With membership of a group comes the right to vote at the group conscience meeting on issues that might affect the group and might also affect AA as a whole—a process that forms the very cornerstone of AA's service structure. As with all group-conscience matters, each AA member has one vote; and this, is voiced through his or her home group.

Over the years, the very essence of AA strength has remained with our home group, which, for many members, becomes our extended family. Once isolated by our drinking, we find in the home group a solid, continuing support system, friends and, very often, a sponsor. We also learn firsthand, through the group's workings, how to place "principles before personalities" in the interest of carrying the AA message.

What is an informed Group Conscience?



The group conscience is the collective conscience of the group membership and thus represents substantial unanimity on an issue before definitive action is taken. This is achieved by the group members through the sharing of full information, listening to 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.

How can AA groups play their part in the national structure?



The final responsibility for, and the benefits of, what gets done in Australia by AA depends very much on each and every group. If groups want AA to develop and be available to the newcomer today and in the future, their participation in the work of the national structure is needed. Here are a few of the things groups can do to help:

1. Stay informed about what goes on at Conference, at the Board and at National Office. Ask questions. The more you know about AA, the more useful you can be in carrying the message.
2. Choose a qualified general service representative. The GSR acts as the important liaison between the group and AA as a whole, carrying the group's voice to the general service structure and reporting news of the greater fellowship back to the home group.
3. It is important to inform National Office of any group changes, such as information concerning a new GSR or a change in address or group name. This is the only way to keep information coming to your group without interruption.

National Office has a form specifically for the purpose of recording changes in existing group information, *For Use in Changing Group Information*—not to be confused with the group registration form for startup groups. Excerpts from the 2009 version (red cover) of *The Australian AA Group Handbook*.

District News...

An AA District is a geographical unit within an Area containing a number of AA Groups, the number being dependent on the ability of the General Service Representatives (GSRs) to communicate between each other and to meet regularly together with comparative ease.

A metropolitan District may cover a small area but contain hundreds of Groups, while a rural District may cover many square kilometres but include as few as 3 or 4 Groups. As the number of Groups in an Area increases more Districts are formed, each new one then electing another District

Each District has a Committee Member (DCM) on the Area Committee.

Experience has shown that the answer to growth rests in the setting up of more Districts to meet the Fellowship's expansion in size and activities.

Extract from *Australian AA Service Manual 7th Edition 2007* ~ Section 4 *The District & DCM*

"Because of the closer communication links within the District, the Groups are able to share together and to carry their message more effectively."

Ballarat District

AA Ballarat's website is continually updated with new information and events. The 24 hour Helpline and website are now listed in the White Pages, telephone book.

Our 15th meeting started last month – AA Gay meeting, every third Saturday of the month and a new meeting at Daylesford on Wednesday evenings will make it 17 local meetings in Ballarat. Thursday prison visits are still continuing with 8 persons now registered for visits. An interest in starting an ID, Steps 1,2 & 3 meeting for newcomers has been requested in the Beaufort district; we will look at this at our next District

meeting.

At our last District meeting approximately 12 people attended. The 2011, 60th AA Ballarat Anniversary Committee met on August 21 at 4:30 to kick off ideas for this event.

P.I. has been going well with information via posters and such given to local hospitals, Law courts, police stations (including Creswick) and all have been well received. Our P.I. officer, Di is planning to deliver more information to local schools, doctors, chemists, supermarket notice boards and all of the Women's health facilities.

A good effort all round, remembering when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, we want the hand of AA to be there.

Ballarat District Committee.

<http://sites.google.com/site/ballarataadistrict/>

**Next District Meeting
Sunday 17th Oct @ 1:30pm -
Eastwood Leisure Centre.
Anniversary Catch Up also.**

Calder District

As the DCM for the Calder District I do not have much to report on at this time only to say that I have been on vacation for the past six weeks and so not very active in District affairs. I thank Barry H. Area Delegate for chairing the last Calder District Meeting in my absence.

Glenn B. has been very active in producing AA Information Packages for those in need of help. Over 100 hundred of these Packs were given to a Policeman at the Heidelberg Police Station following a request from him. Following are some of his comments. *"Yesterday was my last day at Heidelberg and on Monday I start my new posting at Sunshine. I left some of the starters packs at Heidelberg and sort of deputised a couple of colleagues to ensure that they are distributed as the boss instructed.*

They have also printed off some of the area-specific meetings listed from the Internet link.

I have taken a bundle of the starter packs to Sunshine which also has cells and does court custody and is much busier than Heidelberg and I intend to institute the same practice at Heidelberg.

Have been networking with squadmates and trusted colleagues and have instituted the same practice at Croydon, and Altona North. Also trying to get some response from City East but the reception there is not as positive as it might be. Hopefully it might make a difference in some peoples lives."

Glenn also produced about 20 GSR Packs, which have been given to all GSRs in the District and to any other

GSR who requested one. On Monday 21st June, Calder District Members, Frank O'F, Adrian and I attended the Kyneton Group Meeting and afterwards we were invited to give a short presentation on what the Calder District is and what it does. This meeting was well attended and had many members from nearby groups and was a very worthwhile experience for us all.

Yours in service
Kevin H.

**Next Calder District Meeting:
Thursday 4th Nov 8:00pm
Flemington Neighbourhood House
28 Farnham Street
All GSRs in the District are
encouraged to attend or to send a
group-endorsed alternate GSR**

Geelong District

Personally I'm now feeling more positive about our Geelong District having visited several group consciences, which has been great for two reasons. Firstly an opportunity to try and answer the many concerns re the current situation from many confused members with facts and rumours flying around. Secondly an opportunity to demonstrate District's desire to reach out to our groups and bring them in to the fold – unity being the essence for all of us and our fellowship. Some groups are still struggling with low numbers and unfilled positions, but together hopefully we can turn this around. District workshops are being organised and we have our Anniversary to look forward to in November, plus fundraising events by various groups.

Our phone line being out of action for over a week, during Drug & Alcohol Week of all times, was a real concern. Goodness knows how it happened – an unknown person instructing Telstra re the disconnection, but thanks to the tireless efforts of our phone roster person we were finally reconnected. We still have a bit of investigation work to uncover the reason for this mystery. It was particularly disappointing as we had worked hard to get AA information around our district during Drug & Alcohol week.

Our District Committee has just rotated two positions with a new secretary, Lisa and Michael as Treasurer, now we just need to get some more GSRs on board. Our Anniversary Committee is gaining

momentum as November draws closer, with portfolio workshops being organised, great entertainment on Saturday Night and a fine speaker for our Public Meeting on the Sunday.

Yours in service

Sue T
Geelong District DCM

Next Geelong District Meeting:
Saturday 6th Nov 2:00pm
Open Doors Meeting Place,
Church of Christ Hall
cnr Little Myer Street & Latrobe
Tce, Geelong
Further information available
from Sue T. on 0417 562604

Western Suburbs District

We as a District should continue to operate as it is our main objective to help the alcoholic who is still suffering.

The District activities are as follows:

Literature: There are some groups that are purchasing literature to distribute amongst the public and professional community.

Fundraiser. Ideas of perhaps a BBQ with a continuous AA meeting in October/November or 2011. Laurie P suggested that there is a raffle pack from National Office and this maybe good way to raise funds around Christmas.

Public Information

Alex reported that a Werribee PI committee has been formed and that they have divided Werribee into 6 geographic areas to that they can distribute literature. There will be further meetings. Area D has introduced a literature order form on their website. Literature is available via the District post free from National Office.

Ray went as an observer to the Daswest drink driving program. There is no AA literature available at this program. Literature will be provided by the District \$50.00 Werribee Hospital is

distributing AA literature. Port Phillip Prison. Needs volunteers for the Prison Partnership Program.

Rotations are coming up and we are looking for some positions to be filled as people will be rotating off.

Barry D DCM
Western Suburbs District.

Next Western Suburbs District Meeting:
Tuesday 23rd Nov 7:00pm
Spotswood Community House
598 Williamstown Rd, Spotswood
Further information available
from Barry D.

Anonymity on the Internet



"MySpace, Facebook and other social networking web sites are public in nature. Though users create accounts and utilize usernames and passwords, once on the site, it is a public medium where AA members and non-AAs mingle.

"As long as individuals do not identify themselves as AA members, there is no conflict of interest. However, someone using their full name or a likeness, such as a full-face photograph, would be contrary to the spirit of the Eleventh Tradition, which states in the Long Form that, "... our [last] names and pictures as

AA members ought not be broadcast, filmed or publicly printed." "Experience suggests that it is in keeping with the Eleventh Tradition not to disclose AA membership on social networking sites as well as on any other Web site, blog, electronic bulletin board, etc., that is not composed solely of AA members, is not password protected or is accessible to the public."

Source: AA Internet Guidelines on [North American] GSO website



http://www.aa.org/en_pdfs/mg-18_internet.pdf

AATimes :

[Access from Mobile Phones](#)

All the Meetings and Event information on AATimes is also available also available 24 hours a day on your internet enabled phone. The pages are designed to fit on a small phone display. URL for most web enabled mobile phones:

<http://m.aatimes.org.au>

You can also use this URL which has content optimised for the iPhone:

<http://iphone.aatimes.org.au>

If your phone handles WAP content only, use this URL instead:

<http://wap.aatimes.org.au>

Twitter:

Regular AATimes updates about AA meetings and events are available through twitter.

Simply follow [@aatimes](#).

Corrections Committee News

Area D and C Corrections Committees continue the cooperative partnership which has brought the positive elements of the "Prison District" under the responsible and effective guidance of the traditions and concepts of AA as a whole and the General Service Conference.

AA's presence in correctional facilities is being maintained and expanded due to good personal relationships between the prison administration and AA members. Currently members are attending the following facilities: Barwon Prison; Marngoneet Correctional Centre; (both in the Geelong Area); Dame Phyllis Frost Centre; Melbourne Assessment Prison; Metropolitan Remand Centre; Ararat Prison; Langi Kal Kal Prison; Loddon Prison; Tarrengower Prison; Beechworth

Correctional Centre; Fulham Correctional Centre.

We are hopeful of an AA presence in the future in the following:

Dhurringile (Shepparton);
Judy Lazarus Transition Centre;
Port Phillip Prison.

The fund established by the prison district to provide literature to inmates and support for any members carrying the AA message into correctional facilities has been maintained through Area D with the agreement of Area C. Literature is available to all members who work in this area of service as long as the funds are available. Donations in support of the Prison Work can be made through Area D and you can contact me through the Area D website for details.

It is essential to maintain the fund and receive support from Members, Groups, Districts and Areas. Inmates by the very nature of where they live are incapable of being self-supporting. We need members to be willing to go on rosters to visit *and* establish meetings within correctional facilities. If you are at least 2 years sober and are willing to have a go contact me via the Area D website.

Finally the second National Correctional Forum will be held in Brisbane from the 8th to the 10th October 2010. Details can be obtained from the AA National Website.

Yours in service, Peter M.

Chairman

Area D Corrections Committee

Public Information News...

A national binge drinking campaign aimed at teenagers & young people goes live to air across TV networks in early November. This campaign will be aired Australia wide.

The final artwork for the handbook for the Prevocational Medical Forum (which is a four-day event aimed at the medical profession) is almost completed; hopefully we can display it in the next issue of D-Liberation. A member who is a graphic artist is doing the design to the specifications required. We've kept it very simple but effective, using the AA colours – blue & yellow & the wording "If you are a professional AA wants to work with you". This has been taken from conference approved literature, &

copyright has been acknowledged. Final approval will be needed from the Area Committee. The Forum is timely for the Binge Drinking Campaign and funding was agreed at the last assembly.

Everything is hotting up for the warmer weather. Groups within the Calder District are out & about doing local Pi work. A couple of the Werribee groups have formed a PI Committee. At the inaugural meeting they discussed potential areas to approach with PI material: Those identified are: Courthouse, Police, libraries, Job Networks, Community houses, Doctors, Anglicare, Community Housing.

The Committee also intends to

approach the Western Suburbs District for the appropriate literature for specific areas. The PI Posters about "binge drinking" would be very helpful for young people. They will also approach the Banner newspaper with a view to a free ad in their "Community" section, giving meeting locations and times. The Western General Group has decided to follow their lead, & start with the local Doctors in the Footscray Area.

PI is very much about connecting with people at the grass roots level, with both individuals & professionals. They need to know that AA exists, & is available to help.

Sharon R. PI Co-ordinator

Snippet: Upcoming "Sunday Life" Article

Sunday Life, the Sunday supplement magazine for the *Herald Sun* (Sydney and Melbourne) is running an article on professional women who have had a drinking problem. Women from AA have been interviewed and the journalist involved is respectful of the Traditions and the fellowship in general. It should come out in December, deadline is the end of November, so something to look out for. (This is not an endorsement of the content!)



Service Opportunities!

"... an AA service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer, ranging all the way from the *Twelfth Step* itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to AA's General [National] Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our *Third Legacy of Service*." Australian AA Service Manual 7th Edition 2007 ~ Section 1 *The Conference Plan* . <http://aaservice.org.au/members/ServiceManual>

Note that an Election Assembly will be held in December each year when positions that are due for rotation are declared open. Most positions have a predetermined duration, such as Area Delegate, which is a 3 year term and Area Chair which is a 2 year term. Refer to the Service Manual, Sections 6 "The Area" for further guidelines on who can vote, the voting procedure etc.

Coming Events ... dates to put in your calendar

**Area D
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VIC 3013**

Email
aa@aread.org.au

We're on the web!

See us at
www.ared.org.au

Disclaimer:

Except for material identified as being taken directly from AA Conference Approved Literature, articles published in this Newsletter are the experience and opinion of the author, and are not necessarily the opinion of AA.

- Next Area D Assembly:**
Sunday 5th December 2010 1pm
 (Workshop—Conference Outcomes at 11am)
 Senior Citizens Club, cnr Autumn/Pakington Sts, Geelong West Melway Ref 401 B2 .
- Shepparton/Mooroopna District 55th AA Anniversary Friday to Sunday 15th to 17th Oct**
With Al-anon Participation
 Mooroopna Community Centre (The Hub), Cnr Morrell & Alexandra Sts. Mooroopna Les - 5831 5532
- Geelong & District 55th Anniversary**
 Saturday 13 & Sunday 14 November 2010
 Potato Shed, Drysdale (10 mins out of Geelong)
Further details to follow!
- Mooroopna Fun & Fellowship Music Night**
Saturday 30th Oct & Saturday 27th Nov 7:00pm
 Mooroopna Hub Community Centre
 23 Alexandra St (cnr Morrell St), Mooroopna
 (Feel free to bring a plate and your voices)
- Kyneton Weekend of Fellowship & Fun**
 With Al Anon participation
Saturday to Sunday 6th to 7th Nov
 Catholic Church Hall, 53 Ebdon Street Kyneton
 Registration \$25 Includes Meals & Entertainment
aakyneton@y7mail.com
- Committee meeting organising the 2012 National Convention in Melbourne**
Monday 22nd Nov 7:30pm
 Gahan Centre Corner Greville & Grattan St Prahran
- 46th NATIONAL AUSTRALIAN A.A. CONVENTION**
 Perth, Western Australia, Easter 2011
 Thursday 21st to Sunday 24th April 2011
<http://www.aanatconperth2011.cjb.net/>

About Area D

Area D Southern Region is a part of the Alcoholics Anonymous General Service Conference Structure of Australia.

As such we fully participate in the Australian General Service Conference.

We also support the AA

National Office in any way we are able.

Bordered by the Yarra river, the Area includes the Western and Northern suburbs of Melbourne and extends to include other major cities such as Geelong and Ballarat, and

regional centres such as Daylesford and Kyneton.

