

GSR BOOT CAMP WORKSHOP- PART II-The HOW OF IT ALL

I would like to start this part by sharing my experience as a former GSR. I had to develop a thick skin to deal with matters related to my service position. I learned to command respect from my group by my thoughtful, concise and informative reports. As I performed my duties to the best of my abilities, they came to respect me as their representative and would come to me for advice on matters related to AA as a whole. I always carried the message to the best of my abilities and kept them as best informed as was possible.

One of the things that I took to heart from those that served before me was to keep the GSR book for my group and to pass it along to the next Incoming GSR. This act of passing it on is the essence of Rotation that Tradition two implies, "we are but trusted Servants" and therefore we must not govern. What we do is by the grace of a higher power. Thy will not mine be done. In the end it was one of the most rewarding Service experiences I have had to date in the Service of AA. And my wish and hope for you is that it will be the same for you.

Let's go back to the SENY Handbook to start this part of the workshop.

The link below is to the SENY-AREA 49 web site for New Incoming GSR's. It succinctly describes what that role is and how you operate in the AREA and AA structure

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*As a GSR, you are part of the General Service Structure. **You are responsible to your group's conscience and what they feel is best for A.A.** You can vote against what your group feels is best, if there is new information presented to you that you feel if they knew they would change their vote, or if you believe that voting for or against really was not in the best interest of A.A. If done, the group you were asked to serve certainly has a right to ask why you felt it was best to go against the group conscience. As a member of the group and serving as its GSR, you are on the top of the service structure and those below, such as DCMs and Delegates, are responsible to listen to you!*

The above passage comes from the SENY GSR handout and refers to **Concept Three** "Right of Decision" as well as something that is unique to AA as a whole, *The Minority Opinion*. It is your duty and indeed your right to vote the conscience of your heart, if and when you feel that new pertinent information is revealed at an assembly. However, you must then go back to your group and explain why you changed your vote and clarify for them what that the new evidence was that changed your mind. You were elected to **voice your group's conscience to the body** and the Delegate, who is always listening to what is said in order to form the Area conscience, which is then taken to the General Service Conference in the Spring by the Delegate.

Typically, the basic duties of the GSR, are as follows:

I am a new GSR, what do I need to know now?

- **Get a Service Sponsor** – It is suggested that if your current sponsor does not have experience with general service, that you get a service sponsor.
- **Make sure your group has an Alternate GSR.**
- **Bring Copies of “The Link” to your Group.**
- **Familiarize yourself with the A.A. Service Manual, the 12 Concepts for World Service, and our 12 Traditions, and read the pamphlet The A.A. Group.**

- **Attend all of your County General Service /District Meetings on a monthly basis.**
- **You will also be asked to attend all the SENY assemblies that are scattered throughout the year, as well as some optional events that will both help you and give you the information you need to be a better group representative.**
- **By Attending all of the Assemblies, you are on track to make sure that the group conscience you carry with you will be forwarded to the Service Conference -** Remember, each time you raise your hand to vote, you are voting on behalf of your group. You are exercising Concept Three- “Right of Decision” and Concept Four- “Right of Participation” and fulfilling your primary purpose of carrying the message. (Tradition Five)

As discussed, in Part I, it is important for you to register with the Area Registrar because you will receive the agenda and the directions to the Assembly and other pertinent mailings. The meetings rotate throughout the Area and since we are twelve geographic counties and 1 Spanish District (Districo Hispanicos) (a non-geographic area), the assembly moves around in a rotational basis so that all counties get to host an AREA Assembly.

Below is an example of the usual Assembly format, when we met in person. The virtual Assembly format is a little different but of a similar nature:

- 8:30 a.m.-arrival & registration
- 8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.- breakfast & orientation
- 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.-morning session
- 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.-lunch
- 1:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Afternoon Assembly Session and closing

A large part of your job is to report back to your group what transpired at the meetings and assemblies that you attend. That is usually accomplished through the use of reports. A typically suggested report structure follows:

A typical report from the County Meeting / Assembly to your group may contain some of the following information:

- **Something about GSO** (AA as a whole).
- **Something about SENY** – listen to the officer’s reports, may be something about one of

the standing committees (Corrections, Public Information, etc.). **SENY EVENTS CALENDAR:** It is always a good idea to keep checking the SENY Events Calendar for items of interest to your group. The Calendar is where you will find all meetings, assemblies and other Districts and groups activities. They are posted here by the Agenda chair of SENY, after being submitted to the chair, and are for all members of the Area to attend. An important thing to know is that the calendar fills up quickly and that it is used to avoid scheduling conflicts within the Area. It is a great way to publicize events in your District or Group, i.e.; Workshops that your group may be putting on.

- **Something that you think your home group would be interested in. (From the District- this usually will be Group Anniversaries and other local news of interest)**
- **Something from an article in the Link.**

Please refer back to the original document for more information on the Assembly schedule and what happens at each of them. I would like to point out that there are two assemblies that are super important, in my opinion as a former GSR: 1) the Delegates Day of Sharing and the other is 2) the Pre-Conference Assembly.

At the Delegate’s day of sharing, you will be presented with the necessary background presentations for you to bring back to your group in order to make an informed group conscience on the questions on the delegate’s questionnaire. The Pre-Conference Assembly is important because that is when you will bring your group’s conscience back to the Delegate to bring to the conference. Your questionnaires, that you received prior to this will be due back at this time.

The important thing for you to remember is that your voice matters as much as a person with 20 years or more because we are all equals in the eyes of our Higher Power.

This portion of the GSR duties and responsibilities comes from the SENY AREA HANDBOOK, (which you will all be getting from us) and it goes as follows:

Relationship of the GSR to the District and the County

- Attends all district and county meetings.
- Keeps the group GSR handbook with all minutes of district, county, and area meetings up to date for successors and group reference.
- Reports to the district on the group conscience.
- Shares with other GSRs.
- Is available to serve in such district and county activities as

required.

- Assists in maintaining the group history and records.

Relationship of the GSR to the Area and Suggested Training

- Attends and participates in area assemblies.
- Attends orientation sessions, and county and area workshops.
- Studies the Traditions, The AA Service Manual/Twelve Concepts

for World Service and other service literature.

- Obtains the services of an alternate GSR— at least during the second year of the term.

- Familiarizes and shares with the alternate GSR (AGSR) with all

GSR duties and resources, including the SENY Service Handbook, The AA Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service, etc.

Next, we'll quickly talk about the Parliamentary procedures that we use to vote at Assemblies and a bit about the voting process.

SENY Assemblies use the modified form of Robert's Rules of Order in order to conduct *business*.

In A.A. we use what's referred to as modified Robert's Rules of Order. We use them to help conduct the flow of a meeting where voting takes place and help to establish a process to make sure that each voice can be heard. Certain terms you may hear are "I would like to make a motion to..." "Second"; "Point of Order" "Point of Information" "Call the Question": "motion to Table"; "Motion to close."

We refer to them as 'Modified' in A.A. as we do not use them as strictly as the full version. A.A. General Service takes great care in making sure every voice is heard and that we reach decisions by "substantial unanimity" where in almost all cases a vote passes by a minimum of 2/3rds of eligible voters. This is so we can never slowly become divided into two sizable parties, neither feeling they are getting what they want. We also take care to listen to "minority opinion." This means that whoever was not in the 'prevailing' or winning vote has the opportunity to speak again as to why they were for or against a motion.

A bit on the minority opinion. It is unique to AA and it can be used to change the majority opinion when presented in the right fashion. It can cause those present to recast their votes in a different light given the new evidence. If this happens to you at an Assembly, then it is your right and duty to cast your vote differently given the new information at hand. - (Concept 3 - "Right of Decision") After the minority opinion has been presented the Parliamentarian will ask if anyone has changed their vote and if so, a simple majority will re-open the discussion and a new vote will be taken. This very unique democratic concept is the true essence of Love and

Tolerance that we practice in all our affairs. Where else does the minority get the same rights as the majority? **Nowhere, except in AA.**

You can explore a deeper look at How we vote in SENY by reading that section of the Handbook or by going to this link:

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/559f240ce4b07a4915495c39/t/5e3e4d1fbab6ba3cfafd3933/1581141281506/SENY_RulesOfOrder_Illustrated.pdf

Here is a quick guide to some of the acronyms and names that you will encounter as a GSR:

Alphabet Soup: A Glossary of Commonly Used Acronyms and Terms

AA Grapevine (Inc.), The— A corporation of the General Service Board overseeing the publishing operations of the Grapevine and La Viña

AAWS— Alcoholics Anonymous World Services (Inc.)— A corporation of the General Service Board overseeing the operations of the General Service Office and serving as the publishing company for Conference-approved and service literature

Area— A geographical division entitled to elect a delegate to represent it at the General Service Conference, also assuming some responsibility for AA service activity in its geographical division

CF— Correctional Facilities— A service committee concerned with carrying the AA message to incarcerated alcoholics and/or with working cooperatively with correctional professionals toward that end

Class A Trustee— Non-alcoholic trustee elected by the General Service Board to serve on AA's General Service Board and standing trustee committees, usually drawn from the ranks of professionals who believe in the AA recovery program

Class B Trustee— AA member trustee elected either regionally (Regional Trustee), nationally (Trustee at Large for the United States or Canada) or from among current or past non-trustee directors at AAWS or The AA Grapevine (General Service Trustee)

CNY— Central New York— Area 47 of the General Service Conference of the United States and Canada, one of the four areas in New York State

CPC— Cooperation with the Professional Community— A service committee concerned with carrying the AA message through working with professionals who may work with alcoholics

DCM— District Committee Member— The chairperson of local district committee, the district's voice in area committee and assembly meetings

DCMC— District Committee Member Chair— The chairperson of the local county committee/assembly, the county's voice in area committee and assembly meetings

District— Several groups in a local community meet together to form a district committee as the next service level between the home groups and the county and area

General Service Board— The service entity with responsibility for custodial oversight for all AA service activities through AAWS, Inc., the AA Grapevine, Inc. and the trustees' committees

GSC— General Service Conference— The service body representative of the membership which is "the guardian of world services and of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of AA," (from, The AA Service Manual, p. S95), the guiding conscience of the fellowship, also the annual meeting in New York City of that service body

GSO— General Service Office— The business office of AA in the US and Canada located in New York City

GSR— General Service Representative— An AA group's representative and link with the rest of AA, the voice of its group conscience

GV— Grapevine— The periodic journal of AA, "Our Meeting in Print," also a service committee concerned with carrying the AA message through the publication of the two periodicals, the Grapevine and La Viña

GvR— Grapevine Representative— Local link with the Grapevine Office offering access to information and materials about/from the Grapevine/LaViña

H&I— Hospitals and Institutions— A service committee concerned with carrying the AA message to alcoholics in hospitals and other institutions

HMB— Hudson-Mohawk-Berkshire— Area 48 of the General Service Conference of the United States and Canada, one of the four areas in New York State

LV— La Viña— The Spanish language edition of AA's periodic journal

NERAASA— Northeast Regional AA Service Assembly— The Northeast Region's annual weekend gathering to discuss General Service Conference-related and other topics touching AA's Three Legacies

NERC— Northeast Regional Convention— The Northeast Region's annual convention

NERD— Northeast Regional Delegate(s)— Any past or present delegate from the Northeast

Region, also the annual meeting of that group of members

NERF— Northeast Regional Forum— A biennial regional weekend sharing and informational session designed to help the General Service Board, AAWS, the Grapevine Corporate Board, the Grapevine Staff, and the General Service Office Staff stay in touch with members in the region

Northeast Region— Our region in the General Service Conference of the United States and Canada, one of eight regions (six in the US and two in Canada), including the 18 areas in Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts (2), New Hampshire, New Jersey (2), New York (4), Pennsylvania (2), Rhode Island and Vermont

NYSIW— New York State Informational Workshop— An annual service weekend sponsored by the four areas in NY State supporting discussion and the sharing of experience of the fellowship's main service committees

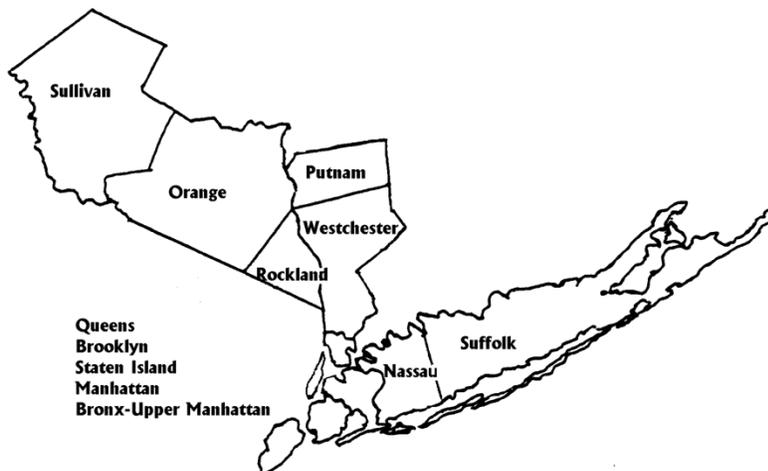
PI— Public Information— A service committee concerned with carrying the AA message to the public often working with the media

SENY— South Eastern New York (Committee and Assembly of Alcoholics Anonymous)—

Area 49 of the General Service Conference of the United States and Canada, one of the four areas in New York State, our area

TF— Treatment Facilities— A service committee concerned with carrying the AA message to alcoholics in institutions and/or working cooperatively with treatment professionals toward that end

WNY— Western New York— Area 50 of the General Service Conference of the United States and Canada, one of the four areas in New York State



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Once again if you have any questions feel free to email me at
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!!!

Part III- GSR Duties at Delegates Day of Sharing and Pre-conference Assembly