

G.S.R.

**General  
Service  
Representative**

**May be the  
most important  
job in A.A.**

**G.S.R. WORKSHOP WORKBOOK**

Western Washington Area (WWA) 72 Of Alcoholics Anonymous

By choosing its most qualified man or woman as G.S.R., a group helps secure its own future — and the future of A.A. as a whole.

Revised 5/10/2009

# **A Declaration of Unity**

**This we owe to A.A.'s future; to place our common welfare first; to keep our fellowship united.**

**For on A.A. unity depend our lives, and the lives of those to come.**

This handbook is meant to be an instructive guide.

Most of the information contained herein may be found, in greater detail, in the A.A. Service Manual, the Western Washington Area 72 handbook, and the other referenced literature

In no manner whatsoever is this handbook intended to supersede the above-mentioned references or any A.A. General Service Conference approved literature.

Many thanks to the Washington State East Area 92, California Northern Interior Area 7, Mid-Southern California Area 9, and Oregon Area 58, for sharing service materials from which this manual was adapted.

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## SECTION I

### **WELCOME TO ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS GENERAL SERVICE!**

As an elected general service representative (G.S.R.) you now carry the voice of your A.A. group's conscience to the A.A. General Service Conference held in New York each April. Through your elected district committee member (D.C.M.) and the Western Washington Area 72 delegate, you will become the two-way link between your group and the world of A.A. as a whole. As such, you and your fellow G.S.R.s all over the world have become the key to the unity of A.A.

You are your A.A. group's link with Western Washington Area general service, the General Service Office (G.S.O.), and the General Service Conference. You will, unless you direct otherwise, have your name and telephone number listed in the Western Directory as the official contact for your group.

By your active presence in General Service you will be helping to insure that A.A. will still be here for future generations of suffering alcoholics. As such you have an active part in building a strong service structure. Please take care to protect the rights of individual A.A.s to have their voices acknowledged and heard, no matter how much in the minority they may be.

You will learn more about the general service structure, which is based on:

### **SUMMARY OF THE SERVICE STRUCTURE**

The structure from the **TOP DOWN** is:

The Group: is part of

The District: is part of

The Area: is part of

The Region: all parts of

The General Service Conference

### **THE THREE LEGACIES**

1. **RECOVERY**, as outlined in the Twelve Steps,
2. **UNITY**, as outlined in the Twelve Traditions, and
3. **SERVICE**, as outlined in the *A.A. Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service*, by Bill W.

**\*\*\*EQUALS 36 Spiritual Principles\*\*\***

**You are now engaged in one of the finest forms of our 3<sup>rd</sup> Legacy and Twelfth Step work.**

## ABOUT THIS MANUAL

Here, we will cover some aspects of the general service structure and your new position as GSR:

- The geographic division of the U.S. and Canada into service regions.
- The broad structure of general service.
- Service structure of the Western Washington Area 72.
- Area officers and their qualifications.
- Things you can do as general service representatives.
- Some ideas on how to carry out the duties of a general service representative more effectively.

## INVOLVEMENT IN GENERAL SERVICE

Regarding the relationship of the G.S.R. to general service, the *A.A. Service Manual* states:

“General services grew to fill a need beyond the reach of the individual, group and intergroup. Today, the term general services are applied to all kinds of activities within the conference structure, carried on by area committees, delegates, trustees, and G.S.O. staff. Usually the services affect the Fellowship as a whole. Almost always, they are part of A.A.’s distinctive unity, which allows the movement to function so well.”

Also, “originally, the services were performed by A.A.’s General Service Office (G.S.O.). Today it means the work of anyone in the general service structure — G.S.R., committee member, delegate, etc.”

## SECTION II

### THE GROUP

The fundamental unit in Alcoholics Anonymous is the group; and, the groups are at the top of the chart. We will work our way down from there. (See *The A.A. Service Manual* Chapter II for charts of the general service structure; *The AA Group* pamphlet for the group structure chart; and later pages in this document for a chart of the service structure of Western Washington Area 72.) Note that A.A. is loosely organized, almost directly in reverse of the normal corporate or department chart we’re used to seeing. Hopefully, internal matters within any group are resolved at the business meeting of that group by:

- Involving as many members of the group as possible.
- Expressing the widest range of points of view on the subject.
- Allowing enough time for the members to take all the information into consideration before any final decision is made on an issue.
- Thus resulting in an informed group conscience.

### YOUR HOME GROUP

People in General Service — particularly the G.S.R.s — are generally known as the guardians of our Traditions.

The relationship of a G.S.R. with the home group is very important. An important element of

becoming effective is to attend the meetings of your home group on a regular basis. Becoming acquainted with home group members and their ideas gives you the credibility needed when making suggestions and reports. Only by attending group meetings regularly can you stay informed of the group's affairs.

If your group has a steering committee, the G.S.R. should be an active part of it by giving regular reports to the group on service activities and brief reports on important issues discussed at the district and area meetings.

Just as a personal inventory helps us to maintain a healthy sobriety by revealing our strengths and weaknesses, an annual group inventory can flag areas that may need some focused group attention. A good starting format for this inventory may be found in the pamphlet *The A.A. Group*.

The General Service Office has a publication, *Box 4-5-9*, which is produced bimonthly and contains many articles of general interest to the entire fellowship. Since the G.S.R. is listed at G.S.O. as the mail contact for the group, he or she automatically receives a copy, which should be read, then shared with the group. For the nominal cost of \$6.00 per year, a group may receive a bulk subscription of ten copies of each issue. Often just a simple exposure to the availability of this newfound hidden resource is enough to get a group interested in subscribing. *Box 4-5-9* is a valuable resource for discussion and could also be tied into the G.S.R.'s report.

Other areas in which the G.S.R. can be of service to the group include the group's finances. It is suggested that a group retain a prudent reserve of money to cover any potential extraordinary cost that may be incurred, as well as one to three months' regular expenses. This reserve is retained after the group's expenses have been paid. These expenses may — and probably should — include supporting the G.S.R. in his/her duties directly related to the position. Such expenses might be for traveling to district meetings and area assemblies.

### **DUTIES OF THE G.S.R.**

**Now**, let's focus on the duties of a G.S.R. in a bit more detail. The G.S.R. has the job of

- Linking the group with A.A. as a whole.
- Carrying the voice of the group's conscience.
- Reporting it to the D.C.M. and the delegate, who pass this on to the conference and the rest of A.A.
- Bringing the problems and remedies that affect A.A. unity, health and growth back to the group.

In this sense, the General Service Conference can feel that it is acting for A.A. as a whole only to the extent that the GSR keeps the group informed and can gather and communicate the group's conscience.

In general, the G.S.R.'s major responsibilities involve a two-way relationship with:

- The group.
- The district.
- The general service area.

Read *The A.A. Service Manual*, Chapter Two, and the pamphlet *GSR: Perhaps the most important job in A.A.* for further information on your job and duties.

## **ATTENDING DISTRICT MEETINGS**

There are really very few completely new and original problems that develop in groups, so our continuity of experience is extremely valuable to the new G.S.R. The G.S.R.s may share with their fellow G.S.R.s and the D.C.M. at the district meetings how they dealt with such matters and with what success. Their experience may be helpful to another group.

Also, at the district meetings, agenda items that require action at the next area assembly can be discussed. This is a kind of middle ground where such discussion makes us better informed and able to take back to our group any business where a group conscience is needed. We can then take this conscience back to the assembly and make our voice heard.

## **REPORTS TO THOSE YOU SERVE**

When giving reports at your group or district, it's probably best to be brief. **Things you might present to the district are:**

- Any new group officers or other service position holders.
- Who your alternate G.S.R. is.
- What the average attendance is at group meetings.
- How your group divides its funds for contributions.
- Any problems the group may be facing such as having to move, court referrals, dual diagnosis members (alcoholism coupled with a mental illness), non-alcoholic addicts, lack of interest in service, etc.
- Announce any upcoming events and any group activities.

**And, things you might report to your group include:**

- News of any events or workshops you learned about at the district meeting.
- New district officers and other service people.
- Things that you think the group can relate to or is interested or involved in.
- If there is an issue coming up that will require your vote, try to explain it as simply, fully, and fairly as possible so that they can arrive at an informed group conscience.
- With a bit of practice, you can probably work in a piece of information that will provoke a question and get the discussion started.

You may not personally agree with your group's conscience, but if you have done your job correctly and discussed it enough, you will have no problem in abiding by it; and can rightly feel good about it, too.

Probably the most important thing that you can do as a GSR is to become an informed one. This serves both us personally and serves A.A. as a whole. The more you know, the more you can share from personal experience, and the more credible your voice will become.

## **ROTATION**

In most groups, the G.S.R. is elected to a two-year term, which usually runs concurrent with the area rotation. D.C.M.s and area officers likewise serve two years. Since rotation is an essential part of service, it is important to have an alternate G.S.R. to learn something about the job before they assume the responsibility that goes with it. Having someone in the wings who is prepared will give you the freedom to go into and experience other levels of service without feeling that your job is

unfinished because there is no one to take your place.

If you've been elected a G.S.R. without any training, don't despair. Ask the former G.S.R. or your D.C.M. for copies of past district meeting and area assembly minutes; read the previous reports, if any, from your group to the district; and learn what is being discussed at the area level. It is an adage in A.A. that by the time you have fully learned how to do your current job, it is time to rotate out of it.

And, if we hold any job beyond its usual term, we are denying someone else the opportunity to learn and grow as we have. It will seem frustrating at times because you may think that nobody in the group is listening or cares about what you have to say. Then, sometime you will find yourself amazed by being asked a question relating to something you thought was dead and buried months ago. Or your group will ask you to deal with a question in terms of how it relates to the A.A. Traditions. Those times are part of what makes it all rewarding in the end. So keep coming back and ask questions until you feel you have, or know how to get, an answer. Remember, we strive for progress, not perfection.

### **A WORD ABOUT COMMITMENT**

Commitment, in terms of recovery, means recovering some of those basic principles which all of us were taught as children, but which we lost somewhere in pursuit of self.

As members of the general service structure, those principles that we must now demonstrate as a trusted servant include willingness, self sacrifice, honesty, consideration of others, thoughtfulness, love, tolerance and, most of all, basic etiquette.

- Do we show up when we say we will?
- Are we on time?
- Do we mark our A.A. commitments on the calendar and then work around them, or do we attend only if it doesn't interfere with our own pleasure?
- When we are unable to make an event that the G.S.R. should attend, do we arrange for our alternate to be there?
- Do we keep our alternates well informed and involved?
- Do we attend as many service activities as possible in order to become better informed, or do we do the least possible required?
- Do we tend to our responsibilities cheerfully or portray them as a drag?
- Are we able to offer criticism lovingly and based on the application of our three legacies, or do we let personalities get in the way?

All of these things are important to being committed to service in A.A., but the bottom line is: Are we giving in proportion to what has been given to us? Gratitude is an action word. It is something we show, not just something we talk about. If we give only a tenth of what has been given to us, we should all be shining examples of service and commitment in A.A.

### **THE INFORMED GROUP CONSCIENCE**

Taken from a workshop at the thirty-fourth General Service Conference:

#### **The Second Tradition**

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority ... A loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants ... they do not govern.

**Concept XII, Warranty Four:** “That all important decisions should be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity.”

“Here on the one hand we erect a safeguard against any hasty or overbearing authority of a simple majority; and, on the other hand, it takes notice of the rights and the frequent wisdom of minorities, however small. This principle further guarantees that all matters of importance, time permitting, will be extensively debated, and that such debates will continue until a really heavy majority can support every critical decision ...”

The group conscience strives for unanimity through enlightenment, spirituality, and the practice of our principles in all our affairs. To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions through full discussion. On sensitive issues, the group works slowly, discouraging formal motions until the group has a clear sense of its views. Placing principles before personalities, the group is wary of dominant opinions. The group conscience is the aggregate of experience a group develops after applying the Traditions and Concepts to a question.

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

Groups find their way past ignorance, prejudice and self-will on an individual basis by practicing the Twelve Steps that enable us to practice humility, patience, tolerance, kindness and love – emphasizing principles before personalities. Through the Steps, we learn to overcome self-will and open the way to a group conscience. When tempers flare, an informed chairperson postpones discussion until those tempers cool, allowing time for prayer and meditation. (One workshop mentioned the Serenity Prayer.)

Knowledge of A.A. history and willingness to listen to experience are important factors. We can listen for a quiet minority voice, which may be the true expression of a loving God by allowing time for all to share and, especially, the minority to be heard.

### **FURTHERING YOUR GROWTH AND EDUCATION IN THE SERVICE STRUCTURE**

You will find it advantageous to attend all training sessions, workshops and seminars, etc., to get new ideas, knowledge or clarification of a principle. These events include:

- Other district and area workshops.
- Pre-Conference
- Pre-Assembly
- Regional Service Assemblies: PRAASA and Regional Forums

### **ATTENDING PRE-CONFERENCES AND PRE-ASSEMBLIES**

Western Washington Area 72 holds several regional **pre-conferences** each year prior to the General Service Conference to give groups the opportunity to become informed about items on the agenda for the conference. Pre-conferences are usually held in late February or during the month of March, with several districts in a geographic region of the area gathering in a common location. Pre-conferences are attended by the delegate and alternate delegate. By attending and participating in pre-conferences, the G.S.R. gathers vital information and experience that can be shared with the group and considered as the group comes to an informed conscience. Before the delegate leaves

for the conference, the G.S.R. shares the group conscience with him or her, so that the delegate is able to attend the conference with a “sense of the area.”

**Pre-assemblies** are similar gatherings held in the weeks prior to the annual Western Washington Area Assembly. Pre-assemblies are attended by the area chairperson and alternate chairperson. The area treasurer or alternate treasurer also attends to provide background and additional information on the effect of proposed motions on area finances. The G.S.R. carries all information gathered from the pre-assembly back to the group for full discussion. Through thorough discussion, the group comes to an informed group conscience which the G.S.R. is able to carry to the October assembly.

### **WHAT ARE THESE REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES? Pacific Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (PRAASA)**

“The purpose of PRAASA is to develop greater unity among the members, groups, and areas of the Pacific Region, to encourage the exchange of ideas and to provide an opportunity for members to discuss pertinent aspects of A.A. Recovery, Unity, and Service should always be the primary purpose for each assembly. The thought of how we can better serve Alcoholic Anonymous should never be compromised.” PRAASA is held annually the first weekend of March. It consists of two days of presentations concerning our three legacies and matters of the full agenda for the upcoming General Service Conference. Time for questions is always provided.

There are roundtable discussions concerning every facet of service. At these you will meet people from nine states all sharing a common bond of interest. Whether that interest is in Public Information, Finance, or G.S.R.s, etc., all share their experience, strength and hope with others with similar interests.

PRAASA is a gathering of, in recent years, about one thousand people — all striving to learn how to better carry the message of A.A. A different area hosts this assembly each year.

Our regional trustee attends PRAASA.

### **Regional Forum**

Regional Forums originated in 1975 through a good idea on the part of the late Chair of the Board Emeritus, Dr. Jack Norris. They are weekend sharing sessions designed to enhance and widen communication among service and potential service people, and representatives of the General Service Board, G.S.O. staff, and Grapevine staff. At the invitation of a region, four forums are held each year. Since our U.S./Canada structure is made up of eight regions, a Regional Forum is held every other year in a particular region, on a rotating basis.

There is no registration fee for a Regional Forum. The General Service Board covers the expenses of hotel meeting rooms, transportation and rooms for its board and staff personnel. Many areas, districts, or groups cover or defray the transportation and hotel room expenses of the service people representing them at a forum; however, anyone may attend. A Regional Forum is not a formal, decision-making body, thus no formal actions come about as a result of forums. Rather, forums provide a unique opportunity to share valuable experience, ask questions, and spark new ideas.

### **SPONSORSHIP IN SERVICE (taken from the AA Group Pamphlet)**

The service sponsor begins by encouraging the member to become active in their home group — making coffee, taking care of literature, cleaning up, attending business meetings or intergroup meetings, etc. The service sponsor should keep in mind that all members will not have the desire or qualifications to move beyond certain levels and, thus, the service sponsor might help find tasks appropriate to individuals' skills and interests. Whatever level of service one performs, all are toward the same end — sharing the overall responsibilities of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Eventually, the service sponsor encourages the individual member interested in this form of service to attend district meetings and to read about the history and structure of Alcoholics Anonymous. At this point, the individual beginning this work should begin to understand the responsibilities of service work, as well as feel the satisfaction of yet another form of Twelfth Step work. Such individuals should be encouraged to take an active part in district activities and consider being elected to alternate positions in the district so as to learn about the responsibilities of various jobs in the service structure.

During this process it is important for the individual to continue to learn about the three legacies — unity, recovery and service — and to understand that the principle of rotation not only allows them to move on in service, but also gives newer members the privilege of serving. Rotation also allows them to understand that no one should hold on to a position of trust long enough to feel a proprietary interest and thereby discourage newcomers from service.

Now, through knowledge and experience, the newer member is aware that service is our most important product after sobriety. With this knowledge, the individual is able to share their vision with others and ensure the future of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The above section on service sponsorship has been adapted from the A.A. pamphlet *Questions and Answers on Sponsorship* with permission from A.A.W.S.

### **SECTION III**

#### **THE DISTRICTS**

The Area is divided into Districts, which are ideally comprised of from six to twenty groups. Larger districts may form sub-districts. Our Western Washington Area 72 is currently divided into forty-one districts.

A district is usually a small geographic part of the area. In Western Washington Area 72, we have two non-geographic linguistic districts, which include all the Spanish speaking groups.

#### **DISTRICT MEETINGS**

Each group's G.S.R. represents the group at the district meetings, usually held once a month. Although each district determines the format for the conduct of business autonomously, a typical meeting includes:

- Reports to the G.S.R.s from the District Committee Member (D.C.M.).
- Reports from the groups via the G.S.R.s.
- Discussion of group problems.
- Discussion of the business of the previous or upcoming assembly.
- Discussions of special events such as a workshop that the district may be organizing for the

- general fellowship.
- Perhaps a presentation on some aspect of service.
- District standing committees.

### **THE DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER**

Each district elects a District Committee Member (D.C.M.) who conducts the district meetings, carries the conscience of the district as a voting member at the area assembly, and is a member of the area committee.

The primary purpose of the D.C.M. is to facilitate district meetings, and stimulate as many groups as possible to be an active part of A.A. as a whole, through representation and participation. Also, they assist the efforts of the G.S.R.s. Many districts assign additional duties to the D.C.M. and his or her alternate. Please see *The A.A. Service Manual*, Chapter III, for a more complete description of D.C.M.s and their duties.

D.C.M.s are elected by the G.S.R.s in a district for a two-year term to begin in the odd year. Many districts elect their D.C.M.s in the fall of the even year. The new D.C.M. takes office January 1 of the following year.

### **WORKING WITH LOCAL INTERGROUPS AND CENTRAL OFFICES**

“Traditionally, general service committees and intergroups/central offices have performed different functions. Central offices provide local services: general service committees maintain the link between the A.A. groups and the General Service Board by means of the Conference. So these two separate but vital service structures coexist in many areas in mutual cooperation and harmony.” “At the time the conference was started, there were already well-established central offices in several large cities, providing services for local A.A. groups and members. Today, there are many more central offices throughout the U.S. and Canada, supported by the A.A. groups in the communities they serve (*The A.A. Service Manual*, page S37).

These offices provide such services as:

- Receiving, arranging, and following up Twelfth Step calls.
- Answering inquiries about A.A.
- Establishing local public information committees.
- Maintaining information about local hospitals and recovery facilities for alcoholics.
- Publishing local A.A. meeting lists.
- Providing a newsletter.
- Ordering, selling and distributing A.A. Conference-approved literature.

“The central office is an ideal contact with those in the community seeking information about A.A. Thus, A.A.’s relations with the public and professional in the alcoholism field are often handled through the cooperation of the area committee and central office.” (*A.A. Guidelines on Central or Intergroup Offices*)

One way central office and the general service committees can cooperate is in the areas of Public Information and Cooperation With the Professional Community.

## **SECTION IV**

### **AREA ASSEMBLIES AND QUARTERLIES**

Each area acts as a unit at Area Assemblies and Quarterlies held periodically throughout the year.

In WWA 72, one **Assembly** is held each year on the first or second weekend of **October**. Area Quarterlies are held on the first or second weekend of **January, April, and July**.

The **Assembly**, in even years, is where the election of our delegate, alternate delegate, area officers, and their alternates takes place.

Standing committee chairs and other appointed trusted servants are selected from service resumes submitted. The area elected officers make the selections which are then affirmed by the area committee at the first January quarterly of the new rotation.

At Assemblies and Quarterlies we conduct such business as may affect the entire area, including:

- Informing the delegate of the sense or conscience of the area.
- Receiving from the delegate the sense or conscience of and report from the Conference.
- Discussions of the issues to be introduced and/or voted upon during the Saturday business session.
- Conducting workshops and roundtables on all aspects of general service work.
- Receiving reports from all our area officers, standing committee chairpersons and D.C.M.s regarding their activities and concerns.
- Presenting training or orientation sessions for new G.S.R.s.
- Discussion or sharing sessions for G.S.R.s and D.C.M.s.
- Area budget matters.

Most, but not all, of these activities take place at every assembly or quarterly.

Area assemblies and quarterlies have preset agendas and are usually too large for specific group problems to be efficiently addressed except at the G.S.R. sharing sessions at the assembly. However, there are always plenty of G.S.R.s and other trusted servants around to talk with.

### **ATTENDING AREA ASSEMBLIES and QUARTERLIES**

By attending area assemblies and quarterlies we become familiar with things happening in the larger world of A.A. through the reports given by our delegate, area officers, their alternates, area standing committee chairs, and the D.C.M.s.

It is quite likely that you will hear some ideas that can be used to better your own district or group. With so many G.S.R.s, D.C.M.s, area officers, area standing committee members, the delegate, and past delegates present, you will always be able to find someone to discuss your concerns with.

Copies of the minutes of each area assembly and quarterly are mailed to your D.C.M. for distribution to the G.S.R. of every registered group in your district. On the WWA 72 web site ([www.area72aa.org](http://www.area72aa.org)) you will find agendas for our WWA 72 quarterlies and assemblies.

Serving on different committees at all levels of A.A., one can learn a great deal about the workings of our fellowship.

1.

### **AREA BUSINESS: WHO VOTES**

In WWA 72, while all members are encouraged to attend and become familiar with the issues discussed at the area assemblies and quarterlies, only the G.S.R.s, D.C.M.s, and area elected officers are voting members (**G.S.R.s vote only at assemblies, not quarterlies**). As has been mentioned, the main activities at the assemblies and quarterlies center on the delegate, the conference, and area business. Standing committee workshops and roundtables, G.S.R. and D.C.M. sharing sessions, and various training classes are also offered. As mentioned earlier, the WWA 72 holds one assembly and three quarterlies each year.

With one exception, proxy votes are not allowed at our area assemblies. Your group must have a representative present to vote. The only exception is for groups that are located inside correctional facilities (prisons). Those groups, if registered, may appoint a proxy to carry their votes.

### **THE G.S.R.'S VOICE AND VOTE AT AREA ASSEMBLIES AND QUARTERLIES**

G.S.R.s may participate in the discussion at Area Quarterlies, but only D.C.M.s vote. At the Area Assembly, the G.S.R.s and D.C.M.s are all voting members. As such, they should make every effort to attend every assembly and quarterly. All area matters that have an effect on the area's finances, the conduct of area business, or a direct impact on all the groups are presented and ratified, rejected or revised by the assembly and quarterlies.

We become informed about what is going on by attending area assemblies and quarterlies and discussing issues with others who are in a good position to have experience and information to share on most issues.

In this way the assemblies and quarterlies meet their purpose of strengthening A.A. as a whole by carrying our message in the best way possible for our area. Again, participation by the G.S.R. is the key link in this vital chain of necessary two-way communication between the members of the group and the larger structure of A.A.

### **AREA VOTING PROCEDURES**

Motions are brought from individuals, groups, or districts. New motions are discussed, revised, and/or amended by the Area Committee at the Quarterlies. The motions that are passed by the Area Committee are presented to G.S.R.'s at the Pre-Assemblies to clarify information about them so the motions can be discussed at Home Groups to be voted on at the Area Assembly in October. Motions usually required a 2/3 majority to pass. Complete information about voting procedures is printed on the back of the agenda at the Area Assembly.

### **MAKEUP OF THE WWA 72 COMMITTEE AND ELECTION SCHEDULES**

Currently the voting membership of the WWA 72 Area Committee is comprised of the delegate and alternate, the area chair and alternate, the treasurer and alternate, and the district committee members. All area officers are elected during the assembly in October of even numbered years. They take office January 1 of the following year. The area officers, with their duties briefly described, are:

#### **2009 -2010 Panel 59 Area 72 Committee**

**Area Delegate:** **Dave T.**, [delegate@area72aa.org](mailto:delegate@area72aa.org)

Provides leadership to the area by being involved in area functions to the fullest extent possible, and by keeping an open line of communication between the General Service Office (G.S.O) and the groups. Distributes conference agenda items to groups for their discussion and input, holds regional pre-conferences, and then carries our area's collective conscience to the General Service

Conference in April of each year. Returns from the Conference and reports back to the districts. For a complete listing of delegate's duties, please refer to *The A.A. Service Manual*, Chapter Six.

**Alternate Area Delegate:** **Debbie A.**, [altdelegate@area72aa.org](mailto:altdelegate@area72aa.org)

Receives all correspondence from the General Service Office on the Conference that is sent to the delegate so he/she can be informed in the event it becomes necessary to assume the delegate's duties. Coordinates with the delegate on area issues. Is available to chair or work on special projects as needed or requested by the area.

**Area Chair:** **Randall P.**, [chair@area72aa.org](mailto:chair@area72aa.org)

Assumes a leadership role within the area by organizing, setting the agenda, and chairing three Western Washington Area 72 Quarterly business meetings in addition to the Western Washington Area 72 Assembly. Also chairs the meeting for the selection of appointed committee positions. Keeps alternate chairperson informed. Receives district minutes and corresponds with the districts regarding their problems and concerns. A further description of duties is outlined in *The A.A. Service Manual*, Chapter Five.

**Alternate Area Chair:** **Harriet V.**, [altchair@area72aa.org](mailto:altchair@area72aa.org)

Communicates with the chairperson on information pertinent to the area. Chairs the D.C.M. sharing and report session at area quarterly meetings and the Western Washington Area 72 Assembly. Acts as liaison between the Western Washington Area 72 committee and the host committee for the Western Washington Area 72 Assembly. Participates in host committee meetings and the planning of the assembly agenda. Coordinates and plans the assembly workshops and facilitates the assembly sharing session.

**Area Treasurer:** **Mike M.**, [treasurer@area72aa.org](mailto:treasurer@area72aa.org)

Is the guardian of Tradition Seven. Informs the area of financial matters. Has the ability to project increased costs of the area, what is possible as far as future spending, and cost comparisons with past spending. Surveys and points out all money-related issues as they arise. Has the use of a full computer system approved by the area assembly. The treasurer coordinates with the alternate treasurer.

Manages on-going accounts by computer program as follows:

- receives and records contributions from groups by district;
- writes group receipts and files by district;
- posts checks for current quarter by group and district;
- endorses checks and makes deposits;
- ensure accuracy of group's checks, receipts, ledger, YTD.

**Alternate Area Treasurer:** Tammy M., [alttreasurer@area72aa.org](mailto:alttreasurer@area72aa.org)

Writes all checks approved by the Western Washington Area 72 Assembly. Is responsible for balancing the area checkbook and bank balance. Lists check register, expenses and credit lines on a quarterly basis. Coordinates with the treasurer in encouraging contributions at the group level. Keeps abreast of the financial needs of the area and the financial problems of the groups. Is available to participate in service functions to discuss our Seventh Tradition, explain our regular contribution plan and to provide information on area finances. Serves as the area finance committee chairperson. May coordinate a finance committee to research and review financial matters when needed. Makes use of the Western Washington Area 72 Newsletter, handouts, letters and personal contact to pass on information relating to contributions to the area and G.S.O.

## **AREA APPOINTED OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

The incoming Western Washington Area 72 officers meet to select appointed officers and standing committee chairpersons for a two-year term. These selections are made from past trusted servants who have made themselves available by submitting résumés for consideration.

The archives steering committee selects area archivist. The area chair selects the Area Secretary. These selections are affirmed the Western Washington Area 72 Committee at the first January quarterly of the new rotation.

## **AREA APPOINTED TRUSTED SERVANTS AND STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

**Accessibility: Stephen C.,** [accessibility@area72aa.org](mailto:accessibility@area72aa.org)

Chairs the area accessibilities committee. Schedules and chairs four quarterly meetings with districts to share experience in this service area. Addresses accessibilities needs and issues for Western Washington Area 72, and coordinates services as outlined in the area accessibilities committee guidelines.

**Archivist: Trisha C.,** [archvist@area72aa.org](mailto:archvist@area72aa.org)

Schedules and chairs up to four archive quarterlies annually. Maintains and schedules a portable display of historical materials which is to be made available to A.A. service functions. Works closely with the area archives steering committee to collect, organize, store, maintain, and display historical files and materials pertinent to the area and to A.A. in general. The archivist relies upon the advice and counsel of the steering committee in carrying out the duties of the archivist, which include management of the archives repository.

**Cooperation with the Professional Community: Darrin F.,** [cpc@area72aa.org](mailto:cpc@area72aa.org)

Follows the guidelines as outlined in the Cooperation with the Professional Community Workbook from G.S.O. Schedules and chairs four quarterly meetings with the districts to share experience in this service area. Coordinates efforts to provide information to the professional community and to those who have contact with alcoholics through their profession regarding where we are, what we are, what we can do, and what we cannot do. Seeks new ways of carrying the message and sets an example of leadership for the committee members.

**Correctional Facilities: Dan F.,** [corrections@area72aa.org](mailto:corrections@area72aa.org)

Follows the guidelines as outlined in the Correctional Facilities Workbook from G.S.O. Acts in an advisory capacity to the district corrections chairpersons and D.C.M.s on corrections work. Schedules and chairs four quarterly meetings with the districts to share information on A.A. meetings in correctional facilities. Helps to structure district corrections committees through training and assistance, particularly to those experiencing new growth. May be available to talk on committee work at G.S.R. meetings. Coordinates the sponsorship of corrections meetings. Appoints and oversees the “Corrections Bridge Program” coordinator. Seeks to understand facility regulations and explains them to those who will be in direct contact with the groups. Coordinates Grapevine subscriptions to correctional facilities in the area.

**Grapevine & Literature: Reggie F., [gvlit@area72aa.org](mailto:gvlit@area72aa.org)**

Follows the guidelines as outlined in the Grapevine Workbook and in the Literature Committee Guidelines marked MG-9 from G.S.O. Exists primarily to educate the fellowship about A.A. literature, related service material, and how to obtain it. Maintains a comprehensive literature display consisting of items from A.A.W.S., G.S.O., A.A. Grapevine, Inc., and other A.A. materials. Is available to take this display to various service workshops, quarterlies and the area assembly. Sells literature on an individual basis so as not to be in competition with any group, district or Intergroup. Assets described as display items, literature inventory and cash on hand shall not exceed \$5,000. Gives informed talk on A.A. literature when asked, encourages groups to have Grapevine Representatives (GVR) and stresses the Grapevine as a valuable tool for groups and individual members. Holds four area-wide Grapevine and Literature quarterly meetings per year.

**Newsletter Editor: Betsy B., [newsletter@area72aa.org](mailto:newsletter@area72aa.org)**

Publishes, on a monthly basis, a newsletter that serves as our principal communication tool within the area. May appoint a working committee to assist in the format, content and distribution of the newsletter. Receives, formats and edits news received from the area and prepares for bulk mailing. Selects a local printer for the newsletter. Maintains a separate bank account for incoming contributions and newsletter office expenses. Maintains a current address list of all subscribers, G.S.R.s and other trusted servants for newsletter distribution. As the result of a 1990 Assembly action, effective 1991, a computer, printer, and software were approved for purchase for the editor as needed for work and completion of the newsletter editor's duties.

**Public Information: Carol W., [pi@area72aa.org](mailto:pi@area72aa.org)**

Studies and follows the A.A. Guidelines for Public Information, the P.I. Workbook and all A.A. literature pertinent to public information work. Attends and co-presides with the host district P.I. chairperson at four quarterly meetings per year, rotating among districts. Encourages districts to have a P.I. chair and for groups to appoint/elect a P.I. representative. Also encourages P.I. workshops, individually or in conjunction with each other. Maintains a list of P.I. chairpersons, addresses and phone numbers for communication and receipt of minutes. Reports anonymity breaks that may occur to the WW Area 72 delegate and encourages district P.I. chairpersons to do the same.

**Registrar: Kim C., [registrar@area72aa.org](mailto:registrar@area72aa.org)**

The registrar position is to help facilitate communication between groups, the area committee and the General Service Office by maintaining an accurate roster of all G.S.R.s and area committee members.

**Secretary: Reid B., [secretary@area72aa.org](mailto:secretary@area72aa.org)**

Assists area chairperson in preparing agendas and meeting notices of area meetings and distributes to the committee. Attends area quarterly meetings and assemblies and records the proceedings for the minutes, using notes, audiotapes and written reports. Prints and mails minutes to the D.C.M.s, area officers, committee chairpersons and others on the mailing list. (Area secretary for Western Washington is appointed by the area chair.)

**Sound System Operator: JesusA., [soundsystem@area72aa.org](mailto:soundsystem@area72aa.org)**

Provides transportation and operates area sound equipment to the following Western Washington Area 72 events only: pre-conferences, delegate reports, pre-assemblies, Area 72 quarterlies (3), and Area 72 assembly.

**Treatment Facilities: Bill K.,** [treatment@area72aa.org](mailto:treatment@area72aa.org)

Uses the guidelines as outlined in the Treatment Facilities Workbook from G.S.O. Schedules and chairs four quarterly meetings with district chairpersons in the area, rotating location between districts. Maintains an updated list of district chairpersons for communication purposes. Also encourages participation in “Bridging the Gap” program and keeps a list of temporary contacts for individuals preparing to leave treatment facilities. Coordinates Grapevine subscriptions to the districts for treatment facilities.

**Webmaster: Sharon C.,** [webmaster@area72aa.org](mailto:webmaster@area72aa.org)

Serves on the area website committee with the public information chair and three volunteers. Is responsible for the input of content and maintenance of the website. This position includes funding for communications and expenses incurred to attend area quarterly meetings and the area assembly. Area Website is [www.area72aa.org](http://www.area72aa.org)

### **Western Washington Area 72 HANDBOOK**

The *Western Washington Area 72 Handbook* is printed and updated annually. It contains a wealth of current and historical information on how our area conducts business. The handbook also has descriptions of service responsibilities of area officers, some suggested qualifications to hold area office, and references to other A.A. literature containing more complete descriptions of area officers’ qualifications and duties. It is strongly suggested that each G.S.R. obtain a copy of the Handbook that is available electronically. Your D.C.M. will be able to provide this as well as a copy of *The AA. Service Manual Combined With Twelve Concepts for World Service* by Bill W.

### **A.A. WORLDWIDE**

Alcoholics Anonymous is a worldwide organization. There are General Service Offices in many countries, each of which is autonomous. Our General Service Office for the United States and Canada is located in New York City. No attempt is made to have this office be the world capital of A.A. Rather, the New York office is available to share experience, strength and hope with offices in other countries, mainly because it has been in existence a much longer period of time.

Every two years a World Service Meeting is held with the Trustee-At-Large each from the United States and Canada attending as our delegates. This meeting serves as the way that Alcoholics Anonymous establishes and maintains its worldwide communication links. The meeting location rotates between New York and another country that has submitted a bid to hold the meeting; much as one or more districts combine to submit bids to host WWA 72 Assemblies.

### **THE REGIONS**

The map in *The A.A. Service Manual*, Chapter Nine, shows the U.S. and Canada divided into eight regions:

#### Two in Canada:

- Eastern Canada
- Western Canada including the Yukon Territory.

#### Six in the United States:

- Northeast
- Southeast
- East Central
- West Central
- Southwest

- Pacific ( Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington ... Thus, our Western Washington Area 72 is part of the Pacific Region.

### **REGIONAL TRUSTEE**

Each region has its own trustee, called a regional trustee, who serves a four-year term on the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Each region nominates a slate of qualified candidates, one from each area, from which a regional trustee is elected during the General Service Conference. The terms of these trustees are staggered so that two regional trustees are elected each year. This provides both continuity and a smooth flow of rotation. There are twenty-one non-paid trustees on the General Service Board all of whom perform tremendous amounts of service for Alcoholics Anonymous. These trustees are elected or approved by the General Service Conference. Seven are non-alcoholic, called Class A Trustees, and fourteen are alcoholic, called Class B Trustees. Eight of these fourteen Class B trustees are the regional trustees.

### **THE AREAS**

Most general service areas follow the broad geographical division of a state or Province. Due to the size and/or population of some states, they are divided into two or more areas. California is divided into six. Our Pacific Region has nine states with fifteen areas. Areas do not have to follow strict state lines. Washington State East Area 92 includes a part of SE British Columbia Canada, Washington state east of the Cascade Mountains, North Idaho, and part of Western Montana.

A map of our area WWA 72, broken down by district, is on the following page.

### **THE AREA DELEGATE**

Each general service area elects a delegate to serve them at the annual General Service Conference in New York where the broad issues of A.A. as a whole are addressed. There are a total of 93 delegates, one for each area, throughout the U.S. and Canada. The delegates are elected for a two-year term with about one-half elected each year to provide both continuity and rotation as with the trustees. The *A.A. Service Manual* has an election schedule for delegates. The General Service Conference deals only with issues affecting A.A. in the U.S. and Canada.

### **THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE**

The culmination of much of this activity, (group, district, area and regional meetings), occurs in April of each year when our area delegate attends the week long General Service Conference in New York. The voting members of the Conference are:

- The 93 Area Delegates,
- The 21 Trustees of the General Service Board,
- The staffs of the General Service Office and Grapevine,
- The Directors of A.A. World Services, Inc.
- The Directors of the A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

The 93 area delegates constitute more than two thirds of the voting members at the Conference. The policy of A.A. is decided at this meeting. The delegates take to the Conference the group conscience of the groups in their area as expressed at the area assemblies by the G.S.R.s' responses to the issues and policies discussed.



## SECTION VI

### PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now, if you start doing all the things indicated above, you'll be active and find yourself attending many meetings. Some of these may seem boring to you. This is not unusual. The main reason for this is that you are a newcomer in a whole different sense of the word. Try to remember how strange and confusing some of those first A.A. meetings that you attended seemed. Service work takes every bit as much energy as learning and working the Steps. You'll find that people involved in service are a friendly bunch and love to take time to share and explain this most valuable part of recovery with new people. Keeping this in mind may make it easier. Talk to people. Ask questions. Find out how to get information.

This organizational method; region, area, district and group may seem complicated and overly structured at first but it is really in accord with our Tradition of "least possible organization." It has been tested over time as providing the most balanced way to arrive at the only recognized authority in A.A., which is expressed as an informed group conscience which must be communicated to others when it deals with issues affecting A.A. as a whole.

### IN CONCLUSION

Concept IX tells us:

*"Good service leaders ... are at all Levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety."*

Leadership starts with informed group members and G.S.R.s, many of whom go on to become D.C.M.s, area service committee chairs, area officers, delegates and trustees.

In order to fulfill the responsibility that our group has given us we must become as knowledgeable as possible. If we keep an open mind and a willingness to learn we soon find that we are the ones that benefit.

In so helping to carry the message more usefully are we not doing what the 12th Step asks of us?

### **Leadership in A.A.: Ever a Vital Need**

*(Excerpts from Bill W.'s article in the April 1959 Grapevine. See Concept IX, page 38 of "Twelve Concepts for World Service" for the full article)*

Somewhere in our literature there is a statement to this effect: "Our leaders do not drive by mandate: they lead by example." In effect, we are saying to them, "Act for us, but don't boss us." . .

Therefore, a leader in A.A. service is a man (or woman) who can personally put principles, plans, and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back him up and help him with his job. When a leader power-drives us badly, we rebel; but when he too meekly becomes an order-taker and he exercises no judgment of his own — well, he really isn't a leader at all....

Good leadership originates plans, policies, and ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its service. But in new and important matters, it will nevertheless consult widely before taking decisions and actions. Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from

anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better, and it will give credit to the source. . . .

Good leadership never passes the buck. Once assured that it has, or can obtain, sufficient general backing, it freely takes decisions and puts them into action forthwith, provided, of course, that such action be within the framework of its defined authority and responsibility. . . .

Another qualification for leadership is give-and-take, the ability to compromise cheerfully whenever a proper compromise can cause a situation to progress in what appears to be the right direction. Compromise comes hard to us all-or-nothing drunks. Nevertheless, we must never lose sight of the fact that progress is nearly always characterized by a series of improving compromises. We cannot, however, compromise always. Now and then, it is truly necessary to stick flatfooted to one's conviction about an issue until it is settled. These are situations for keen timing and careful discrimination as to which course to take. . . .

Leadership is often called upon to face heavy and sometimes long-continued criticism. This is an acid test. There are always the constructive critics, our friends indeed. We ought never fail to give them a careful hearing. We should be willing to let them modify our opinions or change them completely. Often, too, we shall have to disagree and then stand fast without losing their friendship. *Copyright © by The A.A. Grapevine, Inc.; excerpted with permission*

**Randall**

## **TOOLS FOR THE G.S.R**

### **Some Vital Aids**

Some of the reading material seems tough at first; but study it, discuss it, and see how it relates to other parts of the program. It will surprise you someday soon when it comes alive and becomes a part of you and your message. All of our A.A. literature is important, but those pieces most directly related to service include:

- *The A.A. Service Manual Combined With The Twelve Concepts for World Service (booklet)*
- *The A.A. Group (pamphlet)*
- *A.A. Comes of Age (book)*
- *A.A. Tradition - How it Developed (pamphlet)*
- *Supporting The A.A. Support System (pamphlet)*
- *Circles of love and Service (pamphlet)*
- *Inside A.A. (pamphlet)*
- *The GSR May Be The Most Important Job In A.A. (pamphlet)*
- *The Twelve Concepts For World Service Illustrated (pamphlet)*
- *The "White Sheet," What A.A. Does and Does Not Do (one page flyer)*
- *A.A. Literature Catalog*
- *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (book)*

### *The Western Washington Area Handbook*

This handbook explains how our area conducts business, charts our service structure, contains maps of our districts, and tells how a district or a combination of two or three districts may host an assembly.

### *Final Conference Report*

A detailed report from the General Service Conference held in New York City in April of each year. The report is generally available in August of each year following the Conference.

Using these you will get both a good overview of the service picture and enough detail to deal in specifics.

## **GLOSSARY OF COMMON A.A. TERMS**

**Alternate:** A general service worker who, according to local autonomy and needs, is elected at the group, district or area levels to participate with, assist in and, in appropriate circumstances, assume the duties of a principal office holder, i.e., alternate G.S.R., alternate delegate.

**Archives:** A collection of A.A. memorabilia. The archivist's functions might include collection, indexing, storing and exhibiting original and reproduced local, national and international A.A. material such as newspaper and magazine articles, tape recordings of important A.A. functions, oral histories of older members, group and district histories, minutes of area assemblies and district meetings, etc.

**Area:** A geographical division within a state or Province. Normally there is one area for each state or Province. Where there is high population, a state or Province may divide into two or more areas.

**Area Assembly:** An area assembly is a periodic meeting of the G.S.R.s, D.C.M.s, area service committee chairs and area officers. All A.A. members are encouraged to attend, but only the above listed members of the assembly are entitled to vote. From among the members of the assembly, they elect their delegate and alternate and the area officers and their alternates. The assembly is a basic unit of the general service structure and conducts or helps coordinate most of the business for the area.

**Autonomous:** Our Fourth Tradition states: "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole." This means that we have been given the courage to declare each A.A. group an individual entity, strictly reliant on its own conscience as a guide to action. In charting this enormous expanse of freedom, we found it necessary to post only two storm signals: A group ought not do anything that would greatly injure A.A. as a whole, nor ought it affiliate itself with anything or anybody else.

The above was quoted with permission from pg. 147 of *Twelve Steps And Twelve Traditions*, published by A.A. World Services, Inc.

**Box 4-5-9:** A bimonthly publication of the General Service Office, the title of which is also the New York mailing address of G.S.O. (Grand Central Station, New York, NY. 10136). The masthead of this informative mini-magazine consists of the words "*News and Notes from the General Service Office of A.A.*" It includes such items of interest as: a calendar of important local, national and international events; questions and problems of G.S.O. about A.A.; committee reports from Public Information, Cooperation With the Professional Community, Cooperation With Treatment Facilities, Correctional Facilities Committee, Hospitals, Finance, etc.; vignettes and

anecdotes from A.A. people, history and events; as well as much other information of interest to the dedicated and/or curious member. Many fruitful ideas for a G.S.R.s reports to the group can be derived from the pages of *Box 4-5-9*.

**Conference:** Delegates, the Board of Trustees, A.A.W.S. and Grapevine Directors, and the G.S.O. and Grapevine Staff. This meeting keeps the individual A.A. member and G.S.O. in close, supportive contact with each other through the general service chain. This chain is made up of several links: the Trustees' Committees working closely with the comparable delegates' committees (such as P.I., C.P.C., Treatment Facilities, Finance, etc.), the delegate from and back to the area; and the individual A.A. member through the G.S.R. In the Conference, each area has one representative delegate who confers with the ninety-three other delegates, twenty-one trustees, G.S.O. staff members and directors from the two corporations — A.A. World Services, Inc. and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. See "What is the Conference Plan?" in *The A.A. Service Manual*.

**Delegate:** The man or woman elected, for a two-year term, at the area general assembly to represent the area at the annual meeting of the General Service Conference in New York. The delegate carries the group conscience of our area to the conference and brings back to us the results of the conference meeting.

**District:** A geographic sub-division within a general service area created in order to come closer to the individual A.A. group.

**District Committee Member (D.C.M.):** An experienced G.S.R. who has been elected by the other G.S.R.s within a district. The D.C.M. is primarily responsible for coordinating and assisting the efforts of the G.S.R.s in the district. Many districts assign further duties to their D.C.M.

**General Service Representative (G.S.R.):** An AA member who is elected by a group to represent that group's conscience in discussions at the district and area levels. The G.S.R. also keeps the group as fully informed as possible of important decisions, discussions and events occurring within A.A. at the district, area, regional, national and international levels. They are further responsible for seeing that the best possible A.A. members are chosen to serve the whole fellowship by voting for the D.C.M. of their district, area officers, the delegate to the conference and their alternates.

**Region:** A grouping of several states or Provinces from which a regional trustee is elected to the Board of Trustees. There are eight regions in the conference — six in the United States and two in Canada.

**Third Legacy:** Recovery and unity are our first two legacies handed down to us from the founders of A.A. Our Third Legacy is Service: the sum total of all AA services, from the twelfth step call to AA's coast-to-coast and world wide activities.

**Third Legacy Procedure:** A voting procedure, unique to A.A, designed to help reduce some of the negative aspects of elections — such as personality clashes, ego battles and dissatisfied minorities. See "What is 'Third Legacy Procedure?' " in *The A.A. Service Manual*.

**Trustee:** The usual term, or name, for a member of A.A.'s General Service Board of Trustees. Currently the board is made up of twenty-one trustees including eight Regional Trustees; all of whom are alcoholic. Seven of the other trustees are "Class A" (non-alcoholic) and fourteen are "Class B" (alcoholic).

**Twelve Concepts:** As the Twelve Traditions are to the preservation and unity of Alcoholics Anonymous; so are the Twelve Concepts to General Service. They are a set of principles and practices intended to preserve service to A.A. and the still suffering alcoholic. They also protect the structure by which such service is made possible. (See *The Twelve Concepts for World Service* in the back portion of *The A.A. Service Manual*.)

**Warranties:** The Twelfth Concept of World Service consists of The Six Warranties that are also Article 12 of the Conference Charter. Some consider these Warranties to be the A.A. Bill of Rights.

**Responsibility Statement:**

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