

District 5 GSR Orientation

Welcome to District 5 General Service! We are glad you are here. As a new General Service Representative (GSR) or Alternate GSR, you are your group's link to AA as a whole. Our purpose at District 5 is to help you and the members of your group in doing 12th Step Service Work. This booklet is intended to help you understand your role as a GSR. Please give us the opportunity to help you understand General Service and how rewarding it can be.

District 5 has a long history of enthusiastic members who have adopted the slogan "District 5 Is Alive!" We invite you to help keep this enthusiasm going through active participation!

Our meetings are held on the Third Tuesday of each month at Community United Church of Christ, 3450 S. Biscayne Dr., North Port. We suggest you add this meeting to your calendar for the whole year. Monthly meetings start at 7:00 pm with GSR Sharing and a Workshop. This is an opportunity for all AA members to share concerns, to learn more about our committees, the Traditions, the Concepts, and the tools that are available to you. Some of us like to bring our sponsees.

The Business meeting is held right after the GSR Sharing at 8:00 pm. It begins with the reading of the GSR Preamble and the Long Form of the Tradition of the month, followed by roll call. The Officers (elected by the GSRs) then give their reports, followed by Committee Chairs, GSR reports and announcements. Next we discuss Old Business including all motions before the body. GSRs are voting members. Last is New Business for committee concerns and requests plus any other new motions to be discussed. You can find this agenda outlined at the end of the minutes that are sent you each month.

The GSR Preamble

We are the General Service Representatives. We are the link in the chain of communication for our groups with the General Service Conference and the world of AA. We realize that the ultimate authority in AA is a loving God as he may express Himself in our group conscience. As trusted servants, our job is to bring information to our groups in order that the group can reach an informed group conscience. Passing along this group conscience we are helping to maintain the unity and strength so vital to our fellowship. Let us: therefore, have the patience and tolerance to listen while others share, the courage to speak up when we have something to share, and the wisdom to do what is right for our groups and AA as a whole.

From Box 4-5-9 Aug/Sept. 1989

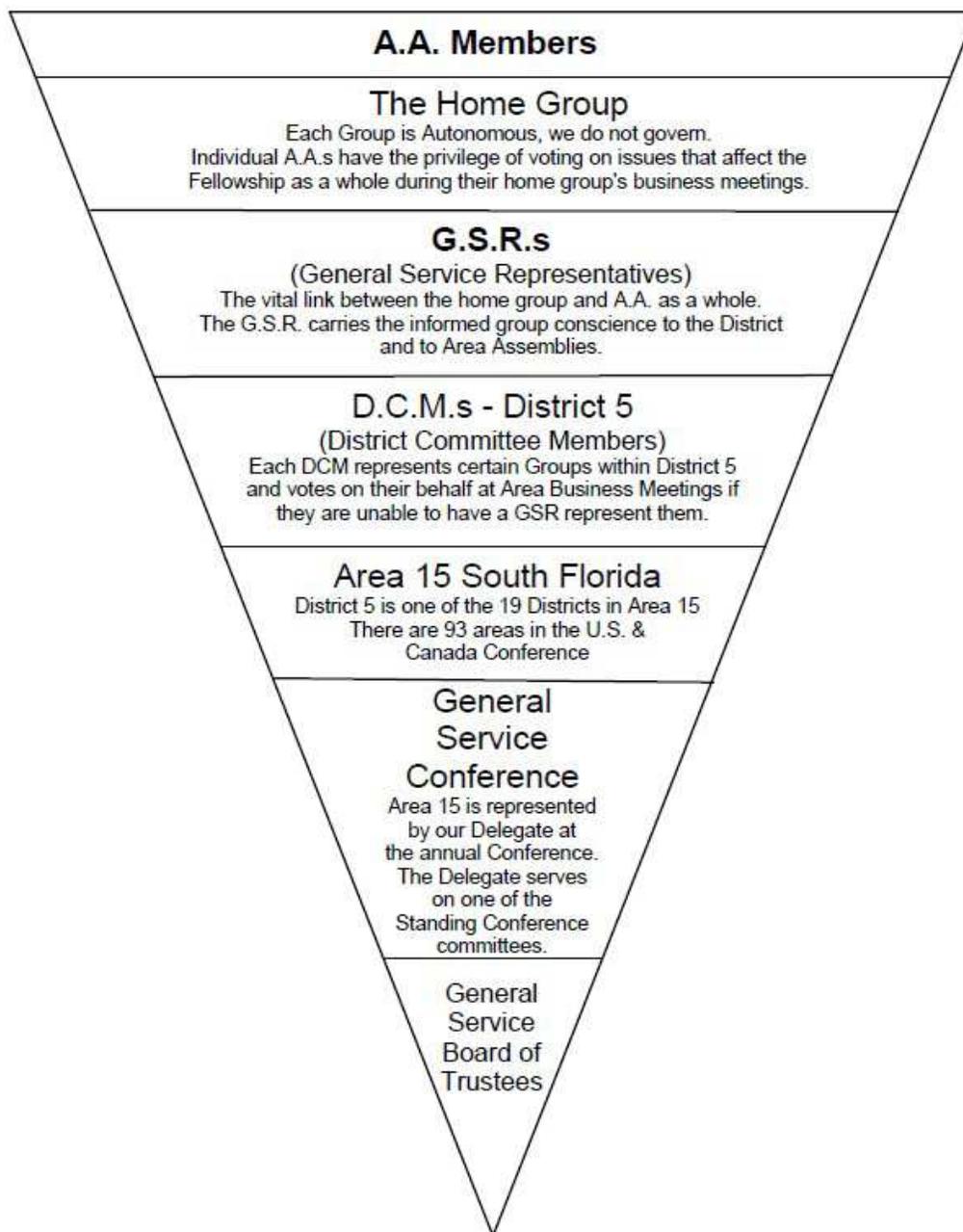
THE GSR'S ROLE IN DISTRICT 5 GENERAL SERVICE

In this booklet you will find a diagram of an upside down triangle describing the relationship of the GSR to your Group, to District and to the rest of the AA service structure. Every person below the GSR on this diagram serves the GSR and his/her group. We are here to serve you. This means that over time the GSRs that came before you felt that certain services were needed and were to be accomplished in certain ways. They came to an agreement (voted on a motion) and placed these decisions in a Book of Current Practices. These are our guidelines on how we run our business meeting, conduct workshops, provide services to our groups and provide services to the greater community. It is your responsibility to see that this work continues and that if change is needed, to make the recommendation.

As the representative of your group and the link to AA as a whole, you have the right to tap the past and present experiences of District 5 members, South Florida Area 15 members and A.A. World Service (GSO in New York).

There is a reservoir of useful information available to you and your homegroup members. Your active participation in District 5 service work will open those doors. Many of us use a Service Sponsor to help guide us through all this information. Ask an experienced individual in General Service to be your Service Sponsor or to suggest someone who would be a good Service Sponsor for you.

The General Service Structure



HOW TO MAKE A GSR REPORT

It's important to get your group used to hearing a GSR report. For a start, we suggest that you make District and Group Event announcements at your meetings when there is a call for AA related announcements. During the Group's regular business meeting, break down the information into short bullet points. If an informed group conscience is needed so that you can vote on behalf of your group, then you will need to give more in-depth information.

DISTRICT 5 COMMITTEES

The Standing Committees of District 5 coordinate various types of 12th step work that AA members can do to help carry the message to those interested in our program of recovery. Group contributions support these committees and the vital service work that they do. Therefore, these committees are in turn responsible to the groups. They open the doors to institutions, inform professionals and plant the seed with the general public so that each of us can participate in carrying the message to other alcoholics.

All committee meetings are open to all AA members. GSRs are expected to volunteer on a committee. The work these committees do is an excellent way for sponsors to introduce service work to those they sponsor and to practice AA's 12th Step. Each of these committees has service work waiting for you.

The Chairperson for each of the District Committees shares our local experience, strength and hope in a report at both our District Business Meetings and at the Area Quarterlies, and in turn, reports back to our District with news and information gathered from other Districts and the General Service Office (GSO). When you hear these reports, please make note of District service work opportunities to share with your group. Some examples are given below.

Archives Committee

This is an opportunity to actively share our history; another way we "pass it on"!

- Attend Displays at Events; meet and greet
- Place documents in protective sleeves
- Dub CDs and DVDs at home on your computer
- Scan documents for website and digital storage
- Interview and record old-timer's stories
- Transport and set up display at Events, or
- Categorize and Inventory incoming items

The Archives Committee humbly asks members to pass AA related items on to them for safe keeping and appropriate display so that we may enrich the lives of those to come.

Corrections Committee

The main purpose of this committee is to carry the AA message of recovery to the inmates that cannot attend our meetings outside the walls. Volunteers need only be willing to stay sober, carry the message of AA and have at least one year of continuous sobriety. They also need to be cleared through the Florida State Department of Corrections. As a committee we:

- place meetings in Federal, State and County prison facilities
- schedule individuals for orientation classes to learn proper conduct in the facilities and how and what will be allowed in the meetings when AA visits
- hold AA meetings in these facilities on a regular basis
- encourages all AA members to participate in the Correspondence Program
- coordinate the Pre-release Program
- provide AA literature

Current Practices Committee

The immediate Past District Chairperson usually chairs this committee. Other AA members who may serve are selected by the Chairperson. The committee is responsible for updating the District Book of Motions, Book of Current Practices and Legacy of Service. These documents can be downloaded from the District website. GSR's should be familiar with them.

DCM Committee & Coordinator

The DCM Committee is composed of a Chairperson, who is the District 5 Alternate District Chairperson, and up to twelve District Committee Members (DCMs) and up to twelve Alternate District Committee Members (ACMs). Their responsibilities include:

- Provide a forum for discussion on enhancing Group communication within District 5
- Serve as an aid to Groups in solving internal problems through monthly GSR sharing sessions
- Attend Group business meetings when invited
- Provide information to Groups via A.A. literature resources
- Inform Groups on how to apply the principles of the Twelve Traditions in all Group affairs
- Carry the message of A.A. to all interested members by holding annual or bi-annual Service Fairs
- Vote in the best interest of those Groups who do not have a GSR at Area 15 Assemblies
- Educate all interested A.A. members on the principle behind the A.A. Seventh Tradition

Finance Committee

The Chairperson of the Finance Committee is the immediate past District Treasurer. The Committee consists of the current District Treasurer and any A.A. member(s) willing to serve. This committee is responsible for putting together and monitoring the Annual Budget for District 5. All motions that entail any expenditure not in the annual budget are required to be reviewed by the Finance Committee prior to being put on the floor.

Grapevine Committee

The Grapevine Committee promotes subscriptions to the AA Grapevine, the International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous and La Vina, a bi-monthly publication written by and for Spanish-speaking members of A.A. We call them "our meeting in print". The committee:

- coordinates with group Grapevine Representatives (GVR)
- stays abreast of Grapevine activities at the Area and GSO levels
- maintains a Grapevine display for group or other AA functions.

Literature Committee

The Literature Committee reviews and discusses changes in our literature, especially pamphlets.

These recommendations are brought to the attention of our Area delegate every April through the Area Literature Committee. We also provide and maintain a display of current literature for all District 5 events.

PI/CPC: Public Information & Cooperation with the Professional Community

Volunteers on this committee fulfill speaking engagements at non-AA functions, such as D.U.I. schools, community organizations and schools. The committee's primary goal is to provide information about AA to those who have contact with alcoholics through their profession. Examples are clergy, lawyers, social workers, physicians, nurses, union leaders and industry managers, as well as those working in the field of alcoholism. It is the Committee's endeavor to find creative and productive ways of effecting cooperation without affiliation, between AA and the professional communities in our District.

Special Needs Committee

Volunteers carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to members who are blind or visually impaired; deaf or hard of hearing; chronically ill or home bound; and those who are developmentally disabled.

Treatment Facilities Committee

This committee places and coordinates restricted AA meetings for clients/patients in treatment facilities throughout District 5. Individual AA members and groups who are interested in carrying our message of recovery to alcoholics in treatment facilities work through this committee. The Chairperson is responsible for making first contact with the facility and then a committee member acts as coordinator for that facility.

At times people in treatment request help getting to their first AA meetings after release from the facility. The Committee coordinates a “Bridging the Gap” (BTG) Program, matching volunteers with these new people in the individual’s community.

Website Committee

The Website Committee is responsible for making the District 5 website aaDistrict5.org an increasingly more valuable resource, servicing newcomers seeking help, visitors and members seeking meeting and fellowship opportunities, increasing awareness of service opportunities, and reporting the business of our District 5 General Service Organization.

The committee consists of a Web Chair and/or Web Servant and other volunteers who collaborate with individual groups, Intergroup, Area 15, and related AA committees to simplify and improve communication to best serve our AA community, while aligning website content with the 11th and 12th Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Website Committee welcomes new members, and encourages input from all of the AA community to submit group, meeting and event information. We rely on feedback from all website visitors to identify errors and make suggestions for ongoing improvements to the website.

REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETINGS					
Most at INTERGROUP OFFICE					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Saturday
1st		6:00 pm Website 7:00 pm DCM		7:00 pm Events	
2nd	6:00 pm PI/CPC 7:00 pm Finance			6:40 pm Treatment at Easy Does It Club	10:00 am Corrections
3rd	6:00 pm Literature	6:00 pm Archives 7:00 pm GSR Workshop and 8:00 pm District 5 Biz at NP Community Church		6:00 pm Intergroup Steering Comm. 7:00 pm Intergroup Reps	
4th					as of 1/1/2016
All Committees have email. Go to Contacts page on web site aadistrict5.org or aalifeline.org					

Intergroup Office is at 13325 Tamiami Trail – Unit A Crown Plaza, North Port, FL 34287
Phone: 941-426-7655

How It Works (at District 5)

(Words in italics are defined in the appendix “Glossary of Terms”)

Many GSRs have never attended a business meeting. In this section we hope to help you understand how we get things accomplished. At District 5 we do it together and with as many people in agreement as possible. When there is a problem to be solved, action to be taken, business decisions to be made such as spending money, then clear solutions are needed. We put the solution into precise wording in a *motion*. All motions must be in writing.

The most important characteristics of a good motion are that it is complete and that it is simple. A good motion should try to include all information necessary to making an intelligent decision. Ideally, a motion should be in one or two sentences and include:

- WHAT – what exactly is to be done?
- WHO – who will do what needs to be done?
- WHEN – when is “it” to be done?
- HOW – how much will “it” cost; where will the money come from?
- WHY – supporting reasons for the recommended action.

After the person who wrote the motion reads it to the body and another member seconds the motion, the Chair opens the floor for questions and discussion. All are encouraged to participate in full discussion and debate before voting but we are reminded to be respectful, look for the similarities and know there is no us or them - it's all “we”!

If the motion is time sensitive, a vote is taken. Most of the time GSRs are asked to take motions to their groups so that an informed group conscience can be taken. The motion is then voted on at the next business meeting. A two-thirds majority is needed to pass. After the vote is counted and the motion is declared passed or failed, the chair calls for the “*Minority Opinion*”. This is a unique AA procedure in which the minority vote has a last chance to speak on the issue, putting additional light on their point. Sometimes that minority opinion is so compelling that it will change the mind of one or more of the people who voted in the majority. In that case the person or the Chair can call for a second vote on the motion.

At the District (and South Florida Area) meetings various committee chairs give reports. The Recording Secretary adds these reports, when they are also presented in writing, into the *minutes*. The minutes also include the results of the new and old business as well as the *agenda* for the next scheduled business meeting. You will also find contact information for DCMs, Committee Chairs and Officers in the minutes, plus a reminder for the next scheduled business meeting.

As your journey through General Service continues, you will understand and use these principles to voice your group’s conscience. Your DCM and Officers are here to help you become acquainted with General Service and our District meetings with the goal of increased GSR participation.

ABOUT THE AREA ASSEMBLY

As part of your GSR role, attendance at the Area 15 Assembly or “Quarterly” is strongly encouraged. District 5 is a part of *South Florida Area 15* (see map at end of this section). An Assembly is a meeting of all the Districts in the Area. These meetings are held quarterly, usually in January, April, July and October in different Districts throughout the Area.

Attending Quarterlies offers you the opportunity to learn more about your duties as a GSR, how to use the Traditions and Concepts in your meetings, and how to better carry the AA message. You will meet with other GSR’s for the sharing of ideas and experiences. One District 5 member shared that “I truly love enthusiastic AAers and some of the most enthusiastic AAers attend these weekend gatherings.” Another said that after attending a Quarterly “I usually have a sense of gratitude and a greater sense of belonging to something greater.”

The schedule for the Assembly usually looks something like this:

FRIDAY NIGHT: Speaker Meeting.

SATURDAY: Committee Meetings (Archives, Treatment, Corrections, etc.), Workshops on the Concepts, Traditions and Service Manual, all of which benefit your effectiveness as a GSR. Sharing sessions and workshops for GSR’s and DCM’s are also scheduled. Saturday ends with a Banquet and Speaker Meeting, and a late night discussion meeting.

SUNDAY MORNING: Business meeting for South Florida Area. Your Group Conscience is carried by your vote. GSRs have the right to participate in discussions at the microphone. However, at this time, GSRs need to work with their DCM if they wish to make a motion at the Area level.

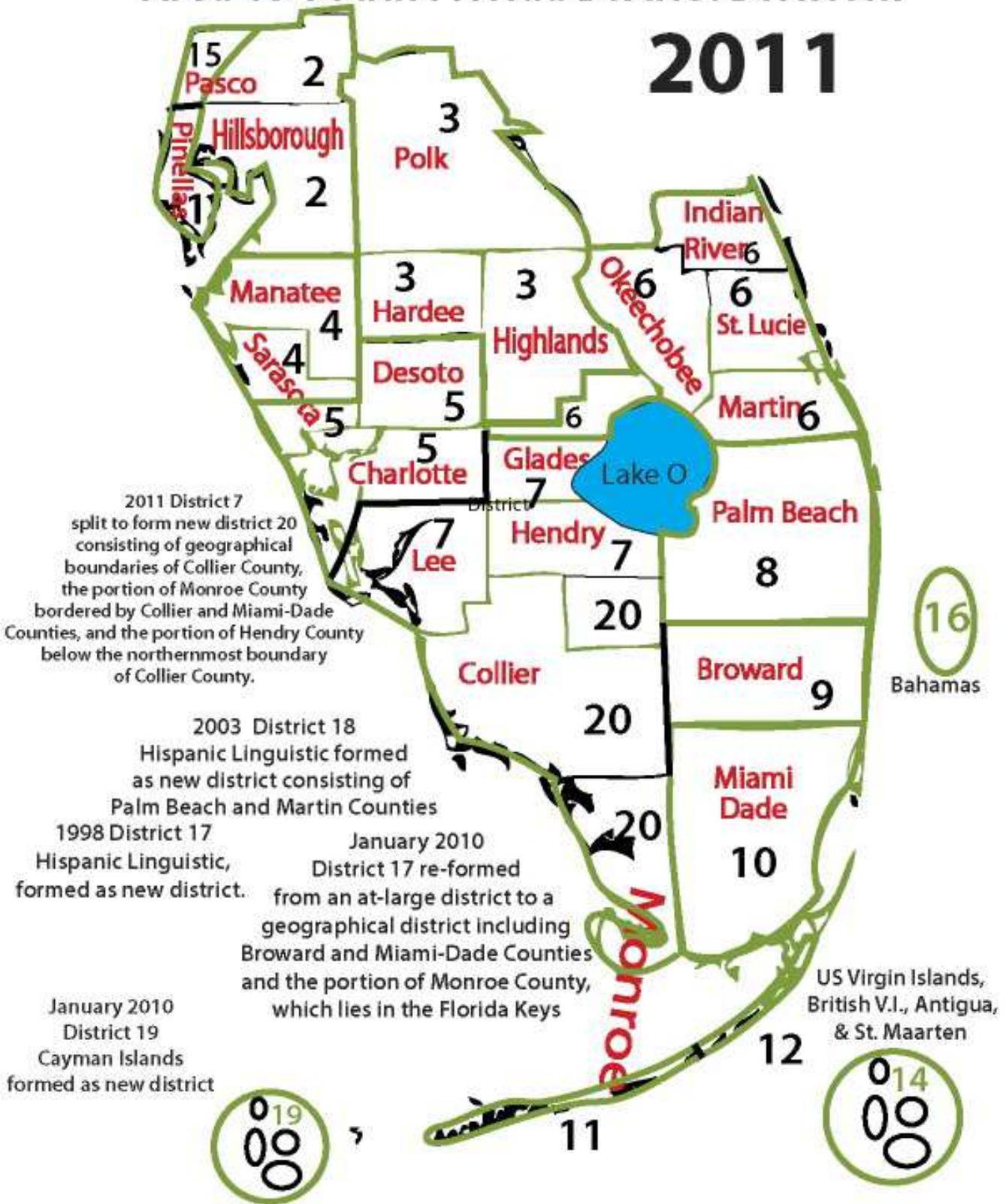
SUNDAY AFTERNOON: In April, the Assembly reviews agenda items for the General Service Conference held later that month in New York, where Area 15 is represented by our Delegate. Every even numbered year, in October, there is an Election Assembly to elect Area officers for the next two years.

LOGISTICS AND FINANCES: The Service Manual suggests that the group support their GSR in attending these meetings, including financial support, in the spirit of being self-supporting. Some groups pay the entire cost for the GSR to attend and others pay only a portion. The point is that your group be aware of their responsibility and the benefit to them from your attending the Assemblies, and that the informed Group Conscience prevails. If your group is new, or would like more information, you might suggest that your DCM be invited to attend a business meeting and answer their questions. The Third Tradition says your group is autonomous and again, these are suggestions.

QUARTERLY AD HOC COMMITTEE: As a part of South Florida Area 15, District 5 participates by occasionally hosting a Quarterly. We form a Quarterly Host Committee (QHC) that includes several sub-committees who coordinate dozens of volunteers from our District as greeters, assist attendees with registration, provide refreshments in the hospitality room, lead and participate in workshops, etc. This is an experience not to be missed! Not only is it a service to AAs in the South Florida Area but it brings our home groups and District together for a fun and fulfilling project.

Area 15 South Florida District Divisions

2011



Group Contributions: Where They Go & How They Help:

All this work is possible through the spirit of self-support found in the Seventh Tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous: "Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." Your Group's Contributions do many wonderful things.

General Service Office:

General Service Office
P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163-0459

- 1) Carries the AA Message world-wide
- 2) Prints and sells all AA literature (including **free** pamphlets and hand-out packets)
- 3) Organizes yearly delegates conference
- 4) Network information for International Conventions
- 5) Covers all office expenses, etc.
- 6) Provides directories of all registered AA groups, Intergroups and Central Offices.

South Florida Area 15 General Service:

Treasurer Area 15 Panel 65 (This address expires Dec. 2016)
PO Box 690275
Vero Beach FL 34269-0275.

- 1) Carries the message of our primary purpose to all AA Groups and members in South Florida
- 2) Holds Quarterly business meetings and Assemblies throughout South Florida at which Committees of AA meet to exchange experience, strength and hope for carrying the AA message everywhere we go.
- 3) The Area funds most Area Committees, reimburses some Area Committee member expenses for Quarterlies, pays Delegate expenses for Quarterlies and the yearly General Service Conference in New York.

District 5 General Service:

General Service District 5
P.O. Box 7356
North Port, FL 34290-0356

- 1) Carries the AA message of recovery throughout the area from Nokomis to Punta Gorda and Englewood to Arcadia through meetings, committees, workshops and various other activities where demonstrations of sobriety and unity are shown to bring alcoholics to a new way of living.
- 2) Funds District Committees, provides funds for specific District functions, holds a monthly District Meeting on the third Tuesday of each month, and partially reimburses District Committee Members and certain trusted servants for attending Area Quarterlies.
- 3) Once every two years the District can bid on hosting the South Florida Area Assembly. Hosting the Assembly gives the groups and their members an opportunity to actively participate in service and fellowship.

Intergroup:

Intergroup Service Committee
13325 Tamiami Trail, Unit A
North Port, FL 34287

- 1) Provides phone service by recovering alcoholic volunteers
- 2) Prints meeting lists for all groups or meetings desiring publication
- 3) Provides some free pamphlets and has literature for sale
- 4) Responsible for producing the local newsletter "The Lifeline"
- 5) Is a great 12th Step resource
- 6) Co-ordinates with District Committees

**INCLUDE YOUR GROUP NAME and GROUP SERVICE NUMBER
WHEN MAILING CONTRIBUTIONS!**

Example: *One Day at A Time, Port Charlotte 15-05-xxxxxx*
See the District registrar if you don't know your group service number.

Glossary of Terms

Additional terms are in the *Service Manual* on pages S19 - 21

Agenda: Order of business; program for a business meeting.

Ad Hoc Committee: Committee established for a specific purpose, for a limited period of time.

Adjourn: To end a meeting.

Announcing the Vote: In announcing the vote on a motion, the Chair should:

- (1) Report on the voting itself, stating which side has prevailed;
- (2) Declare that the motion is adopted or lost; and
- (3) State the effect of the vote or order its execution.

Body: those present at the meeting; the voting members.

Carries: Passed or adopted; used in referring to affirmative action on a motion.

Chair: the Chair, Chairperson: to preside over; the presiding officer.

Commit: To refer to a committee.

Committee of the Whole: Designation of all of the members present at a meeting as members of an ad hoc committee; working as a committee of the whole allows an assembly to function informally. How the April (pre-Conference) Assembly is conducted.

Convene: To open a session.

Floor: the right to have the attention of the group. Thus, when a motion is "on the Floor" it is the topic to which everyone should direct their attention. When a member "has the floor" he has the opportunity to exercise his speaking rights and should be given attention.

Germane: Closely related, relevant; amendments and debate must be germane to the question at hand.

Main Motion: A motion that brings some new subject upon which action of the assembly is desired.

Majority: There are two types of majority votes. First is "**simple majority**" which is a win by one vote, and the second is "**substantial unanimity**" which is 2/3rds of the voting body. Simple majority may be used to get a general opinion of the body. It is all that is needed to table a matter, amend a motion, or adjourn the meeting. At the other end is **unanimity** which is a true consensus of the entire body with most everyone in agreement. "Substantial Unity" of 2/3rds of the body, in most cases, is needed to pass a motion.

Minority Opinion Minority Opinion: is known as "Right of Appeal": Strictly speaking, a democracy operates on the will of the majority, no matter how slim that majority may be. However, in AA we increase the actual spirit of democracy with special concessions to the feelings and the often demonstrated wisdom of the minority. The well-heard minority is our chief protection against the uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority. Once a vote has been taken on a motion, the minority ALWAYS has the opportunity to speak from the floor. If someone in the majority (the winning side) would then like to change their vote, it becomes a motion to reconsider which needs to have a second. It is then open to further discussion before a new vote on the original motion is taken. It is not amendable and requires the same type of vote (majority or 2/3s) as the original motion. Keep in mind that no vote is ever completely final. Anyone can rewrite the motion and present it at a later date.

Rescind: To repeal, annul, cancel, or revoke formally.

Second: To indicate support for consideration of a motion by saying: "I second the motion." Does not imply endorsement.

Table: laying on the table means entrusting to the care of the secretary, to be considered at a later date, after further study. It is usually dealt with as Old Business on the agenda for the next scheduled meeting.

Unanimous (or General) Consent: A means of taking action on a motion without a formal vote. When the chair perceives that there is little or no opposition to a motion.

Voice Vote: A vote taken by having members call out "aye" or "no" at the chair's direction.

Suggested GSR Reading

You will be receiving a GSR Packet from GSO in the mail a couple of months after registering with the District Registrar. (The envelope does not mention AA.) It will include a copy of the Service Manual, several sheets with A.A. Guidelines for various committees or on certain topics, and several Pamphlets. We have found the "A.A. Group" pamphlet especially useful.

A.A. Service Manual / Twelve Concepts for World Service

Important pages:

- Page S20: Why Do We Need A Conference?
- Page S19-21: Conference Language (Glossary of terms)
- Page 27: Service Structure Inside the AA Group
- Page S51: Leadership in AA: Ever a Vital Need
- Page S54: Can the Conference Act for AA as a Whole?
- Pages S122-124: Index
- After the Index: Twelve Concepts For World Service
- Pages 1-3: Introduction and History of the 12 Concepts

Books:

- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*
- A.A. Comes of Age*

Pamphlets (other than those in your GSR Kit from GSO):

- AA Tradition – How It Developed
- The 12 Traditions Illustrated
- The 12 Concepts Illustrated

District 5 Book of Current Practices

Web Sites:

- aa.org
- area15aa.org
- aadistrict5.org Document password = Alive
- aalifeline.org password = bigbook

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.

RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

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

GSR CHECKLIST

Group's Registered Name: _____ Group's ID # _____

Here is the suggested procedure for your first District Meeting:

- Sign in on the blank page of the Attendance Sheets on the back table. Please print. This information is kept in confidence. Next month you'll find your first name and info on the list. (Please put a ✓ (check mark) next to it and be sure the info is correct.) The District Secretary will email you the minutes from our meetings. Printed copies are available at each meeting for those without internet.
- Help yourself to handouts on the back table. This includes our "Sharing List" which is a confidential list of District 5 members you may want to call or email with questions. If you wish to be excluded from the Sharing List, please let us know, but we still need you to provide the information.
- Please see the Registrar to register as your group's new GSR or Alternate GSR.
- Please introduce yourself.
- You need to find out who your District Committee Member (DCM) is and get their contact information, as he/she is here for your guidance. Your DCM is also available to attend your home group's business meeting if asked.
- The Meeting List (published by Intergroup) is another tool which has vital information on the front cover.
- We suggest bringing to each District meeting:
 - this Booklet
 - Service Manual (part of the packet that will eventually be sent to you from the AA General Service Office (GSO))
 - A copy of last month's Minutes
 - District 5 Book of Current Practices (download from aaDistrict5.org > District 5 General Service > District 5 Business Documents > Current Practices Documents. Password is "Alive" (capital A).

Later On:

- Familiarize yourself with the pamphlet "The A.A. Group ... Where it All Begins". This has lots of the information you and your group may be looking for.
- Familiarize yourself with our website aaDistrict5.org. This is a great tool that all of us use for communicating events and other information within the District. Please check it regularly.

Group Changes, What to do:

Changes to your group's meeting may affect your listing in the Meeting List and the group's registration with District and GSO. Include your contact info (name and phone number) in case there are questions. Please inform:

- the District Registrar registrar@aadistrict5.org
- the District Web site webchair@aadistrict5.org
- the Meeting List intergroupdist5@comcast.net

Group Announcements & Events: (Include your contact info in case there are questions)

- to post in the Lifeline newsletter and Intergroup's Website, send info to intergroupdist5@comcast.net
- to post on the District Website, send info to webchair@aaDistrict5.org