



The Mid Southern California Area 9 Newsletter

The Monthly General Service Newsletter for Area 9 of the General Service Conference
P.O.Box 51446, Irvine, CA 92619-1446 www.msca09aa.org

Sept. 2009

MSCA Area 9 includes all AA groups in the counties of Los Angeles (South of Rosecrans Ave.), San Bernardino, Riverside, and Orange.

Concept 9 – A.A. Leadership

This Concept is the one that allows the other 11 Concepts to work at all. It says that A.A. deserves and must have the very best leadership possible. It relies on the A.A. Fellowship to take care in choosing its leaders at all levels. If we don't take care, we can just throw the other concepts and most of our Traditions away – they will cease to be effective! However, if we take minimal care, the leadership we choose, whether at the Group level, the District or Intergroup level, or the General Service Conference level will always provide us with effective service. The 9th Tradition says that true leaders in A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. The key word in that phrase from the 9th Tradition is not leaders, it is servants.

...continued on p.4, col.2.

Balancing the Budget

By Joseph M

Is it really possible to balance the budget? Of course, but ... , think of it this way. My car gets 25 miles per gallon of gas, it is 250 miles to my destination. According to my best estimates, my car will use 10 gallons of gas. Now, am I just going to put 10 gallons of gas in my car and go for it. I think not. There are too many unknowns that could really upset my estimate. Such is the budget process.

...continued on p.2, col. 1

The Difference Between Service and General Service

By Steve S

When I was a newcomer, I was so involved with myself that I never considered that someone had to set up the meetings, make the coffee, clean the cups, set up the chairs and get the speakers. When my first sponsor made me get into service, I was washing cups, setting up chairs, and picking up cigarette butts.

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Delegate's Corner

Hello everyone

When I came to AA drinking was my only problem, if I could just stop drinking everything would be all right. The wife would understand me, the kids would appreciate me and the judge would forgive "all" my indiscretions. Yeah, that's all I needed to do was stop drinking and the world would right it's self.

I have found that over these past years that just not drinking is an important part of my recovery (after all I couldn't have recovery if I was drinking), but recovery has become much more to me than just not drinking: it's about becoming a better person and I believe that this process has to be acted out continually in my daily life for the change to really take root. I needed to have a change of character, with my goal to become the man that I always wanted to be.

I heard a story on the radio the other day that made me more aware of the changes that have happened slowly, inch by inch, in my life over the years and I was not even aware of until I heard this story:

A father asked his son, after grocery shopping, to return their cart to the retrieval area. Although it would have taken only a minute, the son protested.

"C'mon, Dad," he said, "there are carts all over the lot. None of those people returned theirs. No one expects them to."

Then Mom chimed in. "For heaven's sake, they pay people to collect the carts. Returning one more won't change the history of the world. Let's just go."

Dad was about to surrender when he saw an elderly couple walking together to return their cart. After a moment, he said to his wife and son, "We're not responsible for what other people do, but we are responsible for what we do. There are two kinds of people: those who put their carts away and those who don't. We put our carts away because that's the kind of people we are."

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Balancing the Budget ... continued from p.1, col. 1

The budget process requires what Bill W. in Concept IX calls vision, *"Vision is, I think, the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and more distant future. ... Vision is therefore the very essence of prudence, an essential virtue if there ever was one. Of course we shall often miscalculate the future in whole or in part, but that is better than to refuse to think at all."*

So it is with the budget. This year's proposed budget will probably raise some eyebrows and I am sure will generate much "loving discussion". In 2006 the Area had reached a point, in regards to money, where we were not only filling the gas tank as full as possible, but were also stuffing the trunk with five gallon cans of gas. This could have been dangerous. Tradition 7 (the long form) states *"Then, too, we view with much concern those A.A. treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated A.A. purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority"*.

From 2001 until 2006, the Area had always received more and spent less than the approved budget. 2004 was the closest to being balanced with only a \$5,000 increase in net worth over the budget estimate. At the end of 2006, the Area had a total of \$27,676 in available funds at the end of the year. This was \$23,500 over the Area's Prudent Reserve.

We had done a good job of saving money, but is this what we were supposed to be doing? *"Service to the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous shall be the primary purpose of General Service in Mid-Southern California Area"* (MSCA Guidelines). For this purpose the Area receives contributions from the Groups of the Area. **Accumulated funds actually represent services and reimbursements that we have failed to provide our members.**

What have we done about these funds for no stated A.A. purpose? We could have raised the Prudent Reserve. I asked about this. I was told that the Prudent Reserve was set low on purpose. The reason given was that with a low Prudent Reserve, the Groups would have more influence over the Area through the use of the A.A. "purse strings" than if the Area had a large Prudent Reserve. We have, to this date, never used the Prudent Reserve. Possibly, we could attract more members into service by assisting them with their service expenses. How about funding those new ideas for carrying the message? What is the price of a drunk's life?

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Balancing the Budget ... continued from col. 1

Since the end of 2006, we have managed to spend down the accumulated funds to the point of about \$8,600. This was accomplished by spending funds over and above what we received in contributions. This has worked well to this point.

This year there has been a drop in contributions to the Area of 15%, fortunately, there has been a 14% drop in spending which means that compared to last year at the same time (7/31) we have spent \$286 more than last year. This is a good thing considering that we started the year with \$13,000 and currently have \$8,600.

This year, if the projections hold true, we are looking at a net cash outflow of about <\$12,000>. This amount, when subtracted from our bank account at the beginning of 2009 of \$13,000, gives us \$1,000 in the bank. Add the \$1,000 to a prudent reserve of \$4,825 and we have \$5,825 of which \$4,825 has a stated A.A. purpose. We have done well.

We have spent a lot of time in budget discussions with debate over new ideas and different ways of doing things. Some of this debate seems to be based on the fear that we will spend too much money. God has provided. We (the Area) should be prudent, but do not need to be miserly.

Bill said in Tradition 7, that *"There was a place in A.A. where spirituality and money would mix, and that was in the hat"*. The Groups of the Area have put their money in the hat and given a portion of those funds to the Area to support the services that the Groups have decided would be of benefit. It is our duty as trusted servants to use those funds wisely.

The Area is a service committee (not a big A.A. Group), which was set up by the groups of the Area to handle the service responsibilities for the Area (see A.A. *Service Manual*, Chapter 5). The Area is also a 501 (c) 3 non-profit corporation and subject to the laws of the State of California and the IRS. Non-profits are not, generally, in the business of saving money.

I would urge all involved in the budget process to make their budget requests reasonable and remember the following quote from Concept IX; *"We shall be in continuing need of these same attributes – tolerance, responsibility, flexibility, and vision – among our leaders of A.A. Service at all levels."*

In Service, Joseph M. Finance Committee Chair

The Difference Between Service and General Service ... continued from p.1, col. 1

I wanted to be important. I wanted to be a big shot in AA to feel less ignorant. So services for me was reading and yearning to be a secretary. Then I could be in charge. I wanted to be a sponsor, but no one asked me. It never occurred to me that I had nothing anyone wanted. Occasionally, jobs were offered such as Grapevine Rep., Intergroup Rep, and GSR. These positions require time, which interfered with my usual activities. When I asked about GSR I was told that it was political and that I would have to miss football games on Sunday. There were people at the meeting who said that *real* service was one alcoholic talking to another, sponsorship. I have since learned differently.

Any service is a good thing for me. It is responsible for getting me out of myself. I do not believe that there is any such thing as bad service, as long as it does not interfere with our sobriety. For myself, I never understood the program of Alcoholics Anonymous until I became involved with general service. I stayed in Alcoholics Anonymous because I did not want to die drunk.

I knew that I had to love everyone, but there were very few that I really liked. I saw the 12 steps, and 12 traditions and felt that they were unattainable. The members at the meetings did not seem to be living the principles that they were preaching and talking about. They were either telling me how I should behave or how I should believe. When I was about 12 years sober I became interested in general service. I was appalled at the endless bickering about issues that should be able to be resolved in minutes. I stayed because I had a commitment and for the first time in AA I met people who were living the steps and the traditions. I finally began to understand who I needed to identify with.

After several years of service I began to understand. Our primary purpose is to carry that message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Many alcoholics interpret that to mean sponsorship only. When Bill and Bob began organizing the alcoholics into a program, they spent a great deal of time writing literature, raising money, traveling to other areas to bring Alcoholics

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The Difference Between Service and General Service ...continued from col.1

Anonymous to others. These activities took a great deal of time and began to seriously interfere with their ability to function and have the support of their Fellowship. They found it necessary to hire secretaries, seek advice from others and raise money to ensure that the Fellowship could exist. I believe, that is the real meaning of traditions eight and nine: How to carry the message while allowing the Fellowship to function for the alcoholic who still suffers. When Bill outlined the structure of the general service conference, his primary purpose was to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers by protecting the Fellowship and ensuring that the Fellowship stayed on track.

I suspect, that most alcoholics were like me. At first sight, the seeming chaos, endless bickering, and endless discussions were compared to what we see in our Congress and Senate. It is not surprising, but many alcoholics view general service as the politics of Alcoholics Anonymous and find other activities. Practice of The third legacy forces me have patience, tolerance and humility, whether I like it or not. It is in general service that I must practice the spiritual principles and in doing so my life keeps getting better.

Steve S.

Special Two Day Event:

Oct. 10 (Sat) MSC AREA 9 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Oct. 11 (Sun) ELECTION ASSEMBLY

Delegate's Corner ... continued from p. 1, col. 2

I know that I am far from perfect, but I do know what type of person I am today, and it's all because of this program and people like you. You are all such wonderful good examples for me and help me become what I want to be.

I love AA, and I love all of you... (and there's not a damn thing you can do about it!)

Thank you for allowing me this great privilege to serve you.

Joe B.

Treasurer's \$\$\$\$\$\$

As the elections near, and I approach the finish line, I would like to express my gratitude to Mid-Southern California Area 09. Especially to those individual, groups whose treasurers have been of service and the enthusiasm of the Spanish groups and young people (PAA's). If we could harness the energy in both Spanish and young people, we would have more participation and new ideas, which are very much needed!!

The bad things that people at the Area have said to me have been far outweighed by the good comments by the Area as a whole have made. This has sustained me as your Treasurer.

Because our budget is tight, I've tried to keep you informed each month of our status, this is factual since the treasurer pays the bills and deposits the contributions.

I have tried to be fiscally responsible to Mid-Southern California Area 09 and I hope the person who follows me does the same. Blank expense reports are on the website and you can easily print them out. It saves the Treasurer from printing them out.

We will have some hard decisions to make when preparing the 2010 Annual Budget. What you submit is not necessarily what you will get as a budgeted expense, but what MSCA 09 can afford. It is the Area's money that groups contribute. Also, committees who have co-chairs get 50% each of the total budget for their line item.

I would still like to see our approved budget put on the website. What do you think?

When we started Panel 58, all Area Chairs were invited to attend a meeting, so that the officers could explain their positions and what responsibilities that went with them. Then we had a DCMC orientation. At both, orientations we had some time for Q&A.

Thank you for the honor of serving you as your Treasurer.

Linda H.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE

Give your districts and committees the widest distribution of your needs, activities and events. Have them published here in your Area 09 Newsletter.

Concept 9 – A.A. Leadership ... continued from p.1, col. 1.

I remember after the International Convention in San Diego had closed and several of us went back down to the San Diego Convention Center where many of us had spent hours in marathon meetings. As I walked into the center, I noticed a solitary figure folding and stacking chairs, (there were 15,000 chairs, I thought they were going to need more than 1 person to do this). As I got closer, I noticed that it was one of the past-Delegates to the General Service Conference from our Area. I instinctively knew why he was stacking chairs – it was a final act of service to the International Convention, a convention he had helped bring about through his service to the planning committee.

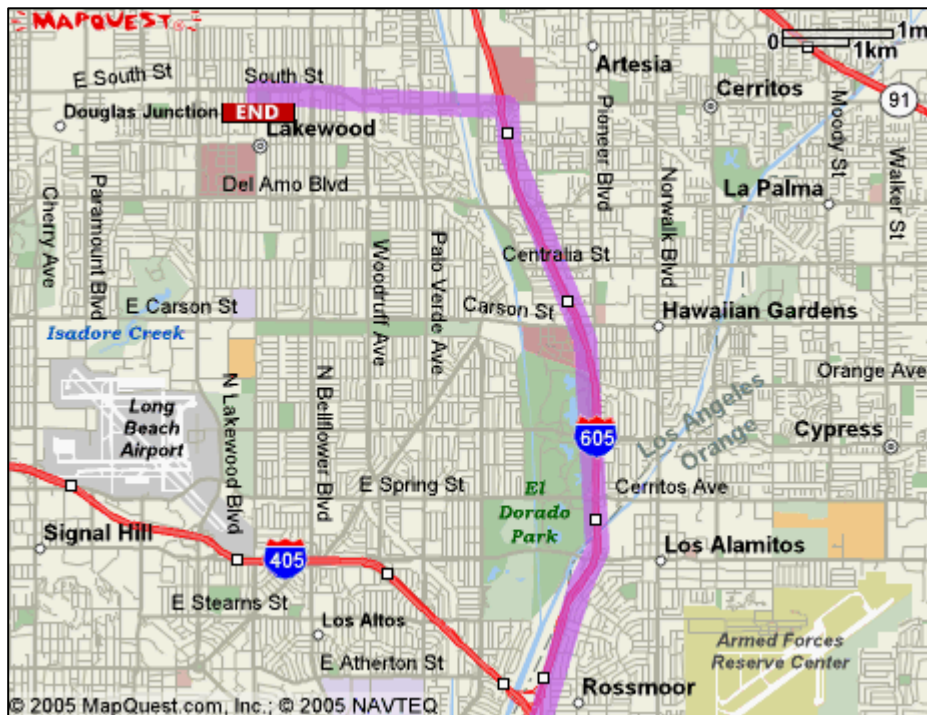
Everything I ever needed to know about service in and to A.A., I learned that day. There is no greater reward for service beyond my own sobriety, and ultimately, that is sometimes the only reward. It is more than enough. In Bill W's essay in the Service Manual explaining Concept 9, he explains the importance of leadership and service to A.A. through leadership. So the next time, your home group asks for servants to step forward – will you remain sitting in your seat, or will you step forward. Or, next month when we are having our Area 09 elections, think about answering "yes" when you are asked, "Will you stand for this position".

A member of A.A. in Orange County.

Tradition 9 (Long Form)

Our A.A. experience has taught us that:

Each A. A. group needs the least possible organization. Rotating leadership is the best. The small group may elect its secretary, the large group its rotating committee, and the groups of a large metropolitan area their central or intergroup committee, which often employs a full-time secretary. The trustees of the General Service Board are, in effect, our A.A. General Service Committee. They are the custodians of our A.A. Tradition and the receivers of voluntary A.A. contributions by which we maintain our A.A. General Service Office at New York. They are authorized by the groups to handle our overall public relations and they guarantee the integrity of our principal newspaper, the A.A. Grapevine. All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles; they do not govern. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness.



Assembly, Sept. 13, 2009

**Community Center at
Mayfair Park,
5720 Clark Avenue,
Lakewood, CA 90712**

**Directions from the
South:**

Take I-405 N toward
LONG BEACH.

Merge onto I-605 N 5.4
miles.

Take the SOUTH ST
exit 0.2 miles.

Turn LEFT onto SOUTH
ST 2.2 miles.

Turn LEFT onto CLARK
AVE. <0.1 miles.

End at 5720 Clark Ave,
Lakewood

Directions From the East:

Take I-10 W toward LOS
ANGELES.

Merge onto CA-60 W via the exit
on the LEFT toward
RIVERSIDE. 23.0 miles.

Merge onto CA-91 W toward
RIVERSIDE/BEACH
CITIES. 49.8 miles.

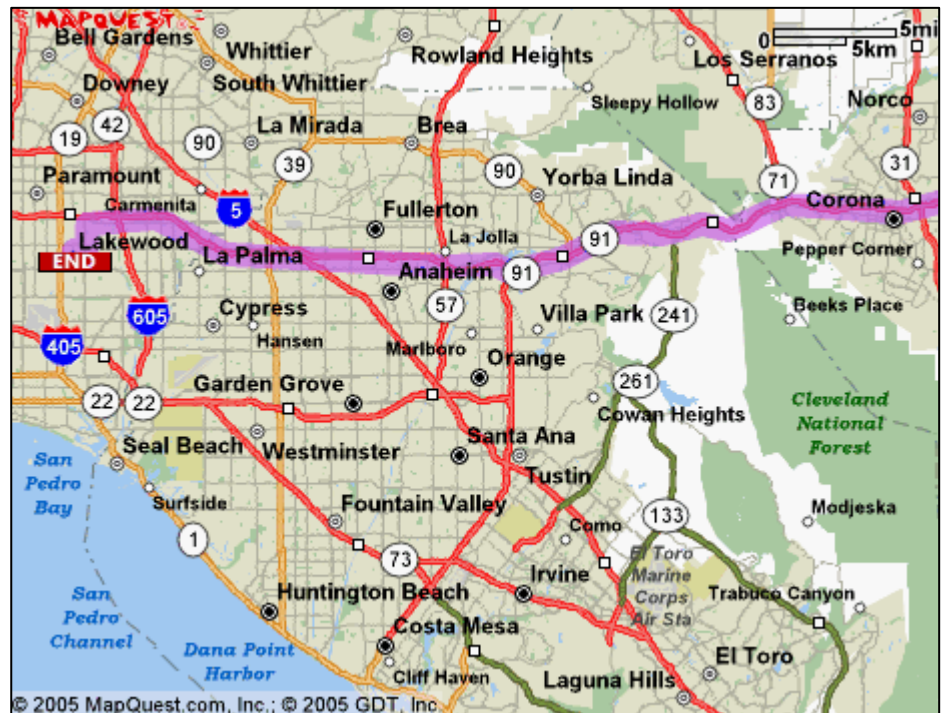
Take the BELLFLOWER BLVD
exit toward
BELLFLOWER. 0.1 miles.

Turn LEFT onto BELLFLOWER
BLVD. 1.1 miles.

Turn RIGHT onto SOUTH
ST. 0.5 miles.

Turn LEFT onto CLARK
AVE. <0.1 miles.

End at 5720 Clark Ave,
Lakewood, CA 90712-1908.



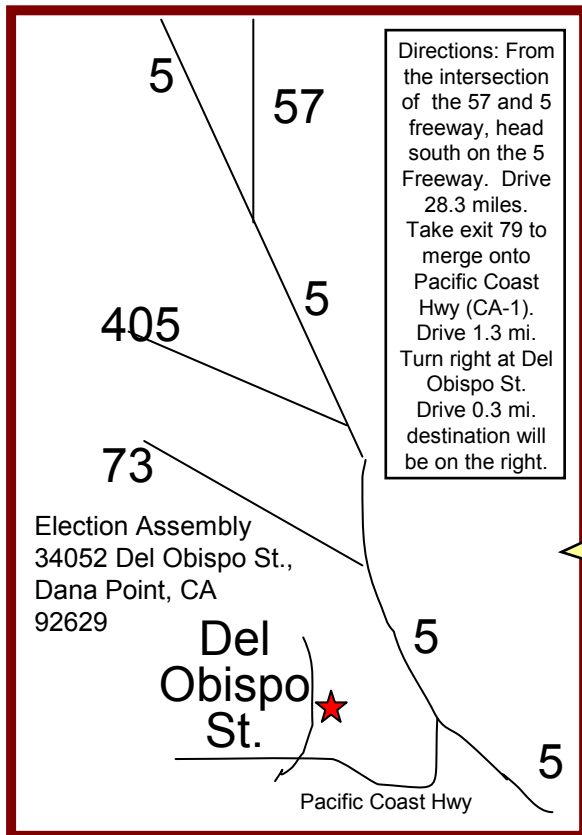
4th Annual Alcoholics Anonymous Area 09 PI and CPC Committee Workshop

Sept. 26, 2009, 8:30am - 4:30pm, Valley Missionary Program, 56565 Oasis Palm Ave, Coachella, CA 92236

Featuring:

- Speakers from Professional Community
- Round Tables
- Spanish Translation
- Extraordinary Lunch

Help us improve and empower our Public
Information and Cooperation with
Professional Community Committees in their
quest to carry the message to Professionals.



Upcoming Events

- | <u>Date:</u> | <u>Event Type:</u> |
|------------------------|--|
| Sept. 13 (Sun) | ASSEMBLY, Dist 2, Mayfair Park, 5720 Clark Ave, Lakewood, CA |
| Sept. 26 (Sat) | 4th Annual Alcoholics Anonymous Area 09 PI and CPC Committee Workshop - Valley Missionary Program, 56565 Oasis Palm Ave, |
| Special Two Day Event: | |
| Oct. 10 (Sat) | MSC AREA 9 50TH ANNIVERSARY, Area 9 |
| Oct. 11 (Sun) | ELECTION ASSEMBLY, District 12, 34052 Del Obispo St., Dana Point |
| Oct. 24 | Heritage Day |
| Nov. 8 (Sun) | ASC (Proposals will be presented but not voted on), District 17 |
| Nov. 14 (Sun) | SERVATHON, District 9 |
| Dec. 13 (Sun) | ASC (<i>vote which proposals to put onto Assembly Agenda</i>), District 30 |

Panel 58 Area Officers

Delegate: Joe B, 714-423-3808,
delegate2008@msca09aa.org
Alternate Delegate: Mike M
Chair: Jason S Treasurer: Linda H
Secretary: Sharon K Registrar: Cesar F

Schedule for most MSCA Assemblies/ASCs

9:00 am....GSR/DCM/DCMC Schools, Delegate's Rpt
10 am..... Committee Mtgs
11:30 am... Lunch
12 noon ... ASC or Assembly mtg

The MSCA Assembly includes permanent committees responsible for conducting much of the AA business activity in the Area. We have Standing and Coordinate Committees. Chairs and Co-Chairs of the Standing committees are listed below.

Panel 58 Area Standing Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs, et al.

Archives Chair...Joseph H	Finance Committee Chair...Joseph M
CEC Chair...Rick H	Grapevine Chair...Kimberli A
	La Viña Chair...Angela R
Communications Committee Chair...Linda C	GSR School...John H
Newsletter Subcommittee Chair...Steve S	GSR School, Spanish... Paco G
Electronic Media Sub-Committee Chair...Henry B	Literature Chair... Ernesto M
Web Coordinator...Becky B	Literature Co-Chair, Spanish ...tdb
Equipment Subcommittee Chair...Al W	Public Information Chair...tdb
Translation Subcommittee Chair...Jorge	Public Info., Sp...Francisco D
	Registration...David T
Convention Liaison...Mike	Special Needs Chair...tdb
Convention Liaison, Span...Jose A	Special Needs Co-Chair, Spanish....tdb
Corrections Chair...Alex O	Treatment Facilities Chair...Al F
CPC Chair...Michael M	
CPC Co-Chair, Span...Santiago S	
DCM School...Scott R	Sound Dude... Raul C
DCM School Spanishtdb	Coffee person...Mauricio T

Please send articles or information for the Area Newsletter to newsletter2008@msca09aa.org