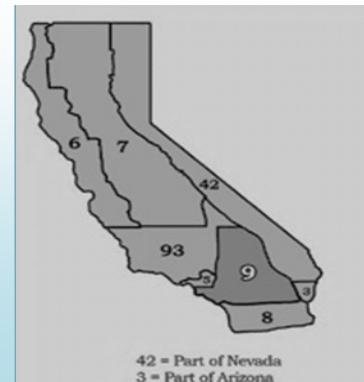


Mid-Southern California Area 09 includes approximately 2,000 A.A. Groups in the counties of Los Angeles (south of Rosecrans), San Bernardino, Riverside and Orange

Mid-Southern California Area 09 Newsletter



DELEGATE'S CORNER

Greetings Area 09

If you read my article from last month, you may recall that I mentioned that I was going to speak to a group regarding their 7th Tradition contributions. I did just exactly that. I worked up the courage and spoke with the Secretary and Treasurer.

I explained myself and asked about their funds. As it turns out, they barely have enough to make rent. Thus, they do not have enough money left over to make contributions to GSO. I thanked them. Now I wonder. If the group does not have enough to make rent, then is it not now incumbent upon the individual member to take responsibility? For example, for this particular group, if the members contributed more to the group, then the group should have enough to make rent, and then hopefully have enough to contribute to other vital entities.

So, the next challenge to myself is this; to communicate to the group our need (provided they will listen to me). I'll let you know how it turns out next month. In the mean time, I was asked to write an article for a local central office. I have included it below.

UPCOMING AREA EVENTS

September 11—Sunday ASSEMBLY
District 20

October 9— Sunday
Area Service Committee
District 9

November 13—Saturday SERVATHON
District 11

December 11—Sunday
Area Service Committee
District 18

A Spiritual Tide

The short form of our 7th Tradition reads that, "Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." The long form of the same Tradition goes on to describe the spiritual dangers of treasuries which continue beyond their prudent reserves. This Tradition is written for the Group, but what about Intergroups, Districts, Areas, and A.A. as a whole? Are not each of these entities essentially groups? Would not the principles of our 7th Tradition apply to these levels as well? I think so.

Of course, each of these entities has different purposes, and thus has different operations and uses of working capital. For example, a Group's prudent reserve may be two months worth of rent. This is what may be prudent for a particular Group. A District may have the same strategy. An Intergroup, however is likely to have a different approach. Many Intergroups employ special workers and enter into long term leases. As such, it is necessary for them to consider their "prudent reserve" in such terms. In my experience, it appears to be average that most Intergroups keep a reserve equal to 12 months worth of operating costs. So, for instance, say all income was to stop. That is, no more contributions were to be received and no literature sales were to take place – no income whatsoever. Then that particular Central Office would be able to carry out its operations (as they currently exist) for the next 12 months before the money runs out. Our General Service Office in New York (GSO) operates under this same principle. For the year 2015, GSO had 10.2 months worth of operating funds in its Reserve Fund.

So what does a Group, District, Area, Intergroup, or our General Service Office in NY do when their respective reserves become too inflated? That is, what do they do when they have too much money? For the Group, District, and Area, the answer is usually a simple one. They can simply contribute their excess funds to whichever service entity makes sense to them. A group might contribute to their local District, Intergroup, Area, and/or GSO for example. A District might contribute to the Area and/or GSO. Which, for me, begs the question, what does our General Service Office in NY do when their Reserve Fund becomes too large? Generally, they lower the price of literature. This is most beneficial for our prospective A.A. members.

Fortunately, or unfortunately (depending on your point of view), our General Service Office in NY is not currently in danger of having too much money. In fact, we are currently faced with a long term challenge. GSO has two main functions. One function is the services they provide, such as website maintenance, answering the phones, archives, translations, maintenance of group records, etc. The second function they provide is the publication of literature, such as our Big Book, 12&12, and our various pamphlets and other books. For the year 2015, only 74% of GSO's services were supported by the 7th Tradition. The other 26% was supported by literature sales. I understand too that many Intergroups rely upon literature sales to help support their operations.

I believe that it is our spiritual aim to be fully self supporting through our own contributions; that we ought not to be so dependent upon literature sales to help supplement the funding of our operations. I believe this to be true from a spiritual point of view. But I also believe this from a practical point of view. The digital age is well upon us. Print media, while still relevant, is not what it used to be in terms of demand. We must consider the possibility that, as we move into the future, we may not be able to rely upon literature sales to help supplement our operations.

Our 7th Tradition contributions therefore are fast becoming an important consideration as we move farther and farther into the future. Currently about 40% of the Groups in the United States and Canada contribute to GSO. I do not know what the percentages are for the local Intergroups, but it is an interesting statistic nonetheless. If every Group in the United States and Canada contributed \$146.48/year, then our services at GSO would be fully funded. Or, if every A.A. member in the United States and Canada contributed \$7.14/year, then our services at GSO would be fully funded. I understand that some Groups struggle to pay the rent, but even so, I feel that these are manageable numbers.

What would it cost per member to keep your local Central Office open? If you do not know the answer, it may be prudent to start thinking about it. Literature is not going away. But, as we move farther and farther into the digital age, our reliance upon literature sales needs to be contemplated. And why not? Is it not an opportunity for us to start thinking about our self-support? Is this not a positive spiritual exercise? I believe this is an opportunity for each of us to consider what A.A. means to us monetarily. Moreover, I believe this is an opportunity for us to communicate with each other. After all, the best way to carry the message of financial health to our membership is to do so through communication, which is what I am doing now.

Respectfully yours,
Joe C
Panel 66 Delegate
Mid-Southern CA Area 09



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Pasco, Washington 604 subscriptions

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Fullerton, CA 895 subscriptions

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18th Anniversary
Las Vegas, Nevada 820 subscriptions

2015:
19th Anniversary
Santa Clara, CA 1,200 subscriptions

2016:
20 Anniversary
Phoenix, Arizona 800 Subscriptions

“Concept Eight”

The Trustees of the General Service Board act in two primary capacities: (a) With respect to the larger matters of over-all policy and finance, they are the principal planners and administrators. They and their primary committees directly manage these affairs. (b) But with respect to our separately incorporated and constantly active services, the relation of the Trustees is mainly that of full stock ownership and of custodial oversight which they exercise through their ability to elect all directors of these entities.

When our boat sets sail, I am worried. Our destination is clearly laid out in the brochure and it is several hundred miles due east of our departure port.

Well, we are sailing in the wrong direction, almost due south! I decide to complain to my husband. He suggests that I “wait and see”... one of his favorite responses to my complaints.

Later in the day, I notice that we are now sailing almost due north! This can’t be right, I think, but I know better than to tell my husband.

Although otherwise I am having a wonderful time, it doesn’t seem right that the boat keeps changing direction again and yet again! Finally, knowing I am missing something important, I go to the navigator.

You know what happens, of course...you’re all sailors or savvy about sailing, so you know that the Captain takes advantage of the best set of the sail to negotiate a wind coming from the east. The only time we sail directly east is when the wind was coming from behind us, from the west!

The navigator points out to me on the chart that although we are zigzagging across the

ocean for the most part, when viewed from high above we are making straight for our destination!

The folks who own the company and map out our itinerary, give the pertinent information (like where we’re going and when it would be good to get there) to the captain and his crew, who are hired to get us there in the best possible way. And they take on the daily operations.

The “heavy obligations” of determining where we are going, ultimately; what size ship best fills the needs; how the finances are handled in general to meet the needs of the company and the passengers; and how to handle the larger questions of international waters, policies, and ideals, are performed by those who planned, managed and oversaw the bigger picture...sort of like the Board of Trustees in A.A.

“...Concept [Eight] deals with the ways the General Service Board ‘discharges its heavy obligations,’ and its relationship with its two subsidiary corporations: A.A. World Services, Inc., and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

“Long experience has proven that the board ‘must devote itself almost exclusively to the larger questions of policy, finance, group relations and leadership...In these matters, it must act with great care and skill to plan, manage and execute.’

“The board, therefore, must not be distracted or burdened with the details or the endless questions which arise daily in the routine operation of the General Service Office or the publishing operations, including the Grapevine. ‘It must delegate its executive function’ to its subsidiary, operating boards.”*

Although Bill W. wasn't familiar with the as-yet-to-be-coined term, I think he was warning the Board against what we now call micromanagement.... ***"The executive direction of these functions is...lodged in the...service corporations themselves..."*** and the Trustees should concentrate on the bigger picture.

And, returning to my sailing vacation, we arrive at our destination port, on time, and (as far

as I know) on budget. I'll bet, however, that if the captain and crew do not live up to their obligations, those overseeing the operations will quickly replace them: another one of their duties and responsibilities!

Linda C., Past Delegate Panel 60 Area 09

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