

**The AA Group  
Servant  
...Where it all begins**

**This packet can be downloaded from  
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## Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
What Trusted Servants Do We Need? (AA Group Pamphlet) . . . . .	1
Chairperson . . . . .	1
Secretary . . . . .	1
Treasurer . . . . .	2
General Service Representative (GSR) . . . . .	3
InterGroup Representative . . . . .	3
AA Grapevine Representative . . . . .	3
Literature Representative . . . . .	3
Steering Committee . . . . .	4
Corrections Committee Liaison . . . . .	4
Treatment Facilities Committee Liaison . . . . .	4
Public Information (PI) Committee Liaison . . . . .	5
Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) Committee Liaison . . . . .	5
Special Needs Committee Liaison . . . . .	5
A Word About Commitment. . . . .	6
Structure of the Conference. . . . .	6
Service Structure Inside the AA Group . . . . .	7
A Group Secretary's tips for taking Notes . . . . .	8
The AA Group Treasurer. . . . .	9
Responsibility Pledge . . . . .	10
A Declaration of Unity . . . . .	10
Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix pamphlet . . . . .	11
Some Questions and Answers About AA's Finances . . . . .	12
Trusted Servant Job Guidelines . . . . .	14
Group Inventory Norms . . . . .	15
Group Inventory . . . . .	16
Traditions Checklist . . . . .	17
Calendar . . . . .	21



## ***What Trusted Servants (Officers) Do We Need?***

It takes Member participation to ensure that Group service work is done. Most of us agree that AA ought never be “organized”. However, without endangering our commitment to preserve our spiritual and democratic Fellowship, we can “create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.” (Tradition Nine).

In AA Groups, these trusted servants are sometimes called “Officers” and usually are chosen by the Group for limited terms of service. As Tradition Two reminds us, **Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern**. Each Group determines the minimum length of sobriety for AA members to be eligible for any position (or office). The general guideline might be stable sobriety of six months to a year, or longer.

These service positions may have titles. But titles in AA do not bring authority or honor; they describe services and responsibilities. And it has generally been found that giving members service positions solely to help them stay sober does not work; instead, the Group’s welfare is of primary concern in choosing Officers. At election time, a review of Traditions One and Two can be helpful.

Individual Groups have many ways of making sure that the necessary services are performed with a minimum of organization. The chart on pg 7 shows possibilities for service at the Group level.

Some Groups have positions that do not appear on this chart, such as greeter, archivist, special needs Representative, and liaison to a meeting facility. Following are the offices established by numerous Groups in order to serve the Group “at home” and in the community at large.

### ***Chairperson***

Group Chairpersons serve for a specified period of time (usually six months to a year). Experience suggests that they should have been sober awhile, at least six months.

The Chairperson coordinates activities with other Group Officers - and with those Members who assume the responsibility for literature, hospitality, coffee-making, programming individual meetings within the Group, and other vital functions.

The more informed that Chairpersons - and other Group Officers - are about AA as a whole, the better they function. By keeping Tradition One firmly in mind and encouraging members to become familiar with all the Traditions, they will help to ensure a healthy AA Group.

### ***Secretary***

Like Chairpersons, Secretaries need to be good all-around Group servants. For Groups that have no Chairpersons, they may perform the tasks associated with that position.

While each Group has its own procedures, the Secretary is generally expected to:

- Announce and/or mail information about important AA activities and events.
- Maintain minutes of business meetings.
- Maintain and update a strictly confidential contact list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of Group members (subject to each member’s approval); and know which members are available to visit still-suffering alcoholics (Twelfth Step calls).
- Keep a record of Members’ sobriety dates, if the Group so wishes.
- Maintain a bulletin board for posting AA announcements, bulletins and newsletters.
- Make certain that the General Service Office (GSO) and other service entities (District and

Area Group Records) are informed, in writing, of any changes of address, meeting place or Group officers.

- Accept and assign calls for Twelfth Step help (unless there is a Twelfth Step Chairperson for this task).
- Share with Group Members the mail from other Groups and the local InterGroup, unless this is done by the InterGroup Representative.

### ***Treasurer***

AA Groups are fully self-supporting through their Members' voluntary contributions. Passing the basket at meetings usually covers the Group's monetary needs, with enough left over so the Group can do its fair share of supporting of the AA General Service Office, Area and District entities and/or the local InterGroup office.

Group funds ordinarily are earmarked for such expenses as:

- Rent.
- AA literature.
- Local meeting lists.
- Coffee and refreshments.
- Support of all AA service entities, usually on a monthly or quarterly basis.

Treasurers generally maintain clear records (a ledger is helpful) and keep their Groups informed about how much money is taken in and how it is spent. They may make periodic reports to the Group and post financial statements quarterly.

Problems can be avoided by keeping Group funds in a separate Group bank account that requires two signatures on each check. The flyer **The AA Group Treasurer** offers many other helpful suggestions.

AA experience clearly shows that it is not a good idea for a Group to accumulate large funds in excess of what is needed for rent and other expenses. It is wise, though, to keep a prudent reserve in case an unforeseen need arises (an amount to be determined by the Group conscience). Group troubles also may arise when extra-large donations - in money, goods or services - are accepted from one member.

The Conference-approved pamphlet **Self- Support - Where Money and Spirituality Mix** makes suggestions as to how Groups may support AA services.

Additionally, GSO, Area, District and your local InterGroup accept contributions from individual AA members. AA members are free to contribute whatever they wish, within the limits set by AA service entities. The maximum individual contribution to the General Service Office is \$3,000 annually. Bequests or in-memoriam contributions of not more than \$3,000 are acceptable on a one-time basis, but only from AA members. Check with other AA service entities for the maximum yearly contributions they accept.

Some Members celebrate their AA anniversaries by sending a gratitude gift to the General Service Office for its world service. With this "Birthday Plan," some members send one dollar for each year of sobriety, while others use the figure \$3.65, a penny a day, for each year. Other members give more, but not in excess of \$3,000 per year. For additional information, talk to your General Service Representative (GSR) or the General Service Office (GSO).

## ***General Service Representative (GSR)***

Working via the District and Area committees, the GSR is the Group's link with the General Service Conference, through which U.S. and Canadian Groups share their experience and voice AA's collective conscience. Sometimes called "the guardians of the Traditions," GSRs become familiar with AA's Third Legacy - our spiritual responsibility to give service freely. Usually elected to serve two-year terms, they:

- Represent the Group at District meetings and Area assemblies.
- Keep Group Members informed about general service activities in their local areas.
- Receive and share with their Groups all mail from GSO, including the newsletter Box 4-5-9, which is GSO's primary tool for communicating with the Fellowship.
- GSRs also may assist their Groups in solving a variety of problems, especially those related to the Traditions. In serving their Groups, they can draw on all the services offered by GSO.

An Alternate GSR (Alt GSR) is elected at the same time as the GSR in the event that the GSR may be unable to attend all District and Area meetings. Alternate GSRs should be encouraged to share the responsibilities of the GSR at the Group, District and Area levels. (See ***The AA Service Manual, Chapter 2, The Group and its GSR***, for further information.)

## ***InterGroup Representative***

In the many locations where an InterGroup (or central office association) has been formed, each Group usually elects an InterGroup Representative, who participates in business meetings with other such Representatives several times a year to share their Groups' experience in carrying the AA message. The InterGroup Representative tries to keep the Group well-informed about what the local InterGroup is doing.

## ***AA Grapevine/La Vina Representative (GVR/RLV)***

The job of the GVR and RLV is to familiarize Members with the Fellowship's international journal, ***The AA Grapevine***, and its bi-monthly Spanish-language magazine ***La Vina***, and the enhancements to sobriety the magazines offer. The magazines contain articles written by AA members based upon their personal experiences; discussion topics; regular features, and a calendar of special AA events.

GVRs and RLVs participate in the activities of their Area's Grapevine Committee, announce the arrival of new magazines at the Group each month, encourage members to submit articles and illustrations, and explain how members can order their own subscriptions. In some Groups, the GVR and RLV positions are combined.

## ***Literature Representative***

The Group's literature Representative makes certain that AA Conference-approved books and pamphlets, ordered from the General Service Office, or purchased from the local InterGroup, are on hand for meetings and properly displayed.

Group Literature Representatives can obtain information on their responsibilities by writing to the Literature coordinator at GSO and contacting the Area and District Literature Chairs. Regular communications are sent to Literature Representatives from GSO. The AA Guideline for Literature Committees is also a valuable resource.

For AA literature and subscriptions to the AA newsletter *Box 4-5-9*, checks should be made out to AA World Services, Inc. Many AA Groups purchase bulk subscriptions to *Box 4-5-9* (in units of 10) for distribution to their members, thus providing them regular communication with AA in the US, Canada and countries throughout the world.

## ***Why Have a Steering Committee?***

Some Groups have **Steering Committees**. At Steering Committee meetings, questions related to Group practices, selecting a slate of candidates for office, and other Group issues often are tackled first by the steering committee (or Group service committee), which goes to the Group for its Members' Group conscience decision. In many cases, the Officers and/or past Officers make up the committee, which usually meets at regularly scheduled times.

For a small Group, a Steering Committee composed of three to five Members has been found to work well. For larger Groups, 12 or more Members provide a better cross-section of Group experience and can share the workload more easily. In some Groups, a rotating committee (with Members rotated on and off periodically) serves the same purpose as a Steering Committee.

## **The AA Group's Relations With Others In The Community**

Tradition Eleven: *Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.*

### ***How Service Committee Representatives Serve AA***

AA service committees, composed mainly of representatives, or liaisons, from area Groups, shoulder major responsibility for carrying the AA message into the community and around the world (see ***The AA Service Manual***). Each of these committees may serve as a resource for the community through our Sixth Tradition of cooperation but not affiliation.

To assist service committees in their local efforts, their counterparts at AA World Services - the trustees' and General Service Conference committees - offer suggested guidelines to local committees when asked, with the help of the General Service Office.

### ***Corrections Committee Liaison***

Group **Corrections Representatives** take part in District or Area Corrections committee meetings. They keep their Home Groups informed about local Twelfth-Step activities in nearby correctional institutions and encourage Group members to participate.

Corrections Representatives, known in some areas as Hospitals and Institutions (H&I) Representatives, take AA meetings into prisons and jails, where allowed by the correctional facility, to help alcoholic inmates recover and prepare for sober, fulfilling lives after release. As part of the Temporary Contact Program known in some areas as Bridging the Gap, they may also serve as correspondents and as AA contacts when the inmates are released. The pamphlet **AA in Correctional Facilities** and the **Corrections Workbook** can be of help to AAs in corrections service work.

### ***Treatment Facilities Committee Liaison***

Some Groups have **Treatment Facilities Representatives** who serve as the Group liaison with the District and Area Treatment Committees and/or the local InterGroup. They share this vital service work with Home Group members and encourage them to join in this responsibility.

Members of the Treatment Facilities Committee work to help hospital and treatment center staffs better understand AA, and to take the AA tools of recovery to alcoholics in treatment. As part of the Bridging the Gap program (Temporary Contact).

Treatment Facilities Committee members also may act as contacts when alcoholic patients are discharged.

The pamphlet **AA in Treatment Settings** and the **Treatment Workbook** can be of help to AAs in treatment service work.

### ***Public Information Committee Liaison***

Group **Public Information Representatives (PI)** usually work with the District or Area Public Information Committee to carry the AA message locally. They periodically inform their home Groups of local activity and may arrange for Group volunteers to participate in P.I. programs requested by schools, businesses, law-enforcement agencies and other organizations interested in the AA approach to recovery from alcoholism.

Most Groups realize that alcoholics can't come to AA for help unless they know where we are. Using many suggested methods ranging from personal contact to public service announcements on radio and TV, Groups and their members reach out, working within the framework of Tradition Eleven. Sometimes a small sign saying "AA meeting tonight" outside the meeting-place door points the way. And from AA's earliest days, radio announcements and small newspaper announcements of AA meetings have been used to attract alcoholics in need of help.

The **Public Information Workbook** offers suggested guidelines in furthering this vital Group-service activity.

### ***Cooperation With The Professional Community Committee Liaison***

Group **Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC)** Representatives, usually working with their District or Area CPC Committees and/or the local InterGroup, focus on cooperation, but not affiliation, with professionals in the community - educators, physicians, the clergy, court officials and others who often are in contact with active alcoholics. They keep their home Groups informed of Area CPC activities and, when appropriate, arrange for Group volunteers to join together in carrying the AA message at professional meetings, seminars, and more. In some Groups, the functions of CPC and Public Information representatives are combined.

The **CPC Workbook** and the pamphlets, If You are a Professional, Alcoholics Anonymous Wants to Work With You, Members of the Clergy Ask About AA, and other pertinent literature can be of assistance to CPC Representatives in reaching out to professionals.

### ***Special Needs Committee Liaison***

The **Special Needs Representative** may coordinate any needed assistance to those with special needs or are in remote communities within their Home Group. Many Representatives find it beneficial to communicate with their District or Area Special Needs Committees and/or the local InterGroup when trying to reach those with special needs.

While there are no special AA members, many members have special needs. AAs who are blind or visually impaired may need help with transportation to a meeting. A deaf or hearing-impaired member may need a sign language interpreter, or special listening device, in order to hear what is being shared. AAs with special needs may also include those who are homebound, those who require a meeting with wheelchair access, or those who are unable to read. Conference-approved literature and other service material is available in various formats to accommodate those with special needs, such as Braille, large-print, American Sign Language (ASL), or the spoken word on audiotape or compact disk. The service piece Serving Alcoholics with Special Needs and **The AA Guidelines, Carrying the AA Message to the Deaf Alcoholic** can provide direction and guidance for those interested in working with AAs with special needs.

## 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.

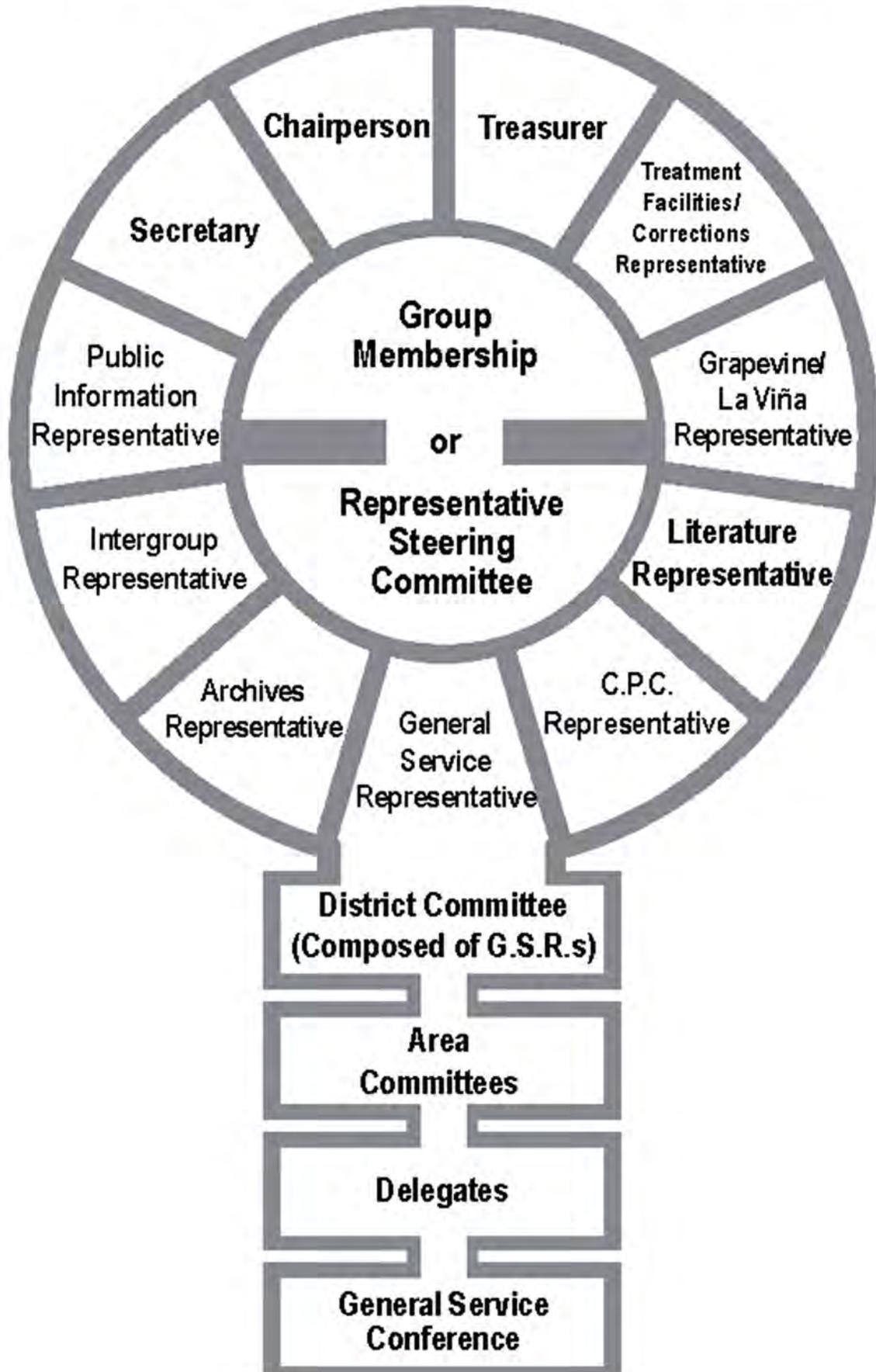
- Do we show up when we say we will?
- Are we on time?
- Do we mark our AA commitments on the calendar and then work around them, or do we attend only if it doesn't interfere with our own pleasure?
- When we are unable to make an event that the GSR should attend, do we arrange for our alternate to be 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 AA, 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 AA.



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# SERVICE STRUCTURE INSIDE THE A.A. GROUP



## ***A Group Secretary's Tips for Taking Minutes***

What are minutes for? Our usual answer: to record what happened at our meeting. Minutes are a tool. They tell us the story of what we have done, and why we have done it. They allow new attendees to review what happened in the past. They help us with an inventory of our process of decision-making. They remind us what the Group committed to do.

In the minutes, the following are some suggestions on what to record:

- When and where was the meeting?
- Number of attendees
- What happened at the meeting?
- Action items: by whom, by when, so we can get the job done, so we can be accountable
- Who is going to take an action? What is the action? When will it be completed?
- Why did we make these choices?
- What was our process?
- Motions made.
  - So we know what we have done. So we have an official record. So we don't keep reinventing the wheel.
- Decisions made
  - Sometimes there is a decision that was not a motion (it didn't need to be). We need to know what that decision was.
- Discussion included
  - So we remember why we made the decisions we did. Or, when no decision was reached, we know what the issues were.
- Meeting Start & Stop Time
  - So we can plan for future meetings. So we can tell new people how long our meetings last. So we remember not to waste time.
- Roster including contact information
  - So we can remember their names, remember who was there when we need to ask questions, call them, send them stuff, etc.
- Follow-up from last minutes - close all items
  - So someone re-reading minutes can completely follow along. Everything has a beginning, middle & end.

## *The AA Group Treasurer*

### **Spirituality and Money**

While the work of the Group Treasurer often involves many details, it is important to remember that the money the Treasurer oversees serves a spiritual purpose: It enables each Group to fulfill its primary purpose of carrying the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers. This is the fundamental work of AA, and to continue it the Group must keep its doors open. The Group Treasurer is an important part of this Twelfth Step work.

### **Choosing a Treasurer**

The position of Group Treasurer is one of the most responsible positions in any AA Group. While there is no standard length of sobriety necessary for a Member to take on the position of Group Treasurer, many Groups suggest that the Treasurer should have a reasonable period of sobriety (at least six months to a year or more). It is also suggested that Group Treasurers be well grounded in the Twelve Traditions and be familiar with the principles and practices of the Group itself.

### **Passing the Basket**

The traditional means of assuring that the Group is self-supporting is to pass the basket. Since there are no dues or fees for AA membership, those Members attending the meeting are asked to make a voluntary contribution to help cover the Group's expenses and to support local services, and the services of your General Service Office. Typically, after the basket is passed, the Group Treasurer takes charge of the money collected.

### **Safeguarding the Group's Money**

The Group Treasurer takes reasonable precautions to safeguard the Group's funds. Many Groups keep the Group's treasury in a bank checking account in the Group's name, often requiring at least two signatures on all checks. This provides security against accidental loss; it also provides ease of disbursement and a continuing record of income and expenses. Monthly bank statements are normally sent directly to the Group Treasurer, who can bring them to the Group's business meeting.

### **Disbursement of a Group's Funds**

The Group Treasurer is usually the person responsible for paying the Group's routine bills and for keeping accurate records of the Group's funds. The Treasurer needs to be well informed about how the Group's money is spent and should have addresses and mailing information for all AA service entities that the Group contributes to.

After the Group's basic needs are met, such as providing for rent, literature, refreshments, and insurance, the Group can participate in the financial support of the Fellowship as a whole by sending money to various AA service entities:

- 1) The Area and District;
- 2) The General Service Office;
- 3) Local InterGroup;
- 4) Many Groups provide financial support for their GSRs to attend service functions.

These entities use contributions in a number of ways, always with the aim of carrying the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

## Treasurer Reports

Most Groups request a Treasurer's report and all relevant documentation at monthly or regularly scheduled business meetings. This way, all Group Members can stay informed about the financial health of the Group and make Group Conscience decisions about how the funds should be spent.

## Opening a Bank Account/Tax ID

Some Groups keep their funds in a bank account, for which a tax ID number is required – even for noninterest bearing accounts. The first step in obtaining a “Federal ID Number” is by filing form SS-4, which can be obtained at any Internal Revenue Service office or at the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). Each AA Group must get its own individual number; there is no one number that applies to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. Depending on how much your Group will keep on deposit at a bank and what its fees are, you may want to file for tax-exempt status. For information, see IRS publication 557, “[Tax-Exempt Status for Your Organization](#).” It may be worthwhile to consult an accountant to learn more about these subjects. (Applies to U.S. only.).

## Insurance

Landlords may sometimes ask that AA Groups carry insurance coverage. Some Groups cooperate with the facility where they meet by purchasing a “rider” in the facility's liability insurance policy. For information, you may wish to consult a local insurance agency.

## Additional Resources for Group Treasurers

For more information consult the pamphlet, *Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix* or *The AA Guidelines on Finance*.

*The AA Group* pamphlet discusses the role and qualifications of Treasurers and how they fit into the AA service structure.

These items may be obtained by contacting the General Service Office in New York or going on the GSO website at [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) and [www.area36.org](http://www.area36.org).

### RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

**I am responsible ... when anyone, anywhere  
Reaches out for help,  
I want the hand of AA always to be there  
And for that,  
I am responsible.**

### A DECLARATION OF UNITY

**This we owe to AA's future;  
To place our common welfare first;  
To keep our fellowship united;  
For on AA unity depends our lives, and the lives of those to come.**

## Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix

The AA Groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members.

We think that each Group should soon achieve this ideal; that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous, whether by Groups, clubs, hospitals, or other outside agencies; that acceptance of large gifts from any source, or of contributions carrying any obligation whatever, is unwise.

Then, too, we view with much concern those AA treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated AA purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority.

Tradition Seven (long form)

***“The first time I had to talk about finances at a District meeting when I was my Area’s Treasurer, a fellow in the back of the room yelled out: ‘Why in the world are you always talking about money when this is a spiritual program?’ The guy threw me and I didn’t know how to answer him.”***

From its earliest beginnings, AA has always incurred expenses — whether it be the cost of a pot of coffee or the price of a place to meet. In the early days, these costs were often absorbed by individual AAs or nonalcoholic friends who offered their parlors and living rooms for AAs to meet in. However, as AA outgrew the generosity of these early friends and members, the Fellowship’s need for income became more and more apparent.

Bill W, AA’s co-founder, and some of the early AA members initially felt the only way for the Fellowship to survive was to solicit financial support from philanthropic institutions or individuals outside AA. These “high rollers” could then supply the funds the Fellowship would need to carry out the vital Twelfth Step work the early AAs envisioned — to bankroll the army of paid missionaries, the chain of AA hospitals, and the library of books they were certain to write.

One potential AA patron, however, when approached by the pioneering members for money, instead helped to lay the groundwork for AA’s Tradition of self-support: **“I am afraid that money will spoil this thing,”** said John D. Rockefeller Jr., while at the same time endorsing the work of the fledgling Fellowship.

This marked a turning point in AA history and, as the reality of Mr. Rockefeller’s statement sank in and AA members began to see the truth in the old cliché, **“Who pays the piper calls the tune,”** the seed of the Seventh Tradition took root.

### **“We cannot skimp”**

With the realization that AA must steer clear of outside contributions in order to maintain its autonomy and independence came the understanding that the money necessary for AA’s survival would have to come from individual AA members and Groups. As Bill W. put it in 1957,

***“Our spiritual way of life is safe for future generations if, as a Society, we resist the temptation to receive money from the outside world. But this leaves us with a responsibility — one that every member ought to understand. We cannot skimp when the Treasurer of our Group passes the hat. Our Groups, our Areas, and AA as a whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and their bills are paid.***

***“When we meet and defeat the temptation to take large gifts, we are only being prudent. But when we are generous with the hat we give a token that we are grateful for our blessings and evidence that we are eager to share what we have found with all those who still suffer. “***

The Language of the Heart, pg. 221

***“Self-support begins with me, because I am part of us — the Group. We pay our rent and utility bills, buy coffee, snacks and AA literature. We support our central office, our Area committee, and our General Service Office. If it were not for those entities, many new people would never discover the miracles of AA.”***

Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix, pg. 5

## Some Questions and Answers About AA's Finances

### Q. What is a "prudent reserve"?

A. Any suggested prudent reserve for a Group should be dependent on local needs. A suggested prudent reserve for InterGroups, and Area committees could be one to twelve months' operating expenses, depending on local needs.

### Q. Does the General Service Office have a "prudent reserve"?

A. In 1954 AA's Board of Trustees established a reserve fund whose principal purpose is to provide the financial resources necessary to continue the essential services of GSO and **The Grapevine** for up to a year in the event of an unexpected and substantial reduction in the normal revenues of the organization.

### Q. Is there a limit on how much an individual can contribute to GSO?

A. Yes. That limit is \$3,000 a year.

### Q. Can people leave money to AA in their wills?

A. Bequests in wills are acceptable only from AA members on a one-time basis, and not in perpetuity. The limit is \$5,000.

### Q. Can a Group have too much money?

A. As stated in the long form of Tradition Seven, "*We view with much concern those AA treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated AA purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority.*"

### Q. Who manages GSO's share of your Group contributions?

A. The General Service Board's Finance Committee meets quarterly to review and approve GSO's budget and the audited financial accounts.

The AA World Services Board meets monthly and maintains direct control of income and expenditures.

The annual General Service Conference reviews AA's finances through its own Finance Committee. AA's financial affairs are an "open" book. A summary is published in each Quarterly Report and a full accounting is in the Final Conference Report. The account books themselves are available at the General Service Office for scrutiny at any time.

### Q. Who manages the other portions of your Group contributions?

A. InterGroup funds are generally administered by steering committees composed of Representatives of the Groups they serve. Areas and Districts generally have volunteer treasurers who administer funds contributed by Groups.

### Q. How can an individual member contribute to GSO?

A. On your AA birthday: Contribute \$1.00 for each year of sobriety — or as much as you wish to give (up to \$3,000). You may request that your Group be credited.

### Q. Are there other kinds of contributions?

A. Special contributions: funds realized from conventions, conferences, dinners, Area get-togethers, etc. (no limitations on these contributions.)

### Q. Do all Groups contribute to AA's service entities?

A. No. Contributions are strictly voluntary and some Groups simply cannot afford additional contributions after covering their basic needs. Additionally, there are Groups who, for whatever reasons, choose not to be a part of the self-support network. These Groups, nevertheless, will receive basic services from the District, Area, and InterGroup if they wish, and are welcome to register with GSO, where they will receive the same basic services as other Groups. In 2010 and 2011, the percentage of all registered Groups who contributed to GSO was 43.9% and 42.4%, respectively.

**Q. What do contributions to GSO cover?**

A. The 2013 service dollar was spent on the following activities: Group Services 32.5% (which includes various Group contact-type costs in addition to Box 4-5-9; AA Directories; records and files; contributions processing; and French services); the General Service Conference, 14.2%; Loners, Internationalists, and Overseas Services, 7.5%; trustees' and directors' activities, 6.3%; Regional Forums, 7.2%; Archives, 10.1%; CPC, 5.2%; Public Information, 4.4%; Correctional Facilities, 4.7%; Treatment Facilities, 2.0%; Special Needs; 1.8%, Nominating, 3.7%; and others, 0.4%.

**Q. How much does it cost, per Group, for GSO to supply basic services?**

A. At the end of 2013, the annual cost of services per Group was \$147.00, while the average contribution per Group was \$107.00. The shortfall between these two figures is made up from income from AA publications.

**Q. My Group doesn't have a lot of money. Is it better not to send anything at all until we can afford to make a sizeable contribution?**

A. In the spirit of participation, no contribution toward carrying the message can be too small. Bill W. spoke about our "collective obligation" to support AA services, and if everyone waited until they had a "sizeable" amount, it's more than likely that AA's bills would go unpaid.

**Q. Does GSO have any specific information for our Group or Group Treasurer about how to handle our Group's finances?**

A. Yes. There are two excellent publications available from GSO, AA Guidelines on Finance and the pamphlet "The AA Group Treasurer," that provide specific information to Groups regarding practical matters related to their Group finances, such as setting up bank accounts, obtaining tax ID numbers, and outlining the responsibilities of a Group Treasurer.

**Q. Doesn't all AA money go into one pot? In other words, when our Group contributes to InterGroup, isn't our money distributed to the Area, District and GSO, as well?**

A. No. Each AA entity — Group, District, Area, central office and GSO — provides a specific service and is autonomous. Each is separate from the other.

**Q. Can our Group make financial contributions to AA Grapevine?**

A. No. *AA Grapevine Inc.* is not set up to take contributions from Groups or individuals. Groups and individual members support the Grapevine by purchasing **The Grapevine** and **La Viña** magazine subscriptions and other Grapevine publications and using them in their Twelfth Step work.

## **Trusted Servant Job Guidelines**

### **Chairperson: 6 month term (Dec/June election)**

- Conducts weekly meeting according to format guidelines
- Oversees set-up and teardown of meeting

### **Secretary: 6-month term (Dec/June elections)**

- Keep minutes of important and pertinent business
- Update and copy call list monthly
- Help coordinate sponsorship needs

### **Treasurer: 2 year term (June Election)**

- Maintain Group funds in checkbook
- Give monthly report of income and expenses at business meeting
- Divide up remaining funds after expenses quarterly 30/30/30% to GSO, Area and District service entities leaving 10% as a prudent reserve
- Offer mileage to out of town speakers

### **Coffee Maker: 3-month term (June/Sept/Dec/March)**

- Maintain coffee supply, cups, creamer, sugar, etc.
- Make coffee one hour prior to meeting time
- Responsible for the key and clean coffee pots and related items

### **Speaker Chair: 1 year term (June Election)**

- Offer possible speaker selection to business meeting
- Invite speaker, send invitation letter one month prior to meeting date, and reminder call one week prior to meeting
- Organize and copy "Upcoming Speaker" flyer and distribute via District newsletter
- Greet, welcome and thank speakers

### **Birthday Coordinator: 1 year term (June Election)**

- Coordinate Birthday Night (open meeting)
- Ask about upcoming birthdays prior to meeting
- Responsible to acquire birthday cake, candles, plates, etc...
- Light candles during birthday celebration
- Make birthday plan envelopes available to participants

### **GVR (Grapevine Representative): 2 year term (Jan Election)**

- Maintain grapevine subscription, and bring each month's copies to the meeting
- Encourage AA members to take copies to Correctional/Treatment facilities
- Participate on District GV committee
- Forward old copies to Correctional/Treatment facilities
- Inform Group members of other Grapevine materials

### **Corrections Chair: 1 year term (Dec Election)**

- Coordinate 12 step opportunities in local jails
- Line up at least 4 volunteers for each jail visit
- Maintain list of "cleared" AA Group Members
- Participate on District Correctional Committee

### **Treatment Facilities Chair: 1 year term (Dec Election)**

- Coordinate volunteers for 12 step commitments including:  
Treatment Center, VA Hospital and Chemical Awareness Classes

## GROUP INVENTORY NORMS

### **Facilitator's role:**

The facilitator is neutral with no opinion; experienced with conducting this type of meeting; and is here to keep the meeting on its desired track.

### **Level set items:**

- All agree on the inventory questions to be used.
- Set an end time and agree on it.
- All agree to the following — Norms of Behavior.
- It's best to direct comments to the facilitator to avoid personalizing discussion.

### **Norms (Normative Behavior):**

- No decisions will be made.
- This is not a business meeting.
- Decisions should be made at a regularly scheduled business meeting.
- A consensus is possible but is not necessary.
- The Group agrees to keep the facilitator in their role.
- Titles should be checked at the door.
- All members agree to work together to complete the agenda.
- Members do not interrupt when someone else is talking.
- Members agree to raise a hand to be recognized.
- There is no such thing as a bad opinion.
- Members agree to treat one another with dignity and respect.
- Members agree to keep AA's primary purpose uppermost in mind at all times.
- We need a timekeeper and someone to record the inventory. Have fun!

### **NOTE TO MODERATORS/REPORTS:**

It is not necessary to report all discussion - only the subject and the "sense of the meeting" need be recorded.

The notes above represent the format of the workshops that are held each year at the General Service Conference. There are other ways, of course, to conduct workshops.

For instance, if a series of workshops is being held on the *AA Guidelines* or *The AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service*, participants might be asked to read the Guidelines or a chapter in the Manual and come prepared with their questions. In some cases the portion to be discussed is read aloud, with each participant taking his turn to read a few paragraphs and then informal discussions on the subject take place.

However, when a report is needed or wanted, it is important to have the subject recorded, as well as the "sense of the meeting" on the subject.

If a District Committee Member or Delegate, for instance, is trying to interest GSRs in the *AA Guidelines* or *The AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service*, it is helpful sometimes to prepare questions in advance, giving each participant a list of the questions to be discussed. The best method is always the one that suits your own purpose best.

## AA GROUP INVENTORY

1. What is the basic purpose of our Group?
2. What more can our Group do to carry the message?
3. Is our group attracting alcoholics from different backgrounds? Are we seeing a good cross-section of our community, including those with special needs?
4. Do new members stick with us, or does turnover seem excessive? If so, why?
5. What can we as a Group do to retain members?
6. Do we emphasize the importance of sponsorship? How effectively? How can we do it better?
7. Are we careful to preserve the anonymity of our Group Members and other AAs outside the meeting rooms? Do we also leave what they share at meetings behind?
8. Does our Group emphasize to all Members the value of keeping up with the kitchen, set-up, clean-up and other housekeeping chores that are essential for our Twelfth Step efforts?
9. Are all members given the opportunity to speak at meetings and to participate in other group activities?
10. Mindful that holding office is a great responsibility not to be viewed as the outcome of a popularity contest, are we choosing our officers with care?
11. Are we doing all we can to provide an attractive and accessible meeting place?
12. Does our Group do its fair share toward participating in the purpose of AA – as it relates to our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service?
13. What has our Group done lately to bring the AA message to the attention of professionals in the community – the physicians, clergy, court officials, educators, and others who are often the first to see alcoholics in need of help?
14. How is our Group fulfilling its responsibility to the Seventh Tradition?

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# TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

## from the AA Grapevine

These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA Groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.

### Practice These Principles....

#### **TRADITION ONE: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.**

1. Am I in my Group a healing, mending, integrating person, or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other members' inventories?
2. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious precludes such as "just for the sake of discussion," plunge into argument?
3. Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?
4. Do I make competitive AA remarks, such as comparing one Group with another or contrasting AA in one place with AA in another?
5. Do I put down some AA activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of AA?
6. Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, AA as a whole, or just the parts I understand and approve of?
7. Am I as considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?
8. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?
9. Do I go to enough AA meetings or read enough AA literature to really keep in touch?
10. Do I share with AA all of me, the bad and the good, accepting as well as giving the help of fellowship?

#### **TRADITION TWO: 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.**

1. Do I criticize or do I trust and support my Group officers, AA committees, and office workers? Newcomers? Old-timers?
2. Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, with AA Twelfth Step jobs or other AA responsibility?
3. Do I look for credit in my AA jobs? Praise for my AA ideas?
4. Do I have to save face in Group discussion, or can I yield in good spirit to the Group conscience and work cheerfully along with it?
5. Although I have been sober a few years, am I still willing to serve my turn at AA chores?
6. In Group discussions, do I sound off about matters on which I have no experience and little knowledge?

#### **Tradition Three: The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.**

1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new AA members as losers?
2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately do not want in my AA Group?
3. Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?
4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?

Cont'd.

## **TRADITIONS CHECKLIST (Cont'd.)**

5. Am I over impressed by a celebrity? By a doctor, a clergyman, an ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
6. When someone turns up at AA needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what he does for a living? Where he lives? What his domestic arrangements are? Whether he had been to AA before? What his other problems are?

### **TRADITION FOUR: Each Group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other Groups or AA as a whole.**

1. Do I insist that there are only a few right ways of doing things in AA?
2. Does my Group always consider the welfare of the rest of AA? Of nearby Groups? Of Loners in Alaska? Of Internationalists miles from port? Of a Group in Rome or El Salvador?
3. Do I put down other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?
4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in AA, I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?
5. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths—his lengths, not mine—to stay sober?
6. Do I share my knowledge of AA tools with other members who may not have heard of them?

### **Tradition Five: Each Group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.**

1. Do I ever cop out by saying, "I'm not a Group, so this or that Tradition doesn't apply to me"?
2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the limitations of AA help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
3. Have I today imposed on any AA member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?
4. Am I willing to twelfth-step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
5. Do I help my Group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?
6. Do I remember that AA old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them?

### **Tradition Six: An AA Group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.**

1. Should my fellow Group members and I go out and raise money to endow several AA beds in our local hospital?
2. Is it good for a Group to lease a small building?
3. Are all the officers and members of our local club for AAs familiar with "Guidelines on Clubs" (which is available free from GSO)?
4. Should the secretary of our Group serve on the mayor's advisory committee on alcoholism?
5. Some alcoholics will stay around AA only if we have a TV and card room. If this is what is required to carry the message to them, should we have these facilities?

Cont'd.

## **TRADITIONS CHECKLIST (Cont'd.)**

### **Tradition Seven: Every AA Group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.**

1. Honestly now, do I do all I can to help AA (my Group, my central office, my GSO) remain self-supporting? Could I put a little more into the basket on behalf of the new guy who can't afford it yet? How generous was I when tanked in a barroom?
2. Should the Grapevine sell advertising space to book publishers and drug companies, so it could make a big profit and become a bigger magazine, in full color, at a cheaper price per copy?
3. If GSO runs short of funds some year, wouldn't it be okay to let the government subsidize AA Groups in hospitals and prisons?
4. Is it more important to get a big AA collection from a few people, or a smaller collection in which more members participate?
5. Is a Group treasurer's report unimportant AA business? How does the treasurer feel about it?
6. How important in my recovery is the feeling of self-respect, rather than the feeling of being always under obligation for charity received?

### **Tradition Eight: Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.**

1. Is my own behavior accurately described by the Traditions? If not, what needs changing?
2. When I chafe about any particular Tradition, do I realize how it affects others?
3. Do I sometimes try to get some reward—even if not money—for my personal AA efforts?
4. Do I try to sound in AA like an expert on alcoholism? On recovery? On medicine? On sociology? On AA itself? On psychology? On spiritual matters? Or, heaven help me, even on humility?
5. Do I make an effort to understand what AA employees do? What workers in other alcoholism agencies do? Can I distinguish clearly among them?
6. In my own AA life, have I any experiences which illustrate the wisdom of this Tradition?
7. Have I paid enough attention to the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions? To the pamphlet AA Tradition—How It Developed?

### **Tradition Nine: AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.**

1. Do I still try to boss things in AA?
2. Do I resist formal aspects of AA because I fear them as authoritative?
3. Am I mature enough to understand and use all elements of the AA program—even if no one makes me do so—with a sense of personal responsibility?
4. Do I exercise patience and humility in any AA job I take?
5. Am I aware of all those to whom I am responsible in any AA job?
6. Why doesn't every AA Group need a constitution and bylaws?
7. Have I learned to step out of an AA job gracefully—and profit thereby—when the time comes?
8. What has rotation to do with anonymity? With humility?

Cont'd.

## TRADITIONS CHECKLIST (Cont'd.)

**Tradition Ten: Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.**

1. Do I ever give the impression that there really is an “AA opinion” on Antabuse? Tranquilizers? Doctors? Psychiatrists? Churches? Hospitals? Jails? Alcohol? The federal or state government? Legalizing marijuana? Vitamins? Al-Anon? Alateen?
2. Can I honestly share my own personal experience concerning any of those without giving the impression I am stating the “AA opinion”?
3. What in AA history gave rise to our Tenth Tradition?
4. Have I had a similar experience in my own AA life?
5. What would AA be without this Tradition? Where would I be?
6. Do I breach this or any of its supporting Traditions in subtle, perhaps unconscious, ways?
7. How can I manifest the spirit of this Tradition in my personal life outside AA? Inside AA?

**Tradition Eleven: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.**

1. Do I sometimes promote AA so fanatically that I make it seem unattractive?
2. Am I always careful to keep the confidences reposed in me as an AA member?
3. Am I careful about throwing AA names around—even within the Fellowship?
4. Am I ashamed of being a recovered, or recovering, alcoholic?
5. What would AA be like if we were not guided by the ideas in Tradition Eleven? Where would I be?
6. Is my AA sobriety attractive enough that a sick drunk would want such a quality for himself?

**Tradition Twelve: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.**

1. Why is it good idea for me to place the common welfare of all AA members before individual welfare? What would happen to me if AA as a whole disappeared?
2. When I do not trust AA’s current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?
3. In my opinions of and remarks about other AAs, am I implying membership requirements other than a desire to stay sober?
4. Do I ever try to get a certain AA Group to conform to my standards, not its own?
5. Have I a personal responsibility in helping an AA Group fulfill its primary purpose? What is my part?
6. Does my personal behavior reflect the Sixth Tradition—or belie it?
7. Do I do all I can do to support AA financially? When is the last time I anonymously gave away a Grapevine subscription?
8. Do I complain about certain AAs’ behavior—especially if they are paid to work for AA? Who made me so smart?
9. Do I fulfill all AA responsibilities in such a way as to please privately even my own conscience? Really?
10. Do my utterances always reflect the Tenth Tradition, or do I give AA critics real ammunition?
11. Should I keep my AA membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me)? Is my brand of AA so attractive that other drunks want it?
12. What is the real importance of me among more than a million AAs?