

DISTRICT 41 MESSENGER

District 41 of Northern Illinois Area 20 Serving
Addison, Bensenville, Lombard, Elmhurst, Oak-
brook Terrace, Villa Park & Wood Dale

FALL 2021
Edition 25



A Call to General Service

Where do you fit in?

The picture below best explains who is to have the largest impact on decision making regarding Alcoholics Anonymous. It is the collective group conscience of your meeting, added to the group consciences of all the other meetings, creating a force that ultimately decides...well, nearly everything related to A.A. There are over 60 thousand groups in the United States alone. There are well over 118,000 Alcoholics Anonymous groups in 180 different countries supporting approximately two million members worldwide. Every year the A.A. General Service Conference is set to the task of bettering our essential life-giving program. That program that awaits every unsuspecting new comer that steps into a meeting or calls an A.A. hotline. That program has given each of us a second chance and made our individual lives more rewarding than we ever imagined. Many topics, some of great importance and others with little relevance, are brought to the table. This newsletter hopes to give each reader a chance to consider where they fit in and how they can impact the collective voice of A.A.

STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE (U.S. and Canada)



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| General Service Structure | 1 |
| What is a G.S.R. ? | 2 |
| What is the role of our District | 2 |
| What Makes a Good Meeting? | 3 |
| What is Area 20? | 4 |
| Big Book Conference 2021 | 5 |
| Help Wanted! | 5 |
| The Science of Happiness | 6 |
| The Pink Can Fund | 6 |

District 41 Treasurer
PO Box 7226
Villa Park, IL 60181

District 41 Answering Service
PO Box 6365
Villa Park, IL 60181

Websites

dupage41aa.org (District)
aa-nia.org (Area)
aa.org (AA World Service)



What is a General Service Representative?

When an A.A. member becomes a General Service Representative (G.S.R.) they are responsible for linking their group (A.A. meeting) with A.A. as a whole. It is recommended that a group have an Alternate G.S.R. as well to step in when needed. Typically a group will nominate and vote to put a willing member in the position of G.S.R. It is important that the G.S.R. be given regular opportunities to present and discuss General Service information with the group members. This can be done as part of a regular meeting or during a separate business meeting. This is vital because the G.S.R. will be expected to keep their group informed of all District 41 and Area 20 concerns as well as “passing on” the information that comes from our General Service Office (G.S.O.). The G.S.R. becomes the trusted servant for the group and is responsible for relaying their group concerns and provides their group conscience regarding A.A.-related issues to the District and Area representatives.

The G.S.R. is the best position to hold to begin the process of learning and participating in General Service. The G.S.R. or the Alternate G.S.R. are expected to:

- **Attend District 41 G.S.R. Committee Meetings held once a month (3rd Thursday at 7pm)**
- **Attend quarterly NIA 20 Area Assemblies to vote on behalf of their group and present their group conscience on important issues**
- **Attend the Area Pre-General Service Conference, provided by NIA 20, allowing your group’s conscience to be heard, counted and brought forward by the Area Delegate as they prepare for the General Service Conference each Spring**

A two-year commitment is suggested and plenty of support will be given to a new G.S.R. Soon. Attending the District meetings will keep them informed and able to pass on the information to and from their group. The G.S.R. is also registered with the A.A. General Service Office and receives a G.S.R. Information Kit and the bi-monthly “Bot 459” Newsletter from our A.A. General Service Office.

What is the role of District 41?

Our District is responsible for providing support to the groups that meet in Addison, Bensenville, Elmhurst, Lombard, Villa Park, Oak Brook Terrace and Wood Dale. The primary way District 41 gets information to and from these meetings is through the group’s GSR regularly attending the monthly District 41 meeting. The District is concerned with local issues and services such as maintaining an informative website, printing our local A.A. meeting directory, operating the answering service, arranging to hold meetings in correctional institutions, hospitals and treatment centers. Our Public Information Chair and Cooperation with the Professional Community Chair are dedicated to providing awareness and support to our surrounding community, reaching out to everyone who may be impacted by alcoholism.

Our District is often involved in holding workshops, being the host for the Area Assembly, Spring Assembly Conference and a variety of District functions. Our District holds regular on going elections to fill all required Committee Chair positions. All chair positions have an Alternate Chair and can create a committee to support their Chair responsibilities. These Chair positions are; Accessibilities, Answering Service, Archives, Bridging the Gap, Corrections, CPC – Cooperation with the Professional Community, Grapevine, LCM – Local Committee Member, Literature, PI – Public Information, Treatment, Web Tech and Workshops. The G.S.R. votes on behalf of their group conscience at the District Meetings. Topics requiring their vote are generated by the District, Area and General Service Office. The Chair of the District Meeting is called the District Committee Member (D.C.M.). The D.C.M. is a member of Area 20 and act as an information link between our District and Area. The G.S.R. is *expected* to attend the District 41 GSR & Committee meeting. **District 41 meets in-person and online the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7pm. The in person meeting is held at Elmhurst Presbyterian Church at the corner of St. Charles and Spring Rd.**

The Ingredients of a “Good” Meeting

Tradition Two reminds us:

“Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”

Have you ever heard someone say, “I go to that meeting and it’s a good one.” Have you ever thought about how the meeting became that way? How can we better the meetings we attend or the group we call “Home”?

The A.A. Conference-approved pamphlet **The A.A. Group... Where It All Begins** contains the guidance of the A.A. General Service Conference about A.A. groups. The pamphlet focuses on the role of officers and committees. Keep in mind, the pamphlet is written for a broad audience and to cover all types of possible group sizes and structures and contingencies. A small group of 10-25 does not always need the full-blown officer and committee structure discussed in the pamphlet until it becomes larger. There is no harm in planning for growth.

What Do A.A. Group Committees Do?

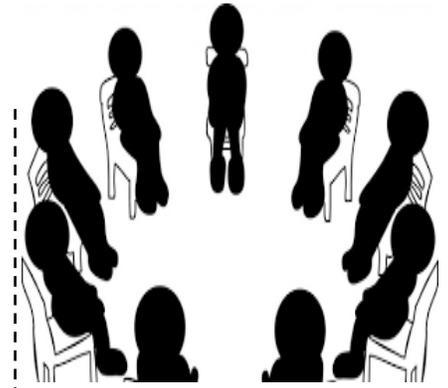
Most of us agree that **A.A. ought never to be “organized.”** However, we can **“create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve” (Tradition Nine).** In A.A. groups, members of these service committees are sometimes called “officers” or “trusted servants.” **As Tradition Two reminds us, “Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”**

In smaller groups, 3-4 officers usually make up a steering committee, which may hold business meetings at regularly scheduled times. Oftentimes, a steering committee of just three people will not meet formally on a regular basis but will instead occasionally meet informally after a regular meeting to touch base about various aspects of the meeting. At steering committee meetings, usually questions related to group practices and other group issues are discussed. If necessary, the steering committee may bring issues to the other home group members for a group-conscience vote.

What Do A.A. Group Officers Do?

Individual groups will select various numbers of officers, depending on the needs of the group and make sure that the necessary services are performed with a minimum of organization. Below are common officer roles that smaller groups often organize their service structure around to ensure that services get done. Oftentimes the officers form the steering committee for the group. Common roles are Treasurer, General Service Representative (G.S.R.), and Secretary.

Continued on page 4



The freedom to run our meeting the way our group see’s fit leaves us with a great responsibility to do it right!

Food for thought...

What is an A.A. group? “.... much attention has been drawn to the extraordinary liberties which the A.A. Traditions accord to the individual member and to his group: no penalties to be inflicted for nonconformity to A.A. principles; no fees or dues to be levied....voluntary contributions only; no member to be expelled from A.A. — membership always to be the choice of the individual; each A.A. group ought to conduct its internal affairs as it wishes - it being merely requested to abstain from activities that might injure A.A. as a whole; and finally that any group of alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group provided that, as a group, they have no other purpose or affiliation.” - Warranty Six, Concept XII

What is Northern Illinois Area 20?

The principal function of Northern Illinois service Area 20 is to be a forum for effective communication between the Groups and the General Service Conference through its Delegate. In addition to counseling its Delegate about the collective Group Conscience of the Fellowship in Northern Illinois, NIA will assist its Districts, Groups and members to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers in a broad variety of ways, including but not restricted to conducting workshops, sharing sessions and seminars in all fields of general service.

NIA Statement on Singleness of Purpose

Our Third and Fifth Traditions state that "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking." "Each Group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. And as a Fellowship we do one thing only: "- share our program of recovery."

NIA Declaration of Unity

This we owe to A.A.'s future: To place our common welfare first and to keep our fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives and the lives of those to come.

Continued from page 3

The Ingredients of a "Good" Meeting

Remember, every A.A. group is autonomous and is free to decide the officer roles best suited to serve the needs of the group. For example, a group could decide to combine the GSR and secretary roles and have one person responsible for those tasks rather than two. The group can decide on length/term of service i.e., 6 months, 1 year, 2 years and on any other qualification for filling an officer/trusted servant role.

Are there other Trusted Servants?

There are often a variety of other service tasks and activities that members of the group can assume responsibility for. Individual groups have many ways of making sure that the necessary services are performed with a minimum of organization. Some groups have as many volunteer positions as possible to provide service opportunities. These service positions can include:

- Liaison to the meeting facility
- Open the building and/or meeting room
- Coffee Maker
- Clean-up
- Greeter
- Maintain inventory of chips, literature, etc.
- Taking a meeting to a rehab, jail, etc.

It is through the combined efforts and ongoing commitment of group members that the group survives. For a group to keep going, service must be done. It takes member participation to ensure that group service work is done.



Coffee Pot from Bill W. & Dr. Bob's First Meeting (Brown University Libraries)

It supposedly belonged to Bob's wife, Ann. It served coffee at many an A.A. meeting in the 1930's and beyond!

Source: It Starts with a Coffee Pot

164 and much more

Save the date!

2021 NORTHERN ILLINOIS AREA 20
BIG BOOK CONFERENCE
via ZOOM (more details to come)
Saturday, October 30th, 2021
8:30am-3:00pm CST
Hosted by District 11

Morning Speaker: Kathleen C.H. from Dallas TX
A History of Women in Early A.A. - "Angels, Sinners and Saints"

Panels:

- "Doctor Bob's Nightmare" (2nd, 3rd & 4th Editions; originally titled "The Doctor's Nightmare" in 1st Edition)
- "Truth Freed Me!" (1st Edition)
- "Fear of Fear" (2nd, 3rd & 4th Editions)
- "A.A. Taught Him to Handle Sobriety" (3rd & 4th Editions)
- 2 Spanish-language Big Book panels

Afternoon Speaker: William S. from Fairfield CT
The 18 months it took to write the Big Book

 ASL signing *upon request* 

Spanish / English translation and Closed Captioning available



Questions? Contact Rich H. at 815.353.7850 (richh925@msn.com)
or Georgene R. at 815.790.7370 (greinwall@gmail.com)



Help Wanted

**District 41 needs
General Service
Chairpersons ASAP!**

Qualified persons have:

A general understanding of the A.A. 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, work a program of recovery, and have adequate time to devote to these important roles. See Page 2 for more information.

Open Chair Positions:

**Archives
Bridging the Gap
Treatment
Grapevine
Public information
Workshops
Plus many Alternate Positions**

Note: District 41 does not state a required length of sobriety.

Interested?

Email us at:

dupage41aa@gmail.com

Help Wanted

**District 41 needs
G.S.R.'s for your group
ASAP!**

Please consider selecting a General Service Representative for your group to participate at our District level. See Page 2 for more information.

Interested?

Email us at:

dupage41aa@gmail.com

Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

This is the fourth edition of the Big Book, the basic text for Alcoholics Anonymous.



WHAT IS THE PINK CAN FUND?

The idea behind the pink can is to collect extra money that is used specifically to purchase literature to distribute in the prisons, jails, probation offices and any other institution that falls in the category of "corrections".

The money is never used for anything other than corrections.

Your group can donate money collected on behalf of the Pink Can to our D41 Treasurer. The address can be found on the front of this newsletter!

All editions of the District 41 Messenger can be found on the District 41 website: dupage41aa.org

District 41 Messenger is published quarterly by District 41 of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is intended as a service letter to inform district members of service opportunities, events, and experiences relevant to carrying the AA message, in and through service. Opinions expressed herein are those of the contributors and do not necessarily express or reflect the thinking of Alcoholics Anonymous, District 41, or the editor. This newsletter is a confidential document. Please do not take it to jails, treatment centers, etc.

The Neuroscience of Giving

Why helping others makes you feel great!

The altruism center of the brain is considered a "deep brain structure," part of the primitive brain. We know when we see a child in trouble, our instincts kick in, and we spring into action before we can even think.

Humans are social animals, so it is no surprise that we are wired to help one another. In our complex modern society, there are many ways to give, and the good news is that we now understand that both the giver and receiver benefit from the relationship. Neuroscience has demonstrated that giving is a powerful pathway for creating more personal joy and improving overall health.

While the brain is remarkably complex, the neurochemical drivers of happiness are quite easy to identify. **Dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin make up the Happiness Triecta.** The Happiness Triecta takes place through helping others. Helping others triggers a release of oxytocin, which has the effect of boosting your mood and counteracts the effects of cortisol (the dreaded stress hormone). Interestingly, the higher your levels of oxytocin, the more you want to help others. When oxytocin is boosted, so are serotonin and dopamine!

Any activity that increases the production of these neurochemicals will cause a boost in mood. It's really that simple. The benefits don't stop at moods! Serotonin is connected to sleep, digestion, memory, learning, and appetite. Dopamine is connected to motivation and arousal. Oxytocin, "the cuddle hormone," is among the most ancient of our neurochemicals and has a powerful effect on the brain and the body. When oxytocin begins to flow, blood pressure decreases and the foundation for sexual arousal is built. Bonding increases, social fears are reduced and trust and empathy are enhanced. Oxytocin is also an anti-inflammatory and reduces pain and enhances wound healing.

So if giving allows us to secrete all the chemicals at once, we owe it to ourselves to give as often as possible!

When most people think of giving, they may have too narrow a focus. All giving works wonders, not just cash given once or twice a year. How can you help others? Is there a cause you support? A friend that needs help? A stranger that needs a random act of kindness? You should fill every day with small acts of giving, as this is an effective way to bring happiness to yourself and others. Even just a smile; you can give one away multiple times a day at no cost, and in the process, boost your mood and your health.

So give, give often, and bask in the mental and physical effects of your actions.

Source: Psychology Today Posted April 24, 2014 | Reviewed by Jessica Schrader