

New GSR's/DCM's should be encouraged to understand this to be only the beginning of their orientation to and participation in General Service. As such, there will likely remain some questions and even confusion which will be resolved over time through active participation, use of a service sponsor, and asking questions. Page numbers for suggested readings referenced below refer to either *The AA Service Manual, '11-'12* (AASM) or the *SENY Service Handbook, 10th Rev.* (SSH).

1. AA's Third Legacy, Service as guided by the *Twelve Concepts for World Service*
2. **Overview of General Service and SENY**
 - a. **What is General Service?**
 - i. **Some history- AA comes of age with the creation of the Conference** (see also, AASM-pp. S1-12)
 - ii. **A bit about the service structure, the upside down triangle**
 - (1) The home Group & the GSR
 - (a) Group's link with the rest of AA, voice of the group conscience
 - (b) Guardian of the Traditions
 - (2) The District & the DCM
 - (3) The County & the DCMC
 - (4) The area (SENY) & the Delegate
 - (5) The General Service Conference
 - b. **SENY Committee & Assembly**
 - i. Meetings to attend: Area Assembly, District and County
 - ii. Who votes? One group one vote principle.
3. **Support for new members**
 - a. Ask questions
 - b. Get an alternate if possible to share some of the responsibility
 - c. Who's who in your district, county and area: People you should know
 - i. DCM
 - ii. DCMC
 - iii. Area officers
 - iv. Area chairs
 - d. Service sponsorship
 - e. Registration with the levels of service, registration with any one level does not provide for registration with any of the others (see also, AASM-pp. S28-30)
 - f. **The AA Service Manual** (suggested first readings)
 - i. "The Conference Structure: An Overview, An Upside-Down Organization, Communication through the Structure"— AASM-pp. S15-19
 - ii. "Glossary of General Service Terms"— AASW-pp. S19-S21
 - iii. "Why do we need a Conference?"— AASM-p. S20

- iv. “Stimulating Interest in General Service”— AASM-p. S23
- v. “The Group and Its GSR”— AASM-pp.25-30
- vi. “The District and Its DCM”— AASM-pp. 31-35

g. Other resources

4. Handouts

- a. **SENY Service Handbook and Articles of Association and By-Laws** (suggested first readings)
 - i. “Getting Started, First Steps”— SSH-pp. 7-11
 - ii. “The General Service Structure in SENY”— SSH-p. 10
 - iii. “What is the Role of the GSR in AA’s Service Structure?, The GSR’s Group Responsibilities, Relationship of the GSR to the District and the County, Relationship of the GSR to the Area and Suggested Training”— SSH-pp. 14-16
 - iv. “The District Committee Member (DCM); Relationship of the DCM to the Group; District Duties; Relationship of the DCM to the Area Assembly and the County; DCM Responsibilities; Getting an Inactive District Up and Running”— SSH-pp. 17-19
 - v. “Who Pays the Expenses of the GSR/DCM?”— SSH-pp. 23-24
 - vi. “Frequently Asked Questions”— SSH-pp. 52-61
 - vii. “A Glossary of Terms, Abbreviations and Acronyms”— SSH-pp, 62-67
- b. AAWS pamphlets (identified by their AAWS catalog code numbers)
 - i. *The AA Group* (P-16)
 - ii. *Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix* (F-3)
 - iii. *Circles of Love and Service* (P-45)
 - iv. *GSR May Be the Most Important Job in AA* (P-19)
 - v. *Your AA General Service Office* (F-6)
 - vi. *The DCM* (F-12)
 - vii. *Inside AA* (P-18)
 - viii. *Twelve Traditions Illustrated* (P-43)
 - ix. *The Twelve Concepts Illustrated* (P-8)
- c. “**Conference Procedures**” adopted by SENY
 - i. Robert’s Rules adapted
 - ii. A word about “minority opinion”
- d. SENY’s periodic newsletter, ***The Link***
- e. “Alphabet Soup: A Glossary of Commonly Used Acronyms and Terms” (see also, AASM-pp. S-19-21 and SSH-pp. 62-67)

5. Where do I go from here?

- a. Today’s agenda
- b. **Q&A**

Alphabet Soup: A Glossary of Commonly Used Acronyms and Terms

AA Grapevine (Inc.), The— A corporation of the General Service Board overseeing the publishing operations of the *Grapevine* and *La Viña*

AAWS— Alcoholics Anonymous World Services (Inc.)— A corporation of the General Service Board overseeing the operations of the General Service Office and serving as the publishing company for Conference-approved and service literature

Area— A geographical division entitled to elect a delegate to represent it at the General Service Conference, also assuming some responsibility for AA service activity in its geographical division

CF— Correctional Facilities— A service committee concerned with carrying the AA message to incarcerated alcoholics and/or with working cooperatively with correctional professionals toward that end

Class A Trustee— Non-alcoholic trustee elected by the General Service Board to serve on AA's General Service Board and standing trustee committees, usually drawn from the ranks of professionals who believe in the AA recovery program

Class B Trustee— AA member trustee elected either regionally (Regional Trustee), nationally (Trustee at Large for the United States or Canada) or from among current or past non-trustee directors at AAWS or The AA Grapevine (General Service Trustee)

CNY— Central New York— Area 47 of the General Service Conference of the United States and Canada, one of the four areas in New York State

CPC— Cooperation with the Professional Community— A service committee concerned with carrying the AA message through working with professionals who may work with alcoholics

DCM— District Committee Member— The chairperson of local district committee, the district's voice in area committee and assembly meetings

DCMC— District Committee Member Chair— The chairperson of the local county committee/assembly, the county's voice in area committee and assembly meetings

District— Several groups in a local community meet together to form a district committee as the next service level between the home groups and the county and area

General Service Board— The service entity with responsibility for custodial oversight for all AA service activities through AAWS, Inc., the AA Grapevine, Inc. and the trustees' committees

GSC— General Service Conference— The service body representative of the membership which is "the guardian of world services and of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of AA," (from, *The AA Service Manual*, p. S95), the guiding conscience of the fellowship, also the annual meeting in New York City of that service body

GSO— General Service Office— The business office of AA in the US and Canada located in New York City

GSR— General Service Representative— An AA group's representative and link with the rest of AA, the voice of its group conscience

GV— Grapevine— The periodic journal of AA, "Our Meeting in Print," also a service committee concerned with carrying the AA message through the publication of the two periodicals, the *Grapevine* and *La Viña*

GvR— Grapevine Representative— Local link with the Grapevine Office offering access to information and materials about/from the *Grapevine/LaViña*

H&I— Hospitals and Institutions— A service committee concerned with carrying the AA message to alcoholics in hospitals and other institutions

HMB— Hudson-Mohawk-Berkshire— Area 48 of the General Service Conference of the United States and Canada, one of the four areas in New York State

LV— La Viña— The Spanish language edition of AA's periodic journal

NERAASA— Northeast Regional AA Service Assembly— The Northeast Region's annual weekend gathering to discuss General Service Conference-related and other topics touching AA's Three Legacies

NERC— Northeast Regional Convention— The Northeast Region's annual convention

NERD— Northeast Regional Delegate(s)— Any past or present delegate from the Northeast Region, also the annual meeting of that group of members

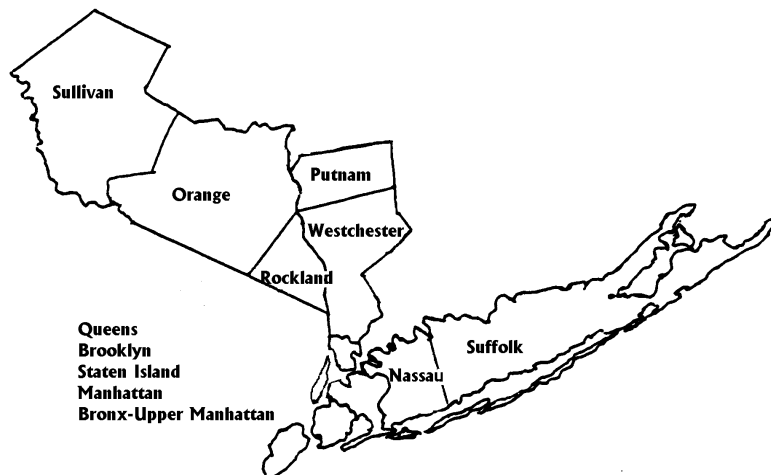
NERF— Northeast Regional Forum— A biennial regional weekend sharing and informational session designed to help the General Service Board, AAWS, the Grapevine Corporate Board, the Grapevine Staff, and the General Service Office Staff stay in touch with members in the region

Northeast Region— Our region in the General Service Conference of the United States and Canada, one of eight regions (six in the US and two in Canada), including the 18 areas in Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts (2), New Hampshire, New Jersey (2), New York (4), Pennsylvania (2), Rhode Island and Vermont

NYSIW— New York State Informational Workshop— An annual service weekend sponsored by the four areas in NY State supporting discussion and the sharing of experience of the fellowship's main service committees

PI— Public Information— A service committee concerned with carrying the AA message to the public often working with the media

SENY— South Eastern New York (Committee and Assembly of Alcoholics Anonymous)— Area 49 of the General Service Conference of the United States and Canada, one of the four areas in New York State, our area



TF— Treatment Facilities— A service committee concerned with carrying the AA message to alcoholics in institutions and/or working cooperatively with treatment professionals toward that end

WNY— Western New York— Area 50 of the General Service Conference of the United States and Canada, one of the four areas in New York State

Rules of Order— How we run our meetings

As with the General Service Conference, SENY runs its business meetings as informally as possible but according to a Conference modified version of Robert's Rules of Order. (The current edition of Robert's Rules is *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, 10th Edition also referred to as "RONR.") This allows for greater fidelity to AA Tradition and respect for local needs and preferences. The handout, "Summary of Conference Procedures" details the main points of procedure. Any "Rules of Order" currently in use by the area are subject to the will of the meeting and its right to amend them. Also, while it may be easier for clarity sake sometimes to talk in terms of winning or losing sides when explaining procedure, we are reminded, "the purpose of . . . debate is to reach a group conscience—there are no winners or losers." (From, "How the General Service Conference Operates," a General Service Conference handout.)

Some central ideas on procedure may be outlined as follows:

Courtesy suggests a member raise his/her hand and wait for the chair running the meeting to **recognize** them before they **take the floor** to speak. There are acceptable and expected exceptions to this.

A **motion** is a formal proposal by a member that the group take a certain action. A motion brings business before the meeting. Good motions are simple, clearly stated. Compound motions, those with sub-sections, are allowed, but may make discussion and decision making more difficult. The substance of the motion is referred to as **the question** before the meeting.

A motion requires a **second** in order to be further considered. That is, it needs a second member's agreement that it should be considered. The "second" is simply be called out after the motion is made without waiting to be recognized by the chair.

Motions may be changed before they go to a vote. An **amendment** to a motion on the floor must be germane to the motion (that is, involve the same question). Amendment requires a specifically worded motion saying exactly how the motion in question is to be re-worded (amended). A motion to amend must be seconded, then may move to discussion and vote. A simple majority decides. If approved, the amended motion is restated by the chair, and debate on the motion as amended moves on.

Debate is the discussion of the question. It is suggested members limit their comments on a question to two minutes and to not speak a second time until those who wish to have been able to speak a first time. The chair may suggest the closing of debate to move the meeting along once it appears the meeting has had its say. Some procedural motions (see below) are not debatable, but simply move to a vote if seconded.

A motion to **call the question** asks that debate be halted while the meeting decides to proceed to the vote on the question or not. The chair may disallow such a motion if it appears premature. After a second, the motion is not debatable and requires a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote to pass.

A motion to **table** or to **lay on the table** a motion asks the meeting to postpone further discussion of the question to an unspecified later time. After a second, the motion is not debatable and requires a simple majority to pass. To later consider the tabled motion, a motion to **take the motion from the table** must be made and seconded. It is not debatable, and is passed by a simple majority.

A **vote** on the question is taken after sufficient discussion. It is suggested important matters be decided by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority. This is called seeking **substantial unanimity** (agreement) on the question offering a firmer foundation for meeting decisions. Some procedural matters are decided by a simple majority only. The chair or the recording secretary reads the motion before the vote so the meeting is clear on the question. Except in the election of officers, the vote is by a show of hands. "Yes" votes, "No" votes and "Abstentions" are each counted for the record, but only Yes or No votes count toward the outcome on the question.

After a vote, a **minority opinion**, additional sharing from a member who voted on the non-prevailing side of the question, is allowed/invited.

After hearing the minority opinion or in possession of other new information on the question, a motion for **reconsideration** may be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side of the question. It may be seconded by any member. If adopted after discussion, the meeting returns to the point in procedure just before the vote on the question and continues.

More About Majority Decisions

Questions before the area committee or assembly are decided by a majority vote following ample discussion and an opportunity for reconsideration of any decision. (See also below.) Depending on the question, the committee/assembly may wish to make its decision based on a simple majority (greater than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total vote), a substantial majority (at least $\frac{2}{3}$ of the total vote) or a super majority (at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total vote). It is suggested questions of conscience (policy) be decided on the basis of a substantial majority. Abstentions are not considered (counted) toward the decision, but may be recorded for the record. Whatever the basis for decision, the chair should assure the committee/assembly is clear on the method for decision before the vote.

More About Minority Opinion and Reconsideration

AA service principles as outlined in the *Twelve Concepts for World Service* try hard to respect minority views in decision making. "Concept Five" reminds us that "a traditional 'Right of Appeal' ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard . . ." Seeking a "minority opinion" after a vote allows an opportunity for "reconsideration" of a question based on the strength of additional minority sharing allowing all participants a sense of a fair hearing.

In practice, the respecting of minority views works as follows in our meetings.

It is suggested the chair allow for ample discussion on any question before a vote assuring all points of view an opportunity to be heard. To that extent it is the individual member's responsibility to speak up during any discussion period if his/her point of view has not already been stated. To wait until after a vote may only waste meeting time.

After a vote, the chair may ask if anyone who voted on the non-prevailing (losing) side of a question wishes to express a "minority opinion" not already stated during the previous discussion on the question. (In some meetings, it may be expected any member wishing to express a minority opinion after a vote will simply step forward to do so without prompting. This can also save the meeting time.) At this point the chair will allow additional time for one or more members who voted on the non-prevailing side of a question to express a minority view. Members are expected to try not to simply restate points already made, but to raise additional points on the question. This sharing is not subject to discussion (debate).

After a reasonable period for hearing such opinions, the chair may ask if any member who voted on the prevailing (winning) side on the question wishes to offer a motion to reconsider, that is, is there anyone who voted on the prevailing side who wishes to change his/her vote. While such a motion must be offered by a member who voted on the prevailing side of the question, it may be seconded by any member. If seconded, the motion may be debated but not amended, and is decided by a simple majority. If the majority votes to reconsider the question, the question is reopened to full discussion as if the original vote had not taken place. After such reconsideration a question is not open to further reconsideration in that session (meeting).

In summary:

- Following a vote on a question, "minority opinion" is allowed/invited from the losing side
- After hearing the "minority voice," anyone who voted on the winning side may move for reconsideration if they wish to change their vote
- If so moved, any member may second; hold a vote to reconsider; simple majority decides
- If a majority is for reconsideration, reopen discussion on the original motion; move to a decision
- No further reconsideration of the same question in the current meeting.

The respecting of minority opinion may be handled differently in some service meetings, and any meeting may decide to do it differently.