

Alphabet Soup – AA’s Acronyms

A.A.W.S.

Alcoholics **A**nonymous **W**orld **S**ervices. An incorporated entity that produces all A.A. literature. The A.A.W.S. Board reports directly to the General Service Board, and is accountable to the Fellowship as a whole through A.A.’s General Service Conference.

B.T.G.

Bridge **T**he **G**ap. This activity attempts to establish temporary contacts or sponsors for newcomers being released from treatment or correctional facilities.

C.F.

Correctional **F**acilities. This committee focuses on carrying the message behind the walls of correctional facilities, and works hard to develop good working relationships with professionals in the corrections field.

C.P.C.

Cooperation with the **P**rofessional **C**ommunity Committee. Building a working relationship with the many professional persons who may come into contact with the drinking alcoholic, and may be able to refer them to AA, is the primary focus of this committee. This is AA’s attempt to be “friendly with our friends” and in so doing, perhaps we may be able to do through cooperation that which we could not do separately.

D.C.M.

District **C**ommittee **M**ember. This person is the chairperson of a geographical unit of the AA service structure – a District. He or she represents the groups that meet within a specific District. That person is also automatically a member of the Area Committee – which meets quarterly. The DCM chairs the regular District Meetings and attends all of the Area meetings (4) and often attends the Regional Meetings (2).

G.I.R.

Group **I**nstitutions **R**epresentative. The role of the GIR is to support and coordinate the Twelfth Step service work between Alcoholics Anonymous and treatment facilities, correctional facilities, and other institutions for their particular AA group.

G.S.B.

General **S**ervice **B**oard. The legal entity that oversees the operation of AA’s publishing arms (AAWS & Grapevine), as well as the G.S.O (General Service Office in New York City).

- G.S.C.** **General Service Conference.** An annual conference, held in New York city, during which the policies of AA as a whole are discussed and formed. The Southern Minnesota Area sends one elected representative (Delegate) to this conference.
- G.S.O.** **General Service Office.** The office, in New York city, that acts as the headquarters for AA's worldwide communication.
- G.S.R.** **General Service Representative.** This person provides the critical link between the AA group and the rest of the AA Fellowship. In Southern Minnesota, Area 36, the GSR typically attends 3 Area Assemblies, 1 Area Service Conference, and monthly district meetings. Many G.S.R's also attend the annual West Central Regional Service Conference, the bi-annual West Central Regional Forum
- GvR** **GrapeVine Representative.** This is often a responsibility within an A.A. group. This person works to ensure that group members know about the A.A. Grapevine (AA's meeting in print).
- L.C.M.** **Local Committee Member.** Often, in very large districts, rather than split the district into smaller ones, another approach is taken to ensuring good communication. The Local Committee Member serves the same function as the D.C.M., only they deal with a portion of the groups within a district – called a Zone – to make sure the communication channel stays open.
- P.I.** **Public Information.** This is the activity of carrying the A.A. message through the use of the media, such as newspapers, television, radio, films, etc. It is through this activity that AA informs the world at large about the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous.
- T.F.** **Treatment Facilities.** A committee that works to improve AA's cooperation with treatment center professionals who refer alcoholics to AA.
- W.C.R.** **West Central Region.** This is the geographic region of AA's structure that Minnesota is in. For further information please see the maps in this portion of the website.
- P.C.P.** **Pink Can Plan.** Members contribute spare change, which is utilized to provide AA literature for Correctional Facilities.

AA Terminology

Area Assembly

A meeting (3 times per year) of GSR's and Area Committee members to discuss area operations and Twelfth Step work, as well as matters affecting AA as a whole. Bi-annually, this assembly will elect a Delegate to the General Service Conference and Area Officers.

Area Committee

A committee made up of District Committee Members (elected by the GSR's in their respective District), the Area Officers, the Area Standing Committee Chairs, and Past Delegates. The Area Committee is a vital element of the general service structure. In Southern Minnesota its two main functions are establishing the agenda for Area Assemblies, and carrying out any tasks as directed by the Assembly.

Area Service Conference

This is an annual event, specific to Southern Minnesota (although some other areas also do this) in which topics of interest to the general service workers in southern Minnesota are presented and discussed. Most generally, the topics are relevant to what is being discussed at AA's General Service Conference in New York.

Bridging the Gap

AA members volunteer to serve as temporary contacts to introduce newcomers to Alcoholics Anonymous, thereby "bridging the gap" between treatment or correctional facilities and the rooms of AA. Bridging the Gap may also encompass presentations by AA members to alcoholism professionals, patients/clients and/or inmates on "what AA is and what it is not".

Class A Trustee (non-alcoholic)

These trustees are members of the general public. They are non-alcoholic friends of AA and have often worked in cooperation with AA for years. They are selected for a variety of reasons including business skills, professional standing, and the specific profession in which they work. They provide a critical link between AA and the world of their profession, helping to ensure AA's ability to cooperate and to carry its message into those professions in the hope that they will, in turn, offer it to the still suffering alcoholics with whom they come into contact.

Committee System

A means by which a considerable amount of work can be accomplished by a deliberative body, such as the General Service Conference. The committee most closely associated with the request/concern first reviews the issues, and then their recommendation for action is brought before the larger body (the Conference). The Conference, upon hearing their recommendation, then decides whether to approve it, modify it, or not act on it. A committee may also decide action is not needed on an item sent to them, or they may refer it to another committee/board they believe to be more appropriate for the item. Many areas, such as Area 36, also use the committee system to good effect.

Delegate

The person elected at the electoral Area Assembly every other year to carry the Area's voice to the annual General Service Meeting in New York City, and to bring back a report of the results of that meeting. Additionally, the Delegate is the primary communication channel between the Area and the rest of the AA service structure in the U.S and Canada.

District

A division within the Area that is represented by a District Committee Member. These divisions can be along county lines, zip code areas, natural divisions such as rivers, or any other boundary that seems to be appropriate. In some areas, where there is a large contingent of members who speak a particular non-English language, districts can be formed using language as a basis. Generally, the request to form a new district is reviewed and approved by the Area Assembly.

District Meetings

The service meetings attended and coordinated by the District Committee Member, District Standing Committee Chairs, and the GSR's for the groups within the district.

General Service (Class B) Trustee

These trustees are selected for their particular business or other skills. They, like the Regional Trustees, serve a 4-year term on the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

General Service Area

A geographical division within a state or province. Each Area elects a Delegate who attends the General Service Conference in New York City each year. Normally, there is one Area to a state or province, except in heavily AA-populated places, where there may be two, three, or more Areas. Some examples of this are California (6 areas), New York (4 areas), and our own state with 2 areas – Area 35 (Northern Minnesota) & Area 36 (Southern Minnesota).

General Service Conference

An annual gathering of delegates – one from each of the general service areas in the US & Canada – to conduct the business of AA in the US and Canada. In addition to these delegates, the Members of the General Service Board (21), G.S.O. staff members, and non-trustee Directors of A.A.W.S and the Grapevine are also voting members of the Conference. It is an event that lasts one full week and provides guidance to AA headquarters (GSO) and to the service boards (AAWS & GV).

General Services

Originally, the services performed by AA's General Service Office in New York City. Today it means the work of anyone in the General Service Structure – GSR, DCM, Committee Chairs, Area Officers, Delegates, etc.

International Convention

A convention of AA's held every 5 years to celebrate AA's continuing progress. This convention does not conduct any official business. It is held in cities in the US & Canada based on bids provided to the General Service Board, and rotates based on the bidding process, which also involves the General Service Conference.

Region

A grouping of several states or provinces from which a Regional Trustee is elected to serve on the General Service Board. There are eight regions – six in the U.S. and 2 in Canada. Southern Minnesota is part of the West Central Region, which includes Northern Minnesota (Area 35), Iowa (Area 24), Nebraska (Area 41), South Dakota (Area 63), North Dakota (Area 52), Wyoming (Area 76), and Montana (Area 40).

Regional (Class B) Trustee

A person (most often a Past Delegate) who has been elected to serve as a Trustee on AA's General Service Board. Each of the 8 regions in the US & Canada has a Regional Trustee. Class B Trustees provide a regional perspective while serving AA as a whole.

Sharing Session

A meeting of a group, district, area, or conference in which everyone is invited to contribute ideas and comments on matters affecting AA.

Substantial Unanimity

This phrase, in Alcoholics Anonymous, essentially means a vote in which a minimum of 2/3 of the voters are in agreement. While some matters, such as a vote to reconsider a previous motion, only require a majority vote – any vote that binds an AA entity to actions taken after the deliberative process is completed, generally requires substantial unanimity.

Third Legacy

Recovery is AA's first legacy, Unity its second, and Service is the third legacy. In this sense, service is the sum total of AA's services, from a Twelfth Step call, to AA's coast-to-coast and worldwide service activities of carrying the message of recovery and hope.

Third Legacy Procedure

AA's Third Legacy Procedure is a special type of electoral procedure. It is considered to be unique to AA. It has proven highly successful in eliminating the influence of factions or parties that seem to thrive on most political scenes. Please see the AA Service Manual for a complete description of this vital procedure.

Trustee-At-Large

There is a Trustee-At-Large for the U.S. and one for Canada. These people, elected in much the same way as the Regional Trustees, help to carry out the duties of a Regional Trustee – should that person be unable to do so either temporarily or permanently. They also attend the Annual World Service Meeting as the representative from the US/Canada General Service Structure.

The Twelve Concepts are a description of AA's world service structure, the preserved experience and lesson of the past, recording the "why" of that structure.

They provide for the opportunity of future change, should it be adequately described and agreed upon, while maintaining a solid base to return to in the event the changes prove unworkable.

Twelve Concepts for World Service

Principles such as the rights of Decision, Participation, Appeal, and Petition – while already in place in our Twelve Traditions – are more clearly spelled out.

Focusing on the harmonious operation of the General Service Board, the intent is not to cast them in concrete. They are, however, an attempt to design a structure in which all may labor to good effect, with a minimum of friction.

Essentially, each Concept is a group of related principles.

West Central Region

This is the geographic region of AA's structure in which Minnesota is located. For further information see the maps in this portion (New to Service) part of the website.

Workshop

This can mean several things, depending on the circumstances. Most generally, this is meant to indicate a service meeting in which presentations are made with the intent of inviting discussion on specific topics. In the strictest sense, it means to have presentations, and a discussion, with the intent of reaching a consensus or group conscience. Groups, districts, areas or regions can sponsor these.

World Service Meeting

A meeting of delegates (often a Trustee) from each of the General Service Structures around the world. Not all countries are represented, only those with an established service structure and the desire to send a representative. These delegates meet to discuss AA's work and struggles all over the globe. One year they meet in a hosting country – the following year they meet in New York City.