



# District 9 Redistricting Ad- Hoc Committee Report

DISTRICT 9, AREA 11 (CT)

DECEMBER 20, 2018

# Preliminary Note

- ▶ Area 11's Immediate Past Delegate provided a presentation in 2015 which contained some of the information for this presentation.

# Ad-Hoc Committee History

- ▶ A motion was made at Area 11 General Service Committee 3/8/17: “to create a redistricting ad-hoc committee with a representative from each District interested in redistricting in Area 11.”
- ▶ Area 11 Redistricting Ad-Hoc Committee final report emphasized the autonomy of Districts in looking into this matter
- ▶ Since the motion was made at the Area, District 1 re-structured and Districts 7, 8, and 9 created redistricting ad-hoc committees.
- ▶ District 9’s motion to create an ad-hoc committee to investigate the topic of redistricting passed unanimously in 2018
- ▶ District 9, Sub-District 9.1 DCM (2018) was appointed ad-hoc committee chairperson and was joined by a GSR Sub-District 9.3 and a GSR Sub-District 9.2.

# Ad-Hoc Committee Charge

A motion was made to explore redistricting, and was voted on unanimously to move forward on April 19, 2018. Since this is too broad, the DCMC compiled this charge for this ad-hoc committee.

- ▶ \* Form a committee with a maximum of two people from each sub-district within District 9.
- ▶ \* **Explore possible effective ways for district nine to redistrict** into as many as five different additional districts.
- ▶ \* Explore possible challenges which may arise from redistricting, possible ways to overcome these challenges.
- ▶ \* Present data on other areas regarding ratios of DCM's to groups
- ▶ \* Have a shared Google drive holding supporting documents that can be shared with District
- ▶ \* Obtain input from other areas and districts who have experience in redistricting
- ▶ \* Have a report each month at District meeting.
- ▶ \* Use Service manual as a guide, specifically with the responsibilities of GSR's and DCM's and redistricting on page S35.
- ▶ \* The goal to be to carry out its duties and be prepared to present Final report by the November 2018 district meeting/ sharing session. The expectation would be that the District nine Sharing session in November can focus on this topic. At this time present all information obtained and come to district with clear recommendation on how to best proceed. The November meeting is an optimistic ideal, not a requirement.
- ▶ \* Pass on all findings/ information to archives of Area 11 and District 9.

# Summary of Ad-Hoc Committee Activity

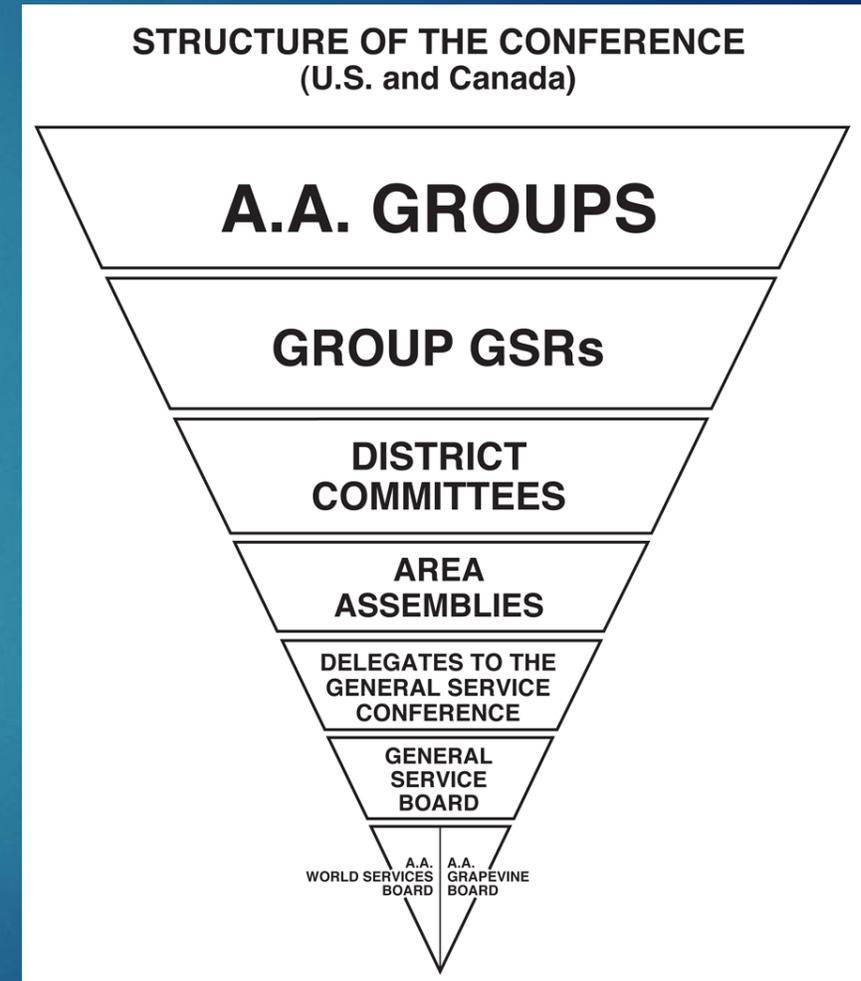
- ▶ Visited District meetings outside of Connecticut (July & August 2018)
  - ▶ 1 District meeting in Arizona
  - ▶ 3 District meetings in Northern New Jersey
  - ▶ 1 District meeting in Southeastern New York
  - ▶ 1 District meeting in Western Massachusetts
  - ▶ 1 District meeting in Eastern Massachusetts
  - ▶ 1 District meeting in Rhode Island
- ▶ Closely examined the A.A. Service Manual
- ▶ Observed District 7 (Area 11) meeting which discussed redistricting
- ▶ Interviewed A.A. members who have experience with redistricting
- ▶ Engaged in regular discussions regarding potential redistricting options
- ▶ Surveyed regular members of District 9 Meeting

# A.A. Service Structure

WHY DISCUSS MAKING  
DISTRICT 9 AS EFFECTIVE  
AS POSSIBLE?

PURPOSE OF SERVICE STRUCTURE

- ▶ Two-Way Communication
- ▶ Up and down the triangle
- ▶ Help more alcoholics



# Districts in Area 11 Compared with other Areas (2015)

## Washington D.C.

- 14 Districts;  
502  
Groups;  
14,790  
Members

## Rhode Island

- 8 Districts;  
300  
Groups;  
5,944  
Members

## Northern New Jersey

- 44 Districts;  
1,335  
Groups,  
31,905  
Members

## Connecticut (Area 11)

- **10 Districts;**  
**1,417**  
**Groups;**  
**32,623**  
**Members**

# A.A. Service Manual (2018-2020), page S31

The District and the D.C.M. THE DISTRICT A district is a geographical unit containing the **right number of groups** — right in terms of the committee member's ability to keep in frequent touch with them, to learn their problems, and to find ways to contribute to their growth and well-being.

# D.C.M. Duties as outlined on page S32 of the A.A. Service Manual

- ▶ “The D.C.M.’s job is primarily that of two-way communication. The D.C.M.: • Regularly attends all district meetings and area assemblies. • Receives reports from the groups through G.S.R.s and through frequent personal contacts with groups in the district. • Holds regular meetings of all G.S.R.s in the district. • Helps the Conference delegate cover the area, which would be impossible for the delegate to do on a group-by-group basis. • Assists the delegate in obtaining group information in time to meet the deadline for A.A. directories • Keeps G.S.R.s informed about Conference activities; this includes setting up opportunities for the delegate’s Conference report, occasionally making the Conference report if the delegate cannot be present, and inviting the delegate to regular district meetings. • Makes sure that G.S.R.s are acquainted with The A.A. Service Manual, the Twelve Concepts for World Service, the G.S.O. bulletin Box 4-5-9, workbooks and guidelines from G.S.O., and any other service material. • Helps G.S.R.s make interesting reports to groups, and encourages them to bring new A.A. members to service events. • Keeps groups informed about Conference-approved books and pamphlets. • Organizes workshops and/or sharing sessions on service activities. • Regularly keeps in touch with the alternate D.C.M. and the delegate; sends district minutes to the delegate and alternate, and exchanges them with other districts. • Brings Traditions problems to the attention of the delegate. • Makes a regular practice of talking to groups (new and old) on the responsibilities of general service work.”

# Redistricting – From Page S34 of the A.A. Service Manual

- ▶ “If it were not for adding committee members to take care of new groups as A.A. grows, the General Service Conference might well become unwieldy. As the number of groups increases and it becomes too difficult for the D.C.M. to communicate with them all, several courses can be followed [...]

Good communication and cooperation among groups, districts, and areas is important when redistricting or other changes in district structure are undertaken. There are many variations, but the goal is the same: to take care of expansion at the district level.” – Page S34 A.A. Service Manual

# A.A. Service Manual (2018-2020), page S17

- ▶ “THE GROUP: The communication process starts with the group, which lets its group conscience — for or against change, approval or disapproval of a proposed action — be known to its elected general service representative (G.S.R.). The G.S.R. (see Chapter Two) makes sure the group’s wishes are heard and fully considered at the district and area levels, and that they are part of the delegate’s thinking at the Conference. After each annual Conference, the G.S.R. is responsible for making sure that group members are informed about what went on at the Conference and made aware of the full range of Advisory Actions (see Chapter Seven)”

# District 9 Survey Results

Survey distributed to all attendees of monthly District 9 meeting during August 2018, September 2018, and October 2018

22 responses

Among the responses: 33% attending District 9 for more than 5 years; 18% attending District 9 for 2 to 5 years; 49% have been attending for less than 2 years

# District 9 Survey Results

- ▶ Question: Which portion of the District meeting do you find the MOST valuable?
  - ▶ 59% said breakout sessions (highest response)
- ▶ Question: Which portion of the District meeting do you find SECOND MOST valuable?
  - ▶ 36% said Delegate's report (highest response)
- ▶ Question: which portion of the District meeting do you find THIRD most valuable?
  - ▶ Tie: 27% said Traditions/Concept report; 27% said Delegate's Report
- ▶ Question: Which portion of the District meeting do you find the LEAST valuable?
  - ▶ 32% said Opening Remarks/Announcements (highest response)

# District 9 Survey Results (Continued)

- ▶ Question: Would you appreciate it if the District meeting was able to accomplish more in a shorter amount of time?
- ▶ 90% said Yes.
  
- ▶ Question: Have you ever left a District 9 meeting with a question unanswered?
- ▶ 40% said Yes. (Our ad-hoc committee thinks anything more than zero is for this question is too much.)
  
- ▶ Question: Have you ever not asked a question because you were intimidated by the size of the District meeting?
- ▶ 36% said Yes. (Again, any number above 0 is too much).

# District 9 Survey Results (Continued)

- ▶ Question: For those who do not live close to the District 9 meeting, would you personally appreciate it if the District meeting was closer to where you live?
- ▶ 40% said not applicable; 36% said Yes; 24% said No.
- ▶ Question for DCM's and Alternate DCM's only: Do you feel you can currently adequately carry out all of your DCM duties with the way District 9 is currently structured and with the current District meeting format and customs?
- ▶ 100% (3 out of 3 responses) said No.

# District 9 Survey – GSR Questions

- ▶ Question for GSR's: Do you believe that it is possible for changes to be made to how the District functions which could assist you in carrying out your duties as a GSR?
- ▶ 61% of GSR's said Yes.
  
- ▶ Question for GSR's: As a GSR, would you be interested in receiving more assistance from a DCM to help you with your duties as a GSR, to assist you with creative GSR reports to your home group, to be able to answer questions about the 12 Traditions and/or the 12 Concepts, and to answer any questions you may have about A.A. Service?
- ▶ 61% of GSR's said Yes.

# District 9 Survey – GSR Questions (continued)

Question: Would you find it inspiring and feel as though you would be more likely to stay involved in A.A. service and get others involved in A.A. service if the monthly District meeting was more focused on topics that are relevant to you, your home group, and service at the local level?

69% of GSR's said Yes.

# Arizona District Meeting Summary

- ▶ Arizona – Area 3 – Sub-District 08-801 – July 2, 2018
- ▶ 10 A.A. members present
- ▶ 12 Groups total within this sub-district
- ▶ Meeting facilitated by DCM
- ▶ Meeting Agenda: Concept Reading, Secretary's Report, Treasurer's Report, DCM Report (Area meeting & Delegate's Report), Old Business (Prudent Reserve), New Business (Google Drive for Sub-District; Post-Conference Assembly). NOTE: Very different structure in AZ due to geography
- ▶ Less than 1 hour meeting
- ▶ Nearly every GSR in attendance was an active participant
- ▶ GSR's present stated they felt they have regular contact with their DCM, feel connected to A.A. as a whole (AA Navajo Big Book discussion)
- ▶ "We're like a family."

# Rhode Island District Meeting Summary

- ▶ Rhode Island – Area 61 – District 6 (Warwick, RI) – August 9, 2018
- ▶ District meeting chaired by DCM (1 DCM for District)
- ▶ 10 A.A. members present at the meeting
- ▶ 1 hour and 15 minutes
- ▶ District meets separately for 30 minutes before the District meeting for a Traditions workshop
- ▶ Most members present were GSR's who filled roles (Treasurer, etc)
- ▶ Agenda: Announcements/Introductions, Secretary's Report, Treasurer's Report, group concerns, DCM report, Committee Reports (most of which provided by DCM), Old Business and New Business (upcoming District workshop discussed as a District), Event Announcements.
- ▶ Area 61 utilizes intergroup and central office in their structure
- ▶ GSR's active participants in meeting; informal; collective discussions
- ▶ District 6 has redistricted in the past; Districts redistrict with some regularity

# Southeastern New York, Putnam County Meeting Summary

- ▶ Southeastern New York – Area 49 – Putnam County – 8/4/18
- ▶ S.E.N.Y. utilizes Counties within their structure
- ▶ Even though it was the County meeting, which is (in theory) bigger than the District meetings, there were only 15 A.A. members present
- ▶ District meeting chaired by D.C.M.C. (or Alternate in their absence)
- ▶ Most A.A. members present were GSR's; some of the GSR's filled the service positions (such as Treasurer)
- ▶ S.E.N.Y. utilizes Intergroup. They also have “bookies” for booking speakers.
- ▶ Agenda: Opening Readings/Intros; Secretary's Report; Treasurer's Report; Committee Reports (such as Website and Corrections & Treatment); Announcements of Upcoming Events; Old & New Business (Website expenses, County-sponsored events, updating County bylaws); meeting concluded with every GSR giving a report
- ▶ All that... and the meeting did not exceed 45 minutes.
- ▶ Several empty service positions; small/intimate; informal; everyone present contributed to the discussion; everyone well-acquainted; all work together on events (like their upcoming movie night event)

# Western Massachusetts District Meeting Summary

- ▶ Western Mass (Area 31) – District 3 – 7/20/18
- ▶ 1 DCM for the District - facilitated the meeting; broken up into sub-Districts; each sub-District has an L.C.M. (Local Committee Member); with a clear distinction between DCM/LCM duties
- ▶ 17 A.A. Members present (this was one of the “larger” District meetings in Area 31); approximately 1 hour
- ▶ Agenda: Announcements/Opening Readings; Secretary’s Report; Welcoming of new GSR’s/Visitors; Tradition & Concept of the Month; GSR reports (every GSR gave one); Area Officer Report; Intergroup Liaison Report; DCM Report; Old Business (discussed Fall workshop); New Business (open positions); remainder of meeting was spent answering questions GSR’s had
- ▶ A majority of committee work (PI, CPC, etc.) carried out by GROUPS

# Western Massachusetts District Meeting Visit (CONTINUED)

- ▶ COMMENTS FROM INFORMAL POLL FROM DISTRICT 9 AD-HOC COMMITTEE:
- ▶ “Any District meeting that is two hours is one hour too long.”
- ▶ “I would feel intimidated speaking up and asking my questions in a larger room.”
- ▶ “We all get to know each other well here.”

# Eastern Massachusetts District Meeting Summary

- ▶ Area 30 (Eastern Massachusetts) – District 20 – 8/6/2018
- ▶ District has 1 DCM and 1 Alternate DCM
- ▶ All other members present were GSR's who fulfilled the various roles (Secretary, Treasurer, etc.)
- ▶ 13 A.A. members present
- ▶ Approximately 1.5 hours long
- ▶ Agenda: Opening announcements/introductions; DCM report; Secretary Report; Treasurer's Report; "Functions" Chairperson Report; Young People's Committee Report; Website Report; the remaining time was spent answering questions from GSR's
- ▶ Some Districts work together on events; Area 30 also uses Intergroup
- ▶ Informal; everyone present contributed; GSR's play an active role; District collectively discussed/decided on events and various agenda items; familiarity

# Northern New Jersey District Meeting – Area 44 – District 9

- ▶ Visited Area 44 (North Jersey) – District 9 – 7/17/18
- ▶ 20 A.A. members present; Meeting in a rectangle around the room
- ▶ 1 DCM for the District; DCM chairs the meeting; Alternate if absent
- ▶ Most present were GSR's; all gave a report on their Group
- ▶ Committee Reports took place; but District works together (example: they all discussed collectively bringing literature to libraries and police stations as a District; GSR's agree to take on tasks for the District and then get their own group involved)
- ▶ District 9 works with other Districts on certain events, like Alkathons
- ▶ Meeting did not close until all questions answered; less than 1 hour

# Northern New Jersey – District 9 Visit (Continued)

- ▶ COMMENT FROM GSR'S WHEN POLLED BY AD-HOC COMMITTEE MEMBER:
- ▶ They feel the intimate size of their District makes them want to return
- ▶ They feel they have a very active role in the District
- ▶ They would feel more intimidated about asking questions if the crowd was larger
- ▶ Brand new GSR felt like they could ask questions; meeting did not end until all questions were asked
- ▶ The smaller size allows for a format where everyone can learn more about the 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts

# Northern New Jersey – Area 44 - District 3 – Visit Summary – 7/20/18

- ▶ 14 A.A. members total sitting around table; 1 hour and 15 minutes
- ▶ Day of Sharing averages 100 attendees
- ▶ Agenda: Introductions; Concept Presentation; Secretary's Report; Treasurer's Report; GSR "Sharing Session" (most of the meeting – group highlights, group events, group concerns); Committee Reports (All Committee Chairs were also GSR's); Announcements/Discussing Important Dates (Assemblies, etc.); DCM Report; Old and New Business
- ▶ Observations: Seemed like everyone was intimate and well-acquainted; DCM had a personal relationship with each GSR
- ▶ The Bottom Line: Most of the meeting was about the GSR's and group participation. A lot of ground covered in 1 hour and 15 minutes. GSR's had an open line of communication with their DCM and their Deleate.

# Northern New Jersey – Area 44 - District 5 & 7 Visit – 8/9/19

- ▶ Cluster District (used to be District 5 and District 7, combined together – now it's simply District 5 & 7)
- ▶ 1 DCM – they chaired the meeting (or Alternate DCM in their absence)
- ▶ 16 A.A. members present; approximately 1 hour
- ▶ Most A.A. members present were either GSR's or visitors looking into filling open positions
- ▶ Collectively discussed solutions and methods of completing committee work (example: an issue that was discussed with the Corrections committee)
- ▶ Many new people present and the District meeting accommodated this and answered all of their questions throughout the District meeting
- ▶ Everyone felt very comfortable asking any service-related question; informal/friendly setting which allowed everyone to learn together

# Interview with A.A. Member with Redistricting Experience

- ▶ 7/30/18 via phone – Former Southeastern New York Redistricting Ad-Hoc Committee (25 years ago)
- ▶ Ad-hoc started because there were too many groups for the DCM's to visit and there was very little participation... the idea about redistricting being: It's better to have too many DCM's than too few.
- ▶ People became more interested when redistricting was brought up
- ▶ Redistricting made the Districts more manageable for DCM's
- ▶ It did not increase the numbers by much, but it did increase the involvement
- ▶ There was more of a “community” feeling after redistricting
- ▶ Some Districts split off without a DCM; these Districts suffered greatly; some of them went completely “dark”
- ▶ The ad-hoc committee made the mistake of not simultaneously restructuring and making sure there were enough DCM's already in place
- ▶ A final thought: having 2 or 3 STRONG groups in a District can make a huge difference

# NERAASA 2018 Redistricting Panel

- ▶ The 2018 Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly featured a panel which focused on the topic of redistricting.

# Reasons for District 9 to Redistrict

- ▶ District 9's size and structure is inconsistent with the suggestions outlined in the A.A. Service Manual
- ▶ The 90/10 rule (90% do 10% of the work... let's grow from that!)
- ▶ GSR's do not have as much of an opportunity to be an active participant of the District as they could
- ▶ GSR's leave the District meeting with unanswered questions.
- ▶ It is impossible for the DCM to fulfill all of their duties, as outlined in the A.A. service manual, with the current structure
- ▶ As Bill W. used to say: "Good is the enemy of the best."
- ▶ Increased communication between GSR's and DCM's
- ▶ More information about the happenings in A.A. as a whole, the 12 Traditions, 12 Concepts, and other important matters; more informed GSR's; more informed local A.A. Groups; more informed A.A. members
- ▶ WORST CASE SCENARIO: It doesn't work and we go back to the original way.

# Solutions to Challenges Likely to Arise from Redistricting

- ▶ Challenge: What if the District meetings get too small?
  - ▶ Experience has shown that may not be as bad as a District that is too large
- ▶ Challenge: How do we figure out everything that needs to get figured out? Splitting up treasury, meeting location, new District guidelines, etc?
  - ▶ Solution: Take a breath. It would not be an overnight matter. Those items would all require a group conscience. It would happen in steps.
- ▶ Challenge: How do we fill all of the positions?
  - ▶ Solution: LESS positions
  - ▶ Solution: GSR's take on more of an active role
  - ▶ Solution: Collaborative work (scratch the 90/10 rule)
  - ▶ Districts can work together (i.e. combined alkathon, etc)

From page S23 of the A.A. Service Manual (2016-2018)

- ▶ One Area shares experience:  
“We created as many jobs as possible for the G.S.R.’s and committee members.” – Pg S23

# Potential Non-Redistricting Option

- ▶ District 9 remains District 9, with its same three sub-districts – but sub-districts meet separately from the District meeting in separate locations
- ▶ Challenge with this approach: adds an additional step; can perpetuate a game of “telephone”)

# Potential Redistricting Options

- ▶ Option 1: Redistrict into three separate Districts, with Sub-District 9.1 being its own District (district 9), 9.2 being its own District (district 11), and 9.3 being its own District (district 12)

## OUR COMMITTEE'S CONSIDERATIONS:

- ▶ Option 2: District 9 to Redistrict into two separate Districts
  - ▶ One Option: One District to consist of what is currently Sub-District 9.2 and the other District to consist of what is currently Sub-Districts 9.1 and 9.3 combined (district 9 and district 11)
  - ▶ Another Option: One District to consist of what is currently Sub-District 9.1 with half of what is currently Sub-District 9.2; the other District to consist of what is currently Sub-District 9.3 and half of Sub-District 9.2 (district 9 and district 11)

# Items that Would Require Further Discussion/Group Conscience

- ▶ Splitting up the District Treasury
- ▶ The creation of separate District Guidelines (as the current District guidelines would essentially cease to exist if redistricting took place)
- ▶ The exact boundaries of the two different Districts (i.e. can split Danbury in half and pair half of Danbury with 9.1 and half with 9.3... or pair 9.1 and 9.3 and have Danbury on its own... or another variation).
- ▶ The Districts may want to continue to work together on certain services that require a lot of work (example: host joint alkathons); other logistics

# The Truth About Redistricting

- ▶ The Good: Having an appropriately sized and appropriately structured District can allow for more informed GSR's, more informed A.A. groups, more informed A.A. members, and the message can better be carried to help more alcoholics. Worst case scenario: switch back to the old way.
- ▶ The Challenge: It WILL require a lot of work, creativity, and strenuous effort on the part of the members of the District. People will need to step up and take responsibility to make it happen.
- ▶ Good News: Once the growing pains subside, we become much more effective for the still-suffering alcoholic.

# Formal Motion and Proposal Moving Forward

- ▶ Motion for District 9 to redistrict into two separate Districts and for this to take place within a transitional period of 1 year; the transitional period consisting of District 9 making regular decisions regarding determining the boundaries of the two Districts, dividing of District 9 Treasury, and all other matters related to the process of redistricting, with the separation of District 9 into separate Districts to be completed no later than December of 2019; members of the District 9 Redistricting Ad-Hoc Committee to provide ongoing guidance and consultation throughout this transitional process.

# Experience, Strength & Hope on the topic of Redistricting. Q & A

- ▶ Valuable to speak with those who have experience with A.A. service outside of Connecticut

- ▶ Q & A