



AA in SA – First Edition 2017

Striving to improve communication between GSO, the Members and Groups of the fellowship

Vol: 2017 / No: 1

MESSAGE FROM THE GSO CHAIRMAN

Welcome to our first update in 2017, we hope that this year will bring health, success and continued sobriety to our members thus enabling us to continue to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

Our Fellowship continues to be blessed in so many ways. In late February/early March World Services personnel visited us to begin preparations for our hosting of the 2018 World meeting; host city Durban extended the warm hand of AA friend and fellowship by ensuring that our guests from New York were well looked after during their stay and we thank them for their efforts in this regard.

A SA coordinating team comprising GSO and KZN Region representatives has been put together to liaise with World Services and we will meet again in June this year at the SSASM meeting also held at the same venue as Conference in Alberton.

The Sub Saharan Africa Service Meeting (SSASM) will again meet in SA in June this year; we are working with many countries in this cluster to advance the development of their structures by sharing our experience and knowledge in this regard. We are proud to be associated with their growth and will continue to assist in whatever way we can.

Is it not wonderful? All these things happening over and above normal group meetings, and I haven't even mentioned all the Rallies, Service Workshops, Forums, Convention and Conference.

We are lucky people, to be so active and industrious; immersing ourselves in this miracle programme pays dividends which we could not even begin to contemplate while drinking. Viva AA!!

Which brings me to a very sensitive and emotional matter that if not resolved will almost certainly severely test our resolve – yes folks, I am talking about the vexing question of dual / multiple addictions in our meeting rooms.

Bill W, co-founder of AA, deals with this matter of problems other than alcohol in an article published in the Grapevine in the 1970s.

I quote excerpts from this article:

“Now there are certain things that AA cannot do for anybody, regardless of what our desires or sympathies may be. Our first duty, as a fellowship, is to ensure our own survival. Therefore, we have to avoid distractions and multipurpose activity.

- Sobriety – freedom from alcohol – through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps, is the sole purpose of an AA Group. Groups have repeatedly tried other activities, and they have always failed. It has also been learned there is no possible way to make nonalcoholics into AA members. We have to confine our membership to alcoholics, and we have to confine our Groups to a singleness of purpose. If we don't stick to these principles, we shall almost surely collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone.
- I see no way of making nonalcoholic addicts into AA members. Experience says loudly that we can admit no exceptions, even though drug users alcoholics happen to be first cousins of a sort. If we persist in trying this, I'm afraid it will be hard on the drug user himself, as well as on AA. We must accept the fact that the nonalcoholic, whatever his affliction, cannot be converted into an alcoholic.....and an AA member.
- We cannot give AA membership to non alcoholic addicts. But, like anyone else, they should be able to attend open AA meetings, provided, of course, that the groups themselves are willing.”

We remind you also in this regard, of the **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 depend our lives,
And the lives of those to come.

And the **responsibility pledge:**

**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!**

Yours in sobriety, service and fellowship.
Joe P. – GSO Chairman

GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

Conference is a service workshop held once a year in May to reflect on and learn how we as a fellowship may be more effective in fulfilling our primary purpose. To fulfil our primary purpose, Delegates, General Service Board (Board), and the General Service Office (GSO) work together in one of five National committees on service projects throughout the year. These National committees are responsible for the implementation of National projects and conference decisions. Conference will be held from the 19th to the 21st of May 2017 in Alberton, Gauteng.

Footnote

Conference accepts that it will never be able to please everyone but does give its assurance that matters placed before it will receive due consideration and that all decisions are made in the collective and within the best interests of AA as a whole.

ARCHIVES

“The primary purpose of those involved in archival work is to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. Archives service work is more than mere custodial activity; it is the means by which we collect, preserve and share the rich and meaningful heritage of our Fellowship”.

AA Guidelines, Archives, AAWS.

Areas are slowly but surely getting into the swing of things with several organizing magnificent displays; rallies and Conventions are assisting in the promotion of this very important and educational drive by setting up displays - for this we are very grateful. Keep up the good work folks. Photos of rally Archive displays are available on the website – send your photos to gso@aasouthafrica.org.za for inclusion.

At GSO we are planning an office restructure which will see the Archives display relocating to its own room in our office complex.

A new free leaflet “Archives Service Piece” is now available at GSO. Please enquire at your nearest Area/Intergroup Office to obtain a copy.

ADMINISTRATION AND STRUCTURES

The Board have appointed a new Class A Trustee, Louina Le Roux, and a new Literature Trustee, Chris C. Louina is Managing Director of SANCA and will bring a wealth of experience from her professional career into our Fellowship. She replaces Dr Wim Roestenburg who rotated out in September 2016.

Our heartfelt and sincere appreciation is extended to Wim who served on the Board for nearly a decade, carrying the message into communities and giving valuable insight into the affairs of the Fellowship. He served with distinction and will be sorely missed but we are sure Louina will serve the Fellowship with equal passion and dedication.

Chris hails from the Western Cape and takes over from Helga who has swapped portfolios and takes over from Lall S who also rotated out in September 2016. These appointments bring the Board onto full complement.

The Alco Solo editor, Frank G, has rotated out and has been replaced by Corrie J. We thank Frank G for his selfless service and valuable contributions over the past two years.

LITERATURE

The primary source of carrying the message is in our literature. There is a vast array of books, pamphlets and magazines to choose from; none more significant than the basic text as contained in what is fondly known as the Big Book. The proposal which caused such consternation over the past two years, namely producing a South African version of the Big Book is once again to be discussed at Conference this year. We are hoping to bring some finality to the matter and will report back to the Fellowship after Conference.

*Just to be sure – if the proposal is accepted the **only** change to the Big Book will be that South African stories will replace American stories at the back of the book. Nothing else will change and it is critical that members understand this.*

GSO will be running monthly literature specials as of March - a clearance sale of stock so get in early and buy bargain basement literature! Reading is

knowledge and knowledge empowers, so if you see an item you have been wanting for years but the price put you off – now is your chance, get in before it is too late.

IT & FINANCE

The AA Treasury is under new management – in this respect we welcome John F who officially took over in January 2017 after Charles G rotated out in December 2016.

We wish to thank Charles for his worthy contributions during his term, the passion, dedication and enthusiasm with which he looked after our monies!

REGMAKER

The first issue is imminent and we are sure that it will be a blockbuster year again – several “ambassadors” have emerged of late who are doing sterling work in getting new subscribers and ensuring listed subscribers renew their subscriptions. We thank them for their efforts. Some ideas from our members to increase awareness of this publication:

- Gift subscriptions to sponsors/sponsees
- Gift subscriptions to celebrate thanksgivings
- Gift subscriptions to rally speakers

NATIONAL CONVENTION

2017

Host city Pretoria are assuring us, and thus the Fellowship, of an invigorating experience and are busy putting on the final touches to put on a memorable event. Thank you folks, we are looking forward to it!

Convention takes place over the Easter weekend, 14 to 16 April this year and the theme is “It works - it really does”.

Convention 2018 is scheduled to be held in Port Elizabeth.

CPC / PI

The schools’ initiative will gain traction once interaction guidelines are finalized and distributed to

Areas for use. We thank Lall S for his efforts in compiling this document.

CF / TF

Louina, our new Class a Trustee has undertaken to assist this Service Arm in broadening its footprint in these facilities nationwide through her network of contacts garnered over the years.

REGIONAL FORUMS

Various forums have been held in the period between Board meetings. We thank and congratulate the Northern Region for holding their inaugural forum in October last year; JWRA, KZN and of course the old stalwarts down at the George forum – all these members are serving AA with distinction, keeping the doors open, fulfilling our primary purpose and we applaud their efforts.

Common themes emerged from these events:

- singleness of purpose
- dual addiction / treatment facilities
- the influence of Sponsorship – we need more sponsors
- service - how to attract members into vacancies
- preserving the 12 Traditions
- home groups – the importance of
- the importance of Social media – despite guidelines, document needs to be more comprehensive; members very protective of anonymity principle, and rightly so

Areas are encouraged to discuss these matters and find workable solutions.

VACANCY: GSO NATIONAL SECRETARY – LITERATURE & PUBLICATIONS

This portfolio, by its very nature, is one of the most important. Some 50 % of the total revenue originates from literature sales.

The incumbent –

- Should have a thorough knowledge of the major publications produced by AA

- Be able to visit groups within his/her area on a regular basis to promote literature sales
- Be able to attend rallies and functions to promote usage and sales of literature
- Assist with stock counts and reconcile with computerized inventory records
- Be responsible for setting forward selling prices, valid for six months, taking cognizance of the Fellowship's mark-up strategy
- Investigate and report on the feasibility of producing more literature locally in line with sales volumes and current exchange rates
- Attend the annual Conference as official participant
- Prepare and deliver presentation at the annual Conference
- Work closely with CPC/PI and CF/TF Secretaries to meet their literature requirements
- Attend monthly GSO meetings at the office in Alberton and provide a monthly report containing statistics and information
- Prepare sales forecasts and budgets, with moving averages

Qualifications:

- Previous service experience within the fellowship of AA at group or area level
- Be totally committed to serve a three year period
- A minimum of three years continuous sobriety in the fellowship of AA
- Conversant with MS Office software package, Pastel Accounting package & own e-mail

Applications:

Please send your application to GSO by e-mail (gso@asouthafrica.org.za) by 30th of April 2017. Your application should include a brief professional CV as well as an AA CV.