

Kit

Keep in Touch
WITH SERVICE

Spring 2009

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South Carolina

On the Web at

Area62.org

Corrections Committee: Carrying the Message Behind Bars

Each year 13,000 prisoners are released from South Carolina prisons, and each year 13,000 are re-arrested.

69% of crimes committed in South Carolina are directly related to drug and alcohol abuse. 95% of inmates will return to prison in the first year of their release.

The availability of drugs and alcohol inside the walls is epidemic and they are available to inmates on demand.

Programs to stop this dire outlook seem to be based on outside organizations that emphasize a Higher Power influence, such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. If an inmate can be connected to these programs prior to release, their chances for re-offence is diminished in exponential quantities. Therefore internal programs, as well as pre-release program, are vital to stop the cycle of re-offence.

A workshop between volunteers from AA and representatives from the South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) was held on February 7, 2009 at SCDC Headquarters in Columbia to discuss cooperative programs.

Chaplain Lloyd Roberts, who heads the SCDC's pastoral care programs discussed our prison system in South Carolina. He said there are currently 30 institutions that could have programs like AA operating in them. Our state prison has a capacity of 24,000, and is 99% full. Of these inmates 1,627 are women, who are housed in four prisons.

Chaplain Roberts invited AA to begin work with all SCDC Chaplains to participate in all prisoner prerelease activities as well as starting a new meeting at the Coastal Prerelease Center in North Charleston.

Volunteers from AA and former inmates told some of their stories. Our Volunteer Coordinator was present as well as the District Chair for District 30 and Corrections Chair for Area 62. The events was hosted by Tim M.

The need for contact volunteers on the outside is critical. More AA volunteers are needed to increase the number of meetings in all institutions. Meetings which are only held once a week need to be increased. Fourth and Fifth Step Workshops inside the walls are vital to inmates' complete recovery.

If you would like to participate in part of AA's Corrections activities, please contact your local Corrections Chair, DCM, or contact Tom D, Area 62 Correction Committee Chairman at tomd@bellsouth.net.



Corrections Activity Update

By Gayle R,
AA Corrections Coordinator

This Corrections Activity Update is a way to keep you informed of any news and useful information that may come to my desk, as well as to share any ideas from other committees around the United States and Canada.

Literature for Correctional Facilities — Practically Free

Being able to afford literature for correctional facilities is a challenge to most committees. I wish to remind you that G.S.O. still has cases available of the following literature:

AA in Prison: Inmate to Inmate (first edition) is available, while quantities last at \$5.00 per case to cover shipping and handling. These are Grapevine stories that inmates have written and are as timeless as all Grapevine stories. The special order number for this item is B-13A.

Second edition of the Spanish Big Book: Since a third edition of the Big Book is now available in Spanish, the second edition Spanish Big Book (all available formats) is selling for **\$25 per case** (including shipping). This is just a little more than a dollar per book.

Orders for both items can *only* be placed by contacting Andrea Brennan, order entry manager at 212-870-3127 or brennana@aa.org.

Sharing From Behind the Walls: This newsletter, which contains bits of sharing from inmate letters that come to this desk, comes out four times a year. I will be happy to send them out as long as they are available.

Corrections Correspondence Service

Please keep spreading the word about the *continuing* need for **male A.A. members** to volunteer to participate in the Corrections Correspondence Service with male inmates. Every week brings in new requests from inmates for someone to write about their experiences with alcohol and recovery through the 12 Steps of A.A. For some of these inmates, correspondence with an outside member may be the only A.A. "meeting" they will get. At the end of 2008, there were 42 inmates on the waiting list to be matched to an outsider. If you need more information to share about this service, please see the pamphlet *Corrections Correspondence — a*

special kind of A.A. Service (available for viewing on-line through the A.A. website <http://www.aa>. (NOTE: This applies only to English-speaking correspondents.)

In 2008 alone we received requests for outside A.A. correspondents from 797 male inmates, and 532 female inmates. That's a lot of letter writers needed.

Sharing from Behind the Walls

The winter 2008 issue of *Sharing From Behind the Walls* was a special four-page issue for this one time only. If you ever have any doubts about how valuable your A.A. service is, please read these selections and see how the inmates react to A.A. literature and meetings!

Please note that beginning with the Spring 2008 issue, *Sharing from Behind the Walls* is now available on G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site so that those who want to make extra copies for inmates have easy access to each issue. You can find the newsletter and more at <http://www.aa.org/lang/en/subpage.cfm?page=30>.

Staple-free A.A. Grapevine Magazines — More Issues Coming

Beginning with the March 2008 issue, the Grapevine magazine is going staple free! This will make it much easier to get them into correctional facilities.

Additions to the Corrections Kits

Some new items have been added at the request of the 2008 Conference Committee on Corrections. In the pockets of the Kit you will see a copy of the DVD *A.A. in Correctional Facilities*, and a copy of the A.A. *Grapevine* magazine or *La Viña* magazine. In the section called "Other," you will find suggestions for using these two items to carry the message of A.A.

Box 4-5-9 Articles

We at G.S.O. are moving toward sending as much information as possible via e-mail, instead of by "hard copies." We are doing this in order to continue communicating with trusted servants and others effectively and more economically, as well as to be responsive to those of you who have requested this. In order to begin the process, we are using a variety of ways to ask all of

you whether you would like to eventually receive newsletters and other mailings from G.S.O. via e-mail.

If you haven't already done so, please send your e-mail address to records@aa.org with your full name, an address (to help find you in our records), and service number if you know it (you can find it on a mailing label).

New Look for AA.ORG

A big thanks to all of you who have told us about using the newly designed Web site with specific "buckets" for service committee literature and service material. Here is one example I have permission to share:

"I recently spent several minutes looking over the aa.org Web site and I was thrilled to see all the wonderful (printable) corrections information provided. Seeing *Sharing from Behind the Walls* there was exciting. Just as exciting is the A.A. Group Handbook for A.A. Groups that Meet in Correctional Facilities. I

created an e-mail to share the great news with all the AA DOC Volunteers I knew. Thank you so much for supporting our 12 Step efforts with these links."

From Local Communities

The new rules in many facilities for not being able to send or hand literature directly to inmates have led to some creative solutions. This suggestion has come in from many different committees: Where the prison or jail will only accept literature directly from A.A.W.S. (the publisher) and have it sent to a contact within the correctional facility (chaplain, counselor, librarian, etc.) for later distribution to inmates.

Some in-house correctional facilities TV channels are an opportunity to play A.A. videos such as *It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell*. This suggestion came from a former inmate, and was passed along by a district committee. To see if this is a possibility, contact the prison chaplain if available.

Notes from the Area 62 Archivist

"The percentage of success that A.A. has scored leaves no doubt that it has something more than we as doctors can offer. It is, I am convinced, your second step. Once the A.A. alcoholic has grasped that, he will have no more 'slip's'."

William Duncan Silkworth, M.D.

The Area 62 archives are continuing to tape A.A. members (and Non-A.A. members) for our archives files. These oral histories are primarily sought from members with at least 25 years, or more, association with the program. Our primary interest is in Area 62. There might be people who for reasons of health or age, etc. are not regularly attending meetings. There are also many spouses of deceased A.A. members whose families and marriages were mended and put back together as a result of his/her getting sober in A.A. There are also some ministers, judges and others who may have attended some early A.A. meetings who may be able to share some interesting and needed information with us.

If there is someone in your home group or district that needs to be interviewed please let us know! What usually happens is a member passes away, the archives is asked if we knew them and did we get a chance to interview them. Please help us find them before they pass away by passing such information along to your district archives representative. In the case where there is no archives representative, pass the information on to

your GSR, DCM, John C. (our area archives committee chairperson) or myself, K.C.H., the area archivist.

Area 62 generally does not preserve public records unless they are related to the history of Alcoholics Anonymous in South Carolina. However, it does maintain an archives office in Columbia, South Carolina where historical documents are preserved and housed.

In addition, we have an archives committee composed of representatives from participating districts in our area. The committee is responsible for developing policies and procedures as well as helping to collect and organize materials to be preserved. The committee meets three times a year in conjunction with the Area Assembly. Area 62 also has an archivist who regularly collects this information and preserves the material on a year round basis.

Thank you for your continuing service to the Area 62 Archives, and please help us by insuring your home group and/or district has an Archives Representative.

K.C.H., Area 62 Archivist

Corrections Connection Workshop

Sing Sing Correctional Facility, 18 April 2008

AA's Cooperation with the Professional Community and Corrections/Correctional Facilities Service

Alcoholics Anonymous' Tradition Five states that AA has only one primary purpose: "to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers." The Fellowship has long understood that in order to be able to do this, AA must cooperate with non-AA individuals and groups which are most likely to be in contact with alcoholics. AA's most recent membership survey (2004) supports this idea. It notes that only 31% of AA members found their way to AA through another AA member. This means that 69% came in through other channels.

Alcoholics commonly run afoul of the law with dire consequences. As a result, the criminal justice community (judges, attorneys, police, and probations and corrections professionals) have long been significant cooperating partners in this process of connecting alcoholics to AA.

Presently, AA is doing several things specifically touching corrections. These include:

- 1) bringing AA meetings into jails and prisons;
- 2) helping to provide inmates with a transition from AA in jail or prison to AA in the community through the "Pre-Release/Bridging the Gap" program;
- 3) arranging for community based AA's to develop supportive relationships, with a focus on recovery through AA, with their incarcerated fellows through correspondence through the "Corrections Correspondence" program;
- 4) providing criminal justice professionals with information about AA and with a cooperative AA liaison.

AA maintains a business office in New York (GSO) which deals with inquiries about AA from around the world, but with special focus on AA activities in and inquiries from the United States and Canada. Beyond GSO, AA is variously organized into areas, within which are districts, and then into community-based AA groups and meetings. Locally, two service committees may be particularly involved in reaching out to corrections professionals. These are the Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee (CPC) and the Corrections/Correctional Facilities Committee (CF/CFC).

Almost all A..A. workers outside of GSO are volunteers, and in most cases these volunteers hold their service responsibilities only for limited periods of time (perhaps for two years) before moving on to something else. This job "rotation" is a basic notion in AA service. Also, each of AA's service elements is fully autonomous, working cooperatively with each other where they can, but autonomously.

These facts — AA's volunteerism, job rotation, and operational autonomy at all levels — will account for some of the variability or inconsistency in dealing with local AA. It also accounts in part for why we are not always able to bring AA meetings into all the correctional facilities that want them, to sustain some meetings we have supported, or even to be fully informed centrally about meetings being supported or discontinued locally. Most direct contact with AA will be through one of the local service committees and their volunteer members.

CPC and Corrections committees work with local AA committees, groups and members interested in corrections service work. The local service committees work to directly support AA's corrections-related activities, and to recruit and prepare AA volunteers for corrections service work. Part of this includes helping our members to understand and respect the necessary restrictions correctional facilities must place on AA's entry to and activities within the various facilities.

AA can provide speakers to come in to explain to corrections personnel how AA works, what we do and what we do not do. (We do, for instance, provide information about AA's program of recovery—the 12 Steps—while we do not provide jobs, housing or referrals to other social services.)

AA also has various materials (booklets, pamphlets, workbooks, videos, and other projects in development) concerning AA's corrections-related activities. Some are directed to corrections professionals such as the video *AA in Correctional Facilities*. Some speak directly to inmates, such as the booklet *AA in Prison: Inmate to Inmate*. Other materials speak to the AA's working to carry AA's message, such as the pamphlet *Carrying the Message Into Correctional Facilities*.

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A Message from Area 62 Chairman

David T- *Area 62 Chairman*

Greetings to all in Area 62, and thank you for giving me an opportunity to serve as Chairman this term.

I'd like to begin by thanking you all for a very good year. I'd especially like to thank the DCMs and GSRs, whose efforts have resulted in a significant increase in 7th Tradition funds. I guess that coming from a background in treasury, I do a lot of watching where the money goes and have viewed with concern the increasing costs of carrying the message lately. But I've learned that when we do our best to put our funds to good use, the membership will come through with their support, as they have this year.

One of the goals Robert and I share is for our committees to keep their focus on taking action to directly help the still-suffering alcoholic find our solution. We should avoid slipping into having meetings simply for the sake of meeting. We should look for service opportunities that are best carried out at the Area level and those where we may offer needed support to the efforts of local districts and groups. To this end, we hold regular committee meetings of the committee chairs, where they are asked to report on the goals for their committee and to request assistance from other committees in meeting these goals. We have made a modest allowance in our budget to be used for these activities and will increase that amount this year because of the successful efforts of the committees in carrying the message.

I'm really pleased with the work being done by our committees this term. Our Corrections chair has established a strong relationship with the Department of Corrections and has been asked to meet regularly with them to help develop policies statewide that will make it easier for us to carry the message behind the walls. He will address a statewide meeting of prison chaplains early this year and will continue to conduct workshops across the state for local committees.

Our treatment chair has assisted our corrections chair in working with corrections-related treatment programs. He has also worked hard on our Bridge the Gap program to see that treatment programs across the state are able to put their clients in touch with AA members to assist them in getting involved in AA when they are released.

CPC continues to do a great job of helping districts learn how to conduct workshops for the their local professionals who may refer members to AA; our web-site continues to be among the best and most informative area websites; and the K.I.T. has moved its focus toward promoting the work of our service committees and sharing their experiences with local groups.

2008 has been a good year and, for 2009, I hope we'll be able to continue and increase our efforts to help others. We'll be conducting an inventory of the Area to discover our assets and liabilities. I'd like to encourage all groups — those who participate and those who don't — to provide whatever feedback you may have to help us better serve South Carolina. I'd like to challenge each of you to help us increase participation by bringing someone new with you to the Assemblies this year. They'll be the ones carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic tomorrow.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your service to AA and all you do to help others.

Corrections Connections Workshop

Continued from page 4

In summary then, AA has historically worked to cooperate with professional groups in contact with alcoholics who may be interested in AA's program of recovery. In support of this in corrections, AA has developed specialized service groups and activities.

A final word about why we AA's do all of this. Beyond the significance of AA tradition which encourages us to carry AA's program to those who still suffer, AA's active in service work are doing so, at least in part, to sustain their own continuing recovery from an illness which many believe may only have been placed into remission. We must actively work to maintain our recovery, and passing on what we have learned can be a big part of that work.

We only have today, and owe a debt to those who carried the message to us while we suffered. This makes us part of a chain of one recovering or recovered drunk connecting with another reaching back to the founders, Bill W. and Dr. Bob.

Spanish Linguistic District?

By Cyndi F.
Area 62 Alternate Delegate

ALCOHOLICOS ANONIMOS es ...

.....una comunidad de hombres y mujeres que comparten su mutua experiencia,

fortaleza y esperanza para resolver su problema común y ayudar a otros a recuperarse

del alcoholismo.

El único requisito para ser miembro de A.A. es el deseo de dejar la bebida. Para ser miembro de A.A. no se pagan honorarios ni cuotas; nos mantenemos con nuestras propias contribuciones.

A.A. no está afiliada a ninguna secta religiosa, partido político, organización o institución alguna; no desea intervenir en controversias; no respalda ni se opone a ninguna causa.

Nuestro objetivo primordial es mantenernos sobrios y ayudar a otros alcohólicos a alcanzar el estado de sobriedad.

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Our Delegate, Robert H., asked me to gather information concerning the creation of a Spanish Linguistic District for Area 62 and to report to the Area Committee and the GSRs. Such non-geographic “overlay” or “floating” Districts have become common in many Areas of the United States and Canada. When I was a GSR in Area 72, Washington State (approximately 1992), the Assembly created an Hispanic Linguistic District. When Area 72 later split into two Areas, 72 and 92, each area maintained a Spanish District. In time, three more districts, one in Western Washington and two in Washington State East, formed to better serve the Spanish groups in geographic regions of each Area.

While I was doing this research, the most interesting things I learned were about similar linguistic districts in foreign countries. In Japan, the ENGLISH(!) speaking groups are requesting inclusion in the Japanese AA service structure as a linguistic district. And in Korea, the service structure was completely in English until several years ago, the Korean language

groups organized and came to the Assembly requesting to be combined in service with them.

The idea of separation of a distinct part or parts of Alcoholics Anonymous may seem to contradict our inclusiveness and equality. Okay, we can accept the special need of non-English speaking alcoholics to have AA meetings in their own tongue, but what do they need with a district? Over the last ten years, our friends in the five Spanish-speaking groups served in the southeast coastal region of South Carolina (Districts 60 and 61), have occasionally attended district meetings, contributed toward schedules, participated in sober functions, and invited us to Spanish AA celebrations, but the limitation of language in actual practice of service together has hindered us all.

Other Areas and GSO report that linguistic districts generally INCREASE participation. Scattered groups are able to meet to discuss Area concerns in their language and to reply to questions posed by our Assembly, Committees, or brought back from the annual Conference by our Delegate. Together, the Hispanic groups across the state can help to develop a method for simultaneous translation at Assemblies and State Conventions to be of service to the suffering alcoholic in any language. (This equipment can also help the hard of hearing, if set up for that...) One example of better service cooperation is in the ability to find Spanish-speaking members to attend Correctional Institutions meetings when needed, through lists maintained by the Linguistic District’s service structure statewide.

You may have specific questions about how these particular special needs groups operate. When twenty Hispanic members of our local groups attended the District 60 GSR Service meeting in November, I had the opportunity to openly ask them some of the most pressing issues that Robert and I had identified beforehand. Our DCM, Rocky M., asked them to read the Preamble and say the serenity Prayer in Spanish after we read them in English to begin.

1. ‘Where does the literature you use in meetings come from? We have heard of a non-Conference approved version of the Big Book in Spanish.’

Our literature comes from the A.A.W.S. office. Sometimes we order through our friends on the West Coast because they have big inventories and ship it faster than GSO has in the past. But it is all AA approved.

2. **‘Do you intend to have District meetings and set up a service structure?’**

Yes. We have been meeting with all the Spanish-speaking Groups across the Area. We already have a Spanish Intergroup Office in the lower part of the state and expect to require further regionalization in the future.

3. **‘I can see you are all males. Do Hispanic women have opportunity for recovery, too?’**

Two part answer: the Groups that are mainly Mexican discourage female attendance to keep distraction to a minimum. We would help women to start AA meetings if a need was recognized (there is a Spanish Al-Anon already in Bluffton), but culturally it is best to have separation of the sexes; on the other hand, the South American Hispanic cultures are not so “macho” and do have female members, in fact, a bi-lingual female secretary is serving in one of the Beaufort groups.

4. **‘So that brings up the Spanish national and cultural differences represented in your groups. How does that work?’**

We are alcoholics helping one another. (They count off Mexicans, Hondurans, El Salvadoran, Guatemalan, Puerto Ricans, etc.) The language of the heart in Spanish is the language of the heart of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The GSRs and officers attending this meeting, and the next meeting in District 61, unanimously approved the Spanish-speaking Groups within the boundaries of the Districts to leave and join the new District. The meeting closed with the Lord’s Prayer in Spanish. It was very powerful, and we all felt like we made new friends in the fellowship and look forward to working together in the future.

Alternatively, I also found that one or two Areas approach the needs of their Hispanic Groups through a standing Linguistic Committee or as part of their Special Needs Committee. These are usually smaller Areas with only a few meetings across their region. Often the stated goal is to eventually form a non-geographic linguistic district. One Area is larger, though; South Florida and the Caribbean (see below for reference).

Where Do We Go From Here?

Forming a floating linguistic district should be similar to a redistricting or district combination or split, similar to those we have seen in the recent past. (8 & 9 became 7, part of 61--14 groups — north of the Broad River moved into District 60, and various groups have moved to more convenient districts.)

A) October 2008: Present and discuss the idea of a Spanish District at Area Assembly.

B) Oct-Feb 2009: Take the information back to the AA groups in Area 62 for discussion.

C) Oct-Feb 2009: The Districts that contain Spanish-Speaking groups agree to these groups joining a new overlay district.

D) March 2009: The proposal is presented to the Assembly. The Assembly agrees to the redistricting by simple majority.

E) March 2009: A bi-lingual linguistic District Committee Member (DCM) is seated.

F) Structures & Procedures Chair makes adjustment to the Addendum list of Districts.

G) After consultation with the Spanish DCM, the Web Coordinator will create the new District Folder and Group pages, and edit and move existing pages.

If you would like more information, e-mail me at 62altdel@area62.org, and I will forward a relatively complete list of Areas that have addressed the need to solve linguistic challenges.

Annual Meeting of Districts 11 & 12

At the annual meeting of districts 11 and 12, our area 62 GSO Delegate, Robert H. presented several calls to action. He asked that we consider and act upon two specific issues: (1) whether profits from sales of AA literature fully complies with Tradition Seven and (2) whether the grey pages within “The Grapevine” dealing with alcoholism in general, rather than AA specifically, constitute a form of advertising.

Robert asked each home group to discuss the first topic and provide feedback. He urged us all to subscribe to “The Grapevine” and to write the editorial board with our views.

Rhonda Sauro
District 11 Kit Committee Chair

UPCOMING EVENTS

62nd Annual SC State Convention
Columbia, SC • April 3-5, 2009

Southeast Region AA Convention
Mobile, AL • August 13-16, 2009

*Southeast Regional
AA Service Assembly*
Richmond, VA • November, 2009

63rd Annual SC State Convention
Myrtle Beach, SC • April, 2010

International AA Convention
San Antonio, TX • July 1-4, 2010

Southeast Regional Forum
Myrtle Beach, SC • Dec., 2010

NOTICES

Randy S, Area 62 Treatment Chair, is available for **TREATMENT WORKSHOPS**. Details are worked out on an individual basis. Contact 62txchair@area62.org.

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE will meet at the archives at the June assembly. We will car pool from the Ramada as soon as we break out to our committees and return in time for our schedule meetings

Keep In Touch (Kit) is distributed at each Area 62 Assembly. Area officers, committee chairs, and AA members share about what is happening in service work around Area 62. If you have a story to share about exceptional service work that carries the message to the still-suffering alcoholic, please send it to 62kitchair@area62.org. KIT presents the experience and opinions of members of Alcoholics Anonymous on the disease of alcoholism. Opinions expressed here are not those of A.A. as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous or the Area 62 Assembly.

62nd South Carolina Area 62 State Convention

AN EXPERIENCE YOU MUST NOT MISS

April 3-5, 2009

Jamil Temple

206 Jamil Road, Columbia, SC 29210

Conference Flyer available at www.area62.org

Mail reservations to: 62nd Annual SC State Convention
PO Box 50002, Columbia, SC 29250

Registration \$20 in advance / \$25 at door

Do you use e-mail for A.A. Service?

G.S.O. is trying to boost its e-mail capabilities

G.S.O. is moving toward sending as much information as possible via e-mail, instead of by "hard copies." They are doing this in order to continue communicating with trusted servants and others effectively and more economically, as well as being responsive to those who have requested this. In order to begin the process, they are using a variety of ways to ask us whether we would like to eventually receive newsletters and other mailings from G.S.O. via e-mail.

To that end, they would like to request an e-mail address from you if you haven't already provided them with one. Please send your e-mail address to records@aa.org, the G.S.O. website. Please include in the e-mail your full name, an address (to help find you in their records) and your service number if you know it (you can find it on any mailing label from G.S.O.)

This is just a first step in the process, and you'll be hearing more from G.S.O. when they are closer to providing notifications and mailings via e-mail.

