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THE GROUP

An N.A. group is any meeting which meets regularly at a specified place and time, provided that it follows the 12 steps and the 12 traditions (having no outside affiliations and receiving no outside financial support). To facilitate communications and unity and to better serve N.A. as a whole, groups should register with the World Service Office of Narcotics Anonymous. The group is the second level of the N.A. Service Structure.

The Primary purpose of an N.A. group is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. However it also provides to each member the chance to express themselves and to hear the experiences of other members who are learning how to live a better life. There are two basic types of groups: Those which are open to the general public and those closed to the public (For Addicts Only). Meetings vary widely in format from group to group. Some are participation meetings, some speaker, some question and answer, some special problems discussion, some topic discussion, and some have a combination of these formats.

Despite the type of format a group uses for its meeting the function of a group is always the same to provide a suitable and reliable environment for personal recovery and to promote such recovery. The group has proven to be the most successful vehicle for 12 step work. After sharing ones personal experience, strength and hope the most valuable thing a member can do is to bring prospective new members (addicts) to the group meeting. In this way the group meeting becomes a place where the newcomer knows he or she can come for help. Often the first thing that can open the doors of recovery for the addict is the recognition of themselves in others. The group provides a setting in which the newcomer can find this identification by hearing a number of recovering addicts rather than just one or two.

The group is the level at which we first find some of the day to day business of N.A. being taken care of. There is rent to pay, literature to buy and distribute, refreshments to be provided, a meeting hall to be kept clean, a time schedule to follow, announcements to be made and other things to be done for the maintenance of the group. The group should stay in contact with other groups in their local area and with the rest of N.A., (This can better be accomplished by a number of groups in an area creating an area service committee. This will be discussed further in the structure), so they can find out about activities: learn of new groups opening up, get new literature, and find out what's happening in N.A. as a whole. This is also the first level at which fellowship funds are handled, and the correct use of this money is essential for the preservation of the group. It is at the group level that the principle of the Trusted Servant comes into being. "Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern". The officers of The Group are elected by a majority vote of the group conscience. They are (A) The Group Secretary (B) The Group Treasurer (C) GSR-Group Service Representative (D) GSR-Alt.-Group Service Representative Alternate. These Trusted servants make up an informal steering committee.

THE GROUP SECRETARY:

The secretary is responsible for the day to day functions of the group. It is his/her responsibility to assure that the group meeting takes place when and where it is supposed to. He/She selects a leader for each meeting, makes sure the coffee or refreshments get made, arranges for group business meetings, arranges for the celebration of "birthdays", makes sure that the meeting hall is left in proper order, and answers all correspondence. This job is important because without a good secretary a group has little chance of surviving and providing an atmosphere of recovery.

THE GROUP TREASURER:

The treasurer of an N.A. group is responsible for the funds which come into the group from the collection and for the distribution of these funds. The money collected in our meetings must be carefully budgeted. There are numerous expenses necessary for running a group. The treasurer an accurate record of all the groups financial transactions, meeting records, maintains the group bank account, distributes the money to pay the rent, purchase literature, provides refreshments, buy supplies, and cover the cost of any miscellaneous expenses the group incurs. In order to maintain our fellowship and freedom, money which comes from the group collections and member contributions must always be used to further our primary purpose. A group must first support itself. After paying its bills any remaining funds should be placed in a group bank account and a reserve adequate to run the group for 2 or 3 months built up. After this "prudent reserve" has been established excess funds should be diverted to help N.A. as a whole. A group can do this by contributing to the "Area Service Committee" or "Regional Service Committee" which serves the group or through contributions directly to the World Service Office of Narcotics Anonymous. One of the biggest problems we have faced has been the misuse of the groups money. This abuse severely limits what N.A. can do for the recovering addicts. The treasurer has a grave responsibility and much thought should be taken in selecting a member to perform this function. As a general guide we have found that the group treasurer and secretary are most successful if they have certain assests necessary for the performance of their responsibilities. These qualifications include:

- (1) The willingness or desire to serve.
- (2) A history of sobriety (we suggest a minimum of 6 months continuous freedom from drugs, including alcohol).
- (3) A good working knowledge of the 12 steps and the 12 traditions.
- (4) An active participation in the group they are to serve.

The two remaining trusted servants of an N.A. group are the General Service Representative (GSR) and the GSR-Alternate. Because the role of the GSR and GSR-Alt. is so important to the success of an N.A. group, these two servants will be discussed in greater detail in the next section of this manual.

The group Secretary and Treasurer and the GSR serve for a period of one year at which time they are succeeded by another member who has been elected by the group. (The use of drugs including alcohol while serving as a group servant constitutes an automatic resignation for that officer). One of the responsibil-

ities of group officers not often talked about is to train group members to replace them. A group can be strengthened by new officers who are prepared to take over the responsibilities of those they replace. Continuity of service can be aided by staggering the election of servants and overlapping terms of service. (Example: A group secretary might be elected in November to begin serving in January and the Treasurer elected in March to begin in May). This would always allow a group to have representation from experienced officers. Remember choose your trusted servants well, it is you whom they will be serving.

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GENERAL SERVICE

The next level of service in N.A. is general service. General Service provides the support necessary for groups of N.A. members so that they can work together for their common welfare.

In 1969, N.A.'s first committee, specifically designed to fill our general service needs, was established. This group and others like it have contributed greatly to the growth of N.A.. However, today it is no longer enough to have a few members getting together to keep their groups going. N.A. has grown and is continuing to grow.

General Service is divided into sections, the Area and the Region. These are both geographic and functional designations. The Area is designed to provide service to individual groups with specific needs. This difference in function is important to keep in mind as we discuss, in the following sections, these two levels of service because in many ways they provide very similar services.

Our experience has shown that from time to time our groups have problems which they can't handle on their own. In the spirit of our fellowship we as individuals seek help from one another to deal with our living problems: just so, groups can find help from other groups. For this reason General Service committees have been established. However, most of the problems a group faces are of such a nature that another group located many miles away can be of little assistance. Only a nearby group can help and for this reason our General Service structure is made up of both Regional and Area committees.

A "DESIGNATED AREA" within N.A. is any local area, community or town with a significant number of N.A. meetings. We have found it convenient to think of an area as any community or communities which comprise a single telephone directory. This concept seems adequate for our needs today, however any set of groups within definable geographic boundaries who need to function together as an area can be a "designated area".

A "DESIGNATED REGION" is a broader geographic unit made up of one or more Areas. Normally we consider a region to be any state in the United States or any foreign country. Again, the definition of a region is ultimately one of need, any N.A. Areas which can show this need can be considered a designated Region. A good example of this as it exist at time of this publication, are the Northern and Southern Regions of N.A. in California. In the future, it may be necessary to break this down even further. We feel its necessary to stress that for the purpose of N.A. designations of Area and Region should always be based on specific need rather than resentment, insanity, or personalities.

"AREA SERVICE COMMITTEE"

An Area Service Committee (ASC) is a committee made up of representatives (GSR'S) from all groups within a designated area, which meets monthly for the purpose of serving the specific needs of its member groups.

There are certain facilities which are necessary to the service provided by the (ASC). In the beginning they may simply be a permanent mailing address usually a post office box, a bank account, and a place to hold meetings often a private home, though experience recommends moving the meeting to a neutral ground as soon as possible; i.e., civic meeting halls, YMCA's, synagogues, churches, ect. As the membership and number of groups within an area increases or when the groups decide that they need a broader spectrum of services, more facilities are needed. These might include a telephone answering service/referral, a ditto machine a typewriter and a adding machine, and a place to store literature among others. As an Area grows still more the members may decide to consolidate and improve these facilities by opening and staffing a local office. At all times, however these facilities MUST reflect the needs of the Area of they are to be an asset to the groups rather than a burden.

In order to coordinate its services, each ASC elects officers. These officers include a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, a Secretary, a Treasurer and an Area Service Representative (ASR) an Area Service Representative-Alternate (ASR-ALT). Leadership must come from the officers. They must have the enthusiasm and know heo of the individual committee member, plus the ability to organize and give the committee direction and incentive. Upon election the officers shall resign as GSR enabling his group to elect a new representative, thus insuring all groups equality of representation.

- 1) The Chairperson arranges an agenda for and presides over the monthly meetings. He is also responsible for correspondence. At committee meetings he can only vote in case of a tie. The Chairperson must be capable of running a business meeting with a firm but understanding hand. For this reason it is suggested that he or she have a minimum of 3 yrs. of abstinence.
- 2) The Vice-Chairperson co-ordinates all sub-committee functions. In the absence of the Chairperson the Vice-Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chairperson. It is suggested that the Vice-Chairperson have a minimum of 1 year abstinence.
- 3) The Secretary keeps accurate minutes of each ASC-Business meeting and types and distributes copies of these minutes to each GSR no later than one week prior to the next ASC meeting. He or she shall be one of the cosigners of the committee's bank account. (1-yr. sobriety).
- 4) The Treasurer shall make a report of contributions and expenditures at every regular ASC meeting as well as an annual statement at the end of the year. He or she shall be the other co-signer on the committee's bank account. The Treasurer can also be made responsible for bulk purchases of literature for the groups. It is suggested that the Treasurer have a minimum of 2-years of sobriety.

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5) The Area Service Representative (ASR)

6) The Area Service Representative Alternate (ASR-ALT)

The Committee also elects an ASR and ASR-Alternate., the function of these last 2 committee members will be covered in more detail in the next section of this manual. These officers are elected yearly from among the active Group Service Representatives. They do not normally represent any group and have no vote in the committee. Any committee worker or officer may be removed during his term in the office by a majority vote of the ASC, also all committee members and workers may succeed themselves in office, but in keeping with the 2nd Tradition and the principle of rotating leadership, it is recommended that no officer serve more than two consecutive terms.

Because groups, just like individuals find it hard to survive alone one of the most important functions of the ASC is to encourage new membership. This can of course be successfully accomplished only by active 12th step work. For this reason, each ASC should maintain an accurate 12 and sponsor list, put together a notice of its meetings and post this notice in places where people can see it, provide for the periodic public service announcements, keep in contact with the local authorities and referral agencies, and perhaps arrange for an answering service to take calls which can then be referred to members in the 12 step list. Our primary aim is to bring the newcomer into our fellowship in the hope that he too can benefit from our way of life.

Another major function of our ASC's is in initiating activities which can make cleanliness even more attractive to the newcomer, give the member an opportunity to learn how to function drug-free on a social level, and which give us a chance to gather together to celebrate living. These local activities could include dances, picnics, parties, dinners, breakfasts, round robin meetings, and other functions which the committee feels would benefit its groups.

The third and most important service which the ASC provide is that of group support. Whenever a group has a specific problem or need which it has not been able to handle on its own, it can come to its Area Service Committee for help. These problems are almost limitless in scope, however we have learned that we can get much accomplished when we work together. Sometime God helps too.

The committee performs other functions which are of help to the groups. It can help new groups get started or give aid to floundering groups. It might scout an area for potential meeting places; might encourage members of other groups to attend meetings which need support; or might keep a stock of literature which the groups can purchase without waiting for mail to get to and from the World Service Office (WSO). The point is that the ASC handles whatever functions are necessary or helpful to its groups.

In order to provide these services the ASC needs the active participation of its GSR's, the facilities already mentioned, and qualified leaders. The group supports its Area Service Committee both financially and emotionally. It takes money to provide the services we have described. It is the groups responsibility to offer this support. When an ASC is first formed this need for funds may be minimal; just enough to pay for a post office box, to rent of a hall once a month, and to serve coffee. However, as an Area grows so the financial needs of a steady, reliable input of money. Some Areas have tried to provide these funds through their activities or by and number of fund-raising methods. All these alternate courses of financial support are helpful, but the bulk of the responsibility still falls on the members of each group.

The active participation of each group representative is essential for a successful ASC. Each GSR must keep his or hers group informed and must represent that groups spiritual conscience in all committee decisions. In addition to this a GSR participates in helping to carry out the ASC's other specific functions. The attracting of new members, the planning and implementation of activities, and the aid given to groups with special problems are services which requires much and more effort than a monthly meeting. Most ASC's have found that subcommittee system is necessary to provide these services. A subcommittee does the actual work necessary to implement ASC programs. These subcommittee's normally deal with a single service, such as 12 step work, and may meet or do work as needed during the month between regular ASC meetings. (A word to the wise; subcommittee are notorious for getting lost in there own dust as they stumble down the road of uncertian destiny; therefore, the Vice-Chairperson's job of coordinating these subcommittees is indeed an important one.

THE AREA SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

The Area Service Representative (ASR) is to the Area Service Committee what the GSR is to the Group. As the representative of the Area, the ASR speaks for the members and the groups within his Area Committee. The primary responsibility of the ASR is to work for the good of N.A. as a whole by providing two-way communication between his or her Area and the rest of N.A., particularly with neighboring ASC's. He/she represents the group conscience of the ASC as the Regional level and at the World Service Conference level.* The ASR attends all Regional Service Committee meetings and takes part in any decisions which affect the region as a whole, speaking as the voice of his ASC's group conscience. The ASR may serve as one of the officer of the Regional Service Committee, and may serve on one or more of its subcommittee. The office of Area Service Representative is an immensely important one, for the ASR is the next link in pressing the will of a loving God. As ASR must be able to work for the common good, placing principles before personalities at all times. Therefore, in addition to the regular qualifications for GSR's it is recommended that nominees to the post of ASR also have:

1. Service Experience
2. The willingness to give the time and resources necessary for the job.

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3. A minimum for 3 years of continuous abstinence from all mind-altering chemicals (including alcohol).

The office of ASR also parallels that of GSR in that it is a 2-year commitment. The first year of ASR is spent as ASR-alternate, becoming familiar with the job, attending all ASC and RSC meetings and filling in for the ASR if he is absent or for any reason unable to complete his term of office. Naturally the recommended qualifications for election as ASR-Alternate are the same as for ASR, with one exception: a minimum of 2 years continuous sobriety.

*Elections of officers: Committee officers should be elected from the active (GSR) but can be elected from the active members that are in its area. Service experiences are a value: i.e. Secretary, Treasurer, panel member in institutions ect. ect.

*For further explanation, see section on REGIONAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

REGIONAL SERVICE COMMITTEE:

The Regional Service Committee (RSC) is a Committee made up of the ASR's from all the Areas within a designated (?) Region. This service committee is designed to provide service to its member areas, and should be fully registered with the World Service Office. The ASC and the RSC are similar in nature and purpose, but their respective functions are slightly different. While the ASC serves the specific needs of the individual member groups the RSC serves the common needs of its member areas.

One of the primary aims of the RSC is to unify the Areas and Groups within its jurisdiction. Another aim is to carry N.A.'s message of recovery in strict accordance with the 12 Traditions to addicts who cannot attend our meetings through contact with various institutions. A third basic function this committee is to contribute to the growth of N.A. as a whole, both by initiating much of the work to be finalized at the World Service Conference and by helping to support our World Services. Ingrained in these basic functions is of course, our primary purpose of carrying the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. The desire to more effectively achieve this purpose is the reason that our entire Service Structure including the RSC exists.

Just as the (ASC) often deals with problems that the groups cannot resolve on their own, so the (RSC) tries to solve problems that the Areas cannot deal with on their own. This is one way in which the (RSC) strives for unity; another is by providing a meeting place for Areas and a center of communication with other Regions and N.A. as a whole.

The Regional Service Committee is also responsible for major activities such as Conventions, Retreats and Round-ups.

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These also can be considered functions to stimulate N.A. unity. Most of us have at sometime attended an activity of this type, and we are aware of the unity, creative action, and fellowship they can create. Each Region is encouraged to hold at least one major function or activity each year. These can be as simple as a camping trip or as involved as a convention; it doesn't really matter- they all provide the same stimulus. Usually the planning and implementation of such an event is left to a Regional activities sub-committee specifically established for this purpose. We have found that a sub-committee system is even more important at the Regional level than is than it is our Areas. This is because RSC covers a greater number of meetings and only meets every two or three months. By necessity, most of the work (excluding major decisions and matters of conscience) must be done by sub-committees. Only the initiation and the finalization of a project takes place in the regular RSC meeting.

Our traditions say that our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addicts who still suffers. This is just as true for the RSC as it is for any group. All RSC functions have this purpose as a goal; some functions, however relate directly to carrying the message. As we have noted the Areas basically work to bring the addict to the fellowship, through public relations, public service announcements and advertising. The RSC's basic means of attracting addicts is to take the program to the addict. Institutional work is the responsibility of the RSC, and is usually handled by one or more sub-committees. Most of the violations of our sixth, seventh and eighth traditions occur within this type of work. Drug programs, Recovery Houses, Mental Health groups, hospitals, criminal diversion courses, drug and alcoholism schools, and other organizations who have requested N.A. speakers, panel or meetings, for the benefit of their residents, patients or members, have at times used the name of Narcotics Anonymous as part of their publicity and as a means to obtain financial grants. This type of MISUSE of the N.A. name and violations of the N.A. Traditions must be avoided at all costs. If a violation of one or more of the Traditions is already in progress, contact with the institution should be broken off until the violation is resolved. The "two-hatter" amendment-- No professional or para-professional, no one working in the field of drug abuse or alcoholism shall be an officer of a service committee of Narcotics Anonymous. This amendment should be instituted to help prevent the type of Tradition violations previously mentioned.

Another important part of the RSC's function is to contribute to our essential to the work of our World Services. Any excess funds which accumulate at the Regional level should be contributed directly to the World Service Office. The RSC itself has little need of large amounts of money, since it has no stationary facilities and therefore need pay no rent. Monies are needed for major activities, though these are ideally self-sustaining, with enough money left over from one activity to secure the next. However, the RSC does need money to

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operate there are expences: most RSC's normally publish quarterly meeting directories; large quantities of literature are often supplied to institutions and hospitals (though in some cases this is handled through a sepe-rate institutional literature fund); most Regions sponsor their representatives to the World Service Conference; and groups of any kind require miscellaneous funds for postage, stationary supplies and the like. Your RSC needs your support and the support of your group.

Most of the suggestions, ideas, and new literature presented at the World Service Conference are initiated at the regional level. These are submitted in writing to the proper subcommittee of the WSC prior to the conference itself in order to be placed on the agenda.

Like the ASC, the RSC elects officers each year from among its member ASR's and ASR-alternate. They include a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer. Their functions and responsitibilities are identical with those of the Area Service Committee officers. The RSC also elects a Regional Service Represenative, who speaks for his or her region at the World Service Conference and a Regional Service Representative Alternate. (This servant is the counterpart of the GSR and the ASR, and will be discussed more fully in the next section of this pamphlet). Often, because of the limited number of people to choose from one person is elected to serve both as Chairperson and as Regional Service Represenative, and another is elected to serve as Vice-chairperson/Regional Service Represenative-Alternate.

Both the Area and Regional Service Committees are autonymous, just as the groups they serve, "except in matters that affect other groups or NA as a whole" thus, the first thing an RSC must have in order to establish its identity, is a permanent mailing address (post office box). After the P.O. Box the next thing a RSC must do is register with the World Service Office. Groups and committees must be registered if they are to be listed in the World Directory, and in order to recieve information and support from WSO. The final thing that must be done whin forming a group or a committee is to set down some kind of framework or guidelines within which to function. For our groups, this is usually a simple format which describes the type of meetings to be held and tells the leader how to proceed in holding it. Our committees also need a format in order to keep their meetings orderly. And in addition, they need some kind of guidelines in order to maintain their service functions.

Meetings formats vary widely from group to group, but usually consist of a statement defining the group, reading from our pamphlet, the body of the meeting, announcements from the GSR, a collection of a definite statement, the reading of our traditions, a roll call and a report from the treasurer, old business (including a report from each group, announcements, a collection, and a closing prayer. Generally, ASC meetings are fairly flexible in their formats in order to deal with the wide variety of problems

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which might come up.

RSC meetings, on the other hand, are usually pretty well structured. The format of an RSC meeting is virtually identical to that of an ASC meeting, but the RSC deals primarily with common problems, working on a broader scale. Some regions have found it valuable to conduct their meetings according to a prearranged agenda. During the time since their last meeting, the RSC officers have been in touch with Area officers and collected topics for discussion and problems to be considered at the upcoming RSC meeting. In this way Area problems can be dealt with on a priority basis(?) and similar problems can be combined to prevent duplication of effort.

As we have said, each service committee should have some kind of guidelines to ensure that its service continue to be provided regardless of changes of officers or representatives. These guidelines should include a description of the committee, its purpose, and the scope of its service, and should define the functions and responsibilities of its members, officers and sub-committee.

The General Service Committees are the real working body of Narcotics Anonymous. It is these committees which can contribute more to the growth of N.A. than any other parts of our service structure. However, in order to function, they need active support: your support. Choose your representatives carefully; participate in group functions. Get involved in N.A.; seek to serve where and when you can. The work is hard and often there seems to be little getting accomplished. But beyond helping you're staying sober and clean, your personal return will be a thousand fold.

THE REGIONAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE:

The Regional Service Representative (RSR) is to the region what the GSR is to the group and ASR is to the Area. The RSR represents and speaks for the members and groups that comprise his or her Regional Service Committee. The primary responsibility of the RSR is to work for the good of N.A. as a whole by providing two way communication between his/her region and the rest of N.A. as a whole. He is the fellowships link with the World Service Branches of the N.A. service structure (i.e., with the World Service Office, the World Service Board, and the World Service Conference). He provides two-way communication between these service levels and the various Areas within his region and the region as a whole; he receives minutes from the business meetings of the World Service Office and the World Service Board, and he reports thereon at each regular RSC meeting. He attends all RSC meeting and as many ASC meetings as possible. If he cannot attend a particular ASC meeting, he supplies that Area's ASR with his report on the World Service Branches so that each Area can remain fully informed on the activities of all levels of NA service.

The office of RSR is a year round job. The RSR attends and is a member of the annual World Service Conference, and takes part in any and all decisions which affect NA as a whole. (In order that the fellowship may have a more fairly audible voice at the highest level of group conscience decision making in Narcotics Anonymous; until such time as the various ASC's within

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within NA have joined together in forming Regional Service Committees, representation of the fellowship at the World Service Conference Level shall consist of all ASR's from all Area Service Committee duly registered with the World Service Office). The RSR serves on one or more conference information and requests from the WSO and WSB, works closely with Regional Officers and sub-committees, and is a source of information or guidance in matters concerning the Twelve Traditions or NA as a whole.

Except in those cases where the Chairperson of the RSC also serves as the RSR, the RSR nominates potential Regional Service Representatives-Alternates from among the qualified members: these nominations are then taken through the Area committees to their groups for a group conscience vote. The results of this vote are reported back to the RSC and the nominees who receives support from the most groups becomes the RSR-Alternate for the following year. An RSR normally serves for a period of two years: the first as an alternate representative, and the second as a voting representative. The RSR-Alternate also fills in if the RSR is absent or for any reason unable to complete his term in office.

In order for the RSR to do a good job, it is recommended that each nominee should have the following qualifications:

- (1) A commitment to service.
- (2) Service experience
- (3) The willingness to give the time and resources necessary to do the job.
- (4) A minimum of five years of continuous abstinence from all drugs including alcohol (four years for the RSR-Alt.)
- (5) A good working knowledge of the twelve steps and the twelve traditions of our fellowship.

Our Regional Representatives should be selected from among our best informed, most trusted, and most active members in order that they may best serve our needs and the needs of NA as a whole.

ALTERNATE PLANS FOR EQUITABLE VOTING REPRESENTATION OF THE NA FELLOWSHIP AT THE WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE LEVELS:

- (1) Each RSR should represent approximately (a designated number) of members of the fellowship. This means that when the regions membership begins to approach (2-times as many as first designated number) members, it should reform as two regions. (The designated numbers will be voted in at completion and approval of the NA Service Structure).
- (2) At the conference, an RSR should cast one vote for each area he represents. (e.g. the RSR from an RSC comprised of 3- Areas would cast 3 votes). The RSR would gather the votes on old business matters from each of the ASC's he represents prior to voting, in order to solicit their votes. The ASR would speak directly for his ASC's group conscience. (Thus,

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THE REGIONAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

the RSR mentioned above might cast 2-yay votes and 1-nay vote on a participation matter.