

The General Service Conference Structure of Alcoholics Anonymous

Presentation to GSR's in the U.P of Michigan Area 74 Northern Wisconsin & Upper Peninsula of Michigan

By Dodie A
Past Delegate Panel 58 Area 74
and
Bob M
Past East Central Regional Trustee

June 4, 2011

Objectives

Role of the Group & the GSR

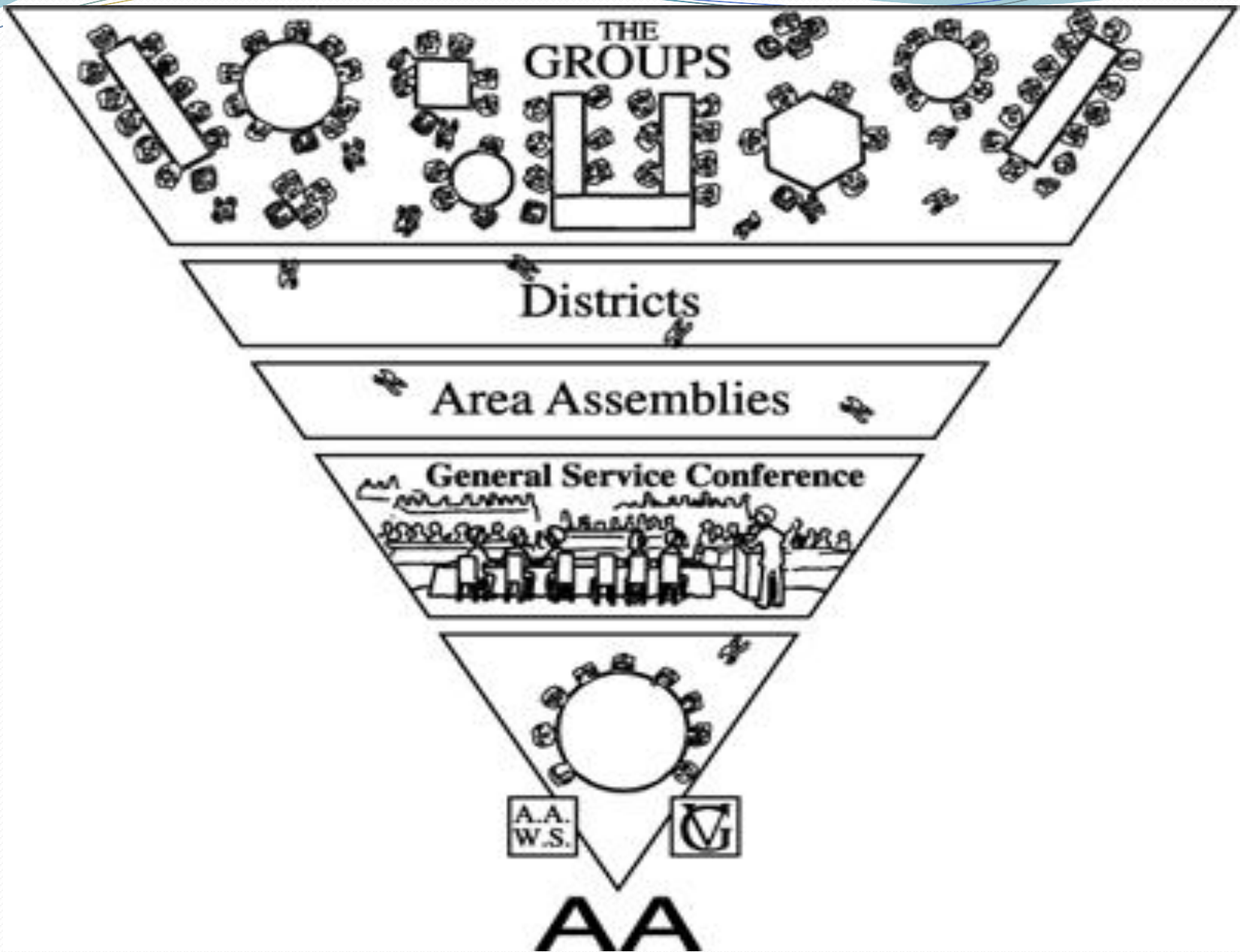
Role of the District & the DCM

Role of the Area Committee

Role of the Assembly

General Service Conference Service Structure

Closing Comments



the Home Group

Any Group of alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group provided that, *as a group*, they have no other purpose or affiliation.

*Twelve Concepts for World Service,
Concept Twelve, Warranty Six*

Service Structure Inside the A.A. Group



First Concept:

“Final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.”

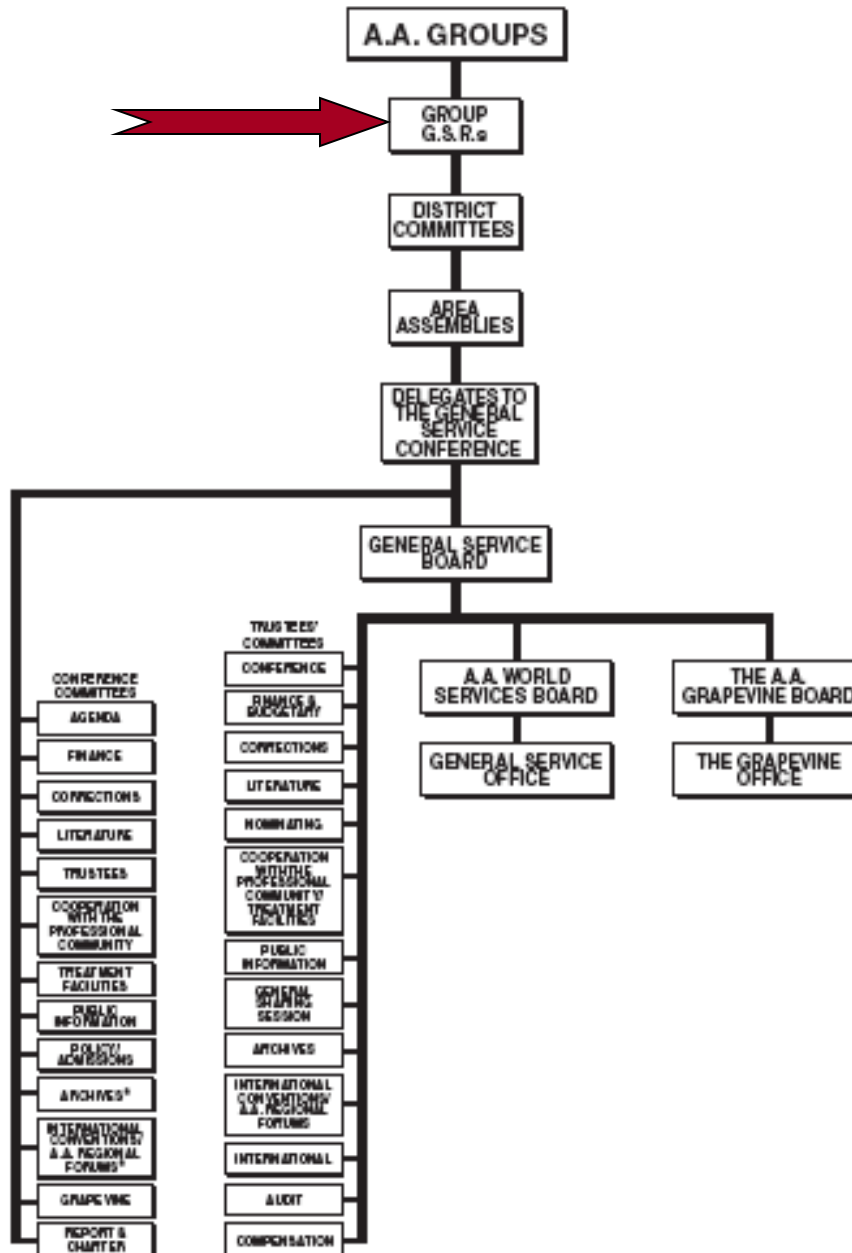
Role of the GSR (General Service Representative)

A.A. GROUPS

```
graph TD; A[A.A. GROUPS] --- B[GROUP G.S.R.s]
```

**GROUP
G.S.R.s**

The General Service Conference Structure (U.S. and Canada)



The Role of the GSR

- The GSR is the **active link** between the group and the Fellowship as a whole through the Area Delegate.
- The GSR represents the **voice of the group conscience**.
- Communication is a **two-way street**, making the GSR responsible for bringing back to the group Conference Actions that affect AA unity, health and growth.

Three Distinct Areas of Responsibility

- ✓ GSR as **Trusted Servant** in the General Service Structure
- ✓ GSR as **Steward** to One's Home Group
- ✓ GSR as **Chair** of the Group's Business Meeting

GSR as Trusted Servant

To serve as the vital link in communication between the Home Group and AA as a whole, a GSR should attend

- Monthly District meetings
- Area assemblies
- AA service conferences
- Forums

GSR as Trusted Servant

GSR plays a vital role in **preparing the Delegate** for the annual General Service Conference:

- Make **announcements** to keep the Home Group aware of matters of interest reported by the Delegate **throughout the year**.
- Carry the Home Group's **informed group conscience** to District meetings and Area assemblies.
- **Report** General Service Conference Actions back to the Home Group.

GSR as Trusted Servant

GSR plays a vital role in **carrying the message** outside the four walls of the Home Group's meeting :

- Participate on a Service Committee by attending break-out sessions at Area Assemblies and by participating in the activities of that committee at the District or Group level.
- Make members of the Home Group aware of opportunities to be of service.

GSR as Trusted Servant

The GSR acts as the **primary contact** for his Home Group

- with the General Service Office (Group Change Forms)
- for the distribution of flyers for upcoming events
- within the District (Meeting Directory) by mail, phone and now email

GSR as Steward of the Home Group

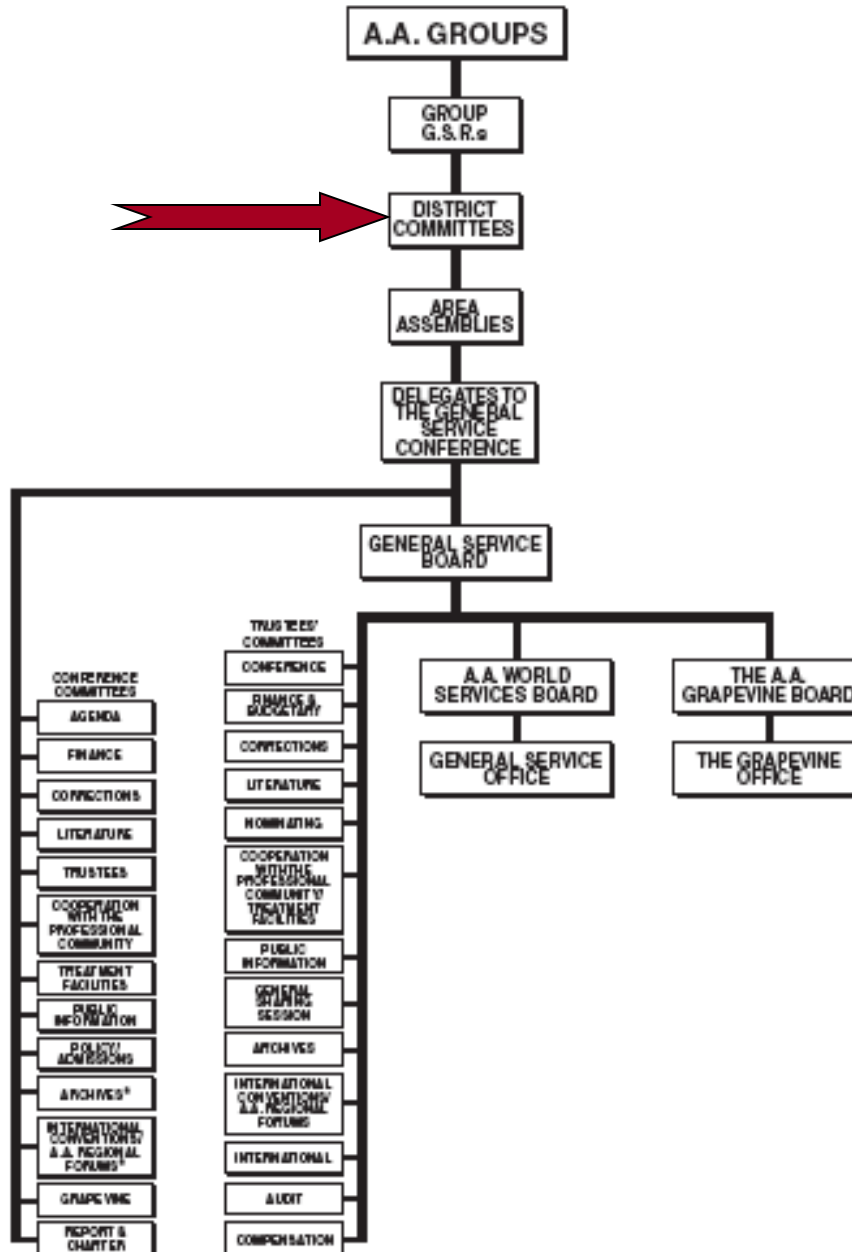
- Make sure the doors are open (Responsibility Statement)
- Make sure everyone is welcome (Fellowship)
- Home Group primary purpose: carry the message to outside the four walls of the meeting
- Guardian of the Traditions

GSR as Chair of Business Meeting

Schedule **monthly** business meetings following District meetings.

- Prepare an agenda
- Include a Treasurer's report
- Invite participation
- Chair the meeting

The General Service Conference Structure (U.S. and Canada)



Role of the DCM

(District Committee member)



Qualifications & Commitments

✓ Qualifications:

- Background in AA service work (previous GSR)
- Enough sobriety (generally 4-5 years) to be delegate
- Time and energy to serve

✓ Commitment:

- Usually 2 year term
- Hold monthly district meetings
- Attend Area Committee Meetings
- Attend Assemblies
- Serves on Area Standing Committees

The Role of the DCM

- Carries collective group conscience to Area Committee
- Is responsible for two-way communication between Groups and Area
 - Holds regular GSR meetings
 - Assists Delegate
 - Keeps GSRs informed
 - Acquaints GSRs with AA Literature
 - Holds workshops and sharing sessions
 - Talks to groups regularly

Holding a District Meeting

- ✓ Printed Agenda
 - Info GSRs should take to their Group
 - Assembly agenda items
 - Frequently asked information
 - Answering Service Number
 - GSO Address
 - Area Address
 - District Address
 - Next Assembly date, location and map
- ✓ Trusted Servants List
 - Phone numbers and email addresses
 - Area Committee Chairs information
- ✓ District Calendar

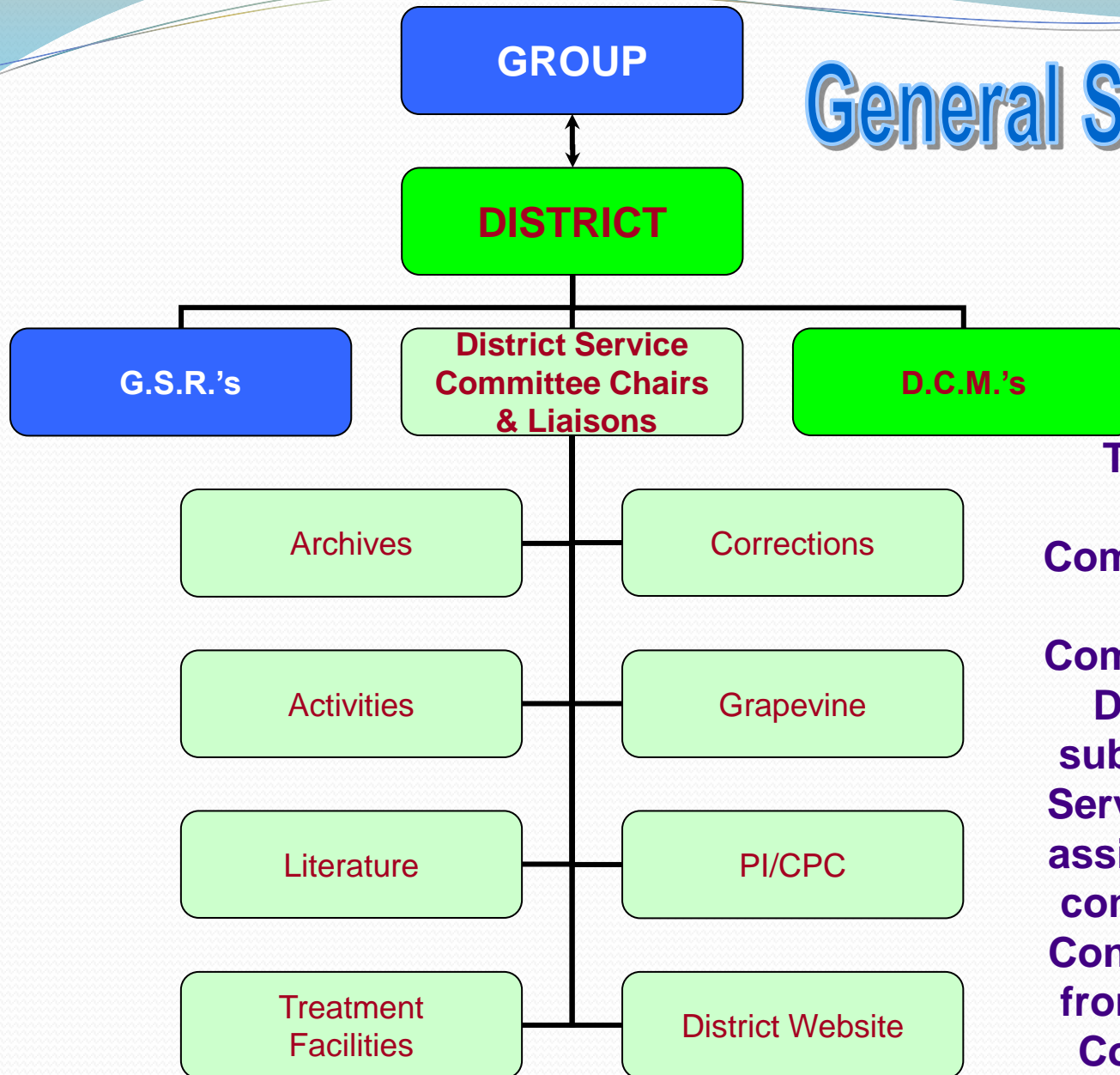
Things I Would Do

- ✓ Invite Service Committee Chairs, Area Delegate, other Area Servants
 - 15 minute presentation
 - Opportunity for GSRs and District Committee Chairs to get to know them
 - Share ideas for their committee
- ✓ Provide a printed agenda with topics and assembly agenda items
- ✓ Have GSRs report at beginning of meetings
- ✓ Car pool to Assemblies and Conferences
- ✓ Be an instigator
- ✓ Ask people to do specific things

Things I Would Do Different

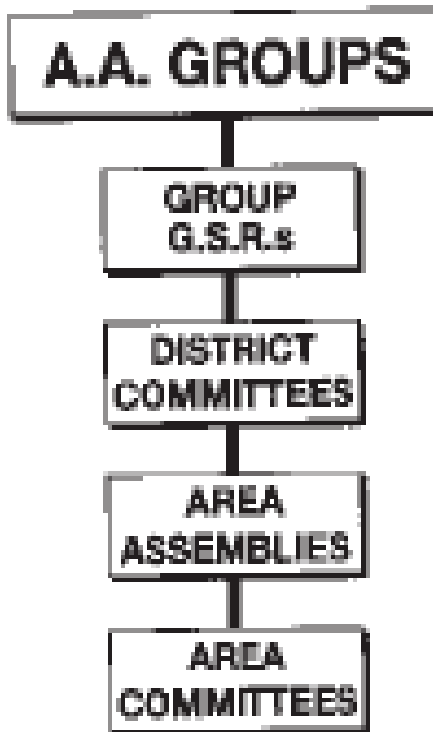
- ✓ Let people know I am the DCM when I visit a meeting
- ✓ Visit more groups
- ✓ Hold workshops
- ✓ Get all agenda items out to GSRs on time
- ✓ Take more time to explain agenda items
- ✓ Stress to Committee Chairs importance of being active
- ✓ Setup mentoring program with old/new GSR and Committee Chairs
- ✓ Provide a sample agenda for a GSR business meeting
- ✓ Be more selective in the service commitments above and beyond being DCM

General Service District

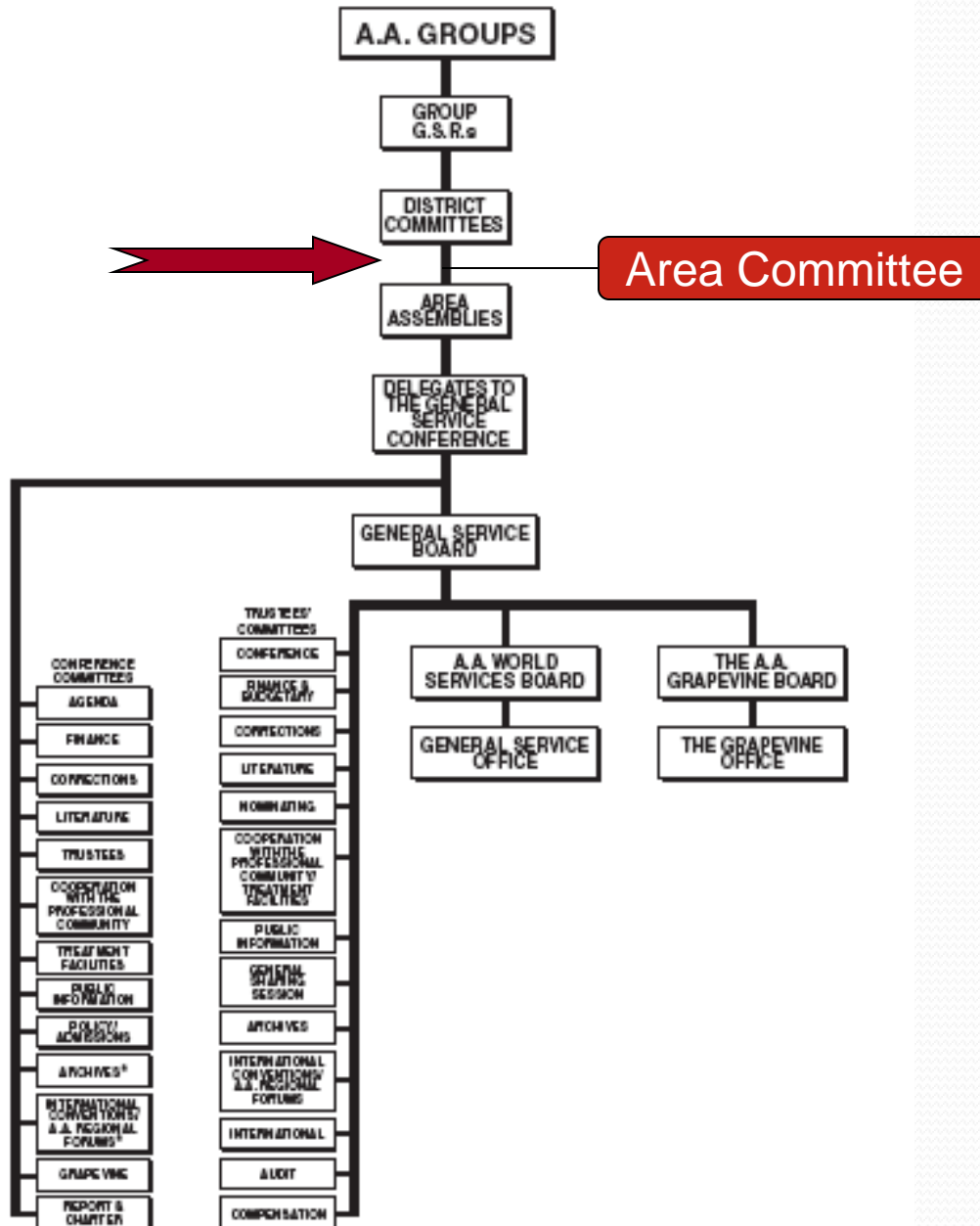


The District serves two primary functions: Communication link between Groups, and the Area Committee through the DCM. Districts are geographic subdivisions of the General Service Area and Groups are assigned to DCMs as best to communicate the collective Conscience of those Groups from to the General Service Conference structure and "AA as a whole".

Role of the Area Committee



The General Service Conference Structure (U.S. and Canada)



The Area Committee

Perhaps more than any other group of people in AA, the area committee is responsible for the health of the Conference structure thus the growth and The harmony in the AA fellowship

If G.S.R.s are lax, if there are difficulties in PI or some other service area, the committee member knows it can turn to the full committee for help

An active Area committee deals with all kinds of service problems.

The Area Committee

Composition:

D.C.M.'s

Area Officers

Chairs of Service Committees

Possibly outgoing Delegate

Possibly Past Delegates (with or without vote)



In Area 74

The Area Committee

Composition:

D.C.M.'s

Area Officers

Chairs of Standing Committees

The Area Officers

Composition:

Delegate

Alternate Delegate

Area Committee Chair

Alternate Area Committee Chair

Treasurer

Alternate Treasurer

Secretary

Alternate secretary

Registrar

In Area 74

The Area Officers

Composition:

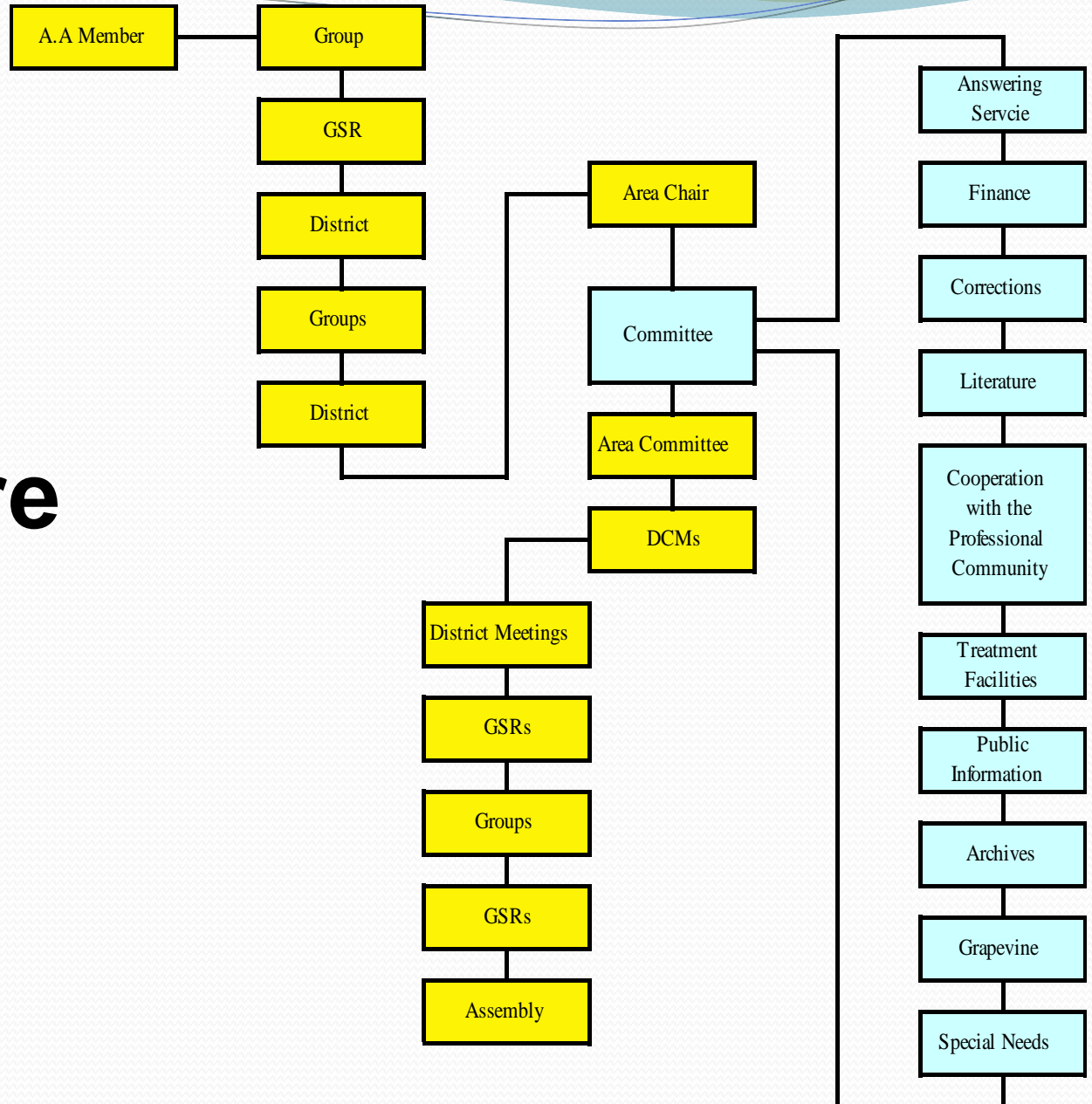
Delegate

Alternate Delegate / Area Committee Chair

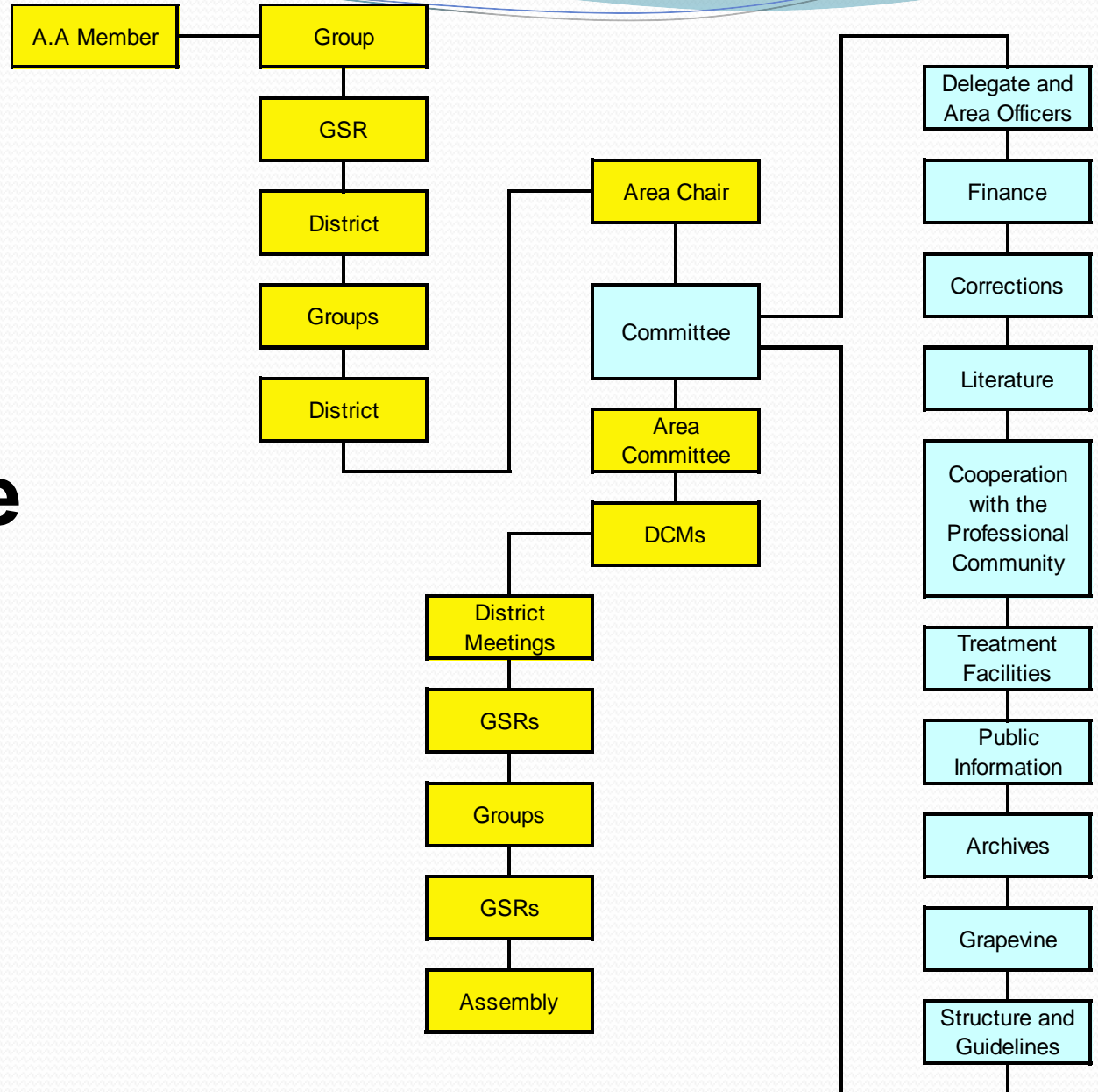
Treasurer

Secretary / Registrar

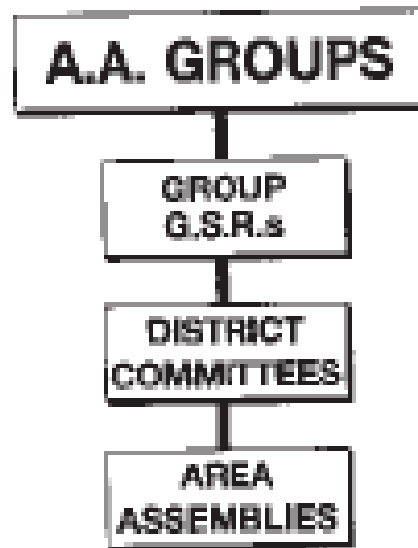
Area Structure



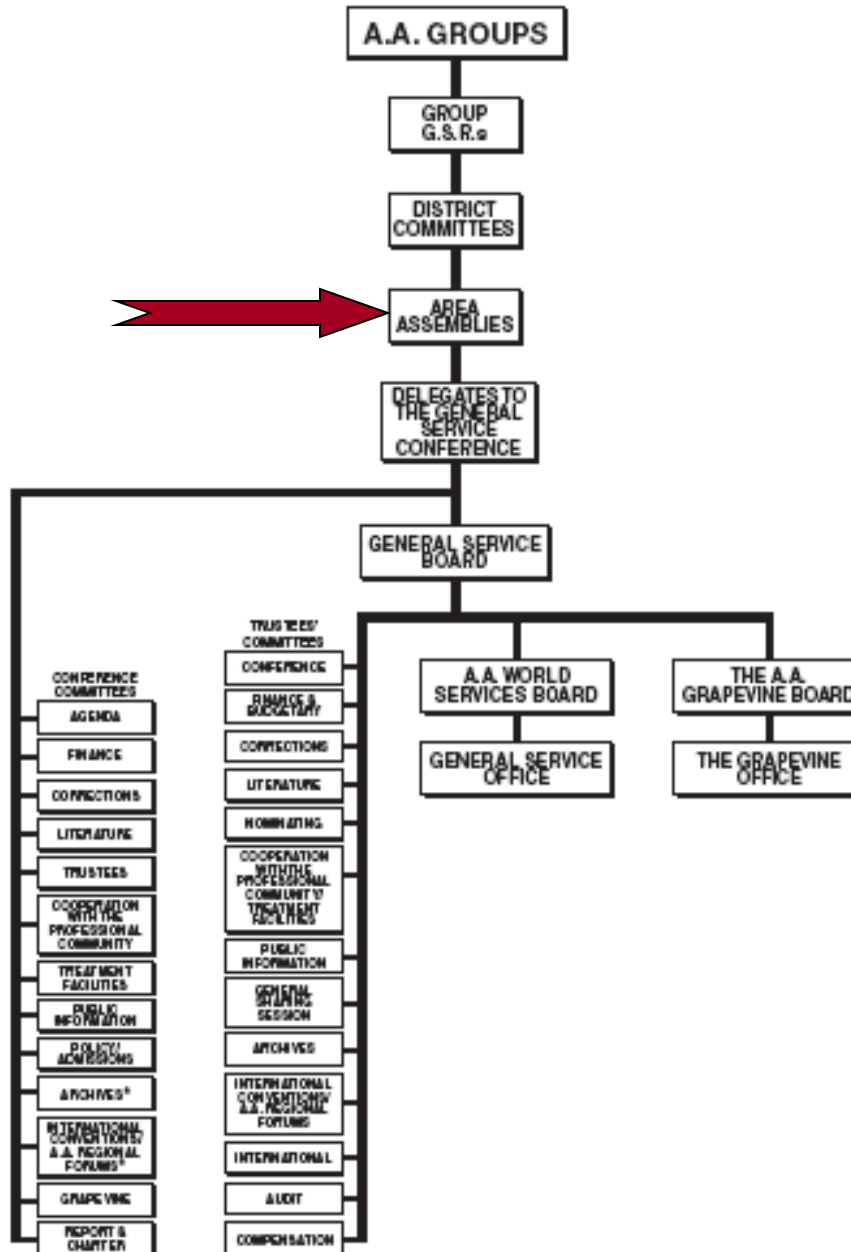
Area 74 Service Structure



Role of the Area Assembly



The General Service Conference Structure (U.S. and Canada)



The Area Assembly

The Area holds an important middle position in the Conference Structure – through the elected Delegate, it participates in A.A. worldwide, while through the D.C.M.s and the G.S.R.s it is close to the local scene.

Any meeting of Area G.S.R.'s and the Area committee is an assembly

The area assembly is the mainspring of the conference structure – the democratic voice of the movement expressing itself.

Assemblies are the responsibility of the area committee and conducted by its chairperson

The Area Assembly

Composition:

G.S.R.s (Voting)

D.C.M.'s (Voting)

Area Officers (voting)

Chairs of Service Committees (May Vote)

Possibly Past Delegates (May vote)

Other AA members encouraged to attend (No Vote)

The Area 74 Assembly

Composition:

G.S.R.s (Voting)

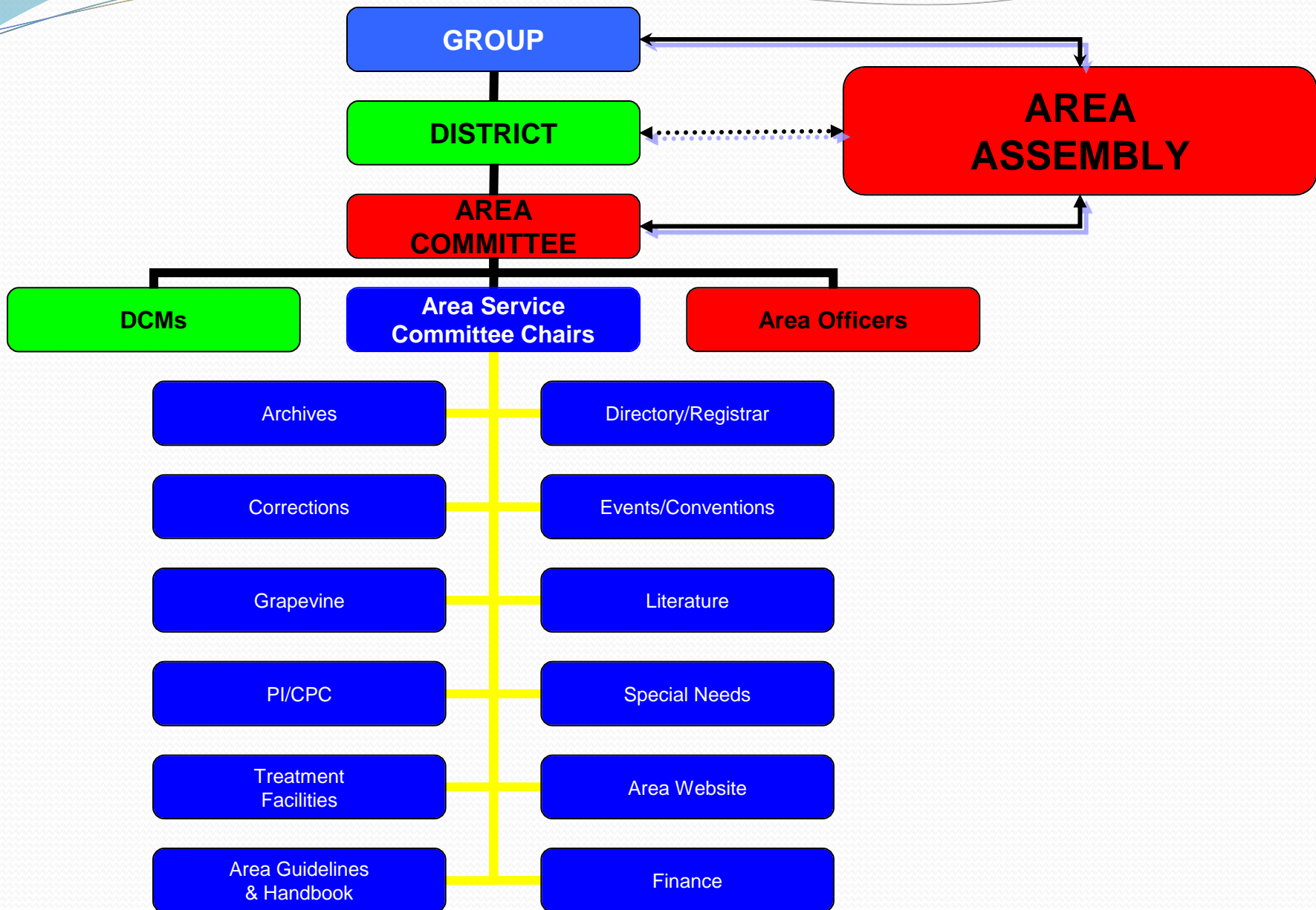
D.C.M.'s (Voting)

Delegate and Area Officers (voting)

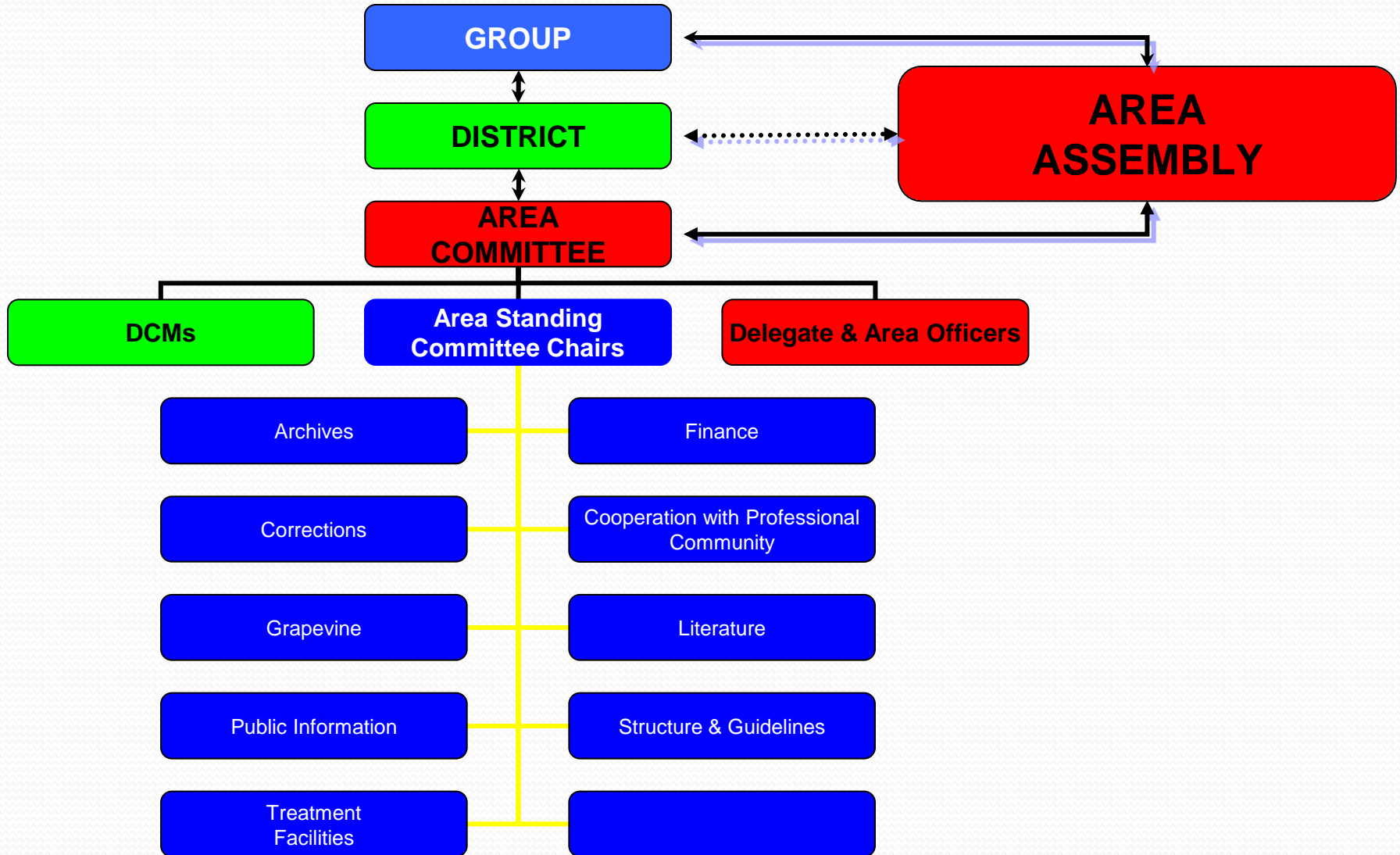
Chairs of Standing Committees (Voting)

Past Delegates (voting)

Other AA members encouraged to attend



Area 74 Service Structure



Concept One:

Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

- ✓ Alcoholic Foundation
 - Providing services by 1948
 - Uniform literature
 - Public Relations
 - Handling inquiries
 - Sharing Experience - General Service Office
- ✓ There is a separation
 - Between the foundation and the fellowship
 - Bill and Bob fill the gap

Concept Two:

The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in world affairs.

- ✓ In 1948 Dr. Bob suffers from a fatal illness
 - Becomes clear that Bill and Bob will not be around forever
 - November 16th, 1950
- ✓ 1951 - First General Service Conference
 - 5 year experiment
 - 1955 Bill turns the Fellowship over to the groups
 - The A.A. Groups now fulfill the role that the co-founders did

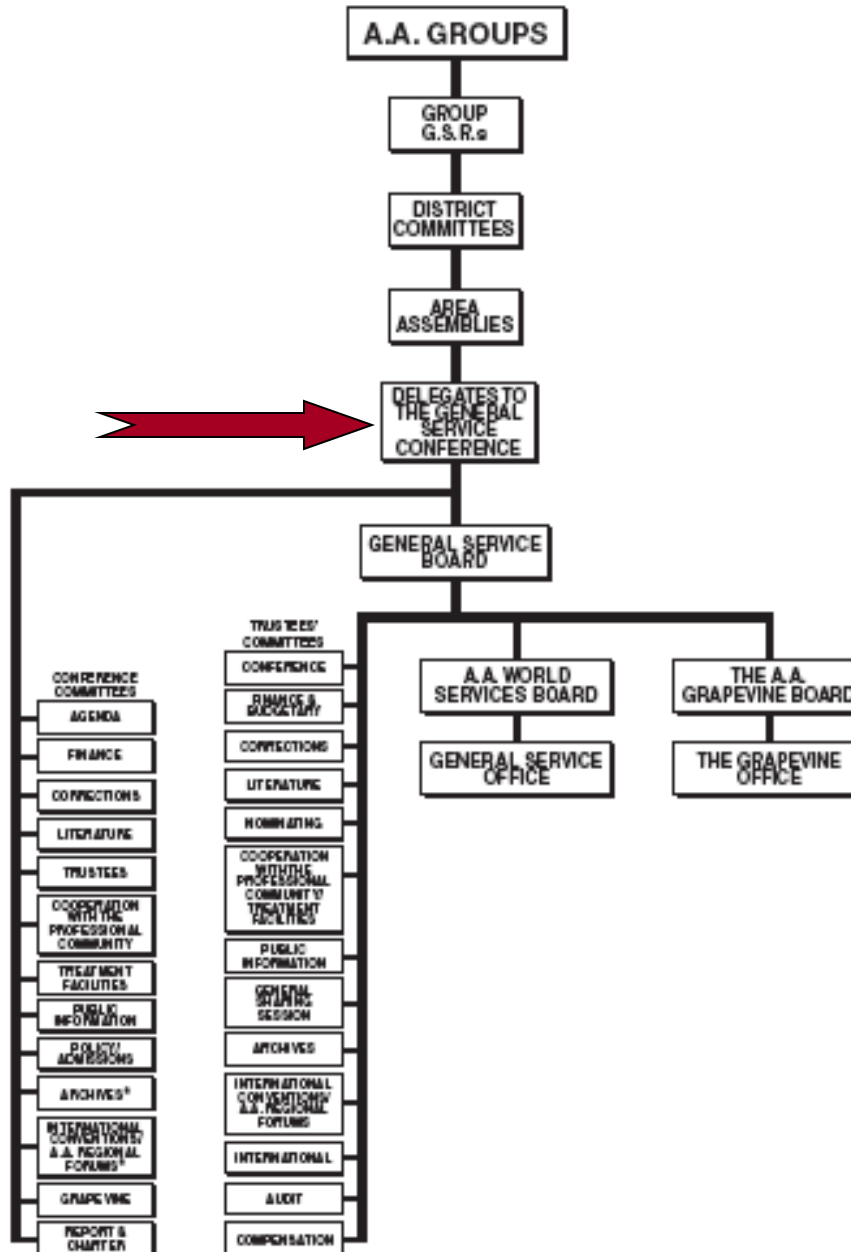
Concept Six:

The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.

The General Service Conference



The General Service Conference Structure (U.S. and Canada)



The General service Conference

- The Conference will act for A.A. in the perpetuation and guidance of its world services,
- It will also be the vehicle by which the A.A. movement can express its views upon all matters of vital A.A. policy and all hazardous deviations from A.A. tradition.
- Delegates should be free to vote as their conscience dictates;
- They should be free to decide what questions should be taken to the group level, whether for information, discussion or their own direct instruction.

From Current Conference Charter

Who Makes Up the Conference?

- ✓ 93 Delegates
- ✓ 21 Trustees
 - 8 Regional
 - 2 At Large
 - 4 General Service
 - 7 Non-Alcoholic
- ✓ 2 A.A.W.S. and Grapevine Directors
- ✓ 16 G.S.O. and Grapevine Staff

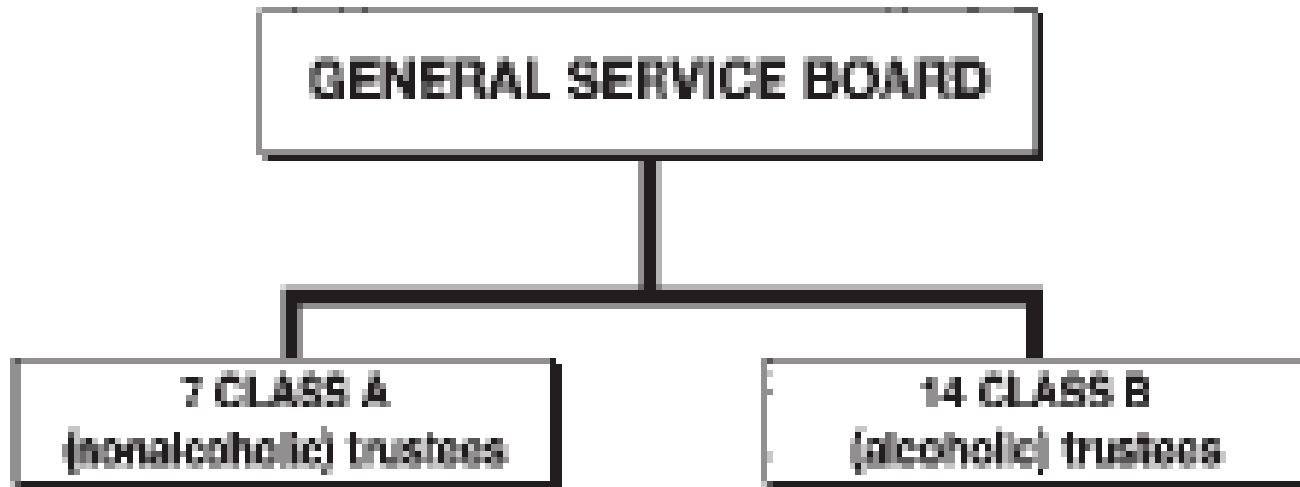
- ✓ Total - 134

Conference Committee System

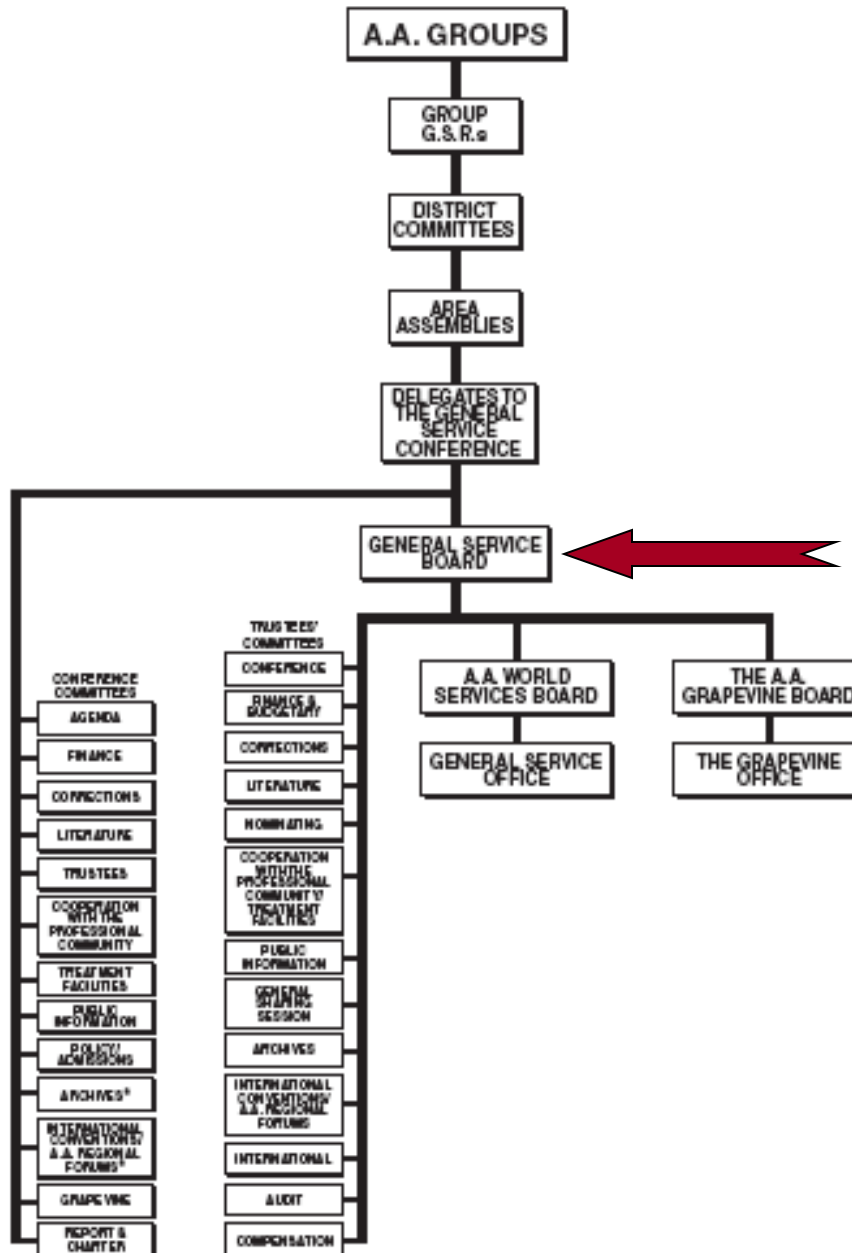
Conference Committees

- Agenda
- Cooperation with the Professional Community - CPC
- Corrections
- Finance
- Grapevine - GV
- Literature
- Policy and Admissions
- Public Information - PI
- Report and Charter
- Treatment Facilities/Special Needs - TF
- Trustees
- Archives
- International Conventions and Regional Forums

The General Service Board



The General Service Conference Structure (U.S. and Canada)



The General Service Board

- **The General Service Board (the trustees)**
- **Chief service arm of the Conference,**
- **Essentially custodial in its character . . . Excepting for decisions upon matters of policy, finance, or A.A. Tradition liable to seriously affect A.A. as a whole,**
- **the General Service Board has entire freedom of action in the routine conduct of the policy and business affairs of the A.A. service corporations. . . .**

— *excerpt from the Conference Charter*

General Service Board

- ✓ There are 21 Trustees
 - Fourteen Alcoholic (Class B)
 - 8 Regional
 - 2 At-Large
 - 4 General Service
 - 2 from A.A.W.S.
 - 2 from the Grapevine Board
 - Seven Non-Alcoholic (Class A)
- ✓ Trustees comprise the General Service Board
- ✓ G.S.B. owns A.A.W.S. and the Grapevine
- ✓ G.S.B. operates the General Service Office

General Service Office

Staff Positions

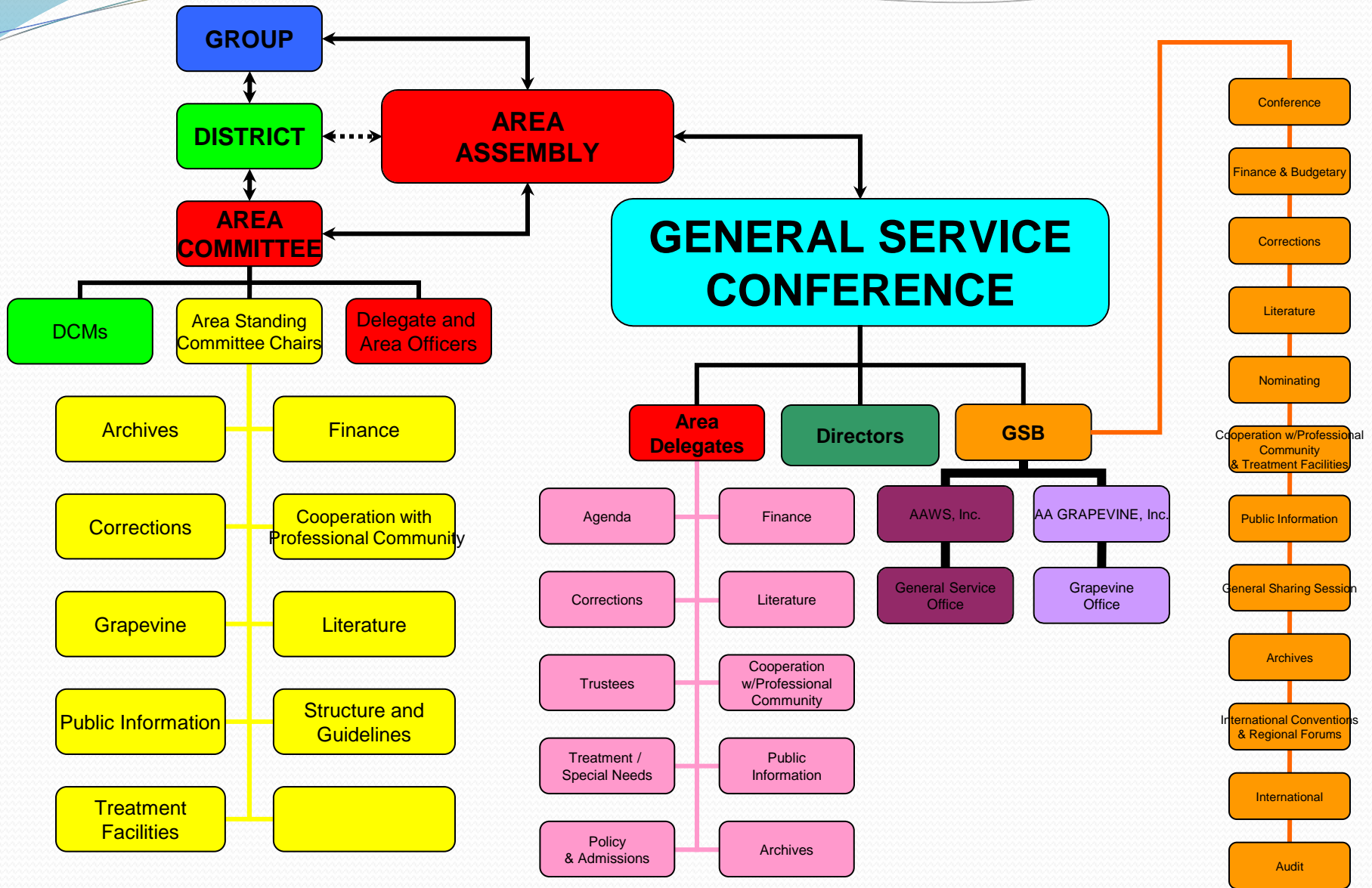
- Conference Coordinator
- Cooperation with the Professional Community
- Corrections
- Group Services
- International
- Literature
- Nominating
- Public Information
- Regional Forums
- Staff Coordinator
- Treatment Facilities / Special Needs

General Service Office

Services include:

- Box 459
- Loners and Internationalists
- Markings
- Sharing from Behind the Walls
- Corrections Correspondence
- Records
- Service Material
- A.A.W.S. Highlights
- Shared Experience
- Archives
- About AA
- Group Handbook
- A.A. Directories
- Public Information
- Anonymity Breaks
- Encourages Self-Support
- Coordinates the G.S.C.
- Organizes Regional Forums
- International Conventions
- Website
- Publications

General Service Conference Structure



The “Big Picture” and how it all fits together.



How does your Group fit in here?



Questions ???



First Concept:

“Final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.”