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One order of business at the seminar is choosing the site of the following year's meeting, and this time Akron, Ohio, was chosen.

Intergroups are in the front ranks of Alcoholics Anonymous, the points of contact for most of those who come into the rooms. As Bill W. remarked, "they make A.A. tick" (*The Language of the Heart*, p. 133).

■ Looking at Redistricting Options

Communication among groups can break down when their number in a district reaches a point where the district committee member—the D.C.M.—is unable to stay in touch with them all.

A district may deal with this by pursuing one form or another of redistricting, such as splitting itself into two or more parts, each with its own D.C.M. Alternatively, a district might create subdistricts. The choice is up to the local A.A. members; what works for some districts may not work for others.

Area 6, California Northern Coastal, to cite one example of how an area approached redistricting, has 22 districts that have been divided into about 130 subdistricts. Each of these subdistricts elects a local committee member (L.C.M.).

Depending on area practice, L.C.M.s may or may not be voting members of the area committee and may or may not hold regular meetings with the G.S.R.s in their subdistricts.

Each area goes about redistricting in its own way. One example is from North Florida, which agreed on the following at an area conference in 1995: "When a district reaches 20 or more groups, it may elect local committee members for each combination of 10 groups. The L.C.M. will function as an assistant to the D.C.M. and will not have a vote at the assembly."

As spelled out in *The A.A. Service Manual*, "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." (p. S31)

According to Butch W., who served as alternate delegate for California Northern Coastal in 2003 and 2004, "as far as we were concerned, splitting a district is a last resort. In effect, when you redistrict, you are creating two new districts, not one. Among other considerations are financial ones. The same number of groups must now support twice as many officers, plus rent. Also, too many districts can make for unwieldy area assembly meetings."

During the time he did service in Area 6, members from a number of districts came forward at area assemblies to propose dividing up their districts.

"When someone from a district called for splitting that district, we did not want to talk them out of it, but we would ask a few questions. First we would ask: do you have all your service positions filled? We'd also ask what percentage of their groups have active G.S.R.s and how splitting the district would improve that? Finally, we would ask them what the district has done to encourage participation, such as putting out a newsletter or organizing a day-long A.A. event," says Butch.

The point of posing these questions, he says, was to get the A.A. members in the district to consider their situations. A.A. members that want to split their district, he says, may be under the misconception that dividing their district into two is automatically going to boost participation and enthusiasm for service. Again, though, the decision is up to the district itself, says Butch.

The same holds true in Area 59, Eastern Pennsylvania. The delegate there, Gary L., says, "the Area does not approve or disapprove district splits; we view it as a local matter. We do, however, counsel that it not be done impulsively and we strongly urge them to include at least the area officers and perhaps even the area committee in their discussions, not with an eye toward talking them out of it, but simply to give them a broader range of experience to draw upon. If there are simpler solutions to their problems then they are certainly urged to try those first before resorting to a split."

Nevertheless, his area was actively redistricting in the 1980s and into the 1990s. As Gary reports, "Area 59 has experienced district splits in 1981, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1992, and 1998. In three of those years, there were at least two separate splits. About 60% of the time it was one district splitting into two, and about 40% of the time it was one district splitting into three. We have gone from 23 districts in 1980 to 47 districts currently."

As Gary points out, "Eastern Pennsylvania is a pretty big chunk of land—at least relative to our neighbors in the Northeast Region. That may have been the motivation for many of the splits."

In 2004, "we had our most recent dealing with the issue—an attempted split that was ultimately voted down by the district," says Gary.

■ Update for A.A. Directories

Starting in January 2006 a reminder will be mailed to all delegates, area chairs and area registrars advising them that it is time for the annual Group Updates to the A.A. Directories. Our Area Download Application (MS Access) will be available for the area registrars to bring their area records up-to-date. Deadline for all information in May 1, 2006.