



GRATITUDE GAZETTE

Eastern Area of Missouri
Conference Area 38
Fall, 2003

AM I ONE OF THE ANTS?

On a plane trip recently I was re-reading the book "Grateful To Have Been There", a book by Nell Wing, who for 25 years was Bill W.'s executive secretary and assistant, and which describes quite a bit of AA history from her perspective. (No it's not Conference approved, but neither is it Conference disapproved, and I just like to read anything I can find on AA.) In any event, at page 119 she is talking about some of the AA wisdom that has been passed down through the years and she mentions that a member from Tampa had observed that, "*AA is like a log floating downstream. On this log are a million ants clinging to it --- and each one thinks he's steering.*"

At first I saw only the humor in those lines, each of us thinking we are in charge or control, but as I thought more about it, I realized how paradoxically, it really was a truism, and how every member of AA is steering, if he or she wants to do so. Through the Home Group we each have the ability to have our voice heard.

In the Spring and Summer issues Matt L. has written some wonderfully informative articles about the roles of the Area Delegate and Chairperson, (a series we hope he will continue next issue), and how the Delegate serves as a conduit for information to and from the Area he or she serves.

Concerns, questions and opinions of members, Groups, Districts or the Area can be routed through our GSR our DCM's and to the Delegate, as the case might be, up to the Conference level and likewise questions, proposals and requests for guidance can be sent back through the delegate and down to the Group or individual.

The key to all of this however is how much do we want to be involved in guiding AA, do we want to be ants.

Here are some questions we might ask ourselves to see if we are taking an active role in guiding AA.

1. Am I taking the time to find out what's going on in AA?
 - a. Do I listen to the reports of my GSR?
 - b. Even though I don't hold an elected or appointed position, do I attend District or Area meetings or assemblies to keep informed?
 - c. Do I take the time to read what is available?
 - d. Do I ask questions of those in service or those who have served about what I don't understand?
2. Is my Group taking the time to find out what's going on?
 - a. Do we have a GSR?

- b. Do we give our GSR a chance to report on AA's workings and take requested actions or do we listen with half an ear and impatiently wait to hit the road?
 - c. Does the Group encourage accountability or does it elect a GSR and not really care whether he or she attends District and Area meetings and Assemblies?
 - d. Does the Group ask for and provide a well-informed Group Conscience on issues it is asked to report back on?
 3. Is the District doing all that it can to obtain information?
 - e. Do we encourage the Delegate to give us a report on the Conference?
 - f. Do we encourage our DCM to share what he or she receives from GSO and discuss items of interest or concern?
 - g. Do we encourage our GSR's to report to their Groups and bring back their feedback?
 - h. Do we attend the Area Assembly?
 4. Is the Area vibrant and alive?
 - a. Do we listen and share or sit and hope it will all be over soon?
 - b. Do we encourage new ideas or badmouth them without a fair trial?
 - c. Do we vote or give opinions on what is in our best interest or do we look out for the interest of AA as a whole?
 - d. Do we try to fully use the Service Structure as it was intended?

I'm sure that most of you could come up with additional questions that would apply as well or better than those above as a type of mini-inventory on your own involvement in steering AA, because, after all, only you can decide if you are one of the ants.

The Editor

CHAIRPERSON'S CHATTER

Hi to all the wonderful servants out there. Well, we are half way through our rotation in whatever position we may be serving. I hope you are enjoying and learning as much about AA and our service structures I have this year. We have tried new things, held on to old ones and have held the hand of AA out so that when the hand of the still suffering alcoholic reaches out we will be there. I hope you now see how ready we are to serve and you are more comfortable in bringing any needs, suggestions or concerns that your group or district has to the attention of the area.

There has been a lot of growth in our area and I am confident that through your efforts, we will be even better at what we do in the future relating to the area service. Our sharing sessions have given us the ability to really come together as an area. They have helped serve our purpose to inform our delegate before his attendance of the General Service Conference in New York. He was much better prepared due to your efforts and willingness to show up and

share your specific experience, strength and hope in our service structure.

What other organization is so willing and, at times, so persistent in wanting to have our opinions about what we think needs to be done and how to put it in place. One thing I have seen from my position this year is – action, action, and action. We have been very active in every area service entity and are improving how to better reach the alcoholic both inside and out of AA. Thank you, once again, for showing me what gratitude in action is all about.

Pat B. Area Chair

SPOTLIGHT ON COMMITTEES

The Gazette Staff would like to spotlight different area committees in our upcoming issues. If you would like to contribute, please submit your articles by e-mail where possible to gazette@eamo.org or otherwise get them to a committee member.

COOPERATION with the PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

The “yellow sheet” from GSO lays out, at first glance, a daunting task for the CPC Committee. The professional community encompasses many professions; medical, to include doctors, nurses, health care professionals, the legal community; to include lawyers, judges and probation officers, and on and on. Actually, it is limited only by imagination and creativity. Reaching them with information about AA is important. How important is that?

I need to remember that it was a professional who introduced me to AA. Without that introduction, I would certainly have continued down the road of destruction to a certain death. Most professionals have only a passing, and sometimes-inaccurate idea, of what AA is all about and how it works. That’s where the CPC committee comes in to help them help us.

We take our experience, strength and hope to the non-alcoholic too. Most non-alcoholics have a desire to help the alcoholic for either professional or personal reasons. We can relate to them our personal experience, strength and hope and demonstrate our commitment of recovery, service and unity by love and service to the still suffering alcoholic and to Alcoholics Anonymous. We can remind them of what an alcoholic is and is not, where to go for help and what to expect when they get there. In no case, do we ever give advice about their professional relationship and their client. Let the lawyers be lawyers and the doctors are doctors and so on.

The Group or Area forms a committee of interested members and lays out a plan for reaching the professionals. If they need assistance or advice they can contact the Area Chairperson who can help coordinate their efforts and advise how to get further assistance. The Area Chairperson will usually have experience in CPC efforts and has the network available to assist the efforts of the committee. Each Group is, of course, autonomous and can act, within Traditions, to reach any of the professional communities where they see a need or need is expressed.

The assistance can be as small as one AA member talking to a group of professionals, to an ad hoc sub-committee for larger

projects. There is always a need for more experienced AA members to help. Their experience in AA can translate to a large group. Lesser experienced AA members can perform a real service by delivering pamphlets to professionals offices, hotels, nursing homes, etc..

Like most service work in AA, there is a place for anyone and everyone. There is always a need for CPC work, it’s a matter of attention to the needs of the community.

Dave B. CPC Chair

RUN THAT BY ME AGAIN?

As our lead article discussed, AA is full of witty little one liners and slogans. Most of these we eventually come to appreciate, if not fully understand, but did you ever think how confusing they can be to the new-comer? Here are some examples that might start the head spinning of even the most high bottomed drunk:

You can’t keep it unless you give it away!

You can’t get ahead until you learn to be here!

You alone can do it, but you can’t do it alone!

In AA you have to surrender to win!

We’re all here because we’re not all here!

What you think you are, you are not; but what you think, you are!

I have to get out of myself to find myself!

Acceptance is about what is, not what is not!

You may not need a meeting, but I need you to have a meeting!

If you pray, why worry? If you worry after you pray, why pray?

You have to change your thinking to change your drinking, but to change your thinking you have to change your drinking!

If you didn’t have to re-read at least one of these you must be doing something right so continue to have a good life, one day at a time!

The Editor

**SORRY, COMPUTER
PROBLEMS AND OTHER LIFE
PROBLEMS LIMITED US TO
ONE PAGE THIS ISSUE. WE
APOLOGIZE AND WILL TRY
TO DO BETTER NEXT ISSUE.**