



GRATITUDE GAZETTE

EASTERN AREA OF MISSOURI CONFERENCE AREA 38

FALL 2004

YOUR LAST ASSEMBLY, OR ONE MORE OF MANY?

Well, two years have come and gone and hopefully we are all the better for our brief period of service as trusted servants for our fellows. Some questions on how to do our jobs have been answered and a whole host of others most likely remain in play. Perhaps you're just getting comfortable with your position and think, "now that I'm beginning to get the hang of this thing I'm out of the picture". You don't have to be, why not stay around in another position and be available to share your experience strength and hope with your successor.

The Editor

ROTATE ON 'NOT' OUT

Thank God this will be my last assembly. Those eight Saturdays over the next two years will now be free to do whatever it is I do on those days. What will I do? All of that free time to cut the grass, watch one more game on the television or to just sit on my ass like I usually do.

What about all of my friends – Mike, Chip, Pat and Alvina? Maybe I should be there to help whenever and wherever I can. I will surely miss them.

Ours is a program of three legacies, not just one or two. Recovery, Unity and Service are all parts of our program. Recovery is how it works to help us gain and retain sobriety. Unity teaches us how to live our AA program and Service is how we make sure that AA lives and survives. If we do not take care of it, it may not survive and then we will all surely die.

At one time I thought sobriety was enough, but in order to give back what was given to me is truly a blessing. Step twelve talks about help for the newcomer when we reach out our hand to help them, but it also says to carry the message and when we do service work we are carrying the message. Remember that a two-legged stool cannot stand by itself and our third legacy of service is needed for our survival.

Boy, I sure miss those Saturdays in Wentzville with all of

my friends, so what can I do to help? What job or jobs need to be done? Maybe I ought to be there so I can spend those Saturdays laughing, learning, helping and feeling needed. Maybe I'll stay!

Mike D. Alternate Editor

BENEFIT OR A BURDEN?

Was your term of service beneficial or a burden to you? Now is the time to reflect back and see whether you gained something towards your continued sobriety or merely passed two years and accomplishing nothing. Most of us would be surprised if you would say the latter, but if that is the case for you, try not to rain on someone else's chance to be of service. Don't unnecessarily bad mouth the experience; let everyone find out for him or herself whether the Third Legacy works for them. The articles that follow give us a chance to share in the experience of some of our fellows.

The Editor

FIRST TIME GSR

GSR. . . What had I done? Whatever possessed me, little Ms. "I'm not going to get involved in service work", to raise my hand and accept the nomination to represent my group in Alcoholics Anonymous, I'll never know.

It might have been the fact that I had been around awhile and saw the benefits of service work, or it could have been I wanted to get to know more about the AA structure, or maybe it was just plain ego. Whatever the reason was I was elected and for the last two years I have been the GSR for Gateway to Sobriety.

My Home Group and the District Meeting take place in the same church. What a bonus I thought! I'll never forget that first district meeting in January of 2002. I had no clue what to expect. No one told me anything about my new job, but of course I never asked either! It was a small meeting – and it seemed that everyone knew everyone else. Imagine that, most of those people were embedded in service work already and here I was a "green" GSR. Thank God (or your Higher Power) for the principles in Alcoholics Anonymous. Everyone there welcomed me,

as well as all of the other new GSR's, to the meeting that night.

So began my introduction into how AA works and just how powerful the voice of an AA member is. So unlike the "business" world where things are run "top" down – AA gets its strength from the general membership. It was my responsibility to attend meetings once a month and to go to the area assemblies four times a year.

My first area assembly was really an eye opener. Many people that I had met in meetings were there. At that time there was a "GSR only" meeting. Those meetings were for GSR's to get together and discuss problems, concerns and solutions with other GSR's and their groups. At that first meeting they needed nominations for a new GSR Chair. Since my name never gets pulled for anything anyway, I figured that I would go ahead and put it in the hat. Guess what. . . I was chosen to be the alternate chair for that meeting. Alternate did not seem that bad, but you guessed it, after the next Area Assembly the chair had to step down making me the new chairperson. I had no idea what I was doing. I was scared and excited all at the same time. Thank God I was sent to the Southwest Regional Forum last year and while I was there I asked around for any input into what I was supposed to do.

Now, I am a teacher, but I become all tongue tied when I must get in front of a bunch of adults and be "in charge". However, I was prepared with a topic and all for that first meeting. It just seems to be my luck though, that first meeting I chaired was to be my last. The Area wanted the GSR's to begin to attend committee meetings so we could get a "feel" for some of the other things that were going on with the area committees. Oh happy day. . . NO MORE MEETINGS TO CHAIR. I was also grateful for the opportunity to learn about how some of the other committees worked in Area 38. I sat in on almost all of the committees. CPC, PI, Corrections, Grapevine, etc., but the one that I liked the most was the Gratitude Gazette. I love to read and I love to write.

As I stated before I my group sent me to attend the Southwest Regional Forum in Kansas City last October. It was an honor to represent my home group during that wonderful weekend. It really was a highlight of my experience as a group GSR.

As I finish this article I am reflecting on the last two years, which have gone by rather quickly. I think about all of those people that I have met and all of things that I have learned as a result of my experience. I think the meetings at the district level and how we have very few people who actually get involved in service work. It seems that the same few people are the ones who come to the meetings. That is quite sad to me really, especially since our fellowship is one that is based on service work. Then I

think about all of the people that I have met at the Area Assemblies and how much people really do love Alcoholics Anonymous. I also think back and cherish the opportunity to serve my Home Group each and every month with reports from the district and/or area level. I truly have grown in Alcoholics Anonymous as a result of my job as GSR. So, for whatever the reason I raised my hand two years ago when nominated – I am glad that I did. I have absolutely loved the chance I was given to represent my Home Group.

Angie B. Outgoing GSR

OUTGOING DCM

It seems like just yesterday that I was elected DCM for my District. The two years have just flown by and I am grateful for the all that I have experienced and learned. Initially the thought of a 2 year commitment to this service position was a little overwhelming but by taking the job "One Day at a Time", like sobriety, it was easy for this alcoholic to manage.

My first district meeting as DCM, I learned some valuable lessons. I tried to insert too many topics for discussion and the meeting ran long. I now realize that the district meeting starts at 7:30 and should end promptly at 9:00 P.M. at the latest or you lose people's attention. As a DCM I now will table discussions if needed and go on to finish the agenda in a timely manner.

Many times the district has been asked a question regarding AA that we were not able to answer and have found that groupservices@aa.org is a valuable tool and will respond in a timely manner with clarifications and the GSO's position. Our District has been e-mailing members and posting a monthly memoranda on www.eamo.org which includes responses from GSO and various other business of the district.

District meetings and assemblies always have GSR's or members attending for their first time and the DCM needs to explain things like who can vote, what to do at an area assembly and some basics on the structure of the district. Recently at the summer assembly I noticed that one of our GSR's did not know that Red Badge is for voting and Blue Badge is non-voting at assemblies (I never explained to her).

I have learned that it is best for a district to concentrate its efforts on one or two things it does well and not try to cover all committees and projects when financial resources or volunteers are limited. I intend to continue to serve in our district, as the DCM's before me have to help carry the AA message and help me stay sober and happy.

David S. Outgoing DCM

YOUNG PEOPLES CORNER

I have been looking at my experience with service work lately. I have thought a lot about the spirit of rotation.

When the Traditions speak of those that hold service positions as "trusted servants" I can see how this aligns with the spirit of rotation. In my Home Group we rotate positions between every month to every 2 years depending on what you do. I have been a G.S.R for a year and a half for instance while the person who announces we have literature available switches every month. With my position I needed time to figure out what an Area Assembly is and what part I have to play in AA as a whole. I believe it is such a fantastic idea to allow everyone in a group to have a significant role. When I first came into AA service opportunities were thrown at me from left to right. I loved this, though later I realized I needed to give a new person a chance to do something for someone else. It seems like as soon as I get used to a position and I become some sort of expert we rotate. It is such a blessing to be able to teach my sponsees not only the 12 steps but also how to be a member of AA. As a part of my ideals at every meeting I go to I try to be of service in some way. Either by cleaning ashtrays, going to group consciences or just saying hi to the person next to me. When I go to bed at night I can honestly say I am a useful human being today.

Ashley S. Gazette Staff

CHAIRPERSON'S CHATTER

Hi to all our fellows,

My, my, my, you sure are busy out there! The groups, district and area level workers sure have been willing to work hard, sacrifice their time just to find new ways to reach the suffering alcoholic. It is nothing but great to watch as new avenues are being put in place to carry our message. Just goes to show when there are a few who open the gate, many more will follow. We are all leaders in A.A., anytime we pass on the wonderful joys of service to the new person or the member who has never experienced serving at the group, district or area levels.

Those small steps you thought might not lead anywhere have now created much activity in every committee of our service structure. Your groups have come to the front and the districts are so much stronger today. We can look back over the last few months and see progress in action, goals set and achieved and all accomplished with a high level of integrity. All because we have so many winning members who not only love the suffering alcoholic, but also Alcoholics Anonymous.

It is a privilege to serve with such a wonderful group of Area 38 servants. We have tried new things and whether you agreed with them or not, you walked in the true spirit of unity. There are no words that can truly express the level of gratitude I have in my heart concerning your willingness, sacrifice and determination to get the job done. So, thank you, for allowing me the opportunity to serve as your Area 38 Chair. Just like the ones before us, we shall leave Area 38 a little better than when we came.

Pat B. Area Chair

AREA ARCHIVES

Do you remember the thrill when you first visited the Gateway Arch, the intrigue of the Westward Expansion Museum, or the Lewis and Clark Expedition? That, my friends, is called history! Bill W. and Dr. Bob might not be as famous as Lewis and Clark, but I'm willing to bet they saved many more lives!

A favorite college professor once defined history as, "A story of the past which we must learn from, whether good or bad." - and that certainly applies to Alcoholics Anonymous!

The Eastern Area Archives is one of the best, kept secrets in AA Area 38 - and that is a shame. Why should you take the time to visit the Archives? You can learn more about the history of Alcoholics Anonymous, both local and world, wide; investigate the history of your group, district or facility - (Did you know that the original Wilson Club of St. Louis had membership cards, rules, and even expulsion after a third slip?). You can learn more about the past activities of our various service committees, including the one you may be serving on right now or hoping to serve on in the near future.

What can you expect to find at the Archives? We have most issues of the Grapevine, early editions of our literature, Big Books starting with the 1st edition, 6th printing. Some of these are special editions such as the reduced size War issues from the 1940's, and the Superbowl Big Book, signed and presented to us by the Tennessee Area Assembly in 2000 after the Rams beat the Titans (23-16). We have loads of newspaper articles and photographs. We have national and local newsletters, many of which are now defunct. We have a collection of Where and When's, starting from 1964. You can really see the growth of the fellowship flipping through these. In some years past, Group Service Representatives were named along side their groups. It's a regular trip down memory lane.

Perhaps you are thinking about working for the Archives. There is certainly much to be done. Working for the Archives is a little different than working for other committees, in that our goal is not so much in carrying the message, but rather in preserving it. It is a quieter form of service. Perhaps you might like to keep up the history of your own district, or even get some of our wonderful "old timers" on tape for all to enjoy in our tape library. It is a wonderful opportunity to immerse yourself in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous, learn how the program and fellowship developed, and connect in a very special way to

all of the Eastern Area of Missouri, through our shared history.

The Eastern Area Archives are open from noon until 7:00 PM on Wednesdays, along with Central Services and the Eastern Area Office at 2683 Big Bend Blvd. If you are interested in working at the Archives, have items you would like to donate, or even visit at a different time, please contact Bill W. (314-921-5504), Karen L. (636-797-4216), or Sandie G. (314-832-9400).

Karen L. and Sandie G. Archives Committee

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU, FOR ALL YOU HAVE ACCOMPLISHED OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS!

HOPE TO SEE YOU AGAIN FOR TWO MORE YEARS!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Oct. 8-10, SW Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (SWRAASA) Clarion Inn, Houston, TX; for more info and to download flyers, see the SE Texas Area Homepage.
- Oct. 16 Group 448 Chile Cook-off. Whitecliff Park, Crestwood, MO 3-6PM 1st Annual event to provide scholarships for the Alano Banquet. \$10.00 Contestant registration, \$5.00 tasting participation. For info call Steve G. 488-5525.
- Oct. 16 Olive Branch Reunion Banquet presented by Group 562 St. Ann Convention Center. Guest Speaker Midge G. Atlanta, GA for info call Bob @ 1-800 688-4180.
- Oct. 23 District 41 Humility Workshop at St. Mary's Hospital on Clayton Rd. Cafeteria Rooms A & B. Noon – 2:00 PM
- Oct. 30 Pacific Facility Halloween Dance following an 8:00 PM open meeting. Call the club for more info. (636) 257.2430
- Nov. 6 4 Absolutes Seminar. St. Alban Roe Church Hwy 109 and Shepard, Wildwood, MO Sponsored by There is a Solution Group. Fellowship at 9:30 AM Seminar 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM Lunch orders will be taken.
- Nov. 14 7th Annual Illinois, Missouri Men's AA Breakfast Collinsville, IL Holiday Inn. 9:00- 11:30 AM Tickets \$15.00 for info call Jim (618) 633-2151 or Esteban (314) 647-1776.
- Nov. 20 64th Annual Alano Banquet, "Oldest Continuous AA Banquet in the World" St. Louis Airport Marriott Hotel, 6PM- Midnight \$29.00 per person.–