



# GRATITUDE GAZETTE

AUTUMN 2007 REPORTING SERVICE NEWS AND VIEWS  
IN AREA 38 ≈ EASTERN MISSOURI AA

## Service as Gratitude in Action

Because November is Gratitude Month (in addition to Traditions Month), this issue's theme title seemed appropriate. Interviews with trusted servants throughout the Eastern Area overwhelmingly cited gratitude as a motivator toward involvement in service and also as a benefit. Jim Estelle, Chair Emeritus of the General Service Board, who is visiting our October Assembly, spent many years as a Class A (non-alcoholic) Trustee serving AA. He demonstrates the selfless spirit of service and love for AA through countless hours of his donated time. Several people share about giving back through committee work. Someone recently asked, "Are we being served, or are we doing service?" Since AA has been good to us, we now continue, in gratitude and service, to ensure that AA will be alive and well for those who will need us in the future. *In Service, Editor*

It is vital that our committees in the Districts are strong—larger than "committees of one." What is a good model to follow? Some of our Districts have committees composed of members from several Groups who meet regularly outside of the District meeting. They develop goals and projects which are then reported to the District.



How can we build local committees? Ideally, the Area plays a role being proactive/reaching out. Our Area committee chairs and alternates have been actively visiting the Districts. In addition, District committee chairs would also be active in Group outreach. Visit the Groups. Find the right people. Ask for their participation. While it is encouraged for all AA members to visit their District meetings or call their DCMs to find out how to get involved, the personal outreach of the District and Area committees seems to yield the most effective results. It is also essential for the DCM to be a resource and guide for the District's committee chairs, and to visit the Groups.

### Committees Giving Back

Sponsoring people, 12th Step calls, and involvement with Group activities are at the heart of AA service. But there is a world of AA Third Legacy service outside of these activities—essential work that enables us to make 12th Step work possible now and in the future. We expand our work of carrying the message through our AA General Service Conference structure. Thus, committee work enters the picture. Some committees do direct 12th Step work, such as Corrections and Treatment. Some carry the message through third parties (Cooperation with the Professional Community, Public Information). Other committees, i.e., Archives, are more indirect, but they are essential.

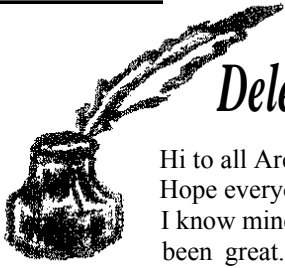
Our committees at the Area, and at most Districts, are modeled after the General Service Conference Committees. Currently, there are 12 standing committees at the Area. Group members participate in the District committees. The challenge before us is to build solid functioning committees. There is often an assumption that the necessary work is getting done at the Area. The jobs of the Area committees are basically to work as coordinators and clearing houses for the Districts and Groups. They run Area workshops and participate in large Area events, but the major committee work is done locally—in the Districts.

To increase the effectiveness of our committees, it helps, at times, to remove the arbitrary boundaries between Districts, to go where needed—meet more needs with more people. Some Districts and Groups are already volunteering in other Districts, particularly with Corrections and Treatment.

It is necessary to keep in mind the primary purpose of the committees; to carry the message, to make 12th Step work possible, to follow the Responsibility Statement, "I am responsible.....". We should not assume that the work is being done by others—it is up to each individual to get involved. If we don't get involved with service beyond the Group level, AA will continue to decline.

There are many rewards from working on a committee. Joining a committee is almost like joining a new arm of the Fellowship—it grows around you. We get outside of ourselves. We make a multitude of new friends—meeting people on the same journey and walking the walk with others. Giving back—carrying the message through committees—enhances a rich, sober life for ourselves and ensures AA's survival.

*Material provided by Larry N., Area 38 Alternate Chair*



## Delegate's Message

Hi to all Area 38 Members !!  
Hope everyone had a great summer.  
I know mine has been busy and it's  
been great. I have been to every

District reporting what happened at the 57th General Service Conference, and was amazed before I was half-way through. You have welcomed me with such hospitality and enthusiasm. You have suited up and showed up to listen and to ask questions about the business at hand in AA. You have not only opened up your mind and hearts to what I was reporting, but some of you have even opened up your homes to me, lessening the stress from all the road trips required to do my job.

You have shown me that our Area is alive and well. We are strong in the unity and spirit of our Traditions. I have watched the Concepts in action and am so pleased at how our efforts, as a Fellowship, are bringing so many newcomers to our doors. Our committees are out there letting our "friends of AA" know where we are and what we can do to help that still suffering alcoholic. I also see such a strong set of District and Area officers working so diligently to serve the Groups and AA as a whole. They work harder behind the scenes than what they outwardly show. They try to make sure things are in place for you. This way you are well informed prior to any decisions you are asked to make, or doing any work that needs to be done. Please take the time to say "thank you" to them.

We are now at our last Assembly in the first year! Wow, time is flying by. Take time to look back and see how much you have learned not only about AA and our service structure, but also how much you have learned about yourself. Yes, you will be amazed before you are half way through!! It's getting a little easier to serve in your position. There isn't quite as much fear now, but that sensing is present that there is still so much to do. Just remember, that it is not how much we do, as it is just getting a little more done than before. Pretty soon, you can look back and go, "Wow, look how much has been done just One Day at a Time!!"

Before I close, please let me wish all of you a very sober and safe holiday season throughout the next few months. What a wonderful opportunity to apply these principles in all our affairs. Family, friends, co-workers and others we may never realize can see what a wonderful way of life we have been given. It is by our willingness to rely on that Higher Power, the taking of our 12 Steps, and living by our Traditions that makes us true examples of what it is to be of maximum service to God and others. Take care, and see you around the Area.

*Yours in service, Pat B.,  
57/38 Eastern Missouri*

## GRAPEVINE—A Great Tool for Carrying the Message of Recovery



My name is Gene and I'm your Grapevine Representative for Area 38. I'd like to share a few thoughts about the use of the Grapevine in 12th Step work. Many of us subscribe to the Grapevine and find it a valuable aid in our own recovery. I find many subjects for meditation in its stories. It truly is like a meeting in print. I also believe the Grapevine is an under-utilized resource for our 12th Step work. Often, a frightened newcomer may not be able to feel a connection right away at a meeting or other 12th Step activity because of fear, but that new person may respond to a story he or she reads in a Grapevine given to them. Some Groups give a Grapevine in a newcomer packet; others subscribe to several copies and have them available at their meetings. Grapevine themed AA meetings can use the monthly discussion topics in the magazine.

At the District and Area level, Grapevine is a wonderful way for the standing committees to carry the message of recovery. Many Grapevines are taken behind the walls by Corrections workers. I know of several people who remove the staples from the magazine and replace them with thread so they can be taken into those facilities that prohibit stapled material. They can do Corrections 12th Step work from their sewing room! Similarly, Treatment and Bridging-the-Gap Committees use Grapevine to introduce alcoholics in Treatment centers to our Fellowship. Cooperation-with-the-Professional-Community and Public Information groups can use our magazine to inform the public about what AA is and is not. Grapevines may be left in doctors' waiting rooms (with permission) where someone in need may see the message of recovery. The special needs of some of our members may be met by receiving a Grapevine, especially those who have hearing difficulties or who can't get out to face-to-face meetings.

Please remind your Group or Committee of the possibilities of using our wonderful magazine to carry the message of recovery to those who don't know about AA, to the frightened newcomer and to the still suffering AA member in need of the benefits Grapevine can provide. Individuals, Groups and Committees can subscribe in the normal manner to single or multiple copies, or they can purchase 50 back issues for \$40.00. If anyone wishes further information, contact me at [grapevine@eamo.org](mailto:grapevine@eamo.org).

*Gene M., Area 38 Grapevine Committee Chair*



## Fall for PI

(Public Information Committee)

A new fall season is upon us. In September, General Services in New York will be distributing the new 2007 Public Service Announcement, "Force of Nature." I am presenting this at the October Assembly. A lot of graduating high school seniors are off to their freshman year in college. Now is a good time to contact guidance counselors at the university campuses and community colleges in your Districts. It's helpful for the counselors to know who to contact within AA for literature, meeting information, and possibly speakers. As we're well aware, a lot of alcohol abuse goes on among college students.

This is a good time to ask around the meetings in your District to find out who organized local health fairs in the past 12 months. A lot of planning for health fairs goes on at this time. Sometimes we can be invited to staff a booth free of charge; and be aware that we have an Area PI budget to support literature for displays at health fairs in the Area. We are most effective when we make contacts with organizers early and have an active participation.

Hard on the heels of a normally pleasant Missouri fall, winter will arrive. Thinking of flu shots? If you plan to get a flu shot from your physician, why not make sure that he or she has an up-to-date meeting listing so that they can guide others seeking recovery to our tables. I guess that we have all from time-to-time read magazines in a doctor's waiting room. How about asking to put two or three copies of recent Grapevines amongst the periodicals in the doctor's waiting room? You never know where lightning may strike. Also, you may want to look into leaving some Grapevine issues in the Emergency Rooms of your local hospitals.

I'm sure your District PI and District committee members have lots more great ideas for making people aware of our support for those who wish to stop drinking. Please share your successes with us so that we can pass them on around the Eastern Area. We are happy to copy good ideas. If you have any questions about our possible support for new PI efforts, please contact David W. (636-537-9910, [dwassoc@aol.com](mailto:dwassoc@aol.com)) or Holly K. (636-578-1478).

*David W., Area 38 PI Committee Chair*

# Love and Service for AA

## Interview with Jim Estelle

### Chair Emeritus General Service Board

Jim Estelle served as Class A (non-alcoholic) Trustee on the General Service Board 1977 to 1986, and was elected Chairman of the Board 1993 to 1997. He was director of the Texas Department of Corrections for 12 years, and brought his background in correctional administration to the Board. With some gaps in service, his involvement in AA has totaled 24 years. He continues to stay in touch with AA General Service Board affairs, and is also associated with three other non-profit boards. This recent interview was conducted by phone.

**GG:** *Our Class A Trustees devote so much time and energy to service in our Fellowship. What prompted your interest in AA?*

**JE:** All of my professional life was spent in corrections; I continually witnessed AA doing things for alcoholics in the jails and prisons that I, or other people in corrections work, could not do. I became profoundly grateful for the work done by AA members.

**GG:** *What motivated you to join our General Service Board?*

**JE:** Two close friends of mine were past Trustees of the General Service Board—one Class A (non-alcoholic) and one Class B (alcoholic), and they asked me to stand as a Trustee of the Board. I accepted on the condition that my two friends sponsor me.

**GG:** *How important is sponsorship for Class A Trustees?*

**JE:** Every Class A Trustee needs sponsors. Throughout my AA service, I have had three kinds of sponsors: spiritual, service and “regular” sponsors.

**GG:** *You mentioned gratitude in your association with AA.*

**JE:** I have always had real gratitude for what AA does for inmates in the jails and prisons. Some of the AA members used to tell me that they did not need thanks for coming into the prison—they were doing this for their own sobriety. But I still saw all of the good that they did, and remained thankful. Whenever I have attended an AA corrections workshop—when I have seen former inmates living sober and productive lives, it has been pay day for me. And I’m grateful for the personal benefits I have gained.

**GG:** *What are the benefits?*

**JE:** I noticed a difference in attitude and a difference in my style of management. I listen more. The 12 Steps give me principles which I try to practice in my own life. No one lays claim to ownership of the AA way of life. In doing service, we get so much more out of it than we receive.

**GG:** *What trends have you noticed in Corrections and AA?*

**JE:** AA in corrections has improved through the years. Around the country we’re locking up more people. The Fellowship has been more responsive. More AA literature and AA sponsorship are now available in the prisons.

**GG:** *What else have you observed about AA Corrections work?*

**JE:** Correctional AA activities are like the outside—if someone is ready for it, it works. There is teamwork between corrections professionals and the Fellowship. The work is greatly enhanced by AA Corrections Committees joining up with other AA Committees such as CPC (Cooperation with the Professional Community). I have noticed that AA Corrections work can get into one’s system—many people want to stay; this is good. It is also our responsibility to sponsor others into this service.

**GG:** *What do you recommend to reduce recidivism?*

**JE:** Meeting attendance within the first 24 hours after discharge. Bridging the Gap—that connection—is important. When someone takes them to a meeting, it shows that people care.

**GG:** *What are your thoughts on the current health and future of AA?*

**JE:** Internationally, AA is exploding. In the US and Canada there is a need to do more 12<sup>th</sup> Step work, and a need for more good sponsorship. Also, one of the additional ways we show our gratitude in action is to put money in the basket in order to help AA reach out to others.

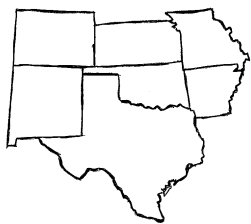
**GG:** *Tell us about your current General Service Board involvement.*

**JE:** I’m now involved to a limited degree. I attend Board Week-ends and the General Service Conference. I have learned to be an “elder statesman” rather than a “bleeding deacon.” This can be difficult to learn!

**GG:** *Thank-you for your service to our Fellowship.*

**JE:** I’m grateful for the opportunity to participate in service.

*Please see the expanded interview at [www.eamo.org](http://www.eamo.org). Go to Gratitude Gazette.*



## South West Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly

It doesn’t matter how you pronounce it, it’s on its way to the Eastern Area of Missouri. In just over 12 months Area 38 will be the host area for the 11<sup>th</sup> SWRAASA. On October

10<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup> you will have the opportunity to meet and share with lots of AA’s interested in service—right here in St. Louis.

What is a SWRAASA, you ask? It is a service oriented gathering of persons from the 11 areas of the Southwest Region. It’s modeled after the service weekend the Pacific Region was hosting. Our first one was held 21 years ago in Colorado. The idea was to help folks to learn how to serve AA at all levels.

All you service junkies out there are in for a weekend full of workshops and sharing sessions. This is a great event to bring new people to. This is not a convention and it is not a “party”. It is a weekend filled with information on service positions. You will get to share with others from around the Southwest Region. You will meet people that serve their

Groups, Districts and Areas in the same service position you hold. Let your group know it is well worth their time and money to send someone to it.

You will also get to meet our new Southwest Regional Trustee, Connelly B. and the 11 people (aka... Delegates) selected to serve at the General Service Conference on Panels 56 and 57. When this weekend is over you will know what is meant when someone says they served on Panel 39.

We have started putting together a committee for this event. If you want to help us make this the best SWRAASA ever, please give us a yell. We can use all the help we can get. We could also use some financial support to put this event on. If your group could afford to contribute \$10, \$20 or \$50 to support this event we would greatly appreciate it. We will let you know at the next Assembly where to send your contributions.

*Yours in Service, Chip B. 55/38  
2008 SWRAASA Chair*

