



GRATITUDE GAZETTE

Special fiscal year-end Budget Edition

Eastern Area of Missouri

Conference Area 38

Spring, 2002

Notes, not quotes, from talks with...

Area Chair

Seems like we're fighting less over money than in other years. Lots going on with the area office, including Frank's recent trip to GSO in New York to work on their new database system.

Registrar

Got a new laptop – can now work at one central location and have everything routed through the office. This is much better than working from home with individually-owned computer and software. Have been updating the eamo.org webpage to make it more user friendly. New, better email setup. Working on setting up criteria for the registrar position so that people will understand how much computer knowledge is involved before standing for it.

Recording Secretary

Got a new laptop. Reporting from committee chairs and DCM's has improved tremendously; they've started following the unofficial "How to Give a Report" guidelines. With the first few written reports, had to edit a lot because people included too much; they didn't realize that what was good for the microphone was not good for the minutes. People didn't like things being left out, but they've learned that it has to be just business and not chatty personal info. People started to call and ask questions, and now the minutes are much efficient to write.

Treasurer

The prudent reserve is now invested in a CD. They sent out thank-you notes to all the districts with pamphlets enclosed.

Archives

The archive facility on Big Bend Blvd. has been renovated and blackout drapes were put in. The reading and viewing room is now, again, available on Wednesdays from 10am to noon. Have distributed to each district a questionnaire of district history, to be compiled along with the group histories. The traveling archive has been in constant use lately.

Corrections

The new corrections book is out: *Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell*. A new prison opened in Charleston, MO in District 8. In August, districts 7 & 8 held a workshop to build up a volunteer base, and in November meetings started going in. On March 15, New York will be sending the 500 Big Books for 500 bucks to the committee. GSO sends letters from people coming out of prison who need rides to a meeting their first day out, and we've been fielding these. Thanks to all the volunteers who make meetings possible for so many prisoners.

Cooperation with the Professional Community ("CPC")

We currently have no CPC committee at the Area level.

Public Information

Have been pushing PSA (public service announcement) radio spots in a big way; have placed them in around 20 different places, mostly further out from St. Louis, e.g., Kirksville and the Boot-heel. The next phase will be audio-visual PSA's. A lot of districts without CPC or PI are starting to get interested in committees, and two districts have recently formed committees, involving about 10 people. The new Big Books are moving fast in libraries, schools, etc. There was a combined workshop with PI and community resources people (police, fire department, etc.) that was extremely well attended by outsiders. Excited about the number of people willing to run the PSA.

Treatment

Put out invitations to all Districts that the committee's chair and alternate (in charge of Bridging the Gap) would come visit, and there was a tremendous response. Districts are blending and talking and forming committees. Three new treatment centers are opening in Missouri and they have contacted GSO who sends us cards with names of contacts who requested that AA contact them. Two are homeless shelters and one is a mental health facility. Also involved with these openings are probation officers, who sometimes work with judges to require AA as part of a client's treatment.

Accessibilities

Lending library, now at Central Services office, offers everything that GSO does in terms of "special needs" materials. Districts are encouraged to start their own such libraries. Have been working with deaf institutions and experimenting with paying sign-language interpreters at meetings. Have been working with GSR's and Central Services to better identify handicapped-accessible meetings in meeting schedules. Have been targeting nursing homes, in some cases for literature, in other cases for meetings. Another Area-wide accessibility workshop is coming up on April 28.

Local AA member goes on hunger strike

Stilts T., long-time member of the Take It Easy group of Bracken Flats, was recently hospitalized after fasting for several weeks in an attempt to get AA members to stop thinking so much. The Gazette was allowed a brief visit with him at Bracken Flats Memorial. Weak with hunger and unable to sit up, he whispered through cracked lips, "You can be too smart to get sober, but not too stupid." At that point, he passed out from exhaustion and we were asked to leave.

Stilts' friend and former drinking companion, Murph J., shared Stilts' philosophy with us over coffee. "Sure, Bill and Bob and the other pioneers did a lot of thinking about how this thing works and how to pass it along. But they were special, and that was in the old days. They may have needed to think, but we don't. They solved all the problems we're ever going to face. What we have here is a message that we shouldn't try to understand."

Group member Maude O., wearing a "We Think Not" T-shirt, chimed in: "You need to remember that we're alcoholics. Even though we're sober now, our brains are still completely useless."

"Right," agreed Murph. "And for all we know, the program would come apart if you looked at it too closely. I mean, maybe the whole program is really just superstitious nonsense. What if somebody figured that out? What we need to do is apply peer pressure to stop all this thinking. And that's what Stilts is doing – trying to lower awareness. We need to get people to not read the AA history books, not read Box 459 or the Grapevine, not discuss any new ideas, and not hold group inventories. Our survival may depend on it."