



GRATITUDE GAZETTE

Eastern Area of Missouri
Conference Area 38
SPRING, 2003

Well here I am, now what do I do?

Since I now know I am not unique, I have to assume that at least some of you are as mystified about how to go about your new job in the service structure as I am, so, what do we do?

I'm falling back on that tried and true formula of asking others to share their experience, strength and hope with me so that I can fulfill my allotted task.

Experience

Who did I turn to? Well, the logical folks were those who had held this particular position before me. Jim F., in my opinion, did a wonderful job during his tenure over the last two years and he was the logical first stop. But there have been other editors and at least two of them are still with us and currently in other service positions and they were both willing to give pointers and guidance. There are probably others around that I can find and talk things over with as well during my term in service. The important thing is that I ask for help and not try to do everything myself as if I were the first one to hold this position

Strength

In addition to previous editors and contributors there are also a number of other folks out there who have held multiple service positions at the district and area level and who are more than willing to share with me and you and who have the ability to relieve us of some of the fear inherent in taking over a position we never dreamed of holding or maybe never even wanted to hold. Although each service position is unique, each has its similarities, and I can benefit from the strength of those who have gone before me by realizing that they once were new to service and also had those upon whom they could rely to help them fulfill their commitment.

Hope

Sure, I took on this task with a certain amount of fear of the unknown, after all I have never been a contributing writer, much less an editor before, but I am hopeful that the next two years will be as much of a growth experience for me as has been the case with every other service position with which I have been entrusted. I might not be as successful at the job as I would like (or that you would like) but I truly believe I

will be better for it and, who knows, maybe in two years I will be able to share something with the next person in line.

The Editor

Comments from others in new positions

From a new DCM

This past January I gratefully attended my first Area Assembly, in the guise of a new DCM.

A previous DCM from my District guided me to the Mailbox where I found an information packet, full of helpful tidbits put together by Frank P. of the Eastern Area Office, a really good fellow to get to know by the way, and just as full of useful information as the packet for those new to service.

Then it was on to the DCM meeting. The information thrown out to us began almost immediately. The importance of group information updates was clearly explained. It was recommended that at the beginning of every District meeting a request for group information changes be made, and that efforts be made to attend meetings, currently without representation at the District, to encourage involvement in service. Fellow DCM's offered many ideas on how to approach these groups, which I found to be most useful.

Our new Delegate, Mike F., was in attendance and shared with us that all AA members have a voice in how the Fellowship works through their Groups and that this voice is presented through our Area Delegate at the Conference level. Mike explained how decisions to make changes at this level require substantial unanimity (defined as a two thirds majority).

Even though I had been "briefed" by our former DCM mentioned above, I was nervous about making my first verbal District Report to the Assembly. However, just like so many other AA tasks, it felt good when it was completed. I was especially comforted with the smile and handshake from Jim F., our Recording Secretary, when turning in my report and by the words, "good job", uttered by my sponsor as I retook my seat.

I am grateful to have been 12th Stepped on all the above elements of service work and for all the other examples of "Service Sponsorship" that came my way through the wisdom and comments from past Delegates and from those I came in contact with

through the fellowship time spent in the coffee area, at lunch and around the tables at break times. All of these things will “Keep me coming back.”

Dave S. DCM District 5-1

From A New GSR

In January I had the privilege of attending my very first Area Assembly in Wentzville, MO. I am presently serving as GSR for Group 344, “There Is a Solution”, which meets in District 4-3.

The flyer I was most grateful for was the one titled, “WELCOME TO YOUR FIRST EASTERN MISSOURI AREA ASSEMBLY”, which not only made me feel a part of the gathering but helped me with feelings of not knowing what to expect and not really knowing the purpose of the assembly. It also immediately encouraged me to come back.

An agenda, a summary of the previous Assembly’s minutes, a treasurer’s report, a list of our Area officers and contact people, a checklist for reporting in a meeting and guidelines for other procedures were all extremely helpful.

Overall, the meeting provided a place to gather flyers of upcoming events to take back to my Group. Lots of familiar faces were there, as well as those who were unfamiliar, but whom I had an opportunity to meet and add to the familiar column at my next visit.

I found the large meetings to be very efficiently run with the agenda followed by those who had been around a while and seemed to know what to do and when to do it. I was very confused by the breakout meetings, in that there was no guidance as to where to go or how to choose what to attend. Also, I was confused about whether the small group meetings were for GSR’s and DCM’s only. I wasn’t really sure where I was supposed to go next.

I believe the Assemblies are about people in recovery keeping AA alive for the next person. The links between my Home Group all the way to GSO are necessary to keep the candle burning (I stole this from non-conference approved literature, ie. Elton John). I can now see the reason behind all the formalities and I believe that this level of service provides us the opportunity to apply the “Steps” and what we learn in our meetings to “real life” situations such as meetings with other organizations, work situations and our families. After becoming sober members of society we have to learn to mature and practice these principles in all our affairs. The Assembly was more practice.

Carol H.

GOT ANY SUGGESTIONS ON HOW WE CAN HELP THOSE FIRST TIMERS AT THE ASSEMBLY? SEND THEM TO THE EDITOR AND IF WE GET ENOUGH W E’LL SEE IF WE CAN’T SHARE THEM WITH ALL.

How does our new Area Delegate prepare for the General Service Conference?

Lets start with some basic definitions;

The Delegate

From the AA Service Manual, page S44 – The Delegate
The delegate has a demanding job, not only because a large amount of time and work are involved, but because it is the delegate’s responsibility to serve worldwide A.A.

As voting members of the Conference, delegates bring to its deliberations the experiences and viewpoints of their own areas. Yet they are not representatives of their areas in the usual political sense; after hearing all points of view and becoming fully informed during Conference discussion, they vote in the best interests of A.A. as a whole.

The Conference

From the AA Service Manual, page S50 – The Annual Conference Meeting, and, General Warranties of the Conference - Concept XII, Twelve Concepts for World Service

In all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

While the General Service Conference operate all year round, the annual meeting, held in New York in April, is the culmination of the years activities, the time when the collective group conscience of U.S./Canada A.A. comes together to take actions that will guide the groups in the years to come.

OK, on to the topic. How does a delegate prepare for the General Service Conference?

To quote Mike F, our newly elected delegate, “There’s a short answer to that question, and a long answer. I’ll give you the short answer. The short answer is pray, pray, pray, and then pray some more.”

The long answer this writer has compiled from discussions with Mike F, Albert A, Jimmy M, and Tim H, with readings from ‘The A.A. Service Manual’, and,

browsing the www.aa.org and www.gso.org web sites. It is as follows:

The process begins just after the new delegate is elected; his/her name and contact information are forwarded to G.S.O (the General Service Office, in New York). Within a short time, G.S.O will mail the new delegate an agenda for the upcoming Conference. A manual called 'The Conference Communication Kit' will also be mailed.

They will then forward the new delegate's contact information to another delegate, one who has already been to one Conference, and is beginning his/her 2nd year. (G.S.O suggests that Area's stagger their election years, to allow this rotating 'Sponsorship' to take place) This other delegate will contact the new delegate, and help with any questions or concerns the newer delegate may have. This 'Buddy', or 'Service Sponsor' is assigned by lot by G.S.O.

Another way in which the delegate prepares, is to meet with past delegates within our area. (What a tremendous resource these friends have been to us, years of gentle leadership and guidance, I can't say too much about these wonderful friends, our past delegates)

The next step in the preparation process, the S.W.R.D.A., or the 'Southwest Regional Delegate's Assembly', is scheduled in the 2nd week of March. Our area sends the delegate to this three day forum, where he/she gets instruction from past and present delegates concerning what to expect at the upcoming Conference. This forum is a 'nuts & bolts' presentation, covering practical issues which the new delegate may encounter. This forum also provides a Conference 'simulation', to help the new delegate become accustomed to the Conference structure.

Lastly, the delegate is provided time at the area assembly for discussion on the upcoming issues that will be presented, and voted on at the Conference. This helps the delegate get a feel for our collective 'Group Conscience' on these issues. The G.S.R's, D.C.M's, and attendees at the area assembly have a chance to discuss topics relating to the upcoming Conference. These are agenda items that have been allocated during the agenda setting process. Look for these agenda topics at our April area assembly.

I hope you have found this article useful and informative.

Yours in service,
Matt L.

WHAT TYPES OF ARTICLES, INFO, ETC WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE APPEAR IN THE GRATITUDE GAZETTE? SEND YOUR THOUGHTS AND IDEAS TO US AND WE WILL GLADLY REVIEW ALL SUBMISSIONS. REMEMBER WE WISH TO STICK TO SERVICE ISSUES PRIMARILY (we have other publications which focus on Recovery & Unity issues) AND AREA AGENDA ITEMS.

Chairperson's Chatter

Hope the winter assembly was a pleasant and productive experience. As your area servants we strive to serve within the purpose of the assembly. We are also open to your questions, suggestions and concerns, so don't be hesitant to voice them.

Our Eastern Area Procedures Manual states, "Service shall be the primary purpose of the assembly," It also states, "The Area Assembly is specifically charged with the duty of electing a Delegate to the General Service Conference and to provide the Delegate with support to assist him or her in the course of the duties of the office."

Yes, there will also be the inevitable housekeeping activities we need to address, such as approving a budget, but hopefully, we will be able to follow the suggestions which ask us to accomplish these with the ideals expressed in the Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts and our AA Service Manual. Yours in service.

Pat B.
Missouri Eastern Area Chair

From our Delegate

I have received my committee assignment to the General Service Conference (GSC) and I will be serving on the Finance Committee. I have also received a copy of the agenda for the GSC and would like to hear your Group's opinions /thoughts on several items at the April Assembly.

1. Self Support. Approximately 50% of the registered Groups in the Eastern Area of Missouri donate to the General Service Office. How can we improve that? Following are some idea starters from GSO to stimulate discussion within your Group concerning this issue:
 - a. Declare February "Self Support Month".
 - b. Take a Group inventory on the Seventh Tradition.
 - c. Hold workshops at the Area and District level on Carrying the message of the Seventh Tradition to non-participating AA Groups.
 - d. Explain the AA Birthday Plan.
 - e. Ask your District to distribute the pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix."
 - f. Have Districts include the addresses of all AA (service entities in their District minutes, so members will know where to send contributions.
 - g. Publish articles in Area, District, Central Office newsletters to inform members about self-support.
 - h. Pick a particular date during the year and have a drive for each member to donate \$2.00. You might call it "Fellowship Day".

- i. Declare and encourage fellow AA Groups to celebrate the day when AA was born- June 10, 1935- as an International AA Holiday. It might be called "Our International Day of Gratitude" and in an expression of gratitude a special basket could be passed for contributions.
 - j. Set some specific goals for individuals and for Groups. Utilize current data, such as the present average contribution per member, per meeting and the needed at GSO through a direct appeal by DCM's
 - k. Stress Tradition Seven at each District meeting.
 - l. Invite speakers from you local intergroup or Central Service Office, area committee, PI and CPC committees to District Meetings, and have them explain how contributions help them to carry the message.
 - m. Let your GSR's see the quarterly lists of contributions to the Area and the District. This lets them know if their Group is contributing on a regular basis.
 - n. Contact Groups that have not contributed. Often it is simply a case where the group conscience is not informed about the AA support system.
2. What are your thoughts/opinions on publishing the Fourth Edition of the Big Book on the AA Website.

I look forward to your input.

Yours in service,
Mike F.
Area 38 Delegate Panel 53

Bulletin Board

April

19th Annual AA Women's Luncheon

Sunday April 13, Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel Registration at 11:30 am Lunch 12:30pm \$19.50 per person call Doris A. (314) 521-1895 or Lisa C. (314) 895-1702 or Carlene H.(314) 731-2079

We're Not a Glum Lot Spring Fling Speaker Meeting and Dance

Saturday, April 26th St. Lucas Church, 7100 Morganford, St. Louis, MO Meeting at 7:30pm Dance at 9:00pm \$5 donation requested.

3rd International AA Men's Conference

April 25, 26 & 27, Detroit MI Call Bob M. (734) 728-2330, Gilbert H. (313) 417-0769 or Ken K. (248)354-1942

Living the AA Principles Through Sponsorship Sharing Session and Pot Luck.

Saturday April 26, St. Bartholmew Church 8370 Latty Ave. Hazelwood Pot Luck starts at 6 pm Sharing 7:30pm

District 5-1 Workshop Living Sober Through Service

Tuesday, April 29, Grace Episcopal Church 514 E. Argonne, Kirkwood, MO Potluck at 6:30 pm Workshop 7:30 pm

May

Cedar River Roundup

May 3 & 4 Cedar Rapids Iowa
Contact John B. (319) 363-3434 or (319) 651-3434

Fall Classic Spring Fling

Saturday May 10 St. James the Greater Church 6401 Wade St. Louis, 7pm Speaker followed by DJ Dance call Mike Z. (314) 961-2773

Freedom From Bondage Workshop

a corrections workshop
Sat. May 10 2-4 pm St. Lucas Church 7100 Morganford St. Louis call Harold L. (314) 909-4827 or Cindy C. (636) 394-9346

June

One Among Many 6th Annual Potluck Sun. June 1 Dinner 5 pm Speakers 6:30 Advent Episcopal Church Crestwood

Textbook Group #347 13th Anniversary Banquet

Sat. June 14th Machinists Hall 12365 St. Charles Rock Rd. St. Louis Dinner 7 pm Speaker 8pm call Brenda A. 560-7681 or James V. 388-4427 \$27.50

Women in Recovery Camp & Float

June 27, 28 & 29 call Mandy E. (314) 890-8263

Missouri State Convention

July 4-6 Columbia MO Holiday Inn Select call Mona B. (314) 487-8325 or Farlev (417) 762-3323

Area 38 CPC

GSO-CPC has informed me that the CPC, Area 38 has had a booth reserved for it at the 100th Convention & Exposition of the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) to be held at the St. Louis America Center April 22-25.

I am accepting volunteers for the booth for Wed. & Thur. from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm and on Fri. from 8:30 am to 11:30 am for 2 hour blocks of time or however long you can stay. Passes have been paid for. Arrangements are being made for parking and meals.

Please pass this on to all you know and contact me with questions.

Dave B. CPC Chairperson
area38cpc@aol.com

2005 Committee Jump Starts

The 2005 Spiritual Homecoming Committee is making progress in getting the word out. Look to our web site at STL2005.org for future buzz. An announcement of a speaker search has gone out. Past Delegate Ed M. recently made a presentation to the SW Regional Delegates Assembly in Oklahoma City on the progress of the event. The Delegates were asked to bring forth names of likely candidates to speak at the event, while they informed their areas of the celebration. Current Delegate Mike F. will carry the ball to New York later this month at the General Service Conference, extending an even broader invitation to the USA and Canada. Keep posted for opportunities to volunteer. Past Delegate Ginny J. is one of the Co-chairs for the event.

State Convention Update

The 4th of July is coming! We are going to know a new freedom!! Isn't that an appropriate theme for this years Missouri State Convention in Columbia, MO at the Holiday Inn Select. Register as soon as you can and reserve your room too! There are no conflicting evening activities on Friday the 4th so you can attend the fireworks program presented by the City at the Hearn Center if you so desire and still fill your evening with a speaker and Big Book Trivia. Speakers abound on Sat. and don't forget the pool-side BBQ at noon and the Banquet that night. A dance and the Ice Cream Social are also still on the agenda. There are too many activities to mention in our limited space but rest assured there will be plenty to occupy your time and guarantee you a wonderful time at your Missouri State Convention. Call Mona B., your convention chairperson with any questions at (314) 487-8325 or e-mail her at mona.6568@aol.com

