



## Our Fellowship Unity Involvement Beyond the Group

### “Communication and Participation— The Key to Unity and Self-Support.”

This is the theme of the 58th General Service Conference (April 27 through May 3, 2008), reminding us that the Group is the foundation of the AA Fellowship. However, it is necessary for Group members to look up and out beyond their Home Groups and participate in the broader Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. The voices of all members are needed, otherwise the “business of AA” is decided by just a few.

Why should this matter? As per the Responsibility Statement, we all have a role to play in keeping AA as a whole alive and well, so that the message of recovery can be carried to those that need us—now and in the future: around the world, in our communities, in our families.

Commentary from Akron, OH “Intergroup News” stated that we need to learn about service beyond the church basement steps. “Every service job in AA is important. Ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a phone call and a cup of coffee, and to AA’s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service. An AA service is anything whatsoever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer, whether sponsorship of a new member or sponsorship of AA in a new country just getting started. Services include meeting places, hospital cooperation, and intergroup offices; they mean pamphlets, books, and good public relations of almost every description. They call for committees, delegates, trustees, and conferences.

“Why can’t we just ‘keep it simple?’ These services, whether performed by individuals, groups, areas, or AA as a whole, are utterly vital to our existence and growth. Nor can we make AA more simple by abolishing such services. We would only be asking for complication and confusion.” © Akron Intergroup News; February, 2008

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### Getting into Service

#### Part II

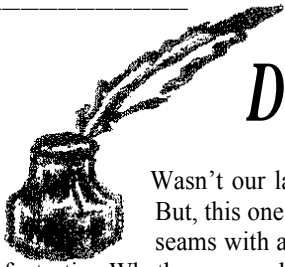
For me, the AA program did not really work until I got into service. Before that, I wrote about myself, tattled on myself, prayed for myself, shared about myself... and kept slipping further into obsession, anger, and depression. I couldn't connect "selfishness – self-centeredness... the root of our troubles" with my chronic real-life misery. I occasionally chaired meetings or made coffee, I attempted to sponsor once or twice, and sometimes I attended an institutional

meeting, but I was essentially working an eleven step program that was all about me. Suspecting problems other than alcoholism, I went to a psychologist, who (amazingly!) recommended service. I threw myself into it and immediately, noticeably, unmistakably started getting better.

Service is not exactly the 12th Step: Not exactly the same as sponsoring or carrying the message. For instance, sharing recovery at a meeting is different than participating in a group conscience meeting, and speaking at a jail meeting is different than arranging it with the jail administrator or making a flyer to advertise it. But these activities can all benefit me in a recovery program that is about more than just "myself". When people arrive here, they need to be helped and they need to work on themselves, but ultimately we owe them a program that is about more than just them, and we ought to be clear on the danger of self-obsession. At some point they must turn the corner and begin to be of service. The real rewards here are for contributors, not consumers. That's why we talk about "spiritual awakening", why Dr. Bob said in his last message to AA that our program boils down to "love" and "service". It seems a paradox, but to find real peace I must sometimes put down my serenity thermostat, go out into the cold, and be useful to God and my fellows.

*(Continued on page 3)*





## Delegate's Message

Wasn't our last assembly great? They are all great. But, this one was exceptional. We were bursting at the seams with attendance. And the sharing sessions were fantastic. Whether you realize it or not, it helps me serve you as your Delegate more than you will ever know. It brings the sensing of our Area all around me, whether in the sharing sessions, business meetings, or just in the hall during breaks and lunch. We have such a great bunch of servants! So many willing and able members just wanting to make sure A.A. can stay in place for the future.

Well, here we are at the starting point of rotation. Do you realize we only have one more assembly before our election assembly in September? The most important thing you can do in your job is to prepare the next person to take it away from you. Is there someone you are keeping abreast of all that is happening in our service structure? How many are jumping in your car to go to the next District meeting, Area Assembly, and workshops with you? Hopefully, we don't "let go" of jobs, we "hand them over" to the next person.

Then we need to look at the next piece of service we are willing and able to do. Don't be afraid of asking questions now. See what the job requires and if time and family obligations allow you to come forward to serve. I was always taught we do not rotate out, but just rotate into another position to help the hand of A.A. always to be there. Ask your sponsors, your peers, your home group members where they think the Higher Power may be placing you. So, take some time and a service inventory to see where you may best serve in the next rotation.

We have our 58<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference in NY right around the corner now. I am preparing, with your help, to attend and try to make the best decisions we can for A.A. in the United States and

Canada. The agenda items have been passed out and viewpoints are being shared. Whether through Home Groups, Districts, the Assembly or individual members, it aids me in serving not only you, but A.A. as a whole. What an awesome privilege you have bestowed upon this alcoholic. Yes, it does get very busy out here at times. But, no matter how extensive the work, I could never pay back the gratitude I have today.

I may be your Delegate, but it is through your groups that we are secure in the survival of A.A. Let's not ever forget that most important part. Without a strong, Tradition based group, we can not have strong Districts, and then no Area conscience to take to NY. So, strengthen your Home Group. Make it the best it can be and the rest will just fall into place. Then, our Fellowship will surely be there for that next alcoholic who has still not been found.

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

### SWRAASA \* 2008: On Its Way

OH NO!!!!!! We have only six months until this event occurs. Have you registered yet? Your help is needed in reaching out to all the groups in the Area and letting them know about this event. Do you have groups in your District not attending your District meetings? When you visit them please take a flyer and leave it with them. Let them know that we would love to have someone from their group attend this event.

So far almost a third of the hotel rooms are booked. Rooms will be filling up fast. Please take the time and book one for your group. We have the meetings scheduled and presenters selected. This is not a "Convention." This is a week-end of workshops and sharing sessions designed to enhance the service work in the Area and Region. If you are interested in service work this is an event you won't want to miss. There is no other event in the Area where you can get all your questions about service answered while sharing experiences with so many people interested in the same things.

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\* Southwest Regional AA Service Assembly

# Celebrate Unity And Participation

## At the Missouri State Convention July 25-27, 2008

What was once old is new again. Our own Missouri State Convention is turning Fifty-Seven this year. It is as vital and crucial today as it was back in its 1951 infancy. So, you might ask what is new about it? No, we aren't going to have The Killers or Beyonce play at our little shindig. But we are as new as the evolution of your sobriety today!

The vibrancy of your commitment to Alcoholics Anonymous is what makes this the premiere event of the year in Missouri A.A. The reality of "freedom from bondage" is always worth celebrating in our own special ways. Our convention theme this year is "**Communication and Participation**". We have some great speakers coming from Baltimore to California and Montana to Reno. What is also very special this year is that we have one of our own Missourians to anchor the event as our banquet speaker. We are emanating from the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City Missouri; our state capitol, July 25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008. See the Bulletin Board on P. 4 for more information.

When you look in the mirror you should see the person needed to make this the successful convention that will be talked about for years to-come. From Kansas City to St. Louis - From Hannibal to

Springfield - And St. Joe to Sikeston this is the year when **Unity and Self-Support** of this convention will be celebrated. Of course we will have the Old-Timers from Areas 38 and 39 to share their great stories. The Ice Cream Social is back. And the DJ is reportedly *off the chain* with some grooves so deep you could fall into. Missouri Young People are hosting some late night meetings. But, the real

reason that we are here is to share the A.A. lifestyle in a very special way with those who have come before us, as-well-as those still new to the magic and miracle of Alcoholics Anonymous. We represent the diversity that is Missouri, coming together from Western and Eastern Missouri to create the State Convention: **A Celebration of Unity and Participation.**

This year we are blessed with some great story-tellers who have unique experiences in carrying our message of Hope: from the cells of MO prisons to the General Service Conference in NYC and beyond our borders. We are excited to again be cooperating with the Al-Anon family groups to offer a program for the entire family. To take a phrase from a time gone by: **'Be There or Be Square'**. Or, as Juno might say *'who knows what shenanigans we might get into.'*

*Yours in service, Ed M., 51/38*



## Special Needs/Accessibility

We've all heard that "there are no special alcoholics. But there are alcoholics with special needs." What are those needs? And, how do we address them. Some are obvious: The wheelchair bound alcoholic who can't get up that flight of narrow stairs leading to the meeting place, the deaf alcoholic who can't hear speakers or discussion. But what about the alcoholic we never see or hear of because of his or her special needs?

There are thousands of alcoholics in nursing homes across the state. Some have never been to a meeting; others were once home group members, but now live far away from that group and no one in their new location knows they exist. Single parents may not be able (or may not believe they are able) to leave their children long enough for a meeting. Bedridden or homebound alcoholics languish in loneliness.

It is the mission of the special needs and accessibility committees at every level to spread awareness and ideas. Actually getting alcoholics to meetings is, and has always been, in the hands of local groups. Obviously, no central committee can accomplish this. What the committee can, *hopefully*, do is to get those local people thinking about alcoholics who are being missed; the ones who are persistently under the radar.

It's not an easy job. The hand of Alcoholics Anonymous must always be there to reach out. But in the case of many alcoholics with special needs, the hand of AA may not know where to reach. There are some simple steps that any group can take: Make local nursing homes (directors of nursing and activities directors are great places to start) aware of AA. They're not going to tell you who their alcoholics are – there are laws against that – but they can encourage the alcoholic to contact AA. Meet in places where alcoholics with physical disabilities can actually reach the meeting. It may seem like a no brainer, but many of us still meet in third floor cubbyholes with no elevator access. Discuss the problem of child care. Some groups provide babysitters, but there may be other solutions. Make the public aware that Alcoholics Anonymous exists. Anonymity is, indeed, essential. But we can't be so far underground that we can't be found.

Perhaps there are no special alcoholics. And we do have to be mindful of carrying the message rather than carrying the alcoholic. But we also need to open our minds and our hearts, and be certain that our message *can* reach those still-suffering who may not be able to reach us without help.

*Yours in service, Cheryl Y., Area 38 SNA Chair*

### SWRAASA—from page 2

The committee is busy with all the behind the scenes work that goes into making this type of event possible. Volunteers will be needed to help with different elements of this event. Working the Registration Table or Hospitality Room are great ways to meet people from across the Region. Can you name the states that make up the region? How many of your group members can name the states in the SW Region or how many Areas we have in the Region? Ask them at your next meeting and see.

I hope that all of you continue to encourage anyone interested in, or already involved in service to attend the SWRAASA in October. This is an Area event and needs broad-based support to be successful. Hope to see you and someone you sponsor there.

*Yours in Service, Chip B., 55/38*

## Treatment Facilities

It is the goal of the Treatment Facilities Committee to carry the AA message to those who need to hear it. In order to accomplish this we have been amassing a list of treatment centers in Area 38 and getting that information to District Chairs. The District level is where the majority of hard work is done. If you are interested in getting involved, your District meeting would be a great place to get started.

The treatment landscape has changed dramatically over the last few years, as you well know. To carry the message, we have had to make many new contacts which may disappear in a few months because the treatment center opts for a different direction. We have Districts going into other Districts that do not have the manpower. There are many tireless servants doing their best to carry the message. And they could always use more help.

Many of us received our start into our new life of sobriety through a treatment center. Many of us believe the most valuable thing they did for us was to point us in the direction of AA. Without that we could not continue our sobriety. Treatment centers (not all) have departed from that message. We know we do not have a monopoly on the recovery from alcoholism, but we believe AA is the best way.

We are trying to build a new foundation at the treatment committee level that can be passed to those who follow in service. Again, we cannot stress enough our responsibility to the still suffering alcoholic. The best way to get involved in AA service is to attend your District meeting to find out where there is a need. You can also contact Doug B. or Jerry C. at: [treatment@eamo.org](mailto:treatment@eamo.org), or call the Eastern Area Office: 314-644-1130.

*Yours in service, Doug B. & Jerry C.,  
Area 38 Treatment Co-Chairs*

### Getting into Service—from page 1:

Our General Service Office in New York takes our calls, collects our experience, prints our literature, handles our legal and PR work, and relays the message beyond our borders. All this work, which almost certainly must be done, is guided indirectly by the collective group conscience of the participating groups of the U.S. and Canada; and directly by their elected servants. It is our hope, as described in Tradition Two, that God speaks through these groups. These are the groups – who hold regular business meetings, who field active GSR's and other workers, who continue their studies beyond the 11th Step, who read the Traditions and offer literature on more than just personal recovery—who understand the larger truth that I originally missed. Among the newcomers entering these groups today are our future GSR's, Delegates, and Trustees. Concept 9 urges us to prepare them well: "*Furnishing our service structure with able and willing workers has to be a continuous activity... our future effectiveness must thus depend upon ever-new generations of leaders.*" Perhaps the best preparation we can give them is our own example of sometimes talking about service and not just our personal recovery.

*Yours in service, Jim F.,  
Alternate Delegate, 57/38 Eastern Missouri  
(See Part I: "Talking Service" in the Winter 2008 issue.)*



# GRATITUDE GAZETTE

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*"The Unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our Society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely on it. We stay whole, or AA Dies." © 1953 AAWS, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 129*

## Communication and Participation—from Page 1:

This issue covers several meaningful ways to get involved in AA beyond our Home Groups: the Missouri State Convention; outreach through the Treatment and Special Needs/Accessibility Committees; participating in the different facets of service. Our AA unity and survival depends upon the participation of us all.

*Yours in service, Editor*



*For all members in the Southwest Region of Alcoholics Anonymous to share and learn about AA service.*

WORKSHOPS \* SHARING SESSIONS \* FELLOWSHIP \* NETWORKING

[www.swraasa2008.org](http://www.swraasa2008.org)

Registration: \$5.00. (Checks payable to SWRAASA 2008)  
mail to: SWRAASA 2008, PO Box 31603, Des Peres, MO 63131

Please pre-register before Sept. 15  
Group contributions welcome!

**Hotel Reservations:** Sheraton Westport Hotel St. Louis Chalet  
191 Westport Plaza, St. Louis, MO 63146 \$89.00/night, 1 - 4 in a room

Reservation website: [www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/swraasa](http://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/swraasa)

## Districts 1 & 2 Picnic

Tower Grove Park,  
St. Louis;  
Turkish Pavilion.  
Saturday,  
May 17



Activities start 10 AM  
Email : [dist2@eamo.org](mailto:dist2@eamo.org)

**Dist. 53 Workshop: Having Fun in AA and Sobriety**  
April 19; 4PM - 7PM  
2761 Telegraph Rd., St. Louis  
**POTLUCK**  
([dist53@eamo.org](mailto:dist53@eamo.org))

18th Annual **BRIDGING-THE-GAP**  
**World Wide Workshop, Sept 5-7**  
Kansas City, MO. Contact:  
[BTGWCoordinator@hotmail.com](mailto:BTGWCoordinator@hotmail.com)

☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺  
**Sunny & Sober**  
DISTRICT 53  
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**Sunday, June 1; 9 - 12**  
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Jefferson Barracks  
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outdoor meeting on river  
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overlook. Coffee, etc.  
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Bring blankets & chairs.  
☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺  
Email: [dist53@eamo.org](mailto:dist53@eamo.org)  
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## AREA BULLETIN BOARD



## 57th Annual Missouri State Convention

July 25-27, 2008

Capitol Plaza Hotel  
415 W. McCarty St., Jefferson City

**"Communication and Participation — The Key to Unity and Self-Support"**

Pre-Registration: \$15; Rooms: \$81/night  
Hotel: 1-800-338-8088—use code MSC  
(or Missouri State Convention)

**FLYER DOWN-LOAD: [eamo.org](http://eamo.org)**

click on: Service Committee & link to State Convention

**SPEAKERS \* MEETINGS \* BANQUET \* ICE  
CREAM SOCIAL \* DANCING \* FUN !!!**

*See article page 2*



## Founders' Day

District 52  
Sunday, June 15,  
Meeting: 10A - 12N  
Fellowship: 9:30 AM

Jefferson Barracks, Blackhawk Pavilion ([dist52@eamo.org](mailto:dist52@eamo.org))



## ARCHIVES:

2683 Big Bend Blvd.,  
Rm. 3, St. Louis, 63143.  
[archives@eamo.org](mailto:archives@eamo.org)  
Open 1st Wed. of each month: 4P - 7P.  
Archives working sessions  
3rd Sat. of each month  
10 - 12. Drop in to visit  
or to volunteer.

**Midwest Woman to Woman Seminar**  
October 3-5, 2008  
Airport Hilton St. Louis  
10330 Natural Bridge Rd.  
[www.midwest-woman-to-woman.com](http://www.midwest-woman-to-woman.com)

**Annual heart of the Ozarks Roundup**  
June 6-8

Oasis Inn & Convention Center,  
2550 N. Glenstone,  
Springfield, MO.  
Further Info: [eamo.org](http://eamo.org) or  
call Eastern Area Office:  
314-644-1130

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AA Women's Luncheon  
May 4, 2008  
St Louis Airport  
Hilton 12:30 PM  
(doors open at 12:00)  
Information at [eamo.org](http://eamo.org)  
click on Events  
\*\*\*\*\*

**SMICYPAA Mini Conference**  
May 23-25  
Tan-Tar-A-Resort  
(on Lake of the Ozarks)  
<http://smicypaa.org/mini.htm>

**NEXT 2008 ASSEMBLY DATES:**  
April 12, July 12,  
Sept. 27 & 28 (election Assembly)

Anyone wishing to correspond with or submit materials for publication in the Gratitude Gazette may contact: [gazette@eamo.org](mailto:gazette@eamo.org) or write to: **Editor, Gratitude Gazette, c/o Eastern Area Office, 2863 Big Bend Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63143.** Submissions should be received four weeks prior to the next Area Assembly for consideration of publication in that issue.

Monthly IR meeting: 3rd Tuesdays, 8PM.  
St. Mary's Hospital cafeteria, 6400 Clayton Rd., St. Louis

*Gratitude Gazette is now available for email subscriptions. Sign up on our website: [eamo.org](http://eamo.org).*