



# GRATITUDE GAZETTE

## Taking Turns

Of the more than 90 Conference Areas in the U.S. and Canada, about half hold elections in even years, and half in odd years. This way, AA always has a mixture of novice and experienced service workers. Every year, half of them are learning a new job, and half are passing an old job along to others. We are in constant rotation.

It's pretty amazing, when you think of it: in the fall of every year, AA hangs out a "Help Wanted" sign and literally tens of thousands of recovering drunks agree to become GSR's, DCM's, committee chairs, treasurers, secretaries, and so on. They commit to a few hours here and there, maybe an evening a month, a few Saturdays a year, as much as they need or want to give - to save themselves, to help others.

Area 38 holds elections in even years; this fall we will elect new workers in our home groups, districts, and area. To those considering this year's election, weighing the sacrifices, trying to find the balance between service and that "much more important demonstration of our principles" in our homes, occupations, and affairs... we offer a Rotation issue.

- Editor

***Make me a channel of peace...  
that where there is despair,  
I may bring hope - that where there  
are shadows, I may bring light -  
that where there is sadness,  
I may bring joy -***

----- advertisement -----

## Corrections Workshop July 13

Hosted by Districts 11 & 12

Saturday, July 13, 10:30-2:30

Hartsburg Peace United Church in Hartsburg

Bring a covered dish with something in it.

Taking Hwy 63 south from Columbia, turn right on Hwy A just south of Ashland; go 4 miles west; turn right on Main St.; Peace United is the 2<sup>nd</sup> church you'll come to in small, scenic downtown Hartsburg.

If you're talking about rotation, you might as well talk about Corrections work, which can be difficult to rotate into, and is therefore sometimes hard to rotate out of. Among the activities being planned are:

- Guest speaker Esther S., Area Corrections chair
- Speakers on "what it was like" working a program or having a meeting brought in while they were institutionalized
- Mini-presentations from representatives for each institution, with procedures & forms for signing up and being trained & cleared.

Getting past the paperwork, clearance, and training can be tough, and dealing with issues like singleness of purpose can be tougher. Come get the help you need (to help others) at this workshop.

----- advertisement -----

## Eastern Area of Missouri Conference Area 38 Summer, 2002

### IN THIS ISSUE

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## A letter from the State Convention committee

*"The purpose of the Missouri State AA Convention is to join the Eastern and Western area of Missouri in unity and to provide a useful opportunity to share the AA experience in a broader way."*  
- Convention Guidelines

The preparation for this year's state convention is nearing the final stretch as we are anxiously awaiting this year's event. The committee has worked to improve upon last year's event, which was a successful and fun weekend.

This year's event will have two main meeting rooms able to hold 500+ people so that multiple meetings can be held during the event. Several additional main speaker meetings will be held featuring our local AA members from around the state. The 'kickoff' meeting will be at 5:30pm Friday, so come early to make the most of the weekend.

The barbecue and pool party will be held at noon on Saturday. An ice cream social will follow the Saturday night banquet.

This year's convention theme, "Sharing Our Steps, Traditions and Concepts", can serve as an open invitation for those of us in service to be available at this year's event. Hearing the message from our selection of speakers is one way to learn about our wonderful legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service, but to experience them from watching what people really do is equally important. Space is available and volunteers may be needed to staff service display tables, or help in registration or hospitality areas.

The flyer for the very first Missouri State Convention of AA was a lively four page brochure packed with enthusiasm and information about the event. It said plans for an area-wide event to get everyone together had been considered since our founding in Missouri, and expressed hope that all the members from throughout the state (at that time estimated at 1000) would attend.

While there are many conventions today where groups of AA's get together, there is only one State Convention. Like the very first committee, we hope for your participation. Come join us as we get together with Area 39 Western Missouri for a weekend of fun-filled fellowship!

## The Incredible Shrinking Area

Wayne R., Delegate from Area 39-Western MO, shared in the General Service Conference in April that, for the first time in history, we are looking at changing the lines of a Conference Area. Groups in District 10 of our Area, near the Lake of the Ozarks, actually participate in the Western Area because it is more convenient for them. According to Wayne, they want to separate from Area 38 and join Area 39, becoming part of a new District 9 whose formation was approved at the Area 39 assembly on June 15th.

There have always been problems with access to that area due to the lake and its rural location, dating back to before there were bridges involved. John S., Chairperson of the Redistricting Committee, has been covering the footwork on this project, and GSO is waiting for approval, confirmation, and contact from both Areas in this matter.

According to Ed M., our Delegate (and our source in this story), this would be a way to revitalize an inactive District, one with no active ongoing service structure for approximately ten years. There would be a better potential for growth, and a better outreach to more alcoholics in Missouri. At press time, Wayne R. is scheduled to share at the Summer Assembly.

***That where there is discord,  
I may bring harmony -  
That where there is error,  
I may bring truth -***

### Summer Assembly Agenda

- 3 DCM, GSR, & Committee Mtgs.
- 3 Delegate's Conference Report
- 3 Area re-apportionment
- 3 Special Needs v. Accessibilities
- 3 Reports, Ask-It Basket
- 3 Area Officers Meeting

## The Gazette Guide to Rotation

The Gazette offers some of the Area experience on the upcoming election & rotation season, bearing in mind that:

1. You're autonomous, so you can hold your elections as you think best.
2. The new rotation doesn't actually begin until January 1.

### The election schedule

The *AA Service Manual* suggests that district elections should take place *after* the group elections and *before* the Area election (p. S29). We'll be electing our new Area officers at the Fall assembly, October 5 & 6, so District elections should be held at the last district meeting before October 5, and group elections should be held at the last group conscience meeting before the District election. Like this:

Group elections → District elections → Area election Oct. 6

A nice feature of doing it this way is that the newly-elected GSR's can help choose the people they'll be working with for the next rotation. Some Districts and Areas allow both the new and the old GSR's to vote at the elections, perhaps to reward a good turnout. In our Area, each voting position only gets one vote, but we encourage the newly elected to attend and participate. Who gets a vote in your District is a matter for your District to decide – preferably before the election begins.

### Appointing v. electing

At the Area, we elect a Delegate and alternate, a Chairman and alternate, a Secretary, a Registrar, a Treasurer and assistant. We do not elect the numerous committee chairs; they are appointed by the new Chairman and approved by a vote at the January assembly. In many cases, the Chairman is guided by the outgoing committee chairs, who are asked to recommend their own replacements.

In some districts, committee chairs are elected rather than appointed. This takes some of the load off of the DCM, prevents "playing favorites", and seems to put the results more in the hands of a higher power. The disadvantage is that people might not get elected to the job they want most, or are best suited for. For example, if I want the job that is being elected last, I might choose to stand for jobs I like less, rather than wait for the job I want most and take a chance on not getting a job at all. One possible compromise might be for people to indicate in advance which positions they'd like to stand for, and then do the electing in order from most popular job to least popular job.

### What do you stand for?

Some say the decision comes down to just one question: Are you qualified? Others make it more complicated, considering their schedule, health, finances, transportation, and factors like "Which job would I prefer?" or "Who would I be standing against?" Many of us have found ourselves asking these questions right up until the last second. And in the excitement of an election, people have been known to over-commit.

So it's good to give it some thought in advance. The qualifications for most jobs are in the *AA Service Manual*, the Area procedures manual, or the *AA Group* pamphlet. There are exceptions to every rule; for instance, we've seen some good GSR's who had less than the recommended sobriety time. But we've also seen people hurt by jobs they weren't ready for. So you may want to talk with past officeholders, and discuss possible commitments with your sponsor (or sponsees). If family members might have to make sacrifices, they should also be involved in your decision.

Remember that the point all along is to stay sober and help others, and we can do this in almost any AA job. So, many people simply stand for whatever they are qualified for, and let the group conscience work out the details.

### How important is it that every job be filled?

It's good but not critical. Things sometimes happen in their own time.

### Wearing more than one hat

Debate goes back and forth as to whether a person should hold more than one job in AA. Nearly all would agree that it's okay to have a voting job at the District or Area level and also make coffee or fold chairs. Many would approve of being a

CSR while also doing committee work, such as speaking at a PI presentation or attending an institutional meeting. But almost no one would approve of holding two voting positions at the same time, for obvious reasons. One possible guideline: "Keep the job you committed to first."

### Speaking of hats

Before you attend an election at the District or Area level, be sure to read the "Third Legacy Procedure" for elections, up to and including the part where we sometimes pull the winner's name out of a hat. You can find it in the index of your Service Manual. Elections carried out in this manner are among the most enjoyable experiences in AA service work.

### Who to vote for

It can be tough to decide who to vote for, especially if you don't know all the candidates personally. Prayer may help, as well as knowing the qualifications and duties of the job (ask if you don't know). Candidates typically announce their qualifications for the job, usually including their service history (other AA jobs they've performed in the past). Bear in mind that you're electing a "trusted servant", and elect someone you can trust.

### Leaving a legacy

In AA we'll sometimes hear of outgoing service workers who hand their successor a grocery bag of "files" and disappear. That's not rotation, it's going AWOL. Much better to pass them your notes (including contacts, service volunteers, procedures, decisions you've made, etc.), and any actual files in a filebox (under \$5 at discount "marts" and office-supply stores). Then, "stick around but let go" – be available to help without trying to run the show. It can be harder than it sounds. This is your chance to practice being an elder statesman.

### Rotating out v. rotating on

It's often said around the Area that we rotate out of a given job or service project, but we never rotate out of service. Why would we stop doing what works? "If you keep on doing what you're doing, you'll keep on getting what you're getting." If you don't have time to chair a committee or attend assemblies, maybe you can occasionally volunteer as a speaker for PI or CPC... or make one of your weekly meetings an institutional meeting. And then from time to time drop in on the district meeting, just to see how things are going, and possibly to be of service to the new kids on the block.

## Heartbreakingly Difficult Rotation Quiz

Are you prepared for election season? Find out with our screamingly rigorous Traditions & Concepts quiz. Answers on back page.

- A. We insist on electing workers by a 2/3 majority, or else going to the hat, to preserve unity in AA. Which Tradition discusses this need for unity?
- B. One of the reasons we rotate is to keep people from getting too powerful in any one job. We hope to avoid human authority, and to instead have "elder statesmen" as discussed in which Tradition in the 12 & 12?
- C. Another Tradition also talks about the dangers of too much power, warning us in the Long Form that "Rotating leadership is the best." Which Tradition is this?
- D. It would be impractical if we had to go to the Assembly to see who is standing for office, return to our groups to discuss the candidates, then return to the Assembly to vote. Which Concept gives us the right to vote at elections without checking with our groups?
- E. We give GSR's a vote because they represent the groups. Which Concept gives some other service workers (e.g., committee chairs) a vote?
- F. Which Concept warns us against electing ineffective workers by discussing the vital need for good leaders at all levels in AA, and explains some of the principles of good AA leadership?
- G. Which Concept advises us to carefully define the jobs to which we elect people, and to "always be clear where the point of final decision is located", avoiding "double-headed" management?
- H. Which Concept suggests the importance of getting "the best possible" workers?

# ***Grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted – to understand, than to be understood – to love, than to be loved...***

## **Notes from this year's Conference**

The Gazette caught up with Area 38 Delegate Ed M. to get the news from the 52nd General Service Conference, "Sharing the Steps, Traditions and Concepts," held in New York City in April. Here are some of the highlights of his report:

**The Big Book 4th edition:** We have new versions of the Big Book coming out. The 4th edition CD-ROM should be out any day now, and coming within months are 3 CD's that are type images and audio images which can be played on computers.

**The Grapevine:** should break even this year, and the Grapevine pamphlet was rewritten to better reflect the organization and structure of the magazine. The pamphlet's name is "The AA Grapevine: Our Meeting in Print," and it was revised to accurately reflect the changes in Grapevine operation and to clarify the text. La Vina is expected to continue to grow in circulation and readership. For the first time, La Vina has a completely Spanish-speaking and bilingual staff, under the leadership of Hernan M.

**Other Literature news:** The Conference protected the wording of The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, so it will be retained as originally published. Also, the 56 stories dropped from the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Editions were approved to be published in a collection entitled *Experience, Strength, and Hope*.

**The Public Information committee:** voted to produce new public service announcements (one per year for five years). At the end of each year they will phase out old ones. What's interesting is that a production company will do distribution to the top stations in the top 75 markets. This is going to reach over 90% of the people in America. A company based in St. Louis will be tracking how often they are aired. PI committees will be able to offer PSA's to other stations in their market area and to assist larger stations with on-screen telephone numbers and Twelfth Step contact information. This will make a tremendous improvement on the number of people we reach.

**State Conventions:** It's that time of year again. The Finance committee reviewed input from fellowships on local Convention reporting, and felt that by reporting International Convention results in a separate column on financial statements they could keep the Fellowship better informed. This would keep reporting of Fellowship finances separate from those of Convention activities, and is consistent with the practice of the Eastern and Western areas of Missouri in our jointly-sponsored State Convention.

**Regional/Special Forums:** Interest was expressed in having more frequent and accessible Regional/Special Forums, on the lines of the Hispanic Forum held in Austin in December and the Inner City Forum held in Chicago in March. Other recent Forums focused on Native American and French-speaking (Canadian) populations and issues.

**Other news:** This year marks the first time that the Conference has responded to the possibly excessive **prudent reserve** in ways other than by lowering literature prices. This could lead to some creative solutions... **The Archives** produced Markings on the Journey into a multimedia video production, slated for release late this year; it is narrated, with still photos and newspaper articles of the period. And Report and Charter has added the "**List of General Service Conference Websites**" to the A.A. directories. They hope that listing Area sites will lead members to district and group sites and help them get "connected".

## **Getting into the Spirit of Rotation**

With elections drawing near, the Gazette asked some of our local servants to talk about their favorite service job (so far), and their thoughts on the spirit of rotation...

"When I was first sober, my sponsor took me to a State-paid-for detox center with junkies and prostitutes. They did 30 days. He took me down there and said, "With 90 days, you'll be like someone who walks on water". Second week we went back there. Third week, he said to start the projector – he would be late. He never showed up again, and I did that meeting for two years. It did me good to be there, built a solid, spiritual foundation. Rotation is absolutely necessary. Service is a tool for sobriety; if you get it down it's no longer a tool for sobriety."

"PI, without question, with GSR as second. It's got a personal twist. When I was trying to get sober (I'm a college grad and I had been a policeman for a bigger city for years with a lot of experience with drunks) I had never heard of A.A. I didn't know what alcoholism was, and wound up in a hospital with severe liver damage. This position allows me to help spread the word to the public so what happened to me doesn't have to happen to others. Rotation-learn it and turn it over – is valuable because we don't become too entrenched. I'm a firm believer that we shouldn't just drop out of our positions; we should hang around for the next crew and help them kick off their new jobs with our experience."

"Going down to Jefferson Barracks V.A. Hospital in St. Louis, and taking meetings in there once every five weeks. I started 16 years ago, when I was early in service. Those kind of jobs, you really get to touch the new alcoholics and bring them hope. Delegate was an honor and very rewarding and it took a lot of experience, but reaching out to the the drunk is the neatest deal. Rotation keeps us all humble, when we know our job we move on; when we get burned out, we can see the end coming. When people don't rotate it harms the group and the individual who won't rotate. One person's ego gets out of whack and that's what we're all fighting, anyway."

"The job of Delegate had the most varied and different exposure to it, but the job that taught me more of what I really needed to know, more than anything, was the job of Area Secretary. I was Area Secretary when there was only one and there was no area office. So I took care of everything. Having served in that capacity, I had a strong basis for my time as DCM and Area Chair because I had seen how it worked from the inside. Rotation truly is the embodiment of the 12 Traditions. My second year as Delegate, the Conference theme was "Anonymity, Our Spiritual Foundation". The Archivist did a history about anonymity going back to Greek times and their rotation, which was two years. Throughout history there are examples of two year rotation, so there is a spiritual base. Rotation and the 12<sup>th</sup> Tradition are inextricably intertwined."

"The role of GSR in my Home Group opened up the 12 Concepts for me; I wouldn't have seen them otherwise. Rotation is helpful to AA, but not just to the AA community. It is of good value to the individual. It was to me."

"I know nothing could ever be like the job of Delegate. Representing AA at a Conference is very humbling. And editor of the Gratitude Gazette – one gets to keep abreast of AA activities and goings-on. The spirit of rotation is how we cleanse ourselves and the fellowship. It creates a very true democracy, like the true Citizen-Servant of Ancient Greece. Rotation has a leveling effect on the fellowship because the fellowship gets different exposure to different attitudes and styles of leadership."

"GSR – I felt like I really had more of a connection between group and area and district. I actively took part on all levels and reported to my group. Now my group doesn't care what goes on at the Archives Committee. The spirit of rotation allows others to participate and keeps ego out of it. I start over in another position where I feel lost and stupid and needing to learn from other people."

"Delegate – it probably got me around the Area and I met the most people as Delegate. That's why I enjoyed it the most. I learned more about the inner workings of AA and was exposed to people outside my own experience and own part of the country. The conference was unique and spiritual. The spirit of rotation is recognition that the jobs in service are more important than the individual. The job in service goes on and I move out to perform some other position. It does get down to personalities. The spirit of rotation is: let the next person do it"

***...for it is by self-forgetting that one finds.***

## BULLETIN BOARD

### JUNE & JULY

#### District 12 Founder's Day Celebration Picnic

Sun. June 30, 10am, Rock Quarry Park (Grindstone Rd) - Columbia  
Covered dish; Meat/drinks provided; Vball; Ben 573-874-9610

#### District 42 Fourth of July Picnic

July 4 – Des Peres Park (Manchester at Ballas)  
Starts at 10am – Coffee/donuts – BBQ pits/charcoal provided  
Speaker (past delegate Ginny J.) at 11am – Open meeting  
**Contact Rich B. (314) 569-3455 for more information**

#### District 7 Fourth of July Picnic (Downtown Group)

July 4 – Capaha Park – Shelter #1 – Cape Girardeau  
Starts at noon – Meat/drinks provided – Speaker at 2pm  
Contact Kenny B. (573) 334-7660 for more information

#### 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Missouri State AA Convention

July 5-7 – Holiday Inn Executive Center – Columbia  
For reservations: 1-800-HOLIDAY or (573) 445-8531  
For information: Steve P. 417-732-9811 or Tom R. 636-939-9728

#### District 11 & 12 Corrections Workshop Saturday, July 13 – Peace United Church – Hartsburg

Contact Chris K. (573) 875-8796

#### District 15 Summer Picnic & Dance

Saturday, July 27, Aquatic Center (Swimming Pool Park), Kirksville  
Starts at 10am – BBQ/Carry-in picnic – Speaker at 1pm  
Afternoon Raffle – Volleyball/Swimming/Dance from 6-10pm  
Contact Jim C. 660-239-4593 for more info

### AUGUST

#### 50th Anniversary Celebration Banquet & Meeting

Friday, Aug. 1 (?) – Chase Park Plaza Khorassan Ballroom, St. Louis  
7pm – Dinner/Speaker meeting (Clancy I. Los Angeles) – \$50

#### Cahokia Serenity Group & Waterloo Picnic

Sunday, August 17 – Park next to Dupo High School – Cahokia  
Starts at 10am – Pot luck

#### District 8 Trusted Servant Workshop

Saturday, August 24 – Dexter Community Center – Dexter, MO  
1-4pm – Contact Dick H. 573-785-1429

#### 19th Annual Fall Classic

August 30-September 1 – St. Louis Airport Marriot  
Juanita B. 636-227-4586 or Wilda P. 636-256-4976  
For more information: [www.fall-classic.com](http://www.fall-classic.com)

### SEPTEMBER & BEYOND

#### Area Assembly & Election

Oct 5 & 6, 9am, Holiday Inn, Wentzville, MO

#### District 8 Picnic & Fish Fry

Sunday, October 13 – Redman Creek Pavilion – Lake Wappapello  
Starts at noon – Contact Dennis H. (573)785-7363

#### 5th Annual Illinois Missouri Men's AA Breakfast

Nov 17, 9am, \$15, W.C. at 618-659-9202 or Jim E. 314-962-6664

## 20 Years Ago in the Gazette

The registration fee for the 1982 State Convention, in a report from Convention Committee member Elma S., was \$8.00; the banquet was \$10.50.

Two new pamphlets had been released by GSO and were mentioned in the Gazette: [Understanding Anonymity](#) (20¢) and [AA and Occupational Programs](#) (5¢).

District 4, through their DCM Howard M., reported their opinion that “Service work is not a ticket to financial instability nor suicide, and that self-supporting groups should provide the necessary support for these people to do their jobs.”

A report from the Area Institutions Committee, Byron B., Chairman:

“For some years the board of trustees of AA has recommended that the Institutions Committee be split into two committees; one for [Treatment Facilities](#) and one for [Correctional Facilities](#). One reason for this is that the present Institutions Committee is spread too thin and tries to do its work with two totally unrelated types of institutions.

“Our present Institutions Committee has recommended that this action be taken and a member has already volunteered to take the chairmanship of the proposed new Treatment Facilities Committee. I will continue with the Correctional Facilities Committee for the balance of this year.

“At our assembly in January of this year, the proposed split seemed to cause a lot of confusion; a fear that present workers would be forced out, a fear that somehow this change would interfere with the present good working arrangements we now have in various institutions. Such fears are completely unfounded. The only change would be two committees instead of one; thereby dividing the responsibility at the chairman or committee level so that each chairman or committee can work more efficiently and effectively.”

## Grapevine Gets a New Hairdo

Yes, yes, we all know the annual subscription price is increasing by three bucks, but that is for postal rate increases the magazine has had to absorb. Individual issue prices shouldn't be affected, and all orders placed before July 1 still get the old price. (That's Monday, so you'll have to place the order on their website!).

Now about the stuff you might not know: The Grapevine's purpose and intent is to double their subscription rate, even with the price increase. Des T., executive editor, describes aggressive attractions as a way to get the fellowship to look at the magazine with new eyes. You will continue to see visual changes with the addition of four-color process printing in the pages. Next up for revamping is the “Contents” Page. Re-subscription offers will include 15 issues for the price of 12, and access to the digital archives.

The Grapevine is further developing into a web presence, and the magazine will continue to become much more of a digital product. Grapevine Representatives can now do all their business on-line at a secure site. The entire Grapevine Workbook is digitized. Check out the website [aagrapevine.org](http://aagrapevine.org) to see what else is up. Important note: Grapevine audio tapes are being phased out and won't be remade as they sell out-- so buy them while they last or get a CD player.

The Grapevine should break even this year, but more important to the Conference, the magazine will continue striving to be a mirror of the fellowship.

Check out the new **District 7 webpage** at [www.district7aa.org](http://www.district7aa.org).