



GRATITUDE GAZETTE

EASTERN AREA OF MISSOURI CONFERENCE AREA 38

Summer 2004

MISSOURI STATE CONVENTION

AUG. 20TH – 22ND

Summer is here and we look forward to another State Convention in Columbia, Missouri, beginning Friday, Aug 20th and running through Sunday, August 22nd.

It is a time to renew old friendships and to make new ones! It is a time for fun and relaxing, but we always keeping in mind that our primary purpose is to help the still suffering alcoholic.

The weekend gets in high gear on Friday afternoon around 3:00 p.m., when registration begins. It is at this time that the excitement starts to build, for we begin to see old friends met over whatever period of sobriety we have been fortunate enough to have attained.

The Friday night sharing session is always inspirational and sets the tone for the entire weekend. As usual the ice cream social which follows, keeps the gathering happy and joyful. If you haven't participated in the Big Book Trivia Contest, don't hold back, everyone who comes is placed on a team of old-timers and newcomers alike, and we all get a chance to share our experience, strength and hope that our guess is correct. (Who cares if you win or not, you will learn something for the next year's event.)

Saturday morning events start early this year with an Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting starting at 8:30 a.m. Come and share or just listen to the message being carried.

The poolside Bar-B-Que at lunch always draws a large crowd and gives everyone a chance for a break and some real fun and cooling off in the water. All activities are guaranteed to draw your interest.

One of the big events of Saturday afternoon is the Old-Timers Meeting. Here we can listen to the men and women who have lived the AA way of life for

many, many years and are living examples of the oft-repeated phrase, "It works, if you work it."

Another popular event occurs at the Saturday evening Banquet, namely the Sobriety Countdown. As we start with the longest period of sobriety and count down to the newest newcomer, we can see the delight on the faces of the people who stand to be recognized and the utter awe on the faces of those new to the program as they begin to understand that beginning one day at a time, they too can build a sober life that spans decades.

After another wonderful speaker, we have a dance and more marathon meetings, which always seem to draw the people of the night.

At Sunday mornings Speaker session and closing ceremony, which is always very moving and inspirational to me, we realize that the time is approaching when we must say good bye to our old and new friends.

On a personal note, I could live in this weekend forever. I know I can't, but it always gives me strength and hope until the next year's event. I can't tell you which part of the weekend I like the most, just that I try to take in as much as possible. I can always catch up on my sleep in the days and weeks to follow and I truly hate to miss anything held over the weekend.

I realize I haven't covered all there is to do nor expressed all of the deep feelings I have for this event, so all I can tell you is come and see for yourself and I will guarantee you that you will never regret your decision. You will have a chance to meet people from all over the State and maybe learn a little something new.

Mike D. Alternate Editor Gratitude Gazette

**SPECIAL NEEDS / ACCESSIBILITY
COMMITTEE ----IS IT NECESSARY?**

Chairpersons Report

The question in the title is one I have been asking myself for the last 6 or 7 months.

In January of 2003 I gratefully accepted the position of "Special Needs / Accessibility Committee" Chair, looking forward to working with, and for fellow trusted servants. I began to compose a list of all District Chairs and to come up with a plan of action.

After a short period of time I became discouraged with the apparent lack of interest, from individuals and from the Districts. Time after time I sat alone or almost alone at the assembly. I tried calling, writing and e-mail. Still, practically no responses were forthcoming.

Then one day I received an e-mail from a Committee Chair in Florida .who had the idea of forming a "Special Needs / Accessibility Task Force. " This body would be composed of individuals interested in helping members or potential members with special needs. These service workers would come from through out the area, GSR's, DCM's and others who only come together when the need or call came in.

I don't know myself if this is a good idea or not. All I know is I want to be of maximum service to this program that saved my life. I want anyone who wants what we have to be able to have it. But, do we need a committee to do this work? Is there a need in our area at this time?

It says in our "Big Book" at page 96 that, " To spend too much time on any one situation is to deny some other alcoholic an opportunity to live and be happy". Do these words apply to this situation?

I realize I am raising a lot of questions, perhaps out of pure frustration. Perhaps one or more of you, as members of this area and this program can answer them or give me guidance.

I am very fortunate to be able to attend an A.A. meeting whenever, and in most cases wherever I need or want to. It's not like that for everyone. Some people have to find a meeting that can receive and accommodate them, and then find someone to help

them get there. We talk around the tables about that two hundred pound phone, for some people it can weigh a lot more, and that's if they can pick it up at all. Lets just make sure that when they do pick it up there's someone there that's able and willing to help.

To date I've received four calls, all for rides. All calls were responded to. No further action taken. For a more detailed account of these calls, or for information regarding this letter, or for anything else regarding "Special Needs" contact me @ (636) 928-8816 or at sna@eamo.org

Yours in service,
Jon Mittler Area Chair

**CORRECTIONS/ CPC/
BRIDGING THE GAP**

Information provided by the Department of Corrections indicates the very real possibility of a new or revised early release program being instituted within the State of Missouri in the very near future, according to Dave B., CPC Area Chair. The Chairs of all three of the above Committees are looking into ways in which the AA hand can be there as needed for alcoholics among those who are being afforded an early release.

If you are interested in obtaining further information regarding the possibilities of carrying the message in this type of situation feel free to contact Dave B., CPC; Ben C., Corrections or Mike B., Bridge the Gap.

(Information provided by Dave B. CPC Chair)

TRUSTED SERVANTS

Elections are coming up at our next Area Assembly. We will be filling our officer positions and thereafter Area Chair positions will be filled. We have been blessed over the years with gifted and hard working people in these positions but that is not a result of blind luck, it takes plenty of thought and hard work.

For those who are new to the assembly and are a voting member, this will be your first chance to observe the process. It might appear a little confusing at first but you should be able to quickly gain an understanding of the procedures followed and

hopefully this article will be of some assistance to you as well.

First of all you may be surprised that there is no electioneering similar to what we experience in the fall of the year in the local, state and federal political arenas. No one has been campaigning or disparaging their opponent. This is so because officially there are no candidates at this point.

You are probably asking yourself, "how in the heck am I to vote responsibly when I don't know who the candidates are?" Well, more will be revealed.

The slate of candidates is arrived at by way of the nomination process. This can be by self-nomination, "I volunteer to serve if elected" or by nominations from the floor, "I nominate Sally the Alcoholic". This may be something new to those whose only previous experience in filling group or District positions is the, "lets appoint Sam to the position, since he's not here to object" method.

Once nominations are closed, all candidates are requested to orally provide information about themselves, usually indicating their dry date, positions previously held within the fellowship and any special talents or experience that they may have which they feel makes them especially qualified for the position to which they have been nominated.

Written ballots follow and in the event that no one candidate receives 2/3rds of the ballots then another written ballot is taken and if again no one receives 2/3rds of the vote additional ballots are issued. Up to 5 votes are taken in this manner with candidates receiving less than 1/5th of the total vote being removed after the 2nd ballot and those with less than 1/3rd of the total being removed after the third ballot. The following ballots will see the lowest vote getters eliminated. After the 4th ballot, if no one receiving 2/3rds of the vote, a motion may be made for a 5th ballot. If it passes then there is one more vote followed by the hat if no one receives 2/3rds of the vote. If the motion is defeated then the remaining candidates names go in the hat immediately and the winner is the person who's name is drawn.

Those not chosen in this process often, but not always, make their name available for the next position to be filled and do so because they wish to be of service in whatever capacity the Assembly feels they may best

serve. Those new to the election process may not understand why the same names keep coming up. Be assured there is no hidden agenda in this phenomena and new candidates for each position are certainly encouraged but it would be a shame to lose a qualified candidate for a position simply because they were not elected to the first position to which they were named as a candidate. Likewise just because a person is nominated for a position doesn't necessarily mean that the majority of the assembly feels they are ready to provide service at that level. Nothing should be read into this other than we are working towards filling our elected positions with the best possible individuals to act as our trusted servants for the next two years. This is a serious responsibility for those entrusted with the right to vote at the assembly by virtue of the position they themselves have been elected to fill.

At this stage of your service at the Assembly you will hopefully have had an opportunity to meet many, if not all, of the various candidates for the slots to be filled. Don't worry if you are not personally familiar with all those nominated to serve, perhaps someone else at your table can give you assistance with respect to information about the candidates over and above what they themselves have disclosed, but, in any event, we are simply trying to do the best we can, with respect to the election process, just as we hope those we elect will do in their new service positions.

The Editor

2005 A SPIRITUAL HOMECOMING

A one-time event is being hosted in the Eastern Area of Missouri. The 2005 Spiritual Homecoming is a celebration of the 50th anniversary of AA Coming of Age in St. Louis in 1955 at the International Convention held at Kiel Auditorium. This event, national in scope, will be held November 24-28, 2005 at the Millennium Hotel in downtown St. Louis.

A website, www.stl2005.org now provides comprehensive information, photographs and a newsletter about the event.

What happened here in 1955 defined AA's future. At that turning point the Fellowship embarked on a path which has allowed us to guide, implement and support the growth of Alcoholics Anonymous and

therefore to carry the message of hope and recovery to the still suffering alcoholics around the world.

On Saturday night of the event, we will be holding our 65th Annual St. Louis Alano Banquet. It is the oldest continuous banquet in the world. Recognition of the role of our Central Service Office in carrying

the message at the local level is very important also.

Check the website for information on how you can volunteer for service.

Virginia Jackson, Panel #39, Area #38 – Chair
Ed Martin, Panel #51, Area #38 – Co-Chair

UPCOMING EVENTS

- July 17 District 7 Quarterly Potluck/Speaker Dinner at Perryville City Park 5:30 pm Fellowship; 6:00 Dinner; 7:00 Speaker
- July 25 District 2 Family Picnic Carondelet Park Picnic Area 1 starts 7 am- all day. Bring a side dish.
- July 31 SMICYPAA (Show Me ICYPAA (Int'l Conf. of Young People in AA) Bid Committee Election Meeting 4:00pm at Central Services Office in Maplewood. For info visit <http://smicypaa.org>
- July 31 Working With Others Group Summer "Whoopie" Party & Potluck 2:00 pm Open Speaker meeting at 6:30 pm Schroeder Park 359 Old Meramec Station Rd. Manchester, MO
- Aug. 20-22 Missouri State Convention, Holiday Inn Select, Columbia, Mo Contact tfblechris@msn.com (816) 728-4960 or seren-t@centurytel.net (573) 438-8607
- Sept. 3-5 21st Annual Fall Classic, "AA Comes of Age" Airport Marriott (website www.fall-classic.com)
- Sept. 14 District 51 Sponsor and Sponsored Workshop 7:00-8:30pm Grace Episcopal Church at Woodlawn and Argonne in Kirkwood.
- Sept. 18 "Breaking Down the Walls" a one day Corrections Conference of the EAMO Corrections Committee. Dardeen Presbyterian Church 7400 Hwy N Dardeen Prairie, MO 8:45 am- 5 pm.
- Sept. 19 St. Louis Service Fair, Tower Grove Park 12:30 pm-4:00 pm for info call 647-3677.
- Oct.2-3 Eastern Area Assembly (Elections) Wentzville Holiday Inn.
- Oct. 8-10 Southwest Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (SWRAASA) Clarion Inn, Houston, TX; for more info see the SE Texas Area Homepage.
- Nov. 20 ALANO Banquet 64th Annual. St. Louis Airport Marriot Hotel 6:00 pm- midnight.
- Jan 2005 New Zealand Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous go to http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.nz/html/aa_events-cfm

**Have A Great Summer & We'll See You At
The Fall Assembly**

We are happy to receive ideas on topics for articles or finished articles themselves. We can't promise to print everything we receive but will give everything fair consideration if it involves our service legacy.