



Participation in the Process Communicating Love and Service

Delegate's Message of the General Service Conference and Reflections on Rotation

Well, I have now participated in our 58th General Service Conference (GSC) as your Delegate. It's now my job to somehow report to you how we were, what happened and how we are now. How do you report an experience almost too profound to put into words? How can you relay the essence of watching our leadership in actions for the good of A.A.? How we witnessed the Higher Power, the ultimate authority, evolve as the agenda items were discussed, recommended then debated on the conference floor. Over and over again, I saw examples of how our Delegates take charge of our fellowship. I witnessed the courtesy shown of listening to each other, without losing respect of other differing opinions.

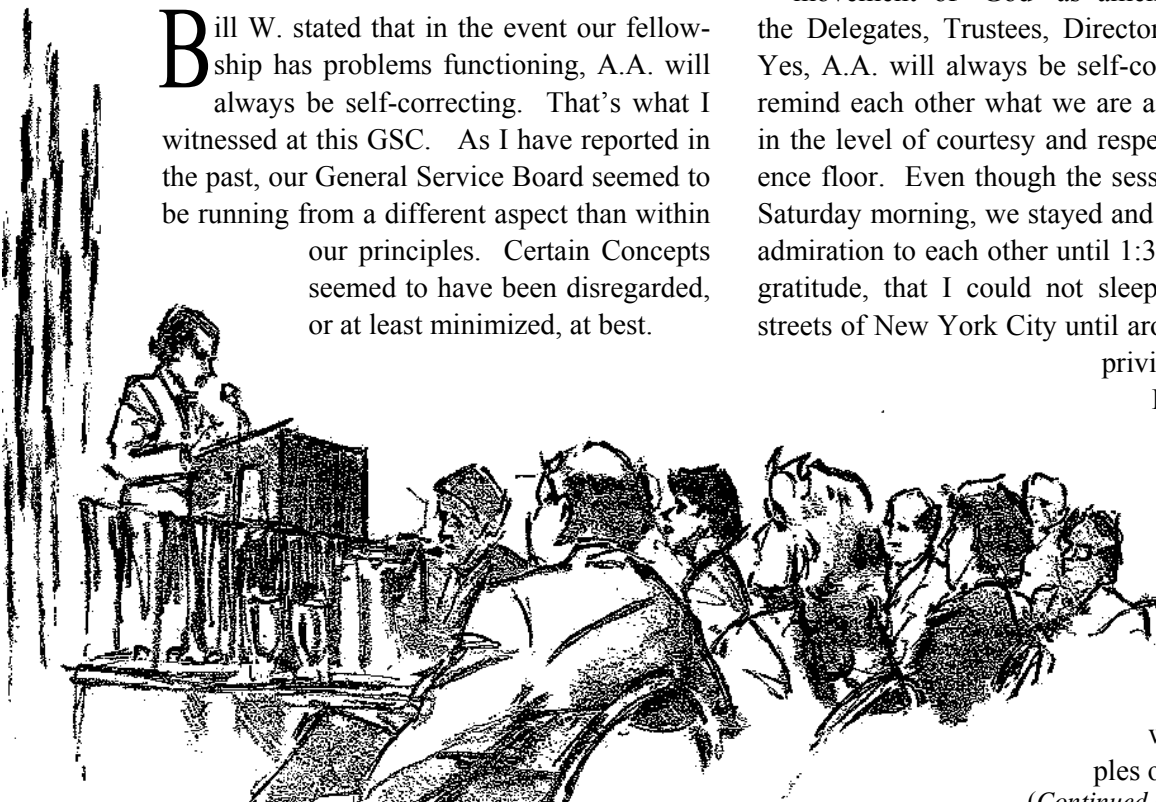
Bill W. stated that in the event our fellowship has problems functioning, A.A. will always be self-correcting. That's what I witnessed at this GSC. As I have reported in the past, our General Service Board seemed to be running from a different aspect than within our principles. Certain Concepts seemed to have been disregarded, or at least minimized, at best.

As a result I saw our groups take action and send questions, concerns and requests for more information. Then I watched as the 93 Delegates who were sent to this GSC, spoke for your interests. They did so in the language of the heart, as I saw our principles defended, without personalities being attacked. The voting period for agenda items runs normally from Wednesday morning to Friday at 5:00 pm. We were on the floor Saturday at 12:30 am. It was an extremely long sharing of feelings, concerns and expectations. But, well worth every minute spent. It was our Steps in action. Our Traditions bringing us back to order. Our Concepts helping us find our way for the future health of A.A.

I watched the General Manager of our General Service Office, who was chairing the session, allow the movement of God as amends were being made by the Delegates, Trustees, Directors, and Staff members. Yes, A.A. will always be self-correcting, as long as we remind each other what we are all about—demonstrated in the level of courtesy and respect I saw on the conference floor. Even though the session closed at 12:30 am Saturday morning, we stayed and expressed our love and admiration to each other until 1:30 AM. I was so full of gratitude, that I could not sleep and was walking the streets of New York City until around 2:30 AM. What a privilege to serve as your

Delegate. I may have attended the GSC in NY, but my favorite part of my job is right here in our area. Every time I show up at your home group, a district meeting, or a workshop, I see examples of what A.A. is all about.

(Continued on page 2)





Thoughts from the Chair

It's hard to believe there are only two assemblies left in this rotation—we are $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through! We have faced some tough decisions this past year, and I am very proud of how our area handles sometimes divisive issues. Through an informed group conscience we are able to listen to others' opinions, even when they differ from our own, and to do so with courtesy and respect. The minority voice is heard. Compromises are reached. This is just one of the ways we grow in service and in emotional sobriety; by setting aside our own views long enough to listen for the voice of our Higher Power as he speaks through the group conscience for the good of the fellowship.

As you each consider rotating on to another service position, I hope that you will do so prayerfully and thoughtfully. Participating in the service structure outside of our home group, whether through the district or area, is indeed a key to unity and self-support. We sacrifice our time and talents in order to Carry the Message and give back some small portion of what we have received in sobriety. Finding that balance between family obligations, jobs, AA service work, and recovery can sometimes be tricky. However, over-committing ourselves can be just as dangerous as dropping out of service altogether. The good news is that we have many tools available to help us find our way: sponsors, other trusted servants, loved ones, our three legacies, and above all, God as we understand Him.

I am looking forward to summer vacation and all of the upcoming conventions. I was grateful to participate in the SMICYPAA Mini-Conference over Memorial Day weekend and am looking forward to ICYPAA in Oklahoma City, where thousands of young people from all over the world will meet July 3rd – 6th. Then on to our Missouri State Convention July 25th – 27th for more fellowship and what promises to be a wonderful slate of speakers. Thank you to everyone who is working so hard on the State Convention and SWRAASA committees to make these events happen. I hope to see many of you at them as we "trudge the road of happy destiny" together. Have a great summer!

*In Love and Service,
Laura V., Area 38 Chair*

Delegate's Message—Cont'd from Page 1

Alcoholics striving to make A.A. even better in finding and serving the next suffering alcoholic. They say that serving as Delegate is a life-changing experience. I know that to be true, but our life changing experience started the day we entered the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Before I close, I have to remind you to look at rotation. Your home group will be looking at who is willing and able to serve as the next GSR. Districts will be asking the outgoing member to continue the path of service following the next 2 years. Then, at our next assembly in September, we will be choosing our area officers. What an exciting time we are in right now. Please look into your hearts, your lives and see where you can continue or start to serve A.A. Gratitude in action is when the work is being done to make sure A.A. continues on. Every member has gifts and abilities they can use in service. Talk to your peers, your sponsors, past serving members and let them help you find where the Higher Power may need you to serve. Don't forget your families and employers. A.A. wants you to serve, but they also want you to be able to get back into the flow of life. So, make sure you include all the affairs in your life as you make these decisions to offer yourself.

We are all one and the same in service, just like we are at our groups. No better or less than each other. The titles of the positions do not define the person, they only define the duties we are to carry out. They say the most important part of any job in A.A. is helping the next person take it away from you. Well, now is the time to look, seek and ask the next person to step forward. Let them know you will be there to help, if they need it. It makes all the difference when we know we don't have to do anything alone. We didn't have to do it when we were trying to get and stay sober and we sure don't have to do it while we serve A.A. One alcoholic helping another is what we are all about. What a beautiful time of life and recovery we are embarking upon. Pray, meditate and listen for the direction in what God has planned for you specifically. His power will always be given to carry it out. One day at a time!!

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

Bridging-the-Gap WORLD-WIDE CONFERENCE

The 18th Annual Bridging-The-Gap *INTERNATIONAL* weekend is to be held this year in Kansas City, Missouri! Because of a lot of dedicated work from the Western Area of Missouri, we here in Eastern Missouri won't have to spend a ton a money on fuel to get there. Share a ride with another A.A. member and save even more!

This weekend is September 5-7, 2006 at the Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel, 7301 NW Tiffany Springs Road, Kansas City, MO 64153. There will be flyers on this event at the Summer Assembly!

This Bridging-The-Gap weekend will consist of presentations and discussions on BTG activities such as Temporary Contact, Re-Entry Process & Pre-release Contact, and A.A. information programs. Participants will be A.A.s involved or interested in 12th Step Work through various General Service and Intergroup Committees: Treatment, Corrections, CPC (Cooperation with the Professional Community), PI (Public Information), H&I (Hospitals & Institutions), etc. AAs from across the U.S. and Canada will attend, many sharing their experiences on BTG topics.

Yours in service, Ben C., Area 38 BTG Chair

(BTG provides temporary AA contacts to introduce AAs discharged from treatment or corrections to local AA—very rewarding & necessary 12th Step work!)

The Importance of SWRAASA

St. Louis, MO: Oct. 10 - 12, 2008

The **S**outh **W**est **R**egional **A.A.** **S**ervice **A**ssembly is coming to St. Louis. There is nothing short of an International AA Convention which would cause me more excitement and deep down good feeling than this. That is in great part because no other large gathering except for the International Convention has ever made me feel more welcome or a part of Alcoholics Anonymous.

It was my great privilege to attend the very first SWRAASA held in Denver, Colorado 20 years ago. I was serving as Area Chair. Rita J., Panel #37, and I went at the insistence of Jan W., our Regional Trustee who was also my sponsor, and a past delegate, Zora H., Panel #19. This was a totally new concept and since it was to be patterned after something the Pacific Region held, it was

thought possibly to be “not in line with our thinking”: why would we need something else when we have the Forum, etc.? We are a pretty conservative area, you know, even today. But Rita and I attended—with no financial support from the area, nor much of any other kind of support—just to let the Area know what we thought of it when we came back.

We were warmly welcomed in Denver by many wonderful AA members from all over the Southwest Region. This was truly an

exploratory gathering which put into place the most wonderful service experience you can have. There was an enthusiasm and openness about what we could learn from each other. There was no business to be conducted, no formal guidelines adhered to, just a simple sharing of service experience by “job classification” if you will. Very much like going to a step meeting and sharing only on the subject step.



It took a while for our Area to come around to being supportive of SWRAASA—finally coming to terms with paying expenses for area officers to attend, with districts soon following along. Today I consider it some of the best money we can spend: to get our trusted servants and those who will become our trusted servants, to a SWRAASA weekend for the kind of sharing you get nowhere else.

The opportunity to participate, to be a part of, just starts with sending in your registration fee of \$5.00. You will get more for your money here than from any place else you could ever attend. And you will know you belong from the minute you step foot in the door.

See you all at SWRAASA in October.

*Yours in service,
Ginny J., 39/38 Eastern Missouri*

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

This was noted to be the longest General Service Conference on record. On the last day, the Delegates engaged in discussion far into the night. Although this year's Advisory Actions (the agenda items discussed and voted upon) did not appear to be as ground-breaking as last year, the 134 member Conference—as related by Pat—accomplished much toward resetting the spiritual compass of the participants: bringing the Conference and thus AA as a whole back to our Traditions and Concepts.

The need for effective communication rang loud and clear. Very apparent was the responsibility of our Groups. Without participation and the voice of the Groups, AA stops functioning. The importance of the Groups' input was demonstrated. Because of the Groups, the Conference was able to come together.

A majority of our new Delegates from the Southwest Region continue to be elected to Conference Committee positions—3 out of 4 will chair for 2009. (Pat was the 2008 Treatment Facilities Chair.)

Greg M., will retire as the General Manager of the General Service Office by Dec. 31, 2008. His excellent service of over 10 years has been praised by all.

A noteworthy Advisory Action recommended that input will be gathered on the benefits and liabilities—spiritual and practical—of relying completely on voluntary contributions of members and Groups.

(Continued on page 4)

MISSOURI STATE CONVENTION

July 25-27, 2008

It's almost here!

This premier Missouri event gives all indications of providing us with an unforgettable week-end. The speakers (AA & Al-Anon) are superb; the activities—meetings, dances, banquet, a great luncheon special, ice cream social, prizes, etc., etc., etc.—will be first class!!! The committees are working over-time to deliver their best.

Be there, or be square!

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

Flyer down-load and information are
available at: eamo.org.

Click on: Missouri State Convention.



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GRATITUDE GAZETTE

Published by the Gratitude Gazette Committee of the Eastern Area of MO, Area 38 of Alcoholics Anonymous. Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors only and not AA as a whole. AA has not endorsed the materials contained herein, unless specifically cited.

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS *(continued from page 3)*

Some liabilities of relying on publishing income were pointed out. Group input on this issue will be important. All information will be forwarded to the 2009 Conference Finance Committee.

Posthumous anonymity and the need for increased awareness of this issue was discussed—no action was taken.

The theme for the 2009 General Service Conference will be: "Our Commitment to Carry AA's Message—Enthusiasm and Gratitude in Action."

Finances: Total contributions to GSO from the US and Canada continue to grow slowly; however, the number of Groups contributing has fallen steadily since 1987 from 58% to 45.2% now. Last year the functional expenses of running GSO cost about \$6.50 per member—actual contributions totaled \$4.09 per member. A shortfall of \$2M was balanced by literature income. AA was last fully self-supporting in 1989.

From material in Pat's report & Box 459

A detailed Conference report is available in Box 459, June-July 2008. The final Report from GSO will be available in Aug. or Sept.

Please see the expanded Conference Highlights article on our website: eamo.org. Click on Gratitude Gazette.



October 10th - 12th, 2008

Sheraton Westport Hotel St. Louis Chalet
191 Westport Plaza, St. Louis, MO 63146

MO ♦ AR ♦ KS ♦ OK ♦ NM ♦ TX ♦ CO

For all members in the Southwest Region of AA to share & learn about AA service.

WORKSHOPS * SHARING SESSIONS * FELLOWSHIP * NETWORKING

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

Hotel reservation website: www.starwoomeeting.com/Book/swraasa

Name	
Badge Name	
City, State	
Homegroup, Area	
Service Position	
Spanish Translator?	Hearing Impaired?



57th Annual Missouri State Convention
July 25-27, 2008
See page 3

AREA BULLETIN BOARD

Midwest Women-to-Women Seminar
Oct. 3-5, 2008
Airport Hilton St. Louis
10330 Natural Bridge
www.midwest-woman-to-woman.com

18th Annual BRIDGING-THE-GAP World Wide Workshop, Sept 5-7
Kansas City, MO.
BTGWwcoordinator@hotmail.com
See page 2

FALL CLASSIC
Aug 29-31
Airport Marriott Hotel—STL International
www.fall-classic.com

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

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



I'm a GSR, Now What?

Return Engagement November 1, 2008!

10 AM - 12 N. Watson Terrace Christian Church,
4205 Watson Rd., SW St. Louis. *** Flyers out soon.

Contact: dist2@eamo.org or dist52@eamo.org

Mark your calendar!

Anyone wishing to correspond with or submit materials for publication in the Gratitude Gazette may contact: 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.

SMICYPAA Announcement

In the event SMICYPAA does not win the bid for ICYPAA, the SMICYPAA Bid Committee will be holding its Election Meeting on Sat., Aug. 2 at 4 PM at **St. Mary's Hospital Cafeteria, Room A & B, 6420 Clayton Rd., Richmond Heights, MO.** Check <http://smicypaa.org> for details. Anyone interested in a service position or just getting involved with the Committee is invited to come and stand for a position—information on the positions is available in SMICYPAA's procedures manual—found at <http://smicypaa.org/proman.htm>.

ARCHIVES:

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