



WINTER 2008

REPORTING SERVICE NEWS AND VIEWS
IN AREA 38 ≈ EASTERN MISSOURI AA

Show Me: Young AAs in Service SMICYPAA on the Move

Of all of the AA acronyms out there, SMICYPAA denotes one of the most dynamic entities in Missouri AA service. Before deciphering this term, we first examine another acronym: ICYPAA—International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous. ICYPAA was first held in 1958, and has since met yearly in different U.S. and Canadian cities. "The purpose of ICYPAA is to celebrate sobriety among young people, the young at heart, and to carry the A.A. message. Since its inception, ICYPAA has depended on A.A.'s Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service in order to survive." (from SMICYPAA's website: smicypaa.org). In 2002 young Missouri AA's put together SMICYPAA—Show Me ICYPAA. This launched a bid committee intent on bringing ICYPAA to St. Louis, Missouri. The Gazette conducted telephone interviews with three SMICYPAA members: Mike P.—the first Chair, Ian S.—current Chair, and Susan M.—current Outreach Chair. In addition to SMICYPAA, they are also active in several general service positions. Their comments are combined.

What is SMICYPAA's primary function?

Bring ICYPAA to St. Louis. Live the spirit of ICYPAA. Reach out to as many young and young-at-heart Missouri AA members as possible, getting them involved. Be a resource with young peoples' 12th step work throughout the state. Also, there is a lot of fun involved! We closely adhere to the Traditions, the Concepts, and the AA Service Manual.

What prompted your bid to host ICYPAA?

Attendance at ICYPAA in 2001 sparked enthusiasm. In 2002, an informational dance and speaker event was held in St. Louis to introduce people to the idea. A sharing session resulted in an emphatic endorsement to go for the bid. After an intensive year of work getting SMICYPAA up and running, our first bid was presented at the 2003 ICYPAA in Orlando. It was received very well!

Why St. Louis?

At this time, St. Louis is the Missouri city best equipped to house the ICYPAA attendees—in recent years it has been around 4,000.

How many cities usually bid for the ICYPAA contract?

About 8 or 9 cities bid each year to host the following year's conference. The contracts are awarded (per Third Legacy voting) by the ICYPAA Advisory Council, and representatives from the bidding states and recent host states. It takes a few bidding attempts before being given the contract.

What is looked for when awarding a bid?

The main requirements are: financially self-supporting—it takes several tens of thousands of dollars to put this thing on; a strong structure—with enough members on the committees; plenty of involvement and enthusiasm; fund-raising events; tax ID and permits; Area support; etc. It's time intensive and comprehensive. Our Bid Package Book, updated yearly, is state-of-the-art.

Your rotations are one year.

This gives as many people as possible a chance to be involved. This helps to quickly put newer AA members to work—they often branch out into general service later on. Most of our original members came on board as "general service veterans."

How many members are involved in SMICYPAA?

About 20-30. We would like to increase those numbers around Missouri.

What is the average age of SMICYPAA members?

In general, members range from the 20s to the 30s. All age groups are invited to join—young people and the young-at-heart.

How do people become involved in SMICYPAA?

Most people join because of word of mouth. Often, they attend out of curiosity. Then they stay.

What events does SMICYPAA put on?

Two-day Mini Conferences, dances, trivia nights, kickball tournaments, etc. All high-energy and great fun! Our events and meetings are generally held around the St. Louis area—at times in Columbia and Jefferson City.

(Continued on page 4)



"...I have found nothing for greater inspiration than the knowledge that A.A. of tomorrow will be safe, and certainly magnificent, in the keeping of you who are the younger generation of A.A. today.

Bill W., June 15, 1969 in a letter written to the 12th International Conference of Young People in Philadelphia, PA



Delegate's Message

Hi everyone!

Well, here we are in 2008! If you feel as I do, 2007 went so fast, but was so good.

I watched you all working very hard, so we can keep doing what we do best, to help the suffering alcoholic find a new way of life, to offer them the message of the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and how a Higher Power can lead them from "incomprehensible demoralization" to a life of hope, love and contented sobriety.

Concept IX talks about leadership: not only about what is going on today, but also about having a vision of how our decisions may affect the future of AA. What visions do you have relating to your Group, your District, or AA as a whole? Have you started looking into rotation? Not only in preparing yourself, but helping prepare the next person who may be asked to serve as you have this term? Look around the rooms. See what others have been willing to do. Our 57th General Conference theme was, "Our 12th Step Responsibility—Are We Going to Any Length?" Many questions can be brought to mind as I look at that. You know what you can and can't do; what responsibilities you have as the blessings of this program. It is not too early to start praying and talking with your sponsor and others about where AA may ask you to serve next time.

That brings me to another thought. Have you noticed the younger members in AA who have been so active in our service structure? They are working hard to not only serve, but to learn what is best for AA as a whole. Yes, their lives may be different than we older folks, but their walk in AA is just the same. They are our future. They are the generation that will be able to continue to carry the message of our 3 Legacies. They have been out there seeking to find that person who is trapped in alcoholism. They bring new life and vitality into the rooms of AA at all levels of their participation. Hopefully, we can help them accomplish their goals without overriding what God has mapped for AA's path today.

In closing, let me say once again, how very grateful I am to be given the privilege to serve as your Delegate. You make the job so much easier. Any work I accomplish as Delegate is due to the Alcoholics Anonymous members who are working so hard. So thank you for all your time, energy and prayers you have put forth. It works, it really does!!

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

Thoughts from the Chair



At the Fall assembly, we were blessed to have Jim Estelle, Class A Trustee Emeritus, as our guest speaker. Jim gave a wonderful tribute to service and the impact it has had on his life as a non-alcoholic Trustee and devoted friend of AA. I was struck by something Jim mentioned that has become very important to him recently: working with and reaching out to young people. It is a topic which was recently featured in both The Grapevine and Box 459. So, it seemed fitting that we focus in January on our younger members. I am very excited to have SMICYPAA participating as our guest host and workshop presenters.

At age 27, I was not exactly young by today's standards when I got sober, but still had a lot of "I Nevers." I tried to focus on the similarities, and not the differences, of older members as they shared in meetings. Most were accepting and encouraging, but I did get the occasional "I spilled more booze on my tie than you drank." This certainly did nothing to make me feel at ease or give me a sense of belonging. I hope that our fellowship has grown beyond that type of attitude towards our younger members, but it got me thinking about the ways we middle-aged folks might alienate young people, consciously or not, just because we may perceive they haven't earned their seat at a meeting yet.

Today it's my hope that by sharing with each other and coming together in service, we can look past outward appearances and stand firmly together on our common bond as recovering alcoholics. Bill W. often reminded us that when we speak the language of the heart all differences between us--young, old, low-bottom, high-bottom, rich, poor, well-educated, illiterate, city or country, basically melt away. The only thing that matters is one alcoholic sharing with another that message of hope.

I also look forward to the second year of our rotation. Hopefully those of you who are serving at the Area, District or Group level have accomplished many of your goals and still have enough steam to finish the term—something which often takes a great deal of determination and will-power! Jim Estelle mentioned being in late-running GSO committee meetings and telling the members that (paraphrasing) "if the issue we're debating here will help carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic, I am prepared to stay all night if necessary. If not, then let's adjourn." What a powerful thought to carry forward into 2008!

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



Beginning and the Middle

January—the New Year—symbolizes new beginnings. It also marks our halfway point through this rotation. In the New Year and the middle, we reflect on our course up to this point. We have become familiar with our current AA jobs—the journey from here on out will be easier. In the middle, it is time to start thinking ahead, to start cultivating our replacements. (And we start the exploratory process for our own rotation on to a new position.)

The midpoint, as with many things, is the time and place to add on to our service capability in the Fellowship—to graft a new shoot onto the established plant. As we move forward through our rotations, we leave them in good shape for our successors to build upon.

In Service, Editor

Talking Service

In nine months we'll elect new "trusted servants" at Group, District, and Area elections. Since we are electing leaders and decision-makers, Concept 9 urges us to prepare and elect quality workers: "Furnishing our service structure with able and willing workers has to be a continuous activity." Given that most meetings do not include study of the Traditions, Concepts, or service literature in their format, how exactly are we preparing these workers to meet their responsibilities? Here are some methods we've seen used...

First, if people never hear about service during meetings, they will see it as something separate and unimportant. Why not share in meetings about how service has helped you? Make sure people see or hear about the AA history books, "Box 459", the service manual, pamphlets, and "Guidelines" sheets. If it's hard to find a Traditions or service study in your District, consider starting one. Many Groups study the Traditions as part of a rotating meeting format. Invite experienced people to share, and explain about "service sponsors" who can answer questions, point out resources, and study with them. Ask yourself, "If I don't mention service, where will this person hear about it?"

The duties of a DCM in the service manual include talking to the Groups about service, organizing workshops on service, and making sure the GSR's are acquainted with the service literature and Concepts. Most Districts hold one or two service workshops every year. For members whose sponsor and Group are not

"into" service, these workshops are often the only source of information on the subject. A good workshop is usually not just a speaker meeting, but may include speakers, materials, Group discussions, games, Q&A, displays, and food. Some have sign-up sheets and schedules for service projects.

When people finally show up at a business meeting, make it a good experience. Someone welcomes them, something worthwhile is discussed, and they are offered an appropriate job—delivering pamphlets or flyers, visiting a shut-in, speaking in a rehab, answering a hotline, addressing envelopes.

One of the best things we can do is to give informative and attractive reports at every level of service. These do not accidentally fall out of your mouth. You plan them. Make good use of meeting time to cover the most important and interesting things. Per Concept 3 (the Right of Decision), eliminate the topics that the Group does not have time for. That's not censorship, it's the job they elected you to do.

At SWRAASA 2008 next fall in St. Louis, more than six hundred service workers from the Southeastern US will be in town to learn and share together about service. One of the best things we can all do for ourselves, our sponsees, and for AA as a whole, is to be there and bring a friend.

Yours in Service, Jim F.,

Alternate Delegate, 57/38 Eastern Missouri

Next issue: Part II Getting Into Service

SWRAASA FEVER: CATCH IT!

South West Region AA Service Assembly

October 10th-12, 2008 Hosted by Area 38, Sheraton Westport Hotel St. Louis Chalet

This is the first time that Area 38 will host SWRAASA—and it won't come our way again for another 22 years! (Each of the 11 Areas in the 7 states of the Southwest Region hosts this event every 2 years—now it's our turn!) Join us and see firsthand why our Region has gained the reputation for extraordinary camaraderie.

The name—South West Region AA Service Assembly—accurately denotes what this event is about, but it does not give a sense of the upbeat experience that comes with bonding with other AA trusted servants around the Region—being fired up with new ideas and learning. And yes, there is fun and socializing in between the workshops. No parties, no dances—but opportunities for "schmoozing" exist galore. Numerous charming cafes and restaurants are a few steps from the meeting site. An extensive Hospitality Center is planned. And on Friday and Saturday nights Ice-cream Socials will be held—historically these SWRAASA socials have been superb networking events and great fun. Dawn to late-night activities will keep us jumping. The conference site and hotel rooms are quite inviting. The price—unbeatable: \$89/night, 1-4 people. 314-878-1500—specify SWRAASA.

Get out the word—we're planning a "blow-out" attendance. Registration: only \$5.00! This sharing and learning event is open to ALL AAs. Bring new people. Talk to anyone who has participated in past SWRAASA's—they'll tell you that there is nothing like it, and they'll emphasize that you won't want to miss this one!

"See you in St. Louis!"

Registration flyers available at meetings, local Intergroups, or web: www.swraasa2008.org

Committee Spotlight: Bridging-the-Gap

Connections

In order for Bridging-the-Gap (BTG) to become its own Standing Committee, the Area Procedures Manual was changed. It was necessary for a motion to be approved by an ad hoc committee and the Area Structures and Procedures Committee, then submitted to the Assembly. This was completed in the spring of 2004. At the 2004 summer Assembly, after a period of discussion, a written ballot was taken and the motion gained the two-thirds majority vote needed to establish BTG as a Standing Committee at the Area level.

This is a great opportunity for AA to extend its hand to the still suffering alcoholic.

Due to the efforts of previous BTG Committees and the work of the current BTG Chair (Ben C.), Alternate Chair (Dave S.) and our BTG Committee, the word has spread throughout the State that we, as a Standing Committee, can, will, and do get most of the men and women being released from a treatment facility, county jail, or prison connected with an AA member from our list of Bridging-the-Gap contacts. Last quarter (August through Sept. 2007), we had over one hundred requests for help. If you are wondering what your Group or District can do to help BTG, please put together a list of male and female BTG contacts. Discuss among the Group the possibility of names—of treatment clients and/or offenders (jail or prison)—being passed to them. Then provide the BTG website (btg@eamo.org) with the Group and District names and numbers for the persons who will be receiving the calls. BTG will never give out the contact number to the member being released! We will get the interested party's information and pass it on to the BTG contact. As a part of the Area Team we are making a difference!

In Your Service,

Ben C., Area 38 Bridging-the-Gap Chair



GRATITUDE GAZETTE

Committee Spotlight: Gratitude Gazette Communication

The goal of our quarterly Area newsletter is to enhance the connection between the Area and the Groups—to carry the message of AA Service around the Area. We work to reach as many Eastern Missouri AA members as possible, to share information, and to provide a forum for service related articles and commentary.

The first Area Newsletter appeared in 1976 under the banner of "Missouri Eastern Area Bulletin." In 1981 it was re-named "Gratitude Gazette." The format has changed a bit through the years; the ideas, insights and philosophies of AA service have remained constant.

Some members say that they have little knowledge of the Area. They are also unfamiliar with our newsletter. We would like to do what we can to increase awareness of the Area, to continue to utilize the Gazette as a communication tool between the Area and the Groups. Please talk about the newsletter to your Groups. People with computers can access the Gazette (and expanded articles) on our website: www.eamo.org. The Gazette would like opinions and articles from members in the Area relating to service in the Group, the District, the Area and AA as a whole. And for our Area Bulletin Board: send in any workshops or events that your Group or District would like to share.

Since we're halfway through this term of our service, we're looking for articles on rotation. What has been your experience during the first year of your new rotation? Please tell us about it, especially if you were new to general service.

Yours in Service, Marge D.

SMICYPAA—from page 1:

Tell us about your outreach around Missouri.

Since SMICYPAA encompasses all of Missouri, we plan to focus on more involvement throughout the state, carrying AA's message, and targeting young people. Our plan is to reach into the small communities and to "smoke out" the young AAs.

Please share some of the benefits of SMICYPAA involvement.

In SMICYPAA, we learn so much about service. We build service leaders. We have been a nurturing structure for many young people in AA—the bonding, the sense of purpose, the joy of sobriety, the close friendships, and the rewards of service. We help people feel at home in AA, no matter what their age. Like all AA service, SMICYPAA keeps young AAs in the middle of the lifeboat. And, as mentioned before, we have a good time!

Additional comments:

All AAs are invited to join us. Please check our website for the location and time of our meetings (first Saturdays of the month): smicypaa.org. Also, visit our website for detailed SMICYPAA information: our activities, committees and service opportunities, procedures, bylaws, minutes, and information on ICYPAA. Our goals: To continue reaching out and involving more people outside St. Louis in SMICYPAA. To carry the message of AA to young people around the state. To keep the fires burning hotly until Missouri gets awarded the bid for ICYPAA.

PLEASE SEE THE EXPANDED INTERVIEW:

www.eamo.org. Go to Gratitude Gazette

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Monthly IR meeting:
3rd Tues. 8PM.
St. Mary's Hospital
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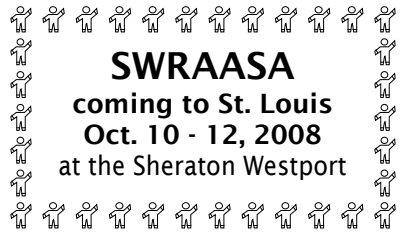
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 *Missouri
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Midwest Woman to Woman Seminar
October 3-5, 2008
Airport Hilton St. Louis
10330 Natural Bridge Rd.
Dwanna R. 314-367-0574

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2008 ASSEMBLY DATES:
January 12
April 12
July 12
Sept. 27 & 28
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North County
Office
7246 N. Lindbergh Blvd.
Lindbergh and Dunn/Taylor
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in Hazelwood 63042
at Hazelwood Plaza

 **SWRAASA**
coming to St. Louis
Oct. 10 - 12, 2008
at the Sheraton Westport

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 three weeks prior to the next Area Assembly for consideration of publication in that issue.

**Bridging-the-Gap Area
List Update**
all Districts & Groups that have
BTG Chairs: please send current
info on your Chair to:
BTG@eamo.org.

For links to read expanded
Gazette articles, and to
access past issues of the
Gazette, visit us on the
Area website: eamo.org.
Click on Gratitude Gazette.