0'S NEWLETTER

The Triangle

Volume 13, Issue 7

October 2005

From Your Area Delegate

My name is Scott and I am an alcoholic. I have the privilege to currently serve as your Delegate..

This article makes several references to the Final Conference Report of the 55th General Service Conference. If you do not have the report, please contact your DCM.

It was a year ago that I was elected. The emotions ran high to low and simply I did not know if I had what was needed to fulfill the duties of this service position. This past year has absolutely flown by and with each passing day it has become obvious that the God of my understanding has blessed me with an opportunity to be of service to our Fellowship and a daily reminder of the spiritual principles He has given all of us to live by have grown in importance.

Right after the election, Paul W. came up to me and handed me a note. It said "Congratulations [blank], would you give your report at our Spring Roundup in Kalispell". Of course I said yes, but as I looked at the note, it was obvious it was written in advance with my name written in at a later time. And so it began.

In January I received a phone call from a very fine gentleman named John F., Panel 54 Delegate from the Golden West of Massachusetts. He was assigned to me as my conference buddy. By tradition a second year Delegate is assigned to a new Delegate to help them with the Conference experience.

John and I swapped many phone calls and emails and became good friends prior to our meeting at the Conference. We have become even closer friends since the Conference and speak with each other at least once a week. He set a fine example of what a Conference buddy should do and I hope to emulate his example with my assignment later this year.

When I walked into the Conference with 136 people who love AA, the energy level was amazing and I immediately felt a part of a great Fellowship. I felt at ease and a part of, was due to the preparation that had taken place over many years of attending our Area Assemblies and the insistence put forth by Area 40 that our Delegates be prepared. One of the things that Area 40 does that is a great part of the preparation for me prior to the Conference is our pre-Assemblies. I learn a great deal about how Area 40 feels about the Conference Agenda items during those meetings and I hope they continue. In addition, the committee system that Area 40 follows is very similar to the process of the Conference. Thank you for providing such a great training ground and in particular, thank you to the past Delegates who have been of such great help with their input. The past Delegates have only responded when asked and have allowed me the opportunity to learn all the lessons I need to on my own.

Sunday night was dinner with our guests and an open AA meeting. The room was filled with the living history of our Fellowship. I was honored to be in attendance and took the advice of the past Delegates of sitting with people I did not know at every meal and meeting.

Monday morning was the start of the committee meetings. I am assigned to the Trustee's Committee. The

Continued on Page 2

Inside this issue:	
Area 40 Delegate Continued	2
From Your Chair	2
From Your Grapevine Chair	3 2
PI Committee Assembly Report	3
District Committee Reports	4-5
From Your Literature Chair	5
From Linda Chezem's Workshop	6
From Your Webmaster	7
Area 40 Archives	7
Let's Be Friendly with our Friends	7
Area 40 Committee	8-9
Districts Map	10
Triangle Tidbits	10
Calendar of Events	11

From Your Area Delegate Continued..

God of my understanding has a pretty good sense of humor. I thought I had a fair understanding of the service structure of Alcoholics Anonymous. However, I did not have a clear understanding of the how the General Service Trustees, Class A Trustees, Regional Trustees, appointed committee members, General Service Office and non-trustee directors interacted, at what level, how often or how they came into their service positions. As the result of being on the Trustees committee, I was tasked with having a working understanding of all those functions.

During that process of reading and in particular studying the Composition. Scope and Procedure of the Trustees committee, I discovered a bit of conflicting information. Simply, the Trustees committee has a specific number of Delegates assigned to the committee from each panel. This conference's Delegate panels did not match up with the prescribed composition. So I asked some questions, wrote some emails, made some phone calls and the result was an additional consideration that came forth from the committee that puts a procedure in place for the next few years to restore the committee to its designated composition. (Review page 59 of Conference Report, 1979

Advisory Action)

On Monday afternoon, Vince K., Chairperson of the trustee's Finance & Budgetary committee and treasurer of the General Service Board, gave a presentation that was very well prepared and understandable. Discussion went on for awhile and centered on the group participation level. Pages 70 & 71 of the Final Conference Report show the 2004 contributions by Delegate Area. 45.1% of the groups in Area 40 contributed to the General Service Office in 2004. The average of all groups in the US and Canada was 43.7%. Don't worry, I am not going to go into great numeric detail. Simply. I would like to share with you that fewer groups contributed but the overall contributions increased to the General Service Office in 2004 versus 2003. Tom J. brought some historical clarity to the discussion by his recalling of the late 80s when the Fellowship was only \$100,000.00 short of self support through group contributions. Simply, there was a call for money. The resultant increase in literature prices coupled with a pull back on all fronts by the General Service office regarding what services can be provided is about at their limits. The Fellowship will need to respond with either more self support or decisions on what services to cut.

This really will be OUR collective decision on what actions we want to take.

Personally, I do not think this is so much a matter of money but a matter of participation. As long as group contributions continue to decline the price of literature will continue to increase to fund the 12th step services provided by the General Service Office. As the price of literature continues to increase, the possibility of fewer Big Books being sold and our primary purpose of carrying a message of hope and recovery to the sick and suffering alcoholic will have its challenges and have a great possibility of decreasing. That is contrary to my opportunity to give away what has been so freely given to me. A contribution of \$5.92 per member/per year, or \$132.51 per group/per year would enable the Fellowship to be fully self supporting from contributions. Is that a lofty goal? For some groups, yes considering the challenges of just a few group members who participate with 7th Tradition at the meeting. One of the warranties of the 12th concept asks that we lead by example. The example to be set is up to us. Enough of money and finances.

If you wish to have a full copy of Scott's report, email triangle@aa-montana.org

From Your Area Chair

Since the Spring Assembly I have had a lot of fun visiting many of your district meetings. I have learned, first-hand, just how large a state this is. I also learned that while attendance at district meetings is thriving in some districts, and struggling in others, the AA message is being carried to the still suffering alcoholic all over Montana. It has been a privilege to attend your district meetings. I am now better informed on the challenges facing different districts. I

also want to thank all the districts who hosted me at their district meetings and campouts.

One of my other purposes in visiting your district meetings was to help inform folks on the process of submitting agenda items for the Area Assemblies. What you see on our agendas are items submitted by a number of ad-hoc committees, districts, groups and individual AA members around Area 40. Some of these items affect Area 40 directly

and others are for Area 40 to consider submitting to the 2006 General Service Conference Agenda. The next Area Assembly will be this spring, April 8 and 9, back here at the Yogo Inn in Lewistown. The deadline for submitting agenda items for the Spring Assembly is February 1.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity to be of service and to participate in AA. Love & Service,

Andrew

From Your Area Grapevine Chair

Okay, let's talk about *The Grape-vine* (our meeting in print). As I write this, I am just home from the West Central Regional Forum in Great Falls. What a great weekend! As your Grapevine Chair, one of my duties is to encourage the use of the Grapevine. I was running out of ideas, but at the Forum, I learned a lot of things I can pass along to you.

Here are some suggestions that might help you encourage members in your Groups or Districts to subscribe to and read the Grapevine:

• One group in Wyoming gives a

- subscription to newcomers so that the magazine shows up every month whether the alcoholic stays sober or not.
- Send a subscription to your local hospital's Emergency Room (check with them first to make sure this won't be unwanted).
- When you go somewhere for an appointment, take a copy of the magazine to read while you wait, then leave it in the waiting room when you go.
- Ask members of your group to bring in old copies of the Grape-

- vine and when you've collected a number, give them to the Red Cross who will send them overseas to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- One group has four subscriptions. They put them out at their meetings and any that aren't used are saved and taken to a treatment center.

I hope these ideas help. Please let me know if I can help you with anything relating to the Grapevine.

Yours in Service, Gail M.

Area Public Information Committee Assembly Report

- 1. Consider the recommendation that Area 40 obtain and manage an 800 number: The committee wishes to first of all thank Laurie C for all the time and work she did on this agenda item. There was a lot of discussion on this item. Concerns expressed by committee attendees were the uncertainty of cost, how the 800# would be put in place, the amount of time the would be required to maintain a state wide 800#. The sense of the committee was unanimous that the 800# was worth pursuing but felt that there were still too many unanswered questions. No action taken at this time.
- 2. Consider the recommendation that the current Policy and Procedures Document be made available to the Area on the Area Website and that updates and revisions will be the responsibility of the Archives Committee after each assembly. Corrections to the Policy and Procedures document need to be submitted to the Area Chair for furtherance to the Archives Committee in accordance with Area Timelines to be included under the committee's agenda.

The committee was a bit confused as to why this item was on their agenda.

Alex M, Area Webmaster was able to clarify by explaining that this was a procedure that was already being done but needed to be formally recognized.

Therefore:

"The Public Information committee recommends that the current Policy and Procedures Document be made available to the Area on the Area Website and that updates and revisions will be the responsibility of the Archives Committee after each assembly. Corrections to the Policy and Procedures document need to be submitted to the Area Chair for furtherance to the Archives Committee in accordance with Area Timelines to be included under the committee's agenda." - Motion passed on the floor.

3. Consider the development of a procedure for handling e-mails addressed to Area 40 committee chairs that do not have a personal e-mail address.

It was brought to the PI Chair's attention by the Area Chair that we need to visit how to handle individuals who do not have emails that are elected as area committee chairs. This procedure is needed so that those who do not have internet access are not discouraged from running for an area position. Therefore:

"The Public Information committee

recommends that the following procedure be put in place for handling Area 40 committee chairs emails. For those chairs who do not have email, it will go to the Area Chair or his designee." - Motion passed on the floor.

Report & Charter

1. Consider whether Area 40, through its Public Information Chair, will encourage and assist (as requested) our districts and intergroups to list their answering service/hot line numbers and/or addresses in the Western US Directory, to provide another contact source for persons seeking AA meetings and information through the directory.

The committee discussed this item and felt that this is a districts decision as to whether or not their number be put in the directory. The PI Chair will contact the GSO PI Staff Member and find out what the districts need to do to have their answering service numbers under the heading of answering service numbers and if the districts can also put their answering service number under their city name. Once the Area PI Chair receives this information from GSO she will forward it on to the DCM's. **No further action taken**.

Page 3 THE TRIANGLE

District Committee Member Reports

Hi! My name is Mike and I'm an alcoholic. It's my privilege to serve as District 42 DCM. The District currently has eight active groups, having had one new group being formed in Conrad.

The majority of our District meetings are held the third Sunday of each month at the Shelby hospital in the conference room. We took the District meeting on the road twice this year to the adjoining towns of Conrad and Valier. They were well attended with vigorous participation.

In the past few months the Conrad group held a "Spring Fling" that was a major success. The Lake Francis group followed that up with their "Mini Roundup", which was also a great success. Thanks go out to the speakers for their sharing, to all those AA and Al-Anon members who attended and gave of their time and energy. I also want to thank the Area chair for his visit this past month.

The District has encountered our stumbles and fumbles, our highs and lows but our leadership has learned and grown. I wish to thank the District for allowing me to serve.

Greetings from District 81! Since my report last spring, I've gotten to see a lot of the beautiful scenery in western Montana. The alternate DCM and I visited groups in St. Ignatius and Polson where we found stable, long-term sobriety and members active in service. I'm happy to report a reestablished group in Hot Springs, with an enthusiastic GSR, and another group just starting. We

also traveled to Seeley Lake and in the opposite direction to Haugen – think 10,000 Silver Dollar Bar. These groups were small – about 5 regular members – and no GSRs. But we have a contact person for each and will keep in touch. I've also visited several groups in "metropolitan" Missoula and still have some to go. Meeting new people was never something I used to look forward to, but these visits with fellow AAs have been the highlight of my DCM service.

All of our district service positions are filled and many of the GSRs attended the assembly. We continue to carry the message into the correctional facility and treatment center. With the new school year at hand, we'll be providing speakers to the high schools again and continue to make sure our pamphlets and schedules are available in the community.

Our district held several events over the last five months, the main one being the 2005 Fall Roundup. Leading up to that were a couple fundraisers: an auction of donated goods held in May and a chili cook-off held on the hottest day in July, which, surprisingly, had a great turnout. What is it with recovering alcoholics and food?? My personal favorite, the Founders' Day Event, was held June 11th. District 93 joined us this year in celebrating AA's birthday with a sponsorship panel - thanks to Earl F. and Connie R. for their participation – and the report from our delegate, Scott, who brought some very tasty ice cream to the picnic. Horseshoes,

volley ball and softball games took up the afternoon where the rain held off until the last cooler was stowed away. If you've not held hands around an infield for the Lord's Prayer, you've missed a profound experience.

Many of us attended the Regional Forum in Great Falls. At our next month's meeting our district will conduct a district inventory with the help of our Area Chair, Andrew. And lastly, since we do "absolutely insist on enjoying life", our Special Events committee is already starting to work on the Halloween Party.

I'm privileged to serve my district as their DCM and feel very grateful for the program and people in Alcoholics Anonymous. Thank you. Julie R, District 81

District 11 is now 33 groups within a 140 miles radius of Billings. We hold our district meetings at 10am the 2nd Saturday of every month, except July. We are continuing to bring meetings into Yellowstone County Detention Facility, Women's Prison, Rimrock Foundation, Alternative Prerelease programs, the Alternative High School, Deering Community Clinic, and Parkview Convalescent Center. Our PI/CPC, Corrections, and Treatment committees are kept very active. A new Family Drug Court is requesting information from our fellowship and probation officers are requesting meeting schedules for their clients.

Since the last assembly, we have the Fall Roundup 2006 committee up and running and plans

District Committee Member Reports Continued

are in the works for the roundup September 8-10, 2006 at the Billings Hotel, next to the Holiday Inn.

There have been numerous group activities throughout the district and a successful delegate report with District 12 at the Fireman's Point campout. Summer softball challenges, group barbeques, Beartooth Conference, Girl Talk are a few functions that have taken place.

We held a Potluck/Speaker Meeting with past West Central Region delegates and trustees that were on their way to the Regional Forum in Great Falls. My name is Pam, I am an alcoholic and I am the DCM from District 21.

Our District started out the summer with a campout at Fort Peck, it was well attended by our district and also by area chairs. We had two workshops, area corrections and area treatment. A great time was had by all and everyone was excited to make it an annual event.

Our next district meeting and event was at Makoshika Park near Glendive. We voted to support district 23 and attend their conference and the Delegates report. We had our district meeting on Saturday, which was well attended from Montana as well as

North Dakota.

Our biggest news from our district is the restart of the Culbertson group. The last report was that it is being well attended.

Our next district function is going to be Halloween weekend, which Glasgow has volunteered to chair.

Our district has been contacted about the WATCH program and I had been blessed enough to be corresponding with a young gal who will be getting out in October.

Thank you for this opportunity to be of service.

From Your Literature Chair

Hi everybody my name is Louise and I'm an alcoholic.

I was fortunate enough to attend the International Convention in Toronto Canada last June/July and it was an "indescribably wonderful" experience. If you have never been to one of these events start planning now so you are able to attend the next one in five years.

There are two new items in the Summer/Fall 2005 catalog. First are display rack extensions, which connect to the already existing pamphlet rack and allow us to display books. Second is a new Step and Traditions window shade that hangs with a chain rather than brackets.

There has been an increase of

\$1.00 on all literature except Alcoholics Anonymous and a 10% handling charge for purchases under \$250 with a minimum of \$3.00. That went into affect in July.

Thank you for allowing me to be of service.

Editor's Note: The increase in literature prices was due to an effort to balance the GSO's prudent reserve when the 4th edition of the Big Book was released. The company that does the mailing of literature charges GSO \$6.75 for each order regardless of size.

Big Book—\$6.00 + shipping

Yearly Group contribution to GSO—\$132.51

Financial Amends—Thousands of dollars

Living sober and comfortable in my own skin—PRICELESS

At the conclusion of the West Central Regional Forum, GSO did not ship the remaining literature back to New York. Consequently, if anyone needs pamphlets, etc. please contact Brian M. DCM District 41 (dcm41@aamontana.org)

Page 5 THE TRIANGLE

From Linda Chezem's (former Class A Trustee) Workshop

Linda Chezem, JD, Past Class A Trustee led a workshop titled "Making Sure The Hand Of AA Is Always There". This report comes from Linda's and the Area Secretary's notes .

" I am responsible, when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that, I am responsible." When Scott and I were e-mailing I was thinking about the International Convention in Toronto, where the theme was "I Am Responsible". The thought occurred to me about the beauty of the responsibility statement and how it teaches each member of the AA fellowship to be responsible. As a judge and also a friend of Alcoholics Anonymous there is more to it than this for me. How can friends of AA cooperate with AA to be sure that the hand of AA is always there? As a Judge in Indiana, I was contacted by the local CPC Committee to attend a presentation about AA. I responded by sending drunks to AA, but not knowing much about AA. As time went by, I began to learn more about AA, and this "responsibility" from the AA point of view, and continued to send "visitors" to my court to AA with much more hope than I had had before.

My work as a judge was greatly enhanced by AA. And I continue to ask myself the question "Can non-AAs make sure the hand of AA is always there?"

Linda asked for participation from the crowd to share experi-

ence with non-alcoholics in helping AAs. Scott (from District 71) indicated that they take AA meetings into jails, and also provide contact slips for those coming out of jail and entering the AA community on the outside.

Bob has a question for Linda: A judge and a probation officer in a certain community are nearly destroying AA meetings as they are sending nearly everyone to the AA meetings, even though they may or may not be alcoholic.

How do we AAs approach these individuals and inform them of what AA is and is not?

Linda's response: I highly encourage you to contact these people and make a CPC presentation informing them what AA is and what AA is not. Ask when the judges conferences, and the probation officers continuing education classes are, and ask if you can attend to give presentations about AA. Teach them (us) about anonymity and the correct questions to ask our visitors such as "what step are you working on?", " what does your sponsor say?". We sometimes ask questions that break anonymity. The way that works best is for AA to be attractive to the newcomer, and each group must decide for themselves if they want to sign court slips. Personally, I think this is not a good way to indicate attendance at AA meetings. We do not know if this person we requested to go to AA meetings and have the chair person sign the courts slip has done this at an AA meeting or in the back of their car. Please do not give up on contacting professionals and informing them about AA. The fact that AA is so loosely organized is a hard concept for professionals to grasp and understand.

Linda also focused a bit on Archives as she was a member of the Archives Committee at GSO. I think that the information about how AA started with Bill W. and Dr Bob could be helpful to newcomers and professionals who come into contact with potential alcoholics as well. Stress how we in AA were helped early on by many non-alcoholics and would probably not be where we are today without their help. We could share more on our history at presentations made for professionals, and also at Treatment Centers, and maybe even at our home groups. Does every AA member know the history of their beginning? This could be helpful information to newcomers. Also important to indicate to professionals are the differences between "Open" and "Closed" AA meetings. It is my hope one day that the hand of AA will Always be There whether it be from a member of Alcoholics Anonymous or a non-alcoholic friend of AA. Thank you very much for being here with me today.

Page 7 THE TRIANGLE

From Your Webmaster

The spring assembly passed two motions to have email links of our Area Officers and copies of the Triangle added to the website.

We now have email links to Area Committee Chairs, Area Officers, Area non-voting Officers and District Committee Members. You can find them by clicking on the Area Business button on the left hand menu of the site.

Currently we have 4 copies of the Triangle, our Area Newsletter online—March, May, July and September.

Here are a few interesting statistics for those of you that like numbers. Since January 1, 2005:

 The Past Actions PDF document has been downloaded 1,482 times.

- The Fall Roundup Flyer was downloaded 897 times.
- There has been 385 downloads of copies of our Area Newsletter the Triangle.
- And as usual, there has been a steady increase in the number of monthly visitors.

I have made two copies of a document containing all the information needed to run and maintain our website. These copies were distributed to Scott W. our Area Delegate and Kevin N. our Area Archivist. This document has passwords, URL's name and information of the hosting service, and a high level explanation of how our website is setup.

I had the privilege of participating in a panel on AA websites at the International Convention in Toronto. So thank you to those of you who made that possible. It was quite the honor for someone whose whole world was once little bar in Tulsa Oklahoma called the Shy Clown.

Finally, I want to encourage all of you to visit your website. If there is anything that you would like to see added, changed or deleted let your Group Service Representative or your District Committee Member know so it can be added to the Spring Assembly agenda items. The growth of the website is dictated by its owners, the AA members of Area 40. Alex M

Area 40 Archives

Kevin N. has been serving has the Area 40 Archivist since the summer of 2002. Not that long ago, Kevin announced he needs to rotate on as our Archivist. Consequently, Area 40 is looking for an Archivist. Kevin's health is continuing to decline and the need to find an Archivist has increased.

The archives are currently housed in a wonderful facility in

Great Falls. The archives will need to be moved if the new Archivist does not live in Great Falls. Consequently, a site selection process should take place by everyone who would like to serve as Archivist.

The Archivist service position is an elected, non-rotating position in Area 40. Anyone interested or needing more information, please contact me and I will do my best to help you with your decision.

On another note, Kevin could use our prayers. His health is declining and I know of nothing more powerful than prayer. Please include him in your prayers.

Scott W., Area 40 Delegate delegate@aa-montana.org

Let's Be Friendly with our Friends

William D. Clark, M.D., Class A Trustee presented this at the West Central Regional Forum in Great Falls.

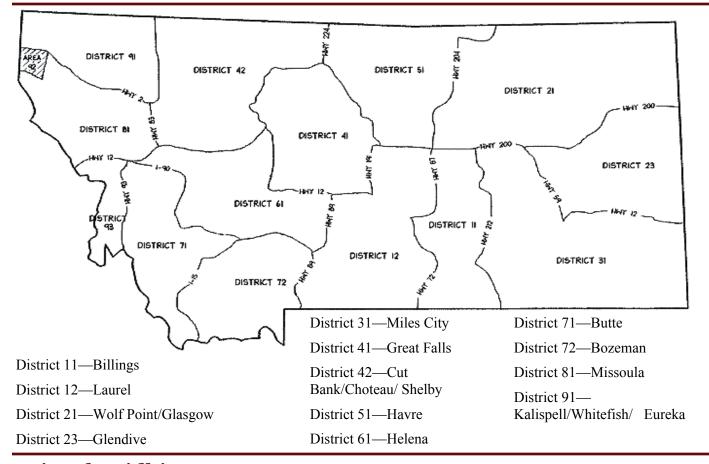
Many professionals consider the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous an invaluable resource for alcoholics who want help. The sick alcoholic benefits greatly when paid alcoholism workers (professionals) maintain a collaborative working relationship with AA members in the community.

We are not in competition with these non-AA professionals; we each have our separate functions. AA simply carries and passes on a message about a recovery program that works for hundreds of thousands who want it. We are not in the business of education, research, medicine, counseling, treatment, prevention, or funding.

Through education, counseling and

rehabilitative treatment, our professional friends in our communities continue to help the sick alcoholic learn about this program. Professionals have also been a great aid not only through making the community aware of the millions still suffering from the progressive illness of alcoholism, but also by encouraging alcoholics to seek and benefit from both professional treatment and the program of AA.

Page 7 Volume 13, Issue 7



Triangle Tidbits

- Thanks to all of you who submitted articles for this issue of the Triangle. The next Triangle issue will be dedicated to AA in Treatment Centers. If you would like to share your experience with us, please do so by submitting an article.
- The next issue will come out in mid-November. Deadline for submission of articles is November 7, 2005. Send to the address below.
- It's been forever since I had a "Overheard at Meetings" and "You might be an alcoholic if..." submitted. Please send one in if you have one.
- Check your subscription date located on the mailing label. If your subscription has expired, please mail \$10 to the Triangle at the address below. Checks should be payable to Area 40. If your group cannot afford the subscription, you will continue to receive a copy.
- The mailing list is continually being updated. If your group is not receiving the Triangle, please send the correct mailing address to the address below.
- The Triangle's email is Triangle@aa-montana.org.
- Contributions to Area 40 should be mailed to Area 40 Treasurer, PO Box 495, Helena, MT 59624.

Oh Great Pumpkin, who will send me an article for the Triangle?

Page 8 THE TRIANGLE

Calendar of Events

- KALISPELL—Women's Retreat- Oct 28-30
- GREAT FALLS—12 Step Study—Nov 12
- BOZEMAN—HOW Group Speaker Event—Nov 12
- HELENA—Attitude of Gratitude—Nov 19
- BILLINGS-First Saturday—Dec 2-3
- HELENA—It's In the Book Group Speaker Event—Jan 21, 2006
- HELENA—Pockets of Enthusiasm—March 17 & 18, 2006
- LEWISTOWN-Area 40 Spring Assembly- April 8-10, 2006 www.aamontana.org
- BOZEMAN—Spring Roundup-June 2, 3, & 4, 2006
- BILLINGS—Fall Roundup—September 8-10, 2006
- SAN ANTONIO, TX—AA's 75th Birthday Party—July 1-4, 2010

We absolutely insist on enjoying life! Get in the car!





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Individuals: If your subscription has expired, this will be your last issue of the Triangle.

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