

The Triangle

Archives & Finance

From The Area Treasurer

Greetings to all from your Area 40 treasurer. I applaud all of you in your support of our active fellowship throughout this great state. We head into July, the 7th month, with that; we get to talk about the 7th Tradition, Finance and Self-Support.

AA is Not Big Business (Nov. 1950)

From Language of the Heart page 124...” We learned our lesson about money early. We feared organization lest we solidify and destroy ourselves as a *movement*! At the same time we faced the moral and humane obligation to make our program instantly available to all who asked for it. And they came in ever increasing numbers. Yes, we’ ve had need of money and we’ ve had to provide services. But we’ ve resolved never to allow either money or the management of our necessary affairs to obscure our spiritual aims. The same loving God whose divine wisdom has shown us that one desperate and shaky drunk, fumbling for a nickel to call for help, looms larger than any “organization” we shall ever have, or need” !

Bill Wilson wrote these words in 1950 as we were establishing the General Service Conference and not long after the Traditions were approved. His words remind me that I am responsible to keep our program alive and available for the still suffering alcoholic. To do this I must be fiscally and spiritually responsible.

We of Alcoholics Anonymous have asked for and expect services from the General Service Office, our Areas, our Districts and our Groups. We cannot demand and receive those things without supporting them with our contributions. The flip side of those demands is the satisfaction that I receive from being self-supporting. When I support my group, district, area, and GSO to the best of my ability, I can honestly be assured that I am helping the still suffering alcoholic. The spiritual joy that comes with that is immeasurable. I gain ownership, responsibility, and accountability to and for this Fellowship.

I am willing to face the *moral and humane obligation* that Bill wrote about. By taking that challenge we can all make our program *instantly available to all who ask for it*.

Here’s a few statistics:

In 2011 the estimated cost of GSO services per AA member was \$6.32; we in Area 40 contributed \$4.72 per member. (USA/Canada average contribution is \$4.45 per member)

The 2012 per group budgeted expense for Area 40 was \$115.37. About 1/3 of all Area 40 groups regularly contribute. This means that it takes about \$350 from each of those contributing groups to meet our budget.

Remember that GSO has contribution and birthday envelopes. Addresses are available in this Triangle for GSO and Area 40. Your Districts likely need your support as well. Remember these entities as you pick up your birthday chips. So when that basket is being passed at your meetings, have a spiritual experience and give generously.

Libbie L., Area 40 Finance Chair

God Showed Up In Service Work

Sometimes God shows up in the most unexpected places. For me, it is always when I show up for AA. It was July of 2007, I had been sober again for two years after relapsing. The relapse forced me to concede to my innermost self that I was a real alcoholic. I felt a desperation that I hadn't felt in all of the years I had previously been sober (before the relapse). I had a willingness to do anything to stay sober, and as fate would have it, I showed up that July to a District Meeting.

Just to show how desperate and willing I was, the District meetings in the summer months are held in different towns, sometimes over an hour away. I found myself driving there, showing up, and I really don't recall why. Well, as God would have it, it was elections for District positions. A two year commitment! I never wanted to drink again so although two years seemed impossibly long, I found myself raising my hand. Positions were filled and I was not elected but I kept raising my hand, and then it was time to fill the Treasurer's position. It is important to note that my own finances had been in shambles for years. Trying to do the right thing, I would put my expenses for attending Young People's AA conferences on a credit card. I spent one summer eating peanut butter burritos just to keep a job that would let me get to as many meetings as I needed to stay sober. I spent months on AA friends' couches or camped in their backyards. One could argue that I put AA and my sobriety first. The path narrowed however, and I wanted to be different but that did not mean I had what it took to be District Treasurer. In all honesty, I had never even reconciled my check book and I didn't know how.

In January of 2007, I started my position as District Treasurer. Coincidentally, at that very same time I decided to leave my job and work in the office for my husband's business. A month after that I found myself taking a "Financial Dating" class with my husband.

I had three different jobs that I was completely unqualified for: District Treasurer, Office and Finance Manager for my husband's business, and co-captain of finances with my newlywed husband. I started calling people in AA, asking how they did it. I started taking more classes: beginner and intermediate Quickbooks, beginning accounting. We got a financial coach. We started a one year business coaching program with weekly homework. I started reading books about finances-I dove in completely and I made many mistakes.

On my district commitment I would get stuck and have to redo a report sometimes two or three times. I would go back to District and reissue a monthly report because of mistakes. Sometimes I wouldn't ask for help and end up working at least twice as long on it. I felt frustration because I would not understand the numbers and sometimes would not know how to explain my report to District and someone else in the meeting would have to explain it. Writing this I still feel humility even after everything I put into that position because I made so many mistakes. But I did it and my life changed. I paid off my credit cards, I started setting goals with my husband, I completed my first year of tax prep for our business, I showed up at District every month with a report. I started giving my experience of finances to others in AA when they asked. Surprisingly, I started to become the one they would ask.

To me, it was the willingness to change and most importantly, the willingness to show up and raise my hand for an AA service position that opened the door to financial freedom. And it's not that I am always "rolling in the dough." It's that the fear of economic insecurity has left me. That feeling of uselessness and self pity disappeared while I was District Treasurer. The most significant thing I can share, knowing where I came from to where I am today-God is doing for me what I could not do for myself. It is truly a gift and I have to remember the way I received that gift was by showing up.

Grace H., Mommy-N-Me Group of Bozeman



Gratitude and the Seventh Tradition

When I walked through the doors of AA for the first time I had nothing to offer the program but my story of hard luck and devastating loss, and the first thing I tossed in the basket going around the room, was my court card. These were my first and, at that time, best contributions. Granted, the court card didn't add much, but I'm sure that my early pain and suffering was a great reminder, for someone who was sitting in that room, that things had not gotten any better since the last time that they were "out there."

I kept coming back though and things got better in my life, to the point that the court card was soon accompanied, then replaced, by a buck. I admit that those first few dollars that went into that fast moving basket were followed by some long gazes, as I reflected on where else that dollar could have gone in my tight financial situation. Child support, court fines, gas, laundry – it all added up.

But, things were getting better. I had to remember that. I realized that I had found something that helped me to cope with all the "life on life's terms" crap that filled my days and it didn't leave me with a hangover or the crippling regret that alcohol had. A buck a meeting didn't seem like too much of a sacrifice (Once that basket was out of sight anyway) and it soon grew to two.

I was experiencing the feeling called gratitude which, I have found, is one of my best defenses against the next drink, if followed by action.

I believe, contrary to the old AA adage, that gratitude is indeed a feeling. The thing is though, that unless the feeling is followed directly by action, it has all the impact that all my good intentions have had in my life and the lives of anyone that I might help, which is zero.

Gratitude and the Seventh Tradition go hand-in-hand in my recovery, because they both present me with opportunities to give something back to a fellowship that has given me a new way of living, and looking, at life. The actions I take, in response to those opportunities are how I can use them to contribute to my own recovery and the recoveries of those people still looking to find us.

Gerry R., Area 40 Chair

A Call For Information Changes From Your Area Secretary

Just a friendly reminder for all the DCMs and GSRs to send me any GSR / Alt GSR changes to groups in your Districts and / or new groups that may have formed since Area Assembly. Also you can send me any changes to your district committee chairs that occur. I want to keep GSO as up to date as we can with what is going on in our Area. You can find forms online on the Area40 website. My email is: mary128@centurytel.net. Please email me or call me with any questions. 406-314-0934
Thank you,

Mary M., Area 40 Secretary/Registrar

From The Archives Chair

Archives—what does that word mean in our Fellowship? How often I have viewed archival material as something physical, such as a first edition Big Book encased in glass, sitting in a storage room, collecting dust. It is true that books, pamphlets, letters and photographs are of infinite value and should be preserved for future generations, but there is much more to archives.

As he [Bill W.] said: *"It isn't hard to prepare a fact sheet of what happened—that is, dates when people came in, groups started and so forth. The hard thing to lay hold of is the atmosphere of the whole proceedings and anecdotal material that will make the early experience come alive."*

What was Alcoholics Anonymous like in the 1950s? Will committee meeting minutes and stored photographs alone give us the full picture? These are highly desired tools but more is necessary to envision the entire picture. The recollections of old-timers, those who were active in AA and sobriety during those periods, are critical to our understanding of that era and its atmosphere. What type of Fellowship did they have? What were their meetings like? How were these things different, or the same, as our Fellowship today?

Having found sobriety at the age 19, I wonder how walking into my first meeting would have been different in 1940 rather than 2000. Would they welcome me as a fellow alcoholic or would they look at me as only a "potential alcoholic," and therefore an outsider who doesn't quite belong? The only way to know would be to hear the stories from those who lived during that time. Recording these stories in a lasting format becomes essential. We can save these memories via casual and/or structured interviews—something any one of us can do. The Archives Workbook, obtainable through GSO, has a wealth of information and suggestions about the interview process. It is highly encouraged to ask your interviewee to sign a copyright waiver before beginning the interview. This makes it possible for AA to utilize the material as it sees fit. Many of the current frustrations regarding putting audio clips on the GSO website would have been prevented if copyrights had been passed over to our Fellowship at the time of the interview/talk.

Our history, as recorded in our archives, is the life and blood of Alcoholics Anonymous. Maintaining our link to the past strengthens our Fellowship today and will continue to in the future. We can all do our part, in fact should do our part, in preserving what is ours for future generations.

Thank you for allowing me to serve—Kira A., Area 40 Archives Chair

To contribute items to the Area 40 Archives or to be involved contact Kira at archives@aa-montana.org.

Reprinted from the January-February 1969 Lodger Ledgers

How does one describe the years of a life that were lived behind a curtain of alcoholism? A mind submerged in the murk of hate and fear, guilt and loneliness? A body with such an appetite, it seemed determined to carry itself straight through the portals of an open grave into hell. The sickness of mind and body during periods of sobriety. The mute desire for an unknown way of life. Finally the first exposure to the AA way of life. The first hope and fumbling of a mind that was awakening but yet had not the clarity of desire to understand.

The vicious despair of returning to the bottle. The unawareness of the seed AA had planted. A seed that grew in strength and purpose amid continued drunks.

Then the day sitting at the bar with a drink and suddenly knowing you don't want it. With no thought of anything else, you simply don't want it. Returning to AA and stripping away the curtains from the darkness your life has been confined to. To be your own man at last, not an object of disgust and anger. To find a measure of peace and know it rests in your own hands.

For these things I am responsible to the one that put his arm around my shoulder and guided me when I could not see the way. To AA that keeps me pointed in the right way. I can't describe my gratitude either.

Failures are the fertilizer of life.

Bill F., 1969 Lodger Ledger Contributor

Note: The Lodger Ledgers were written by inmates in the Montana Men's Prison. Look for more articles from the Lodger Ledgers in the coming issues of the Triangle.

Archived Lodger Ledgers Continued

A Believer

My name is Jim B. and I believe that I am an alcoholic. I say that I believe as I don't know what an alcoholic really is. However, I do know that I was wondering if I was hooked on booze when I was on the streets. I got busted before I found out for sure. I have some understanding of alcohol but I want to know more about it. I have learned what I do know about it by going to AA on Friday and Saturday night meetings.

I've been doing time off and on since 1964 and I realize that booze got me into trouble and it was booze that got me here now. Every time I walked out of a joint, I never even thought about leaving booze alone. The fact is, I was always looking forward to drinking and having parties.

I came to this prison with a three year sentence, all of which was suspended except thirty days, and I really believe that I've learned something within the short time I've been here. I know for a fact that if I drink after I get out of this place I will be back. I don't want to make anyone happy by doing so, therefore I have to quit drinking that joy juice (booze). If I stay around where I live, I'll drink, so I feel I can do better if I get away from there, as there is no AA or any other kind of group where a person can go to get help. I will need all the help I can get as this thing can't be done over night. For me it's going to take a lot of hard work but nevertheless I can do it as I want to live my life the right way and in peace. I also believe very strongly in AA and I will find me an AA group when I leave this camp site.

I have strayed away from my family, friends and people who really thought I could do good. I did this by hurting them and not really caring what happened to them or their feelings. They all have told me to quit drinking as I was getting pretty wild. At the time I couldn't see what I was doing that was so wrong. I mean, what's wrong with having a few parties. They would drink so why did they want me to quit? I'll tell you why because now I know. They could see what booze was doing to me. They could see that booze was handling me instead of me handling the booze. From the things that I was doing they could also see that I was once again prison-bound. I think my dad just plum gave up on me. I don't think he even wants me for his son, but to be truthful about it, I can't blame him at all. I've hurt him because I've been with him all my life and he tried to make me do the right things in life but since I started drinking it never turned out that way. When I look back and see what I did to my mother I feel hurt deep because I made her cry also.

Still, I never stopped drinking because I didn't want to but now I want to stop and will. I want to be whatever I can make myself. I want the love of my Mother and Father back. I want to make up to them whatever heartaches I have caused them. I can only do this with the help of God and to be a good AA member. I need the help of AA as bad as I need to eat food for my body. I know it's a fact that as crazy as I am, without the help of AA and God to guide me, I will be back. So I am sticking with AA. You might say that I am using AA as a crutch. But if I am, well, pal, you can give me two of them as this AA bit is a good and wonderful thing.

This thirty days didn't reform me, it just, made a believer out of me!

Jim B., 1969 Lodger Ledger Contributor

Area 40 Calendar Of Events

2013 Events

- ** Beartooth Mountain Conference, South of Big Timber, June 28th through 30th
- ** Delegate's Day, Kalispell, June 30th
- ** Deadline for Submitting Fall Agenda Items, July 1st
- ** Big Book Study w/ Rick C., Sykes Conference Room, Kalispell, July 5th-7th
- ** Tobacco Valley Campout, Camp 32 West of Eureka, July 12th-14th
- ** Norm's Picnic, Darby, July 20th-21st
- ** Fireman's Point Campout, South of Columbus, August 9th-11th
- ** Whitefish Group Picnic, Whitefish City Beach, August 10th
- ** Blue Moon Campout, Libby, August 16th-18th
- ** Lower Yellowstone Soberfest, Makoshika State Park, August 16th-18th
- ** Emery Bay Campout, East of Columbia Falls, August 23rd-25th
- ** Mission Valley Camporee, Camp Marshall in Polson, August 31st-September 1st
- ** West Central Regional Forum, Bloomington, Minnesota, September 6th- 8th
- ** Havre Mini Conference, Havre, September 13th-15th
- ** Montana State Prison Volunteer Orientation, Deer Lodge, September 21st
- ** Area Assembly (Fall), Yogo Inn in Lewistown, September 20th through 22nd
- ** Fall 2013 Round-Up, Crown Plaza Hotel in Billings, October 11th through 13th

2014 Events

- ** Spring 2014 Area Assembly, Yogo Inn, Lewistown, April 11th-13th
- ** Spring 2014 Round Up, Fairmont Hot Springs, Anaconda, May 2nd-4th
- ** Fall 2014 Area Assembly, Yogo Inn, Lewistown, September 19th-21st

For flyers and information see the calendar on aa-montana.org.

If you'd like your activity to be included in the Triangle (and on the Area 40 website) please email it to calendar@aa-montana.org.



The Montana Story

Nineteen forty-two. A year which will long be remembered by many, many alcoholics in the state of Montana. It is difficult, from the records available, to know whether it began in Butte or Billings. However, we do know that two men, both beaten by the bottle and ready to do almost anything to win back their sobriety, living in Butte, Montana, got together, after hearing of A.A. elsewhere. They arranged the first meeting in a doctor's office. This group, from its humble beginning, now has a membership of 45 and has organized its own club. They hold meetings four nights per week with an average attendance of thirty-five.

A.A. was first brought to the city of Billings by a former member of A.A. in Atlanta, Georgia. He met with considerable disappointment at the first. This was in 1942. He tried and tried for a long time to get a group organized, and it was not until February of 1946 that other alcoholics finally "saw the light" and joined with this enthusiastic "loner" in forming a group. This group has steadily expanded and has never looked back. The total membership in Billings is now approximately 75 members. Another "loner" was instrumental in starting the movement in Helena in July of 1945. In Missoula the first meeting was attended by only three men in 1947. They met first in homes, but now have the YMCA hall. Meetings in Havre are still held in members homes, as were the first meetings which were also started by a "loner" who got out and rustled up another alcoholic in February of 1947. Then came Livingston, Miles City, Cut Bank, Shelby, Glendive, Anaconda, Froid, and so on. Thus from an early pioneer, suffering as only an alcoholic can suffer, came "light" to hundreds of other alcoholics in Montana. From one City to another, from one State to another the Message is taken as a root grows. Alcoholics Anonymous is an organization for GOOD, and so will travel from its roots through members, into towns and cities and countries, giving Life and Hope and Peace. The story of Montana is no different than any other State. Basically, A.A. is the same and Montana offers its thanks to the original two members in Akron, Ohio, for its inception and knows, as we all know, that A.A. will live forever if you but let it live for you! Carry the Message on and on!

Andy P., 1st State Delegate

Reprinted from previous publications

The Quote Corner

"The traditions exist to protect the organization of AA from the members of AA".

"Some days I just want to drive up to a cop—and breathe on him".

"When I am upset my first thought is usually not my best thought".

"Warning! The study of astronomy will be hard on our sense of self-importance".

Compiled by Tom W. of the Missoula Group

Resources Available to Treasurers In Area 40

So you're the Treasurer of a group, district or area this rotation. By now, chances are that you have gotten over the fear part of your position and are settling in to the job. If you were elected because you knew and understood what was expected of you and you have the qualifications to serve, that's wonderful! As Bill W. wrote in a 1959 article entitled ***Leadership in A.A.: Ever a Vital Need***, "The conductor of an orchestra is not necessarily good at finance or foresight. And it is quite unlikely that a fine banker could be a great musical performer. So when we talk about A.A. leadership we only declare that we ought to select that leadership on the basis of obtaining the best talent we can find."

Despite our abilities, questions will arise. Different levels of service may have very different qualifications and duties. The treasurer of a small group may find that knowledge of basic math and the ability to pay the rent on time are sufficient. An area treasurer, however, may be expected to produce a budget and use financial software. Fortunately, there are many sources of information and experience available. Obviously, the most recent previous treasurer will be your best source for things such as split, prudent reserve, and bank account information. Many groups and other entities have procedures in writing that are passed on from treasurer to treasurer. (If your group doesn't have this, consider starting one.) Some other excellent informational resources are:

A.A. Guidelines - Finance If you could only get one piece of literature, this is the one I would recommend. Can be printed from www.aa.org or ordered from AA World Services directly or through your literature chair. Free.

The A.A. Group Treasurer Pamphlet Availability same as above. Free.

Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix Pamphlet Availability same as above. Free.

Self-Support Packet Contains all of the above plus additional material. Available from AAWS directly or through your literature chair. Free.

AA Website (www.aa.org) From home page, click "For Groups and Members" Tab. Financial Information is in menu on left side of page. A good place to start.

Area 40 Website (www.aa-montana.org) From home page click "Area Committee" tab. There you can find past financial reports, assembly minutes, the policy and procedures manual and addresses to send contributions.

Finally, I suggest that you talk to other Treasurers at all levels of service. This is a great way to bounce your ideas off others and discover new ideas to incorporate into your position. If you're a group treasurer, go to the District Meeting and get contact information for other group treasurers. If you are the treasurer for a district, talk to the other district treasurers in your Area. If you are an Area treasurer, contact the other Area treasurers in your region. You'll not only gain information, you'll likely make new friends.

Lori F., Area 40 Treasurer 2011-2012

Delegate's Reports By District

June 22, District 61 Grapefest

June 23, District 93 District 93 Campout at Lake Como

June 30, District 91

July 27, District 72

August 3, District 71

August 10, District 12 Fireman's Point Campout

August 11, District 41

August 17, District 23 Lower Yellowstone Soberfest

	Jan - May 13	YTD Budget	Annual Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
Group Contributions	10,182.15		
District Contribution	144.00		
7th Tradition	635.00		
Triangle Subscriptions	72.00		
Other Income (recouped from)			
Service Manuals	212.55		
Total Other Income (recouped from)	212.55		
Total Income	11,245.70		
Expense			
Travel Expenses			
Gas	1,572.23	1,781.25	4,000.00
Mileage	526.03	947.25	2,046.00
Meals	852.03	1,716.25	3,720.00
Lodging	2,368.63	2,316.25	4,850.00
Air/Train/Taxi fare	31.43	100.00	1,100.00
Area 40 contribution to GSC	1,600.00	1,600.00	1,600.00
Travel Expenses - Other	39.00		
Total Travel Expenses	6,989.35	8,461.00	17,316.00
Rent			
Archives storage	5,170.00	1,750.00	4,200.00
Meeting space	877.20	400.00	800.00
Total Rent	6,047.20	2,150.00	5,000.00
Literature Expenses			
Lit purchases (not svc manuals)	11.44	75.00	150.00
Service manuals (for resale)	171.60		
Total Literature Expenses	183.04	75.00	150.00
Photocopies / printing			
Background information	49.00	225.00	425.00
Photocopies / printing - Other	1,146.98	1,230.00	2,490.00
Total Photocopies / printing	1,195.98	1,455.00	2,915.00
Dues, registration, fees	27.00	24.00	24.00
Postage	555.69	915.00	1,880.00
Supplies	333.98	195.00	405.00
Telephone			
Directory Listings	235.20	750.00	1,500.00
Phone and Conference Calls	54.11	50.00	150.00
800 Number	745.34	1,250.00	3,000.00
Total Telephone	1,034.65	2,050.00	4,650.00
Miscellaneous expense	285.88	235.00	310.00
Total Expense	16,652.77	15,560.00	32,650.00
Net Ordinary Income	(5,407.07)	(15,560.00)	(32,650.00)
Net Income	(5,407.07)	(15,560.00)	(32,650.00)
Check book balance (5/31/13)	14535.85		
Prudent Reserve	10883.33		
Archivist Account	1321.86		
Operating Balance	2330.66		

A Summertime Message From Your Delegate

Hello to my Area 40 friends!

June is getting my delegate summer off to a good start. I was invited to District 11's Unity Day and to District 31 and got to give my first Delegate Reports. This certainly is one of the best responsibilities — travelling around the state and getting to visit with you.

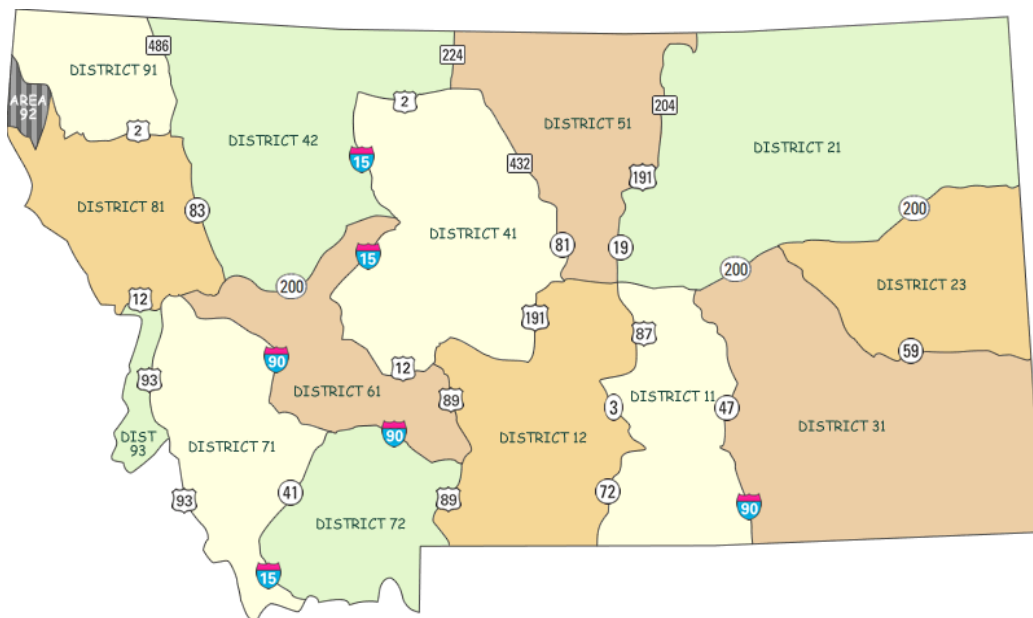
I've been thinking about planning. A.A. has given me a God who helps me make plans and take actions one day at a time. [I've always been a planner, but with a glass in my hand. By the next morning, I forgot the plan and couldn't read my writing if I wrote the plan down! If I somehow did remember, I was rarely able to follow through.] It seems like a long way off, but the International Convention will be July 2-5, 2015 in Atlanta, Georgia. The theme is "80 Years — Happy, Joyous and Free". It's time to plan!

Here's my plan:

- Set a budget: \$1100 (\$600 transportation, \$200 lodging, \$200 food, \$100 registration)
- Start saving this month (22 months, \$50 a month)
- Check the A.A. website aa.org and Box 4-5-9 for updates
- Talk with people about sharing a room
- Watch for registration packets in September 2014
- Register and reserve lodging early

I am hoping many of you will be able to join us, especially if you have not had this experience. It will be quite a thrill to sit in the Georgia Dome with 50,000 or so other alcoholics and our families and friends!
Thank you again for the opportunity to serve in this way, and I hope to see you around Area 40 sometime this summer!

Your trusted servant,
Sharon S., Delegate, Area 40, Panel 63



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