# AREA 40 TRIANGLE

## A Newsletter for A.A. in the State of Montana

## Cooperation with the Professional Community 2019 Class A Trustee Trip Through Area 40

"There are so many things I learned traveling the state of Montana with the Trustees.

Is A.A. really relevant? This is one of the conversations that I overheard between two professionals at the beginning of one of our stops. It was a comment I heard several times and it just reinforced to me how important our C.P.C. work is. Professionals in the medical, corrections, law enforcement, and treatment fields are on the front lines of our disease. Daily they meet and work with still suffering alcoholics who would benefit from finding the rooms of A.A., but if these same professionals are not sure of A.A.'s relevance, how will they find help?

Observation 1: Do we communicate in a language they understand? 2: Do we bristle when they use terms like alcohol use disorder? 3: Do we make A.A. information available to the professional community?

Listening to Nancy and Christine talk to the professionals in attendance, I began to see that the language barrier was wide. As a member of the Fellowship, I tend to speak in terms and phases that we as members understand but are foreign to business professionals. The standard that professionals currently use is DSM-5.

The DSM-5 lists eleven symptoms that can be used to determine if someone has an alcohol use disorder.

- 1. Alcohol is often taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than was intended.
- 2. There is a persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control alcohol use.
- 3. A great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain alcohol, use alcohol, or recover from its effects.
- 4. Craving, or a strong desire or urge to use alcohol.
- Recurrent alcohol use resulting in a failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, or home.
- 6. Continued alcohol use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by the effects of alcohol.
- 7. Important social, occupational, or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of alcohol use.
- 8. Recurrent alcohol use in situations in which it is physically hazardous.
- 9. Alcohol use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by alcohol.
- 10. Tolerance, as defined by either of the following: a) a need for markedly increased amounts of alcohol to achieve intoxication or desired effect, or b) a markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of alcohol.
- 11. Withdrawal, as manifested by either of the following: a) the characteristic withdrawal syndrome for alcohol, or b) alcohol (or a closely related substance, such as a benzodiazepine) is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms.

When a person is diagnosed with alcohol use disorder, the severity of the condition is determined by the number of symptoms they have.

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Excerpts from A.A. Literature, materials, and Grapevine are reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services and Grapevine, Inc.

The Triangle is anonymity protected. All A.A. members are identified by first name and last initial only.

"If I were asked which of our blessings I felt was most responsible for our growth as a fellowship and most vital to our continuity, I would say, the 'Concept of Anonymity." Bill's last message read by Lois, 1970 Annual New York Intergroup Dinner









## Tradition One Snip-it

## Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

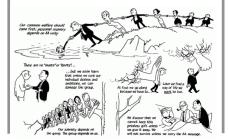
"But,' some will argue, "if A.A. has no authority to govern its individual members or groups, how shall it ever be sure that the common welfare does come first? How is it possible to be governed without a government? If everyone can do as he pleases, how can you have aught but anarchy?"

The answer seems to be that we A.A.'s cannot really do as we please, though there is no constituted human authority to restrain us. Actually, our common welfare is protected by powerful safeguards. The moment any action seriously threatens the common welfare, group opinion mobilizes to remind us; our conscience begins to complain. If one persists, he may become so disturbed as to get drunk; alcohol gives him a beating. Group opinion shows him that he is off the beam, his own conscience tells him that he is dead wrong, and, if he goes too far, Barleycorn brings him real conviction.

So it is we learn that in matters deeply affecting the group as a whole, 'our common welfare comes first.' Rebellion ceases and cooperation begins because it must: we have disciplined ourselves.

Eventually, of course, we cooperate because we really wish to; we see that without substantial unity there can be no A.A., and that without A.A. there can be little lasting recovery for anyone. We gladly set aside personal ambitions whenever these might harm A.A. We humbly confess that we are but 'a small part of a great whole.'"

- Reprinted from The Language of the Heart,



Mild: 2-3 symptoms present

Moderate: 4-5 symptoms present

• Severe: 6 or more symptoms present

I find these to be very similar to the questions we find in the A.A. Pamphlet is A.A. for you? The DSM is much wordier but similar. The questions I ask are: Are we as a Fellowship unable to accept the similarities and acknowledge that professionals have their own autonomy in the terms they use? And is there any harm in learning to communicate in their language? In no way am I advocating to change A.A. I am only offering that we will reach more of those who are still suffering if we make an honest effort to work with our professionals. I know when I go to the doctor and tell him I am an alcoholic, he hears that I suffer from Alcohol Use Disorder. We both know what I am talking about and it does not change the fact that I am an alcoholic.

I also found it interesting that the Grapevine is such an effective tool to use for our professionals. Nancy talked about having them in her lobby at Probation and Parole. The Grapevine app, Meeting Guide app, and the Grapevine quote of the day were also discussed and shown as additional resources that can be utilized. Nancy shared how the Grapevine quote of the day arrives in someone's inbox at 5:30 am each morning and can be used as a moment of serenity in the morning. The Meeting Guide app allows the professional community to find meetings and give directions to help find the meetings.

Christine talked about the importance of open and closed meetings. She explained how meeting cards and signatures for attendance worked and offered some ideas on how to maintain anonymity. She addressed singleness of purpose and how to address recovery. There is a video presentation available upon request."

- Area 40 Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) Chair - Terri T.

### CONTRIBUTIONS - GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE UPDATE

"As we continue the system-wide upgrade of our online business functions, we have discovered some problems that are impacting the users of our online contributions website:

- 1. Credit cards cannot yet be edited or deleted from an account.
- 2. Recurring contribution dates cannot yet be changed.
- 3. Contributors cannot stop payments on recurring contributions at this time.
- 4. In addition, if there is a credit card change, we at G.S.O. currently must deactivate the contributor's account and the contributor will have to log back in and reenter their credit care information.

We apologize for these inconveniences. Sustaining contributions from [...] A.A. groups and members are a major source of support for the services of General Service Office and our great team is focused on bringing forward solutions as quickly as we can.

Therefore, as a contributor, if you would like to change any of your account information, we ask you to call Awilda R., Contributions Supervisor at G.S.O., (212) 870-3208. Our goal is to deliver the best possible service our groups and members. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

In actual terms, your contributions enable us to ship out 14,000 booklets, pamphlets and miscellaneous items every day; to distribute nearly 5,000 Big Books available in 71 different languages; to answer more than 40 phone calls a day from members or others interested in A.A.; and to respond quickly to more than 250 email inquiries each day. And these are just some of the services your contributions help to provide.

As always, we are most grateful for the support [...] shown for G.S.O.'s service to our Fellowship and ask for your continued patience and good will as we work together through this period of transition."

In Fellowship,

Greg T.

G.S.O. General Manger

- Reprinted from General Service Office General Manager, Greg T., December 19, 2019 Letter



We need your experience, strength, and hope! Please send us short articles—400 words or less—on Corrections. Please submit no later than January 28th via email to triangle@aamontana.org. Were you a Corrections rep for your group? Or the Corrections chair for your district? Have you participated on a Corrections committee?

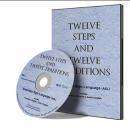
Do you take meetings into the jail?

Do you take meetings into the jail? Inquiring minds want to know!!

## A.A. PUBLISHES TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS BOOK IN ASL

The *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* is now available on video translated into American Sign Language. If you know of someone who is hard-of-hearing or Deaf, please let them know this DVD is available. Check it out on <u>aa.org</u>'s website.

**Some DVD Features:** Professional ASL signers and DVD video production, Updated translation inspired and reviewed by A.A. members who are Deaf, and Audio track and subtitles for use among ASL and non-ASL users.



#### DOES YOUR GROUP RECEIVE A BOX 459?

Box 459 is Alcoholics Anonymous' quarterly news bulletin. There are a multitude of updates, articles, and events posted in each issue. You an sign up your group for Box 459 here: <a href="https://www.aa.org/pages/en\_US/subscribe-to-box-4-5-9-news-and-notes-from-gso">https://www.aa.org/pages/en\_US/subscribe-to-box-4-5-9-news-and-notes-from-gso</a>

### The Winter 2019 issue included information on:

- The **new ASL Big Book** launched December 2019, which I mentioned above.
- The General Service Office is updating the staff position applications, which any A.A. member can apply for. Some of the basic requirements to meet for consideration are "minimum of six years continuous sobriety; a background in service at the group and possibly district and area levels; business and professional experience; and excellent communication skills. Another consideration is a willingness to relocate to New York, if necessary." Just as we practice rotation of leadership in our groups, districts, and area, so do they with staff positions. Interested or would like more info? You can email or snail-mail the Staff Coordinator @ Staff Coordinator, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163 or email staffcoord@aa.org.
- Want to learn about A.A. and technology? Is A.A. represented well on the internet? "Alcoholics Anonymous [...] has been represented by a hodgepodge of different websites for groups, districts, areas, and intergroup/central offices. While this has worked, more or less, for a while—'and in a certain sense, is in accordance with A.A. and our Tradition of group autonomy,' Lew says—there have been ongoing problems in terms of people showing up at the wrong places and the wrong times for meetings in new places, or finding reliable contacts when they needed another alcoholic to speak to."
- Check out the history of Women in A.A. "Many A.A.'s instantly recognize the name of Ruth Hock, Bill W.'s secretary and the typist of the Big Book, but they may not have heard of Bobbie B. By many accounts, Bobbie, who took over as secretary when Ruth left in 1942, worked exhausting hours for over a decade out of love and dedication to the Fellowship during the years of 'explosive growth' that followed publication of Jack Alexander's article in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Thanks to her enormous industry and her communication and letter-writing skills, untold numbers of remote A.A.'s gratefully and lovingly called her 'sponsor."
- What about obstacles for Spanish-speaking women in A.A.? "The perception(s) is that it's a moral issue. For some reason, it's okay for men to have the disease, but not for women."
- There were updates on taking meetings into Angola State Prison.
- Welcome Brenda B. and Irene D. to G.S.O., as they are our two new staff members. Check out the Winter Issue to get the full scoop.
- What's the deal behind paying to attend A.A. events? "It's true that A.A. membership is free, and meetings and most A.A. events are self-supporting through voluntary contributions in the spirit of the Seventh Tradition. But what about A.A. get-togethers beyond the group-meeting level, ranging from special one- or two-hour meetings to banquets and weekend events—area, statewide, regional and international?"
- And don't forget the Calendar of Events. They have stuff posted from now until May 2020. Talk about planning a
  vacation!

Talk to your GSR and see if your group is receiving Box 459. Make sure to set it out during your meetings. Let your members know about it. Or you can always subscribe yourself. **Individual subscription - \$3.50 per year; or group - \$6 for each unit of 10 per year.** Here's the link to subscribe to Box 459: <a href="https://www.aa.org/pages/en\_US/subscribe-to-box-4-5-9-news-and-notes-from-gso">https://www.aa.org/pages/en\_US/subscribe-to-box-4-5-9-news-and-notes-from-gso</a>

## Concept One Bike

The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

"In the midst of the 'exuberant success' of early A.A., Dr. Bob became fatally ill and Bill asked, 'When Dr. Bob and I are gone, who would then advise the trustees and the office?' The answer, Bill felt, was to be found in the collective conscience of the A.A. groups. But how could the autonomous, widely scattered groups exercise such a responsibility?

Over great resistance by trustees and members devoted to the status quo, Bill managed to 'sell' the idea of calling an A.A. General Service Conference [...], and eleven years later Bill was able to declare, 'The results of the Conference have exceeded our highest expectations.'

This concept is rooted in Tradition Two [...] The principles of Tradition Two are crystal-clear, Bill asserts: 'The A.A. groups are to be the final authority; their leaders are to be entrusted with delegated responsibilities only.' The outside world cannot imagine an organization run this way, but Bill calls it 'a spiritualized society characterized by enough enlightenment, enough responsibility, and enough love of man and of God to insure that our democracy of world service will work..."

- Reprinted from The Twelve Concepts for World Service illustrated pamphlet, p. 2, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.



## 85th Anniversary International Convention — Detroit 2020 July 2 - 5, 2020 - Detroit, MI

Join A.A. members throughout the world in Detroit to celebrate A.A.'s 85th Anniversary at Detroit's Cobo Center and Ford Field Stadium (and other locations). Join fellow members at meetings, panels, and workshops. There is nothing quite like sitting in a stadium with thousands of alcoholics saying the Serenity Prayer. If you haven't attended an International Convention, don't wait.

## A.A.'s NEW BOOK - *OUR GREAT RESPONSIBILITY*Hold On to Traditions - Bill W., 1968 General Service Conference Talk

"In A.A. we have a principle: let's live one day at a time. Yesterday is gone, today is here and the future is not yet with us. In that trite little statement there is a great deal of wisdom. But like so many of our familiar cliches, it doesn't cover all of the territory and can still leave us rather cockeyed on the subject of time. I make these few observations as a backdrop on talking a little about the Traditions. For example, clearly if a person is all the time in the past—whether with guilt, whether with remorse, or wishing for the good old days when he could drink like a gentleman—no progress at all is possible. At best he becomes a conservative who is against all change. On the other hand, if I live in today in a really absolute sense—and forget about yesterday, and think nothing about tomorrow—I become a creature of pure expediency and get nowhere. On the contrary, if I'm always pondering the future, I'm out of the reality of today. So, if you make these too-thorough divisions of time and label the present as good, the past as rather bad and the future as not something to be concerned with, I think we're out of balance. Time is a stream of consciousness, and we came on it out of the past through today, and we go out into the future.

Now then, what bearing does this have on the A.A. Traditions? You know, at times we're apt to congratulate ourselves upon those Traditions as though it were a list of our collective virtues, about which we wish to brag. We say, 'Oh yes, we put the common welfare first. Oh, yes, we're a pure democracy. Oh, yes, we have no punishments, no rules, no regulations—a beautiful benign anarchy, in that sense. We don't get complicated with endorsements or alliances, and we keep ourselves as collectively poor as possible so as to not get messed up with dough, filthy lucre. And we have no professional class—you know, plumbers can do as well as anybody with A.A., only too true. We just don't need that,' and so on. We go through this list as though we were reciting a list of virtues very singular to us.

Well, I submit that's a rather dangerous and childish thing. Actually, these Twelve Traditions are in reality a codification of the lessons of past experience that we got out of the school of damned hard knocks in the early days of A.A., and which we continue to get. These are the lessons of experience, this list of hopeful dos and don'ts. Now then, I think about the origins of some of these Traditions. I believe the theme of our Conference today is really that our common welfare comes first. Without A.A. unity, there can be no recovery. That's a frank recognition of the situation. But as you look at the Traditions, one after another, you see that all of them are directly or indirectly related to this subject of the common welfare. You see this idea in great strength in the last Tradition, 'Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.' That, I think, is a spiritual statement of the idea of the common welfare.

Take Tradition Two. In the early days of A.A., we weren't placing principles ahead of personalities all the time. There wasn't any such thing as a group conscience. Dr. Bob and I were schoolteachers of sorts, and as our leadership gained in strength, we began to think very well of ourselves. It was a very long time before we realized that those in position of leadership are biased by considerations of power, prestige, money and the like. That's how we started off. But the time came, little by little and through many bitter experiences—I've undergone some, and Bob did, and any old-timer has—the group conscience began to say to us, 'The common welfare comes first. We do not have these biases. Let us take thought for the general welfare, and after that let's see where the leadership stands.' So we turn up as leaders who have not power in the usual sense, not prestige in the usual sense. We turn up as genuine servants with a discretion from the group conscience to act for them, and that's our state here. The general welfare comes first.

Take another which may at first glance seem a little remote. At about year two of the Akron Group, a poor devil came to Dr. Bob in a grievous state. He could qualify as an alcoholic, all right, but then he said, 'Dr. Bob, I've got a real problem to pose you. I don't know if I could join A.A. because I'm a sex deviant.' Well, that had to go out to the group conscience, you know; up to then, it was supposed that any society could say who was going to join it. And pretty soon the group conscience seethed and boiled over. 'Under no circumstances could we have such a peril and such a disgrace among us,' said a great many. Right then our destiny hung on a razor edge over this single case: Would there be rules that could exclude so-called undesirability? And that caused us in that time (and for quite a time respecting this single case) to ponder, 'What is the more important: the reputation that we shall have, what people shall think? Or is it our character: And who are we, considering our records? Alcoholism is quite as unlovely; who are we to deny a man his opportunity? Or any man or woman?'

Finally, the day of resolution came. A bunch were sitting in Dr. Bob's living room, arguing what to do, whereupon dear old Bob looked around and blandly said, 'Isn't it time, folks, to ask ourselves, What would the Master do in a situation like this? Would He turn this man away?' And that was the beginning of the A.A. Tradition that any person who has a drinking problem is a member of A.A. if *he* says so, not whether *we* say so. Now, I think that the import of this on the common welfare has already been staggering because it takes in even more territory than the confines of our Fellowship: it takes in the whole world of alcoholics. Their freedom to join A.A. is assured. Indeed, it was an act in the general welfare.

Then we got very naturally into this question of how were we going to relate ourselves to other people in the field of endeavor. How were we going to relate ourselves to the public at large? And we came up with the view that we had better stick to our last. We could offer our principles to the whole world, offer the whole world everything but A.A.'s name, which we would like to have stand for certain principles. And this decision has served the general welfare. Now, there were a terrific amount of deviations: you see, all this time, letters were pouring in after the *Saturday Evening Post* piece. We were getting married through the microphone (through broken anonymity) to all sorts of enterprises—some good, some bad, some indifferent. So the lesson was borne in. We are not criticizing endorsements in society around us, but we dare not give them. This is simple prudence. It's good sense, and we've already seen what's happened when we start to do this. So it goes, down through this whole list of Traditions.

In the early days in public relations, the A.A. thought, 'Well, I'll get myself on the radio. I've got connections. I'll get my name and picture in the paper. That's what everybody else does.' But after a few had fallen on their faces after doing this, we began to see that it wasn't for us. As I've said, our Traditions are a list of the lessons of yesterday. If you read the Traditions with a sense of history and information, you will relive our past, and you will see how we have brought forth from the past, on its time stream, the lessons thereof, and have tried to make estimates about the future. We are not absolutely fixed in all of our principles; there is room for change. On the other hand, we shall not lightly cast away these hard-earned principles, which bear on our unity, on our survival, on our growth, under God's grace."

- Reprinted from Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W.'s General Service conference Talks 1951 - 1970, p. 195 - 199, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

## Questions for Discussion with your sponsor, sponsees, fellow A.A. members, or your groups and districts:

- 1. "I'll get myself on the radio." "I'll get my name and picture in the paper." Times have changed, for sure, but what is the modern day "radio" or "paper" that we use to break our anonymity?
- 2. How do you practice putting "the common welfare" first?
- 3. What does "anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions" mean?
- 4. How does your group uphold the Traditions?
- 5. When was the last time you read the Traditions? Your group? Your district?

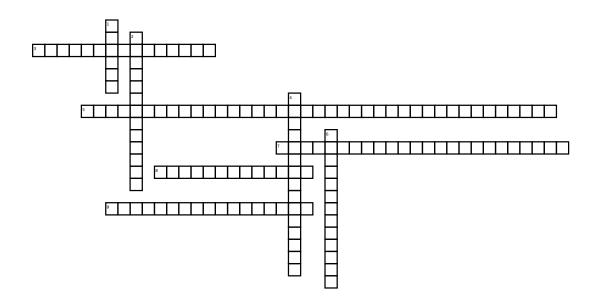
## Letter from the Editor

I received A.A.'s new book, Our Great Responsibility, from my sponsor this holiday season. The first article I flipped to was Hold On to Traditions, which felt pertinent considering the time of year we find ourselves in. We are naturally moving from our past, to our present, and to our future. I can't help but consider where I've been, where I'm at, and where I'm going. My hope and prayer is that I stay the course and keep sobriety front and center. As Bill would say, "He would like us to keep our heads in the clouds with Him, but that our feet ought to be firmly planted on earth. That is where our fellow travelers are, and that is where our work must be done." The sweet, though somewhat inconvenient, caveat of staying the course is that I must give away what I've been given to keep it. May we all keep the hand of A.A. reached out and carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous and "hold on to [our] Traditions" as we transition into this new year.

In love and service, Catherine B., Area 40 Triangle Editor

- Quote reprinted from Alcoholics Anonymous, 3rd Edition, p. 130, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

## AREA 40 CROSSWORD PUZZLE



#### Down:

- 1. The area committee is responsible for the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Conference structure.
- 2. Who keeps financial records for the area and reports regularly to the assembly?
- 4. An active committee deals with all kinds of
- 6. Who records and distributes minutes of area meetings?

## Across:

- 3. They are responsible for the smooth running of area assemblies.
- 5. What does the acronym C.P.C stand for?
- 7. The committee is composed of all \_\_\_\_\_, area officers, and chairs of area service committees.
- 8. A.A. has in \_\_\_\_\_ a wealth of experience, which is sometimes used and sometimes not.
- 9. What does the acronym P.I. stand for?

Literature: A.A. Service Manual (2018-2020 Ed.) Hint: S45 - S49—Happy Hunting!

Keep a look out for the next Area 40 Triangle for the answers!













## **UPCOMING EVENTS**



## Need a flier for your group?

Check out aa-montana.org

#### February 2020

February 15th ► Emotional Sobriety Gathering, Fellowship Hall, Bozeman, MT February 27th - March 1st ► WCRAASC, Billings Sports Plex, Billings, MT

#### March 2020

March 20th - 21st ► Pockets of Enthusiasm, First Presbyterian Church, Helena, MT

#### April 2020

April 18th - 12 Step Study Presents, Civic Center, Great Falls, MT

## May 2020

May 15th - 17th 2020 Spring Roundup, Best Western Plus, Bozeman, MT

## September 2020

September 18th - 19th ► Fellowship at the Falls, Great Falls, MT

#### October 2020

October 2nd - 4th Fall 2020 Roundup, Big Horn Resort, Billings, MT



"George is really enthusiastic about AA."

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#### STOP THE PRESSES!!

The 2021 West Central Regional Forum will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Missoula!

Save the date September 10th - 12th, 2021

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## CONFIDENTIAL

Please share this newsletter with your group!

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