



AREA 40 TRIANGLE

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

OUR WORLD CHANGED OVERNIGHT

How is A.A. stepping up to the plate?

The world changed almost overnight, or so it seemed. One day I was attending my regular morning meeting, being vigilant to wash my hands but not overly concerned. Two days later, I was doing online meetings and staying home. Now, several weeks have passed, and there seems to be no end in sight, though, as we all know, this too shall pass.

In the meantime, while we shelter in place and try not to obsess about the news, Alcoholics Anonymous has adapted and quickly at that. Individual members and groups alike have jumped feet first into technology, figuring out online meetings as we go, and gratefully so. In a day and age where we can't be close to one another, we must find another way to connect, and we have.

Our connections through online meetings do present interesting challenges and concerning questions. What's the best format to use for an online meeting? How does someone run a phone call meeting? What do we do with "zoom bombers" who infiltrate our meetings and overrun them with inappropriate behavior and images? How do we maintain our anonymity in our desperate need to reach the still suffering alcoholic or one another for that matter?

For weeks and months, we've been discussing and rehashing our opinions and experience with technology, not wanting to rush in too quickly but not wanting to miss out on an opportunity to carry the message. And now, we're all the way in, messy and, sometimes, floundering, though still afloat and making our way.

Do you break someone's anonymity if you invite them to a private Facebook group? There are several private "Bill and Bob" Facebook groups that have popped up in an attempt to connect fellow members and disseminate online meeting information. **Do we need to ask the person via private message first before inviting them?**

How does sharing information about your sobriety or membership in Alcoholics Anonymous on social media break anonymity? Yours? Someone else's?

These are great questions to consider and are only the beginning. Maybe if we use one of our tools from the Eleventh Step, we can "pause" before posting or inviting anyone on social media "and ask for the right thought or action." We can consider how our actions may affect our collective anonymity. We can converse with our sponsors, discuss with our groups, study the Traditions and A.A.'s history to set us on the best course for our program and fellowship.

Alcoholics tend to be a rebellious lot, wanting to do what we want when we want, but "we must never let any immediate advantage shake us in our determination to keep intact such a really vital [anonymity] tradition."

In service,

Catherine B., Triangle Editor

- Quotes reprinted from *Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 89, and the pamphlet *A.A. Tradition: How it Developed* by Bill W., p. 41, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

WHY ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IS ANONYMOUS

As never before, the struggle for power, importance and wealth is tearing civilization apart. Man against man, family against family, group against group, nation against nation.

Inside this Issue:

- Our World Changed ➡ p. 1
- Why AA is Anonymous ➡ p. 1
- Online Meeting Trouble ➡ p. 2
- Tradition Four Snip-it ➡ p. 2
- GSO Closure ➡ p. 2
- GSO Needs Money ➡ p. 2
- Make GSO Contributions ➡ p. 3
- Call to Action ➡ p. 3
- Grapevine & La Viña ➡ p. 3
- Cancellations ➡ p. 3
- Tradition Five Snip-it ➡ p. 3
- Member Article ➡ p. 4
- Concept Four Bite ➡ p. 4
- WACYPAA Info ➡ p. 4
- Concept Five Bite ➡ p. 5
- New Young People Video ➡ p. 5
- Box 459 Highlights ➡ p. 5
- Virtual AA Meetings ➡ p. 6
- Upcoming Events ➡ p. 7
- Triangle Subscription Form ➡ p. 8
- Send Group Contributions ➡ p. 8

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

Tradition Four Snip-it

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

“Yet please note one important qualification. It will be seen that such extreme liberty of thought and action applies only to the group's own affairs. Rightly enough, this Tradition goes on to say, ‘But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, these groups ought to be consulted.’ Obviously, if any individual, group, or regional committee could take an action that might seriously affect the welfare of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole or seriously disturb surrounding groups, that would not be liberty at all. It would be sheer license; it would be anarchy, not democracy.

Therefore, we AAs have universally adopted the principle of consultation. This means that if a single AA group wishes to take any action that might affect surrounding groups, it consults them. Or, it confers with the intergroup committee for the area, if there be one. Likewise, if a group or regional committee wishes to take any action that might affect AA as a whole, it consults the trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation, who are, in effect, our overall general service committee. For instance, no group or intergroup could feel free to initiate, without consultation, any publicity that might affect AA as a whole. Nor could it assume to represent the whole of Alcoholics Anonymous by printing and distributing anything purporting to be AA standard literature. This same principle would naturally apply to all similar situations. Though there is no formal compulsion to do so, all undertakings of this general character are customarily checked with our AA general Headquarters.

This idea is clearly summarized in the last sentence of Tradition Four, which observes, ‘On such issues our common welfare is paramount.’”

- Reprinted from *The Language of the Heart*, p. 81 - 82, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

Nearly all those engaged in this fierce competition declare that their aim is peace and justice for themselves, their neighbors and their nations who no longer fear to let our friends know that we have been very sick people.

In practice then, the principle of anonymity seems to come down to this: with one very important exception, the question of how far each individual or group shall go in dropping anonymity is left strictly to the individual or group concerned. The exception is: that all groups or individuals, when writing or speaking for publication as members of Alcoholics Anonymous, feel bound never to disclose their true names. It is at this point of publication that we feel we should draw the line on anonymity. *We ought not disclose ourselves to the general public through the media or the press, in pictures or on the radio.*

Any who would drop their anonymity must reflect that they may set a precedent which could eventually destroy a valuable principle. We must never let any immediate advantage shake us in our determination to keep intact such a really vital tradition.

Great modesty and humility are needed by every A.A. for his own permanent recovery, if these virtues are such vital needs to the individual, so must they be to A.A. as a whole. This principle of anonymity before the general public can, if we take it seriously enough, guarantee the Alcoholics Anonymous movement these sterling attributes forever. Our public relations policy should mainly rest upon the principle of attraction and seldom, if ever, upon promotion.

- Reprinted from the pamphlet *A.A. Tradition: How it Developed* by Bill W., p. 40 - 41, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

HAVING TROUBLES HOSTING A.A. MEETINGS ON ZOOM?

The A.A. Grapevine has a Youtube channel where you can find a video—*Zoom Best Practices & 3rd Legacy Voting in Zoom Online Workshop*—that can give you 40-minutes worth of great information on navigating our newest medium of holding meetings. Here's the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1xvHnYCwHk>

GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE CLOSURE

“As a result of Coronavirus (COVID-19), New York State has shut down 100% of operations of ‘nonessential’ businesses/organizations. The General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. located at 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY is closed, effective March 20, 2020, until further notice.

A.A.W.S. and A.A. Grapevine staff are ‘teleworking’ until further notice as we continue our commitment to serving the A.A. Fellowship. Although we are available to support our membership and groups, these circumstances limit our abilities to be as effective as we would like. We ask that you please limit your communication with G.S.O. to email or Contact Us: <https://www.aa.org/contactus>

We also have limited ability to access and process regular mail. Once again, it would be helpful, if possible, to email your correspondence. **If you are a member and are considering sending a contribution, doing so online would be most helpful.** Make contributions here: https://ctb.aa.org/contribution/index.ssp?cf=1&n=1&lang=en_US#/



G.S.O. NEEDS MONEY



Contributions to the General Service Office are down 50%, which means G.S.O. has had to dip into the prudent reserve by \$3,000,000, which draws our reserve fund down to unprecedented levels. Along with contributions being low, literature sales have decreased by 70%. G.S.O's budget banks on \$1,000,000 a month just in literature sales, but now literature sales are bringing in only \$300,000. Please know that literature is still available for purchase. G.S.O. is taking action and assessing their budget to make cuts where they can. Please let your groups know that contributions still need to be sent to G.S.O.

CALL TO ACTION
Share Your Experience,
Strength, and Hope
on Corrections!!

We need your experience, strength, and hope! Please send us short articles—400 words or less—on A.A. service. Please submit no later than May 28th via email to triangle@aa-montana.org. What service have you done for your group? How does your group do their business/group conscience meetings? Had a district service position? Do you take meetings into the jail? Take meetings into treatment centers? Are you a volunteer for Bridging the Gap? Inquiring minds want to know!!

MAKE CONTRIBUTIONS TO G.S.O. VIA PAYPAL

The General Service Office is now accepting 7th Tradition contributions through PayPal as well as ACH and Debit/Credit Cards.

GRAPEVINE AND LA VIÑA ARE HERE TO HELP

“Due to the current changing health situation, many AA meetings across the U.S. and Canada are finding it safer to close. To help members during this time, we are giving everyone **FREE ACCESS** to all of our 2020 Grapevine and La Viña issues. (The audio to Grapevine’s stories will be available as well, so people can listen to the stories if they like.) Please share with your fellows. We have also included a link to our Youtube channel with some original audio stories as well as other important information.” To enter, visit: www.grapevine.org/we-are-here-to-help

2020 SPRING ROUNDUP CANCELLED

The members of the Bozeman 2020 Spring Roundup Committee are committed to the health and safety of our attendees. We have carefully and continuously monitored the relevant health advisories regarding COVID-19 (coronavirus) and their implications to our Spring Roundup. After considerable discussion last night, the Committee voted to cancel the Roundup and reimburse all those who have signed up for the event thus far. It was a difficult discussion to have, and a difficult decision to make. However, I left the meeting feeling deep satisfaction and gratitude knowing that A.A.s time-honored traditions and concepts continue to work in times of crisis and indecision, and that our loving Higher Power was present in the group conscience leading us to the best decision we could make at this time.

I have been honored to Chair this committee with an incredibly talented group of A.A.s and Al-Anons, and appreciate the opportunity to be of service to my District and my Area. Yours in service, Betty M

**The 2020 International Convention
scheduled for July 2-5, 2020 in Detroit, Michigan,
has been cancelled.**



Read the Announcement from the Chair of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous regarding the cancellation of the 2020 International Convention here: https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/en_GSBchairannouncement.pdf

Tradition Five Snip-it

Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message of the alcoholic who still suffers.

“Years have gone by since I had AA infancy as an excuse for my gimme tendencies. Today, I try to look at the Fifth Tradition as a giver, not as a taker. But the picture is not pretty enough to brag about. It isn’t always easy, even now, to keep my personal wants out of the way when I try to carry the message. I want applause as an AA speaker, compliments as a Grapevine writer. I want to be a ‘success’ as a sponsor—that is, I want to be the one who sobered somebody up! I have found I prefer to carry the message to pleasant, attractive, grateful alcoholics who do what I say and give me full credit for their sobriety. Sometimes, I wish I did not even have to carry the message at all; I wish I could just wait where I am for people to come and pick it up. On the other hand, I rejoice that I can now participate in so many good ways of fulfilling our primary purpose [...]

Yes, my group (made up of individual AAs, including me) has improved a lot in its respect for our Fifth Tradition—in its ways of carrying the message. My own AA history has lengthened considerably since I first caught glimpses of the sobriety-preserving wisdom in the AA ways of doing things, summed up in our Traditions. But I have recently discovered something else quite wonderful about the Fifth: it does not say that AAs should help only newcomers. I do not agree that the newcomer is the most important member at any meeting. In my opinion, equally important are those old-timers who showed me the way, and any middle-timer who may today be suffering. If newcomers are indeed the lifeblood of AA, old- and middle-timers are its skin and backbone. What a bewildered mess we would be in without them!

So in your next meeting, when that Tradition about carrying the message ‘to the alcoholic who still suffers’ is mentioned, please give a thought, not only to newcomers, but also to the alcoholics older in AA who are sitting there. One of them might be me. I still suffer, sometimes. I will need to hear the message, always.”

- Reprinted from *I am Responsible: The Hand of AA*, p. 37 - 38, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

Concept Four Bite

Throughout our conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional “Right of Participation,” taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

“The principle of ‘Right of Participation’ is built into the General Service conference through the Conference Charter. Voting members include not only delegates, but also the trustees, and the directors and staff members of A.A. World Services (i.e., G.S.O.) and the A.A. Grapevine. [...]

Bill warns against the possibility of new delegates or trustees trying to ‘weaken, modify or toss out’ the ‘Right of Participation.’ He cites arguments by delegates to take away the trustees’, directors’ and staff members’ vote at the Conference. ‘Certainly,’ he says, ‘our trustees and service workers are not less conscientious, experienced and wise than the delegates.’

‘It is vital,’ he continues, ‘to preserve the traditional ‘Right of Participation,’ in the face of every tendency to whittle it down.’

Finally, there is a spiritual reason for the ‘Right of Participation.’ All of us desire to belong. In A.A., no members are ‘second class.’ The ‘Right of Participation’ therefore reinforces Tradition Two, that no member is placed in ‘ultimate authority’ over another. We perform our service tasks better ‘when we are sure we belong—when our ‘participation’ assures us we are truly the ‘trusted servants’ described in Tradition Two.”

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

MEETING VIA ELECTRONIC DEVICES - Gene A.

During the recent COVID-19 stay-at-home & physical distancing guidelines our local A.A. groups were doing on-line meetings so that we could comply with local, state & federal guidelines. The governor of Montana informed us that A.A. is a vital business/organization and that we could continue to meet as long as we maintained the 6 foot distance recommended. However myself & many others have chosen to do meetings via technology.

My sponsees and I have also been meeting via electronic devices. I would like to share with you a text conversation between myself & one of those sponsees. Keep in mind there were several emojis that I can’t replicate on the computer.

Sponsee: My wife asked if she’s allowed to buy me a 1 year coin. I said I’d ask.

Sponsor: Certainly. We could take care of it but will certainly defer to her. Family always comes first.

Sponsee: She’s just concerned we will be on for real lockdown by then... She likes that I’m sober & she said 1 year is just as important to her as it is to me.

Sponsor: All I can say is Amen. I’ve had coins from sponsors, friends and my wife. This year she got me a silver coin so I bought another one myself because I am too afraid I might lose hers & it’s too precious to lose.

Sponsee: I just didn’t want to cause problems. I’ve seen & heard other groups talk & get mad at guys for that kinda stuff. Never our group but other groups... another reason why my home group is ours, we’re a family.

Sponsor: Yes we are. Sometimes we even get more than one coin. We cannot celebrate our birthdays too much

Sponsee: I think her concern was she knows how much I appreciate the coins and collect them. I’ve never collected anything in my life but charges. LOL. So she likes that I’m collecting something & holding it so near and dear.

Sponsor: I love you both to pieces.

Sponsee: We love you too, bud.



WACYPAA is coming to Area 40 January, 2021!

ZOOYPAA (Missoula Young People in A.A. service committee) is hosting the Western Area Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous. This will be the largest event Area 40 has ever hosted, so you won’t want to miss out on this momentous event.

“WACYPAA is the Western Area Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous. The purpose of WACYPAA is to build and strengthen unity in Young Peoples Groups in Alcoholics Anonymous in the western area of North America and Hawaii. The focus is especially to reach those areas which historically had little exposure to such conferences.”

<http://wacypaa.org/wacypaas-aim/region/>

Age is not a determining factor for being young at heart. Any A.A. member, regardless of age, is welcome and encouraged to attend WACYPAA.



NEW VIDEO FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services (AAWS) released a new video: *Young & Sober in A.A.: From Drinking to Recovery*. The video is anonymity protected, created by young A.A. members.

“A.A. estimates that 10 percent of its members are under the age of 30. The video helps dispel the myth that some drinkers may be ‘too young’ to have experienced the devastating effects of alcoholism. No matter what your age, no matter what your gender, or background, if you are drinking too much, A.A. offers a solution. Within A.A. are vibrant communities of young people who have discovered sober and fulfilling lives and a daily reprieve from alcoholism.”

- Source - <https://www.aagrapevine.org/magazine/2020/apr/aa-news>

HIGHLIGHTS OF SPRING 2020 BOX 459

Did you know G.S.O. had a “Day of Sharing” with seven other Twelve Step fellowships? G.S.O. and seven other Twelve Step fellowships met on December 3, 2019 for a Day of Sharing. The fellowships attending were Al-Anon, Cocaine Anonymous (C.A.), Narcotics Anonymous (N.A.), Heroin Anonymous (H.A.), Sexaholics Anonymous (S.A.), Debtors Anonymous (D.A.), and Overeater Anonymous (O.A.). Their main reason for coming together was to discuss how A.A. handles “translation and licensing for A.A. literature.”

“Interspersed with lunch and a tour of G.S.O., the day was marked by discussions among all the fellowships about their shared experiences concerning such issues as singleness of purpose, the advantages and disadvantages of technology and social media, the difficulty of attracting younger people to time-consuming general service roles, and how to reach out to those in correctional and treatment institutions. Everyone present felt that the sharing was so valuable that another meeting was tentatively planned for November 2020, possibly hosted by Al-Anon, N.A. or A.A.”

Did you know G.S.O. created a new department?

“The new [Communication Services] department will act as an internal agency supporting G.S.O., A.A.W.S., AA Grapevine and the General Service Board, an internal service hub to help provide more consistent messaging. It will also provide assistance to requests made by the staff assignments in the office (such as implementation of the C.P.C. LinkedIn page and the new Archives video project.)”

Curious about the Big Book? Want to know where the Big Book got its nickname? Do you know who wrote the “To Wives” chapter? Why do a lot of meetings read Chapter Five at the beginning of each meeting? How much did the Big Book cost in 1939? Read the Spring issue of Box 459 and find out.

Learn about G.S.O.’s new operating system ERP. ERP stands for Enterprise Resource Planning, which “integrates different operating systems (which may have been developed separately and sometimes don’t ‘speak’ to each other) into one fluid system in which all users have access to the same data.” This new system allows our Area 40 Secretary to better utilize and find our Area 40 group information, as well as much more.

Want to learn more about the history of the Group Conscious? “In April 1946, Grapevine published an editorial by Bill W. entitled ‘Twelve Points to Assure Our Future’ in which the co-founder introduced the Twelve Traditions and explained why the Fellowship needed them. These Traditions were formally adopted at A.A.’s First International Convention in 1950, and the powerful fundamental of group conscience, codified in Tradition Two, became a feature of each A.A. group that practiced the suggested Traditions.”

HERE’S THE LINK TO THE SPRING 2020 BOX 459 TO LEARN MORE:

https://www.aa.org/newsletters/en_US/en_box459_spring20.pdf

Concept Five Bite

Throughout our world service structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.

“Strictly speaking, a democracy operates on the will of the majority, no matter how slim that majority may be. So when making special concessions to the feelings and the often-demonstrated wisdom of minorities, we occasionally may deny democracy’s cherished principle of final decision by a simple majority vote. Nevertheless we actually have found that our Third Legacy method of electing Delegates has much *strengthened* the *spirit* of democracy among us. Unity has been cemented, cooperation has been increased, and when the Delegate is finally chosen, no discontented minority can trail in his wake. To increase the actual *spirit of democracy* by special deference to minority opinion is, we think, better than to follow blindly the rule which always insists on an unqualified dominance by a slight majority vote.

Consider another example: our respect for the minority position, plus a desire for unity and certainty, often prompts A.A.’s General Service conference to debate at length on important questions of policy, provided there is no need for an immediate or early decision. On many occasions the Conference has insisted on a continuing discussion even in certain cases when a two-thirds majority easily could have been obtained. Such a traditional voluntary practice is evidence of real prudence and courteous deference to minority views. Unless it has been absolutely unavoidable, the Conference has usually refused to take important decisions on anything less than a two-thirds vote.”

- Reprinted from *The A.A. Service Manual*, p. 21 - 22, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

Get the Concept Checklist at aa.org.

Alcoholics Anonymous Response to COVID19

AA VIRTUAL MEETINGS

YOU CAN ACCESS THROUGH
ANY TYPE OF PHONE
COMPUTER OR DEVICE



WE ARE STILL HERE!

For anyone who is interested in connecting with AA

**VIRTUAL MEETINGS CAN BE FOUND HERE
SEVERAL TIMES A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK**

www.aa-montana.org

UPCOMING EVENTS



Need a flier for your group?
Check out aa-montana.org

May 2020

May 14th ➡ 13th Annual CPC Workshop, Youth First Building, Helena, MT

July 2020

July 1st ➡ Deadline for Fall Agenda Items

July 1st ➡ Deadline for Special Needs Form for Fall Assembly

July 17th - 19th ➡ Cooney Campout, Cooney Dam, MT

September 2020

September 11th - 13th ➡ Area 40 Fall Assembly, Holiday Inn, Great Falls, MT (Venue may change due to COVID-19)

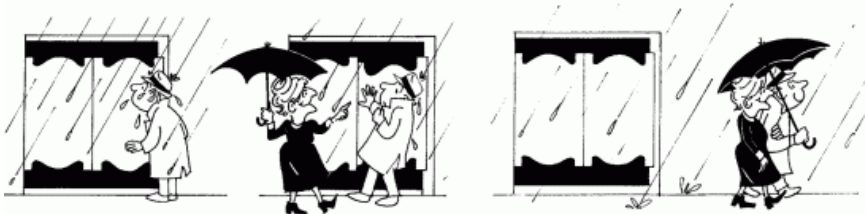
September 18th - 19th ➡ Fellowship at the Falls, Great Falls, MT

October 2020

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

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



Pay for Your Newsletter Online!

Groups are encouraged to be self-supporting for their Triangle subscriptions. Just \$10. You can pay online at aa-montana.org or you can mail in your subscription to Area 40 Triangle, P.O. Box 852, Milltown, MT 59851.

Need to contact your Area 40 Chairs?

Area 40 Delegate

Paul L. delegate@aa-montana.org

Area Chair/Alt. Delegate

Connie R. chair@aa-montana.org

Secretary

Brynn C. secretary@aa-montana.org

Treasurer

Ashley J. treasurer@aa-montana.org

Archives

Kacie N. archives@aa-montana.org

Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC)

Terry T. cpc@aa-montana.org

Grapevine

Shawn N. grapevine@aa-montana.org

Corrections

Jeremiah S. corrections@aa-montana.org

Literature

Grant M. literature@aa-montana.org

Public Information

Sabrina C. pi@aa-montana.org

Treatment

Steve S. treatment@aa-montana.org

Triangle Editor

Catherine B. triangle@aa-montana.org

Advisor (non-voting)

Gerry R. advisor@aa-montana.org

Archivist (non-voting)

Earl F. archivist@aa-montana.org

Bridging the Gap (non-voting)

Jessica E. btgchair@aa-montana.org

Webmaster (non-voting)

Brandon M. webmaster@aa-montana.org



"Okay! I just finished my ninety meetings in ninety days!
When will you people tell me how this thing works?"



Triangle Subscription Form

Want a subscription for yourself, a friend, or a group?
Return this form to the address below or subscribe online
at aa-montana.org. An annual cost of \$10.

Group Name: _____
GSR/Contact: _____
Address: _____
City, St., Zip: _____
Phone No.: _____
Email: _____

SEND TO:

AREA 40 TRIANGLE
P.O. Box 852
Milltown, MT 59851
Make checks payable to Area 40, Inc.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION:

Groups are encouraged to be self-supporting
for their Triangle subscription fee. **“Expired”** above the mailing address indicates
the subscription has expired. Due to Past Actions of the Area Assembly, all groups
will receive the Triangle regardless of subscription status.

Mail Group Contributions

Area 40, Inc.
P.O. Box 3826
Missoula, MT 59806
Make checks payable
to Area 40, Inc.

GSO
P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163
Make checks payable to GSO