

AREA 40 TRIANGLE

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

Experience, Strength, and Hope About Service (Or as some call it ESH)

Learning to Play Well with Others

My experience with service began early in A.A. I started with helping get the coffee made and cleaning up after. Anything to keep me busy and stay occupied while these darn chatty people tried to talk me up. Well, it didn't work, and they cornered me and told me that if I wanted what they had, I must also be willing to give it away. That seemed a little weird, but I did want what they had, so I listened. They said I had to share with the newcomer, and I had to contribute my part to help keep the doors of A.A. open and the meetings for the group going. There were a few road bumps along the way to learning these lessons. I figured that once *those* people found out that my ideas are best, everything would be smooth sailing.

As my life progressed in recovery and in service, I found out that there were other ideas that were better than mine, other ideas than mine on how to stay sober and other ideas regarding working together towards a common goal. This notion was very impactful to me in many ways. First, there were ideas better than mine, and second, when I shared my ideas, they didn't laugh at me, ridicule me, or tell me what a proud, arrogant ass I was. They listened politely and treated my opinion as a valuable part of the decision making process. Again, I decided that I wanted what they had.

I have discovered that the root problem for me was that I had difficulty *playing well with others*. The need to improve my behavior with others came out in my step work. The actual practice of this has come out in my education about the Traditions and by continued service work down through the structure of A.A. I am given the opportunity to practice this in my home group during group conscience meetings, in District, and Area meetings and when I work with others at the level of the General Service Conference.

In the meeting rooms, I was able to learn to really listen to what others were saying rather than formulating my reply. It was there I found the courage to speak about things that were difficult or made me afraid. And the ability to speak without being sarcastic or speaking down to others was a huge lesson. From these experiences, I was able to go into service meetings and speak what was on my mind even when I was afraid or in the minority. I was able to respectfully listen to the ideas of others and even change my mind.

All of this, I attribute to the program of Recovery outlined in the Twelve Steps and the program of Unity as described in the Twelve Traditions. This had led me to a life of sobriety and to a life doing a better job of *playing well with others*.

- Paul L., Area 40 Delegate

UNTOLD BENEFITS OF SERVING ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

When I first started attending Alcoholics Anonymous, my sole focus was getting and staying sober. I had no peripheral leanings toward service or participating with my fellows in any way. The selfishness and self-centeredness that had permeated my drinking saturated my early days in recovery until I got a sponsor and got into the steps. Right away, I was asked to do service, to reach my hand out to the newcomer, and offer my experience, strength, and hope. My lack of experience and time didn't seem enough to me, but I was told I was sober, which was way more than what the newcomer had walking in.

Other service strongly suggested was making coffee and helping open my home group, as well as greeting members as they came into the meeting, newcomer and old-timer alike. As time passed, I ventured further into service doing various jobs at my home group, district, and area.

I didn't know all of the benefits I would receive from serving AA. I just thought I was helping to carry the message. I didn't realize serving AA would change me. I didn't know

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*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 Six Snip-it

An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

"We would thus divide the spiritual from the material, confine the AA movement to its sole aim, and ensure (however wealthy as individuals may become) that AA itself shall always remain poor. We dare not risk the distractions of corporate wealth. Years of experience have proven these principles beyond doubt. They have become certainties, absolute verities for us."

- Reprinted from *The Language of the Heart*, p. 83 - 84 with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

my connection to a higher power would strengthen and grow exponentially. I didn't know I would laugh harder than I ever had before. I didn't know I would make friends from all over our region and throughout our nation. I didn't know I would learn to communicate better with all people, regardless of the circumstance or conflict. I didn't know I would grow in tolerance and patience for my fellows, whether in the program or not. I didn't know my capacity to love would brim over beyond what I had ever experienced.

In serving AA, I'm given the opportunity to not only utilize and capitalize on the Twelve Steps, but I also get to see the Twelve Traditions in action, and the Twelve Concepts. I learn about Unity and an Ultimate Authority. I learn about gathering information to make an Informed Decision. I learn about Autonomy in right relation to others. I learn about Self-Support and Attraction not Promotion. I learn about Responsibility and Authority and that the two must go hand in hand. I learn about Right of Decision and Right of Participation and Right of Appeal. I learn that I have a voice, and so do you and every other member of AA even if we are in the minority. I learn about Leadership and Trusted Servants. I learn about Anonymity and setting aside my personal distinction among my fellows for the betterment of AA. Each principle heals my tattered, alcoholic heart, so that I may find "freedom from the bondage of self" and live a "happy, joyous, and free" life. And the more I serve AA, the more blessed I become.

- Anonymous, Missoula, MT

Physically Distanced but Digitally Connected **The Alcoholics Anonymous Message Carries On Amid Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

"A.A. in the digital age has certainly taken on a new meaning in these challenging times. Alcoholics Anonymous is not a place or an event; it exists in the hearts, minds and help freely offered by its members.

Most recently, Coronavirus (COVID-19) has affected many A.A. groups that normally would meet in-person. The General Service Office (G.S.O.) of Alcoholics Anonymous U.S./Canada, which functions as a repository for A.A. members and groups who are looking for shared experience from the A.A. Fellowship, has some general experience to share regarding this issue.

Some A.A. members have shared that meeting online has been an adjustment and has at times had its challenges. Adhering to state/provincial and federal guidelines, many A.A. members have switched from "in-person" meetings to digital meetings, on platforms such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, Conference Calls, GoToMeeting and What's App, allowing the group to continue to focus on A.A.'s primary purpose: to carry its message of recovery to the alcoholic who still suffers.

In a sense, however, this current experience is not necessarily new for A.A. From its earliest beginnings, the A.A. founders recognized the need to reach beyond the face-to-face transmission of the A.A. message, giving rise to the development of A.A.'s basic text, the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. This book and other A.A. materials which are widely available on multiple platforms – digital, audio and video – has literally circled the globe and opened the door to recovery for thousands of alcoholics looking for help. Even prior to this pandemic many A.A. members around the world – whether homebound, living in remote areas, or service members stationed in far-flung places – have counted on participating in A.A. remotely through A.A. literature, phone calls with other members, correspondence by letter or email and meetings online.

While many A.A. members are for the first time reporting the shift from in-person meetings to digital platforms, for many alcoholics around the world, remote connections and digital platforms are how they initially encountered and maintain their recovery in A.A. even prior to the pandemic.

Many A.A. groups have shared with G.S.O. that they are now finding great connection in digital meetings and want to offer that same experience to anyone who has yet to attend their first meeting.

There are a number of other A.A. resources as well and those seeking help with a drinking problem can get local A.A. information through G.S.O.'s website https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/find-aa-resources or download G.S.O.'s free of charge A.A.W.S. Meeting Guide App.

Another resource is AA Grapevine, the publisher of the International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous. Its purpose is to provide A.A. member sharing through its magazines (in English and Spanish), websites, audios, and e-books. Members share on topics related to recovery, including recovery on digital platforms. Often referred to as A.A.'s "meeting in print," AA Grapevine communicates the experience, strength and hope of its contributors and reflects a broad geographic spectrum of current A.A. experience." - Reprinted from [aa.org \(https://www.aa.org/press-releases/en_US/no_page/physically-distanced-but-digitally-connected-the-alcoholics-anonymous-message-carries-on-amid-coronavirus-covid-19\)](https://www.aa.org/press-releases/en_US/no_page/physically-distanced-but-digitally-connected-the-alcoholics-anonymous-message-carries-on-amid-coronavirus-covid-19), with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

Learn more here: <https://www.aagrapevine.org/we-are-here-to-help>

Learn about A.A. Online Intergroup here: <https://www.aa-intergroup.org/>

Learn more about Anonymity here: https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/understanding-anonymity

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

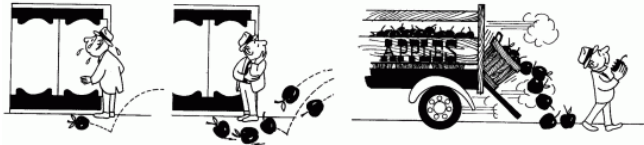
We need your experience, strength, and hope! Please send us short articles—400 words or less—on A.A. service. Please submit no later than June 28th via email to triangle@aa-montana.org. What service have you done for your group? How does your group do their business/group conscience meetings? Had a district 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!!

**West Central Region AA Forum
September 10 - 12, 2021
Hilton Garden Inn, Missoula, MT**

The WCRAA Forum will be hosted in Missoula, September 10 - 12, 2021. A WCRAA Forum committee has recently been created and is currently meeting monthly to coordinate the event. If you are interested in jumping in to help, please reach out to your District Committee Member (DCM) or your group's General Service Representative (GSR) to get more information. Volunteers to greet and man the registration table will be needed, as well as other service.

Registration is free to the forum. Attending a WCRAA Forum is a great way to learn more about Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole and to connect with A.A. members throughout our region. Our region includes Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Wyoming. Don't miss out on participating in this great event!

Go here to learn more: https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/regional-and-local-forums



Concept Six Bite

On behalf of A.A. as a whole, our General Service Conference has the principal responsibility for the maintenance of our world services, and it traditionally has the final decision respecting large matters of general policy and finance. But the Conference also recognizes that the chief initiative and the active responsibility in most of these matters should be exercised primarily by the Trustee members of the Conference when they act among themselves as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

“While the Trustees must always operate under the close observation, guidance and sometimes the direction of the Conference, it is nevertheless true that nobody but the Trustees and their wholly-owned service corporations could possibly pass judgment upon and handle the very large number of transactions now involved in our total world service operation. In view of this very large responsibility, they must therefore be given a correspondingly large grant of authority and leadership with which to discharge it.”

- Reprinted from *The A.A. Service Manual*, p. 25, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

TRADITION SIX

An AA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose

Before I understood even dimly what AA was, I was sure I could improve it. Looking back, I realize now that my pure gall was appalling, since it was rooted so firmly in ignorance. I knew almost nothing about the externals of the Fellowship and much less about its spiritual principles. Since I was too proud to admit that there was anything I did not know, I almost never asked questions.

Practically nothing in the very skimpy AA literature we had then (in 1945) explained how AA or its component units functioned, so my knowledge was based on what I heard and saw in one group. Then as now, we AA members (like other human beings everywhere, I suppose) talked a bewildering melange of facts, guesswork, inspired wisdom, gossip, and nonsense. Yet I assumed that what I heard was the whole AA truth, and armed only with my small collection of quick impressions and misinformation about AA, I wanted to change it.

Surely, for example, AA should be informing the medical profession about the facts of our disease as we understood them. (The Yale—now Rutgers—School of Alcohol Studies and the National Council on Alcoholism had barely got started, and this was non years before the American Medical Association established its alcoholism committee.)

The government, I was sure, should change laws relating to alcoholics. (The North American Association of Alcoholism Programs and the National Center for Control and Prevention of Alcoholism were then impossible dreams.)

Detoxification centers, ovational rehabilitation, and other services improved understandings by social workers, school kids, psychologists, and cops—all these and more were badly needed. Why, I carped, was AA not getting busy?

Just suppose for a minute that our Fellowship had indeed been misguided right smack into all those activities. What a tangled web we could have woven! How many drunks would have been ignored, left to die, as we mounted our political and fundraising campaigns! How many enemies AA would have made for itself it had tried to dictate to the medical, clerical, and legal professions!

If my AA group had had prestige, money, and power at stake, I fear my own sobriety would have found little support at our meetings. There would have been no room for it on the agenda. Many of us would have left, I fear—*sic transit* glorious sobriety, and maybe AA itself.

I am certain now that if any AA-run governmental programs on alcoholism had been set up and had gone bust, my resentments would have burst through my tender, new sobriety. Suppose we had started an official AA club and it had been raided because of gambling, or AA-run retreats for alcoholics had become subjects of gossip. What then? I would have gotten either emotionally embattled or, more probably, alcoholically embottled.

As always, AA as a whole proved much wiser than I as an individual, and my group just plugged along, trying to do its own thing. Even without such complications, we had trouble enough just trying to figure out *what* our own thing really was. The Traditions had not been written yet.

At first, we felt we had to do at least three things: (1) provide a place where members could play cards, eat, and have coffee at any time, (2) maintain an office with telephones as a central clearinghouse for Twelfth Step work and information about meetings, (3) keep our own AA meetings and Twelfth Step work going.

The first two involved us in legal corporations, finances, real estate management, building maintenance, cafeteria operation, a paid secretary, and, naturally, rules and officers. As a result, newcomers who just needed the message often got shortchanged because we were too busy with serious problems like a drunken chef, typewriter repairs, club dues, revising bylaws, a temperamental janitor, and deciding who could and could not use the phone or which brand of coffee to buy.

We made it almost impossible for newcomers to tell the difference between joining a club and simply becoming a sober AA. I know. I was one of those newcomers.



"Of course you're the only one who can say whether or not you're an alcoholic."

People who did not get elected to boards or did get demoted from jobs proceeded to get drunk. Criticism of the cafeteria cashier's report became resentment of "AA's financial structure," yet! Two fellows I liked were displeased by the cafeteria food, blamed AA, and left. (No wonder! they had heard little else except the food discussed at their first meetings. There were dad within a year, of alcoholism.)

The solution my group finally found, nearly a quarter-century ago, was quite simple. We decided that, no matter how exciting anyhow needed such business enterprises were, an AA group ought to stay out of them, because discussions of money, property, and prestige kept us wildly distracted from the Twelve Steps.

As an AA group, we decided to carry the message, period. So we dropped the food business and real-estate management. Some individuals formed separate nonprofit corporations, outside AA, to run clubs or day centers for AAs who wanted such amenities. As for the local central office (or intergroup), it was eventually operated and supported by *all* the groups nearby.

This arrangement has worked beautifully ever since, both in New York and elsewhere. And now, of course, other services seriously needed by alcoholics are at last beginning to get under way—but *not* under the auspices of AA. Food, clothing, shelter, and medical assistance are

often necessary for the alcoholic's recovery. But other organizations, efficiently operated and professionally experienced in these matters, can handle them better than an AA group.

Nevertheless, let's not overlook a fact seldom recognized, in conversation or in print: Many of the great improvements in the treatment of alcoholics during the last thirty-five years have been brought about quietly, behind the scenes, by anonymous AA members, acting as private citizens interests in a public-health problem. The Sixth Tradition leaves every AA member the freedom to do that, if he cares to, so long as his actions do not constitute AA endorsement (or criticism) of any enterprises, nor "lend the AA name" to them.

(There's another side to this coin, too. Once upon a time, a non-AA alcoholism program tried to create the impression, falsely that it was endorsed by AA. But the attempt backfired. The professionals at whom the program was aimed thought it was just an extension of AA and would not come near it! I know. I was the guilty one.)

Adherence to our primary purpose makes AA unique—and also gives as a special responsibility, it seems to me. We are the only people who have our own personal experience to share. And we are the only people who try to do nothing except help the individual alcoholic because we have to, to stay sober ourselves. We help him, not for the sake of society or of science, but for the sake of our own sobriety.

As a result, other programs in the alcoholism field have come to depend heavily on AA's continuing integrity. At every single professional meeting, it is a conspicuous fact that nonalcoholics count absolutely on the air of sober, conscientious AAs who remember: *When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.*

- B.L., Manhattan, N.Y.

- Reprinted from *The Best of the Grapevine*, Volume One, p. 250 - 254, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

**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

Area 40, Inc.
Budget vs. Actual by Line Item
March 2020

	Mar 20	Budget	Jan - Mar 20	YTD Budget	Annual Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense					
Income					
Individual contribution	5.00		30.00		
Group Contributions	1,382.87		9,690.62		
District Contribution	0.00	0.00	3,000.00	0.00	0.00
Triangle Subscriptions	20.00	0.00	40.00	0.00	0.00
Total Income	1,407.87	0.00	12,760.62	0.00	0.00
Expense					
Computer software	0.00	16.60	0.00	200.60	350.00
Travel Expenses					
Gas	428.82	388.00	516.28	1,078.00	3,295.00
Mileage	147.95	75.00	200.45	275.00	910.00
Meals	235.84	425.00	244.52	895.00	2,610.00
Lodging	398.98	935.00	593.44	1,895.00	8,760.00
Air/Train/Taxi fare	0.00	45.00	0.00	735.00	1,140.00
Area 40 contribution to GSC	0.00	0.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00
Total Travel Expenses	1,211.59	1,868.00	3,354.69	6,678.00	18,515.00
Rent					
Archives storage	10.08	325.00	3,920.08	975.00	3,900.00
Meeting space	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,800.00
Total Rent	10.08	325.00	3,920.08	975.00	10,700.00
Literature Expenses					
Service manuals (for resale)	0.00	12.50	0.00	37.50	150.00
Total Literature Expenses	0.00	12.50	0.00	37.50	150.00
Photocopies / printing	323.00	248.00	323.00	798.00	3,430.00
Dues, registration, fees	0.00	0.00	92.00	150.00	225.00
Postage	50.70	76.00	54.40	232.00	916.00
Supplies	306.05	30.00	328.04	144.00	414.00
Telephone					
Directory Listings	463.80	200.00	986.55	600.00	2,400.00
800 Number	3.16	350.00	223.39	1,050.00	4,200.00
Total Telephone	466.96	550.00	1,209.94	1,650.00	6,600.00
Miscellaneous expense	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	20.00
Total Expense	2,368.38	3,126.10	9,282.15	10,865.10	41,320.00
Net Ordinary Income	(960.51)	(3,126.10)	3,478.47	(10,865.10)	(41,320.00)
Net Income	(960.51)	(3,126.10)	3,478.47	(10,865.10)	(41,320.00)
Checkbook balance					
	\$ 13,971.24				
Prudent Reserve					
	\$ 13,773.00				
Operating balance					
	\$ 198.24				

NATIONAL COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY CONFERENCE (CPC)

May 2021 in Billings, MT

The National CPC conference will be held in Billings in May 2021. We are working on the details and also forming an area committee. There are six of us on the national committee that are doing the bulk of the planning, but we will need some Montana assistance. Anyone who is interested in serving on the committee should contact me. Our hope is to feature some Class A Trustees in workshops to figure out how to better reach those serving the still suffering alcoholic. We also have a virtual option available should it not be possible to meeting May.

- Terri T., Area 40 CPC Chair

UPCOMING EVENTS



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

June 2020

June 5th - 7th ➡ Bitterroot Campout, Lake Como, MT

June 15th ➡ District 61 Virtual Workshop

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

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.



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. <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.

Need to contact your Area 40 Chairs?

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"Doc... Remember when you suggested a nip of brandy to help me sleep?"

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: _____

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Milltown, MT 59851
Make checks payable to Area 40, Inc.

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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

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Make checks payable
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