

May/June 2006

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# THE TRIANGLE

Spring Assembly / General Service Conference Reports

## Delegate's Report on the General Service Conference

I bring you greetings from the 56<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous held at the Crowne Plaza in New York City. Thank you for letting me serve you and be your contribution to the Conference.

I flew to New York on Friday April 21<sup>st</sup> and returned on Sunday April 30<sup>th</sup>. As soon as I arrived at the airport in New York, I could feel the electricity of the city. The cab ride was uneventful and quick. We only drove on one sidewalk and the fare was about \$10.00 less than usual.

I ran into a couple of Delegates immediately upon entering the hotel and we visited about last year and all the fun we have had since we last got together. Regretfully, it rained on Friday night and Saturday. So, sightseeing was out of the question which was okay with me. I had a different level of responsibility for this Conference ver-

sus last year and I found I was able to utilize the time reviewing the work that lay ahead of me for the week.

We started on Saturday night with a Delegates only meeting. Michael S. from Northern Florida was the Delegate Chair of the Conference. He gave some excellent opening remarks. I was honored to be asked to give a presentation on the Conference Process at that meeting. Then, some Panel 55 Delegates were pulled from the hat to share about last year's Conference and give the new Panel 56 Delegates helpful hints on the upcoming week.

Sunday afternoon was the official start of the Conference. One of the most moving moments I had from last year was the reading of the Roll Call of the 136 voting members of the Conference. I had the same reaction again this year. Simply, the power and presence of God that was in that room is a mem-

ory that I pray is forever stamped on my mind.

Sunday afternoon was joint meetings of the Conference Committees and the Trustees Committees. Monday morning and Tuesday morning were the Conference Committee meetings. Wednesday afternoon we elected two new Regional Trustees. Wednesday night, all day (and night) Thursday and Friday we debated the Agenda Items. If you want details of the Conference, I will look forward to seeing you at any of the Conference reports listed in the Calendar of Events.

If you would like a report, please contact me and I would be honored to provide the information and answer your questions. I also ordered a copy of the final Conference report for every group in Montana. The report is usually available in mid-August.

There were four Agenda Items that were forwarded from our 2005 Fall Assem-

**Delegate's Report on the General Service Conference Continued..**

bly for consideration by the Conference. The following are the results of those Agenda Items.

1. Under Policy and Admissions as an additional consideration: discuss the request that the Conference be mindful of balancing the number of odd and even panel delegates when decisions are made that affect delegate rotation. Took no action.

The three remaining Area 40 Agenda Items were all within the Finance Committee discussion.

1. The Finance Committee recommended the following be added to the end of the Q & A section of the pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix":

**Q** Does A.A. have any specific information for our group or group treasurer about how to handle our group's finances?

**A** Yes. There are two excellent publications available from G.S.O., A.A. Guidelines on Finance and the pamphlet "The A.A. Group Treasurer," that provide specific information to groups regarding practical matters related to their group finances, such as setting up bank accounts, obtaining tax ID numbers, and outlining the responsibilities of a group

treasurer."

The recommendation passed.

There were two attempts at amending the motion: add a list of page numbers in other A.A. publications and delete the word excellent from the first line (4<sup>th</sup> word). Neither amendment passed. The Advisory Action reads as listed above.

2. Discuss requests to rescind the small-order freight charge policy instituted by A.A.W.S. effective 7/1/05.

The committee recommended that the current small-order freight charge policy be replaced with a policy of charging shipping on all orders which seems to be more in keeping with the spirit of treating everyone equally.

This item did not pass. The debate seemed to center not so much on the intent of the item but the procedures that would need to be in place that were not spelled out in the motion regarding implementation of charging on all orders and the downstream effects. This debate went on for a little over an hour. Some of the deliberations mentioned: what would be time frame for implementation, would this hinder the ability of AAWS to remove shipping charges in future, etc.

3. Under additional considerations, the committee discussed requests to eliminate the discounts on volume purchases of

A.A.W.S. literature and took no action.

The Conference was another great learning experience for me. Spiritual and educational in so many ways. I learned a lot more about the workings of our Fellowship, about the processes of our Trustees & their committees, about Trust in a Higher Power and most importantly about humility. I became aware one more time that my convictions and opinions are lessons in humility. They keep me coming back. In that process of coming back, my heart and mind have become open to the ideas and ideals that you continue to place before me for my consideration.

Thank you for letting me be your contribution to the General Service Conference. I am honored to be a member of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Scott W.  
Panel 55 Delegate  
Area 40 Montana

An alcoholic and his sponsor are stranded on an island. They find a lamp, rub it, and a genie appears and grants them each one wish. The alcoholic can't decide what to wish for and tells his sponsor to go first. The asks to be taken off the island and disappears. The alcoholic is having a hard time deciding what to wish for and says "I wish my sponsor were here."

## DCM Breakout Report

*This is the report of the District Committee Member Breakout Session held at the Spring Assembly in April. Thanks to Earl F. for providing the report.*

- Topic: Would Area 40 be interested in an Area-wide 800 number hotline?

Comments: An area wide hotline could be made available through AIRPAGE out of Helena for a cost of around \$1,070 per month. This is close to the amount that two (2) districts currently pay for the service in their districts.

AIRPAGE stated that they could serve the entire state or all of Area 40. This would require a lot of communication between the DCM's to insure that the list of contacts was accurate and current.

There were some questions of integrity with AIRPAGE giving out billing information.

The sense of the group was that this would be worth bringing forward as an agenda item for this fall.

- Topic: Is there a possibility of or have we ever had an Area hosted CPC Luncheon?

Comments: The Area CPC committee has participated in events like the Governor's council on Aging, and state-wide Health Fairs, but we have never hosted an area wide CPC

luncheon.

Some reasons stated were travel and time concerns of the professionals. The professionals would prefer to have local resources.

Some professionals seem to be very uninformed or misinformed. It seems that we always have to re-educate after staff changes.

Suggestions to assist in providing information to professionals was to use the AA Fact Sheet, repetition of our message, cooperation of the Districts and try to participate in Continuing Education or training sessions.

- Topic: What are some different experiences of DCM's who have put on workshops within their Districts?

Comments: Ask and they will come.

Put on GSR Schools and invite non-locals to participate, this seems to generate a better turnout.

Have workshops on a separate night than the regular district meeting.

Encourage District committee chairs to do their own workshop.

Make hosting a workshop a responsibility of each District committee service position.

Have a Special Events Chair. Do a Service Fair (see the Jan issue of Box 459). Ask the Groups of the District to host workshops.

One district said they asked a group from the district to provide a 30 to 45 minute presentation on one tradition from the "Traditions



Checklist" before or after each district meeting.

- Topic: Do District committee chairs have the right to vote on District business?

Comments: A poll of the DCM's present showed these results:

10 districts give the right to vote to the committee chairs, 2 districts do not allow committee chairs to vote and 2 districts were absent.

Concept 4 "The Right of Participation" was stated in the discussions.

One comment was, "we try to make sure that the votes are weighted to the GSR's or the Groups. (Make sure the groups represent at least 2/3 of the total votes.)"

This is definitely a group conscience issue.

Having committee chairs vote can cause a group overbalance if several committee chairs belong to a particular group but this should

**DCM Breakout Report Continued....**

not be a problem if principles are practiced and we always try to do what is best for AA as a whole.

- Topic: If a district wanted to start filling District Committee chair positions, what position should be the priority?

Comments: It depends on who is willing to serve and what they would like to do.

The needs of the district should dictate the priorities.

Answering service is the committee most important to the still suffering alcoholic. Whatever the committee, get some help from other members, it is far better to have an actual committee than just a committee of one.

- Topic: Do you think that there

**District 21 DCM Report**

Our District consists of 8 towns holding 29 meetings per week. We have our district meeting every other month on the second Sunday, usually at our central meeting point, Glasgow.

We had a Halloween party and district meeting in Glasgow, fun was had by all. At our last district meeting Dave from Plentywood stepped up and took the alternate DCM position. Thanks Dave.

A lot of planning for summer is taking place, for campouts, speakers

are “Dark” Districts in Area 40 and if so what are some things that we can do to help them become active?

Comments: The number of members willing to do service work seems to be cyclical.

It seems to be 10% of the people doing 90% of the work.

We have trouble overcoming a lack of participation.

There seems to be a lack of or no Spirit of Rotation.

We need to fulfill the responsibilities of the DCM. Show enthusiasm and actually walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

Take meetings to the groups who are not showing up or participating.

Encourage sponsorship especially into service.

Try service workshops and be persistent.

Pass on the experiences that you



and meetings. Plentywood agreed to host a campout which will also be our next district meeting. This is set for June 9<sup>th</sup> through the 11<sup>th</sup>. There will be speakers from Canada as well as Area 40. The location will be announced at a later date. We talked about having our campout at Ft Peck again this summer in July. Last year’s was a great success. Two Area chairs came and did a work-

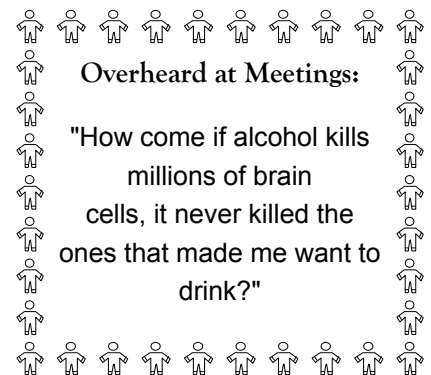
have had to the new trusted servants.

- Topic: What can we do with people who won’t fulfill the responsibilities of their position?

Comments: Bring this to the attention of the District and ask for guidance.

Talk to the people and see if they really want to serve and inform them of what their responsibilities are.

If they won’t or can’t serve ask them to step down so that the district can replace them.



shop so we are hoping to get two other chairs to do the same this year.

Culbertson is still going strong and meetings are held on Wednesday nights and Scobey has started a meeting on Monday nights. We welcome anyone passing through to stop in at our meetings.

Thank you for the opportunity to be of service.

Pam C.

## District 72 DCM Report

- Out of the 53 to 60 groups across Gallatin, Park and Madison Counties in District 72, 36 groups or 2/3 contributed \$7,500 in 2005 (plus \$1,000 in Pink Can funds and spent \$1,500 on literature for a total of around \$10,000).
- The monthly District 72 business meeting attracts between 25 and 35 people representing around 20 different groups.
- Last fall District 72 hosted an annual CPC luncheon where local parole, police and court officers were invited to meet AA members and hear their stories, particularly as it relates to the legal system. This has turned out to be quite a successful program assisting law enforcement in understanding the implications of compulsory AA attendance.
- Bozeman is hosting the Spring Roundup June 2- 4, 2006 at Montana State University. Inexpensive dorm rooms are available. Registration is \$20. Please register by May 24 if you would like to reserve a spot for food.
- Thank you, District 41 – Great Falls, for hosting the regional pre-assembly workshop on April 1, 2006. Given that our local District's pre-assembly was further away than the other District's pre-assemblies, it was difficult soliciting participation from GSRs in District 72.
- Thank you to all the Districts that e-mail monthly minutes. This has been very helpful.
- Here is our District's on-going controversies:
  - Is the Watch Program corrections or treatment?
  - Should Pink Can money be used for literature to Watch or MCDC?
  - How loose is too loose when loosely following Robert's Rules?
  - Should the District pay for mileage for committee chairs to attend the monthly district meeting?
  - The amount of money our District plus Missoula is paying for AirPage to handle the answering service is about enough to pay for the entire state. Should we, instead of the Area, create a state-wide answering service?

Sean B.



## Area 40 Literature Chair Report

I did make it to two of the three pre-assemblies and would again like to thank everyone for their participation. Paula, from Missoula, was gracious enough to attend the pre-assembly in Hamilton for me and Sean's help in Great Falls was a Godsend. I got sick Saturday morning and the extra help was appreciated. I was reminded of one of the miracles of Alcoholics Anonymous; how we can do together what I can't do alone.

I received some information from Adrienne B., our Literature

Coordinator at GSO and one item of interest was a piece from the February/March Box 4-5-9. It is called "How Does Your Group's Literature Stack Up?" The opening line is "When newcomers to your group walk over to the literature table or rack, what do they see? It also talked about literature looking like it needs to be repainted. That sounds like some of our literature at my home group, so I will share this information and hopefully we will make a change to better carry the AA message through our literature.

If you would like a copy of the Box 459 piece, please email me at [literature@aa-montana.org](mailto:literature@aa-montana.org).

Yours in service,  
*Louise M*

### Overheard at meetings:

From a newcomer reading the 'Promises' for the first time: "We will comprehend the word cemetery and we will know peace."



## Lawyer's Assistance Program

The District 61 CPC committee got an inquiry from the State Bar Association, regarding whether AA might be able to provide some assistance to lawyers who come to the attention of the Lawyers' Assistance Program. This could mean, among other things, lawyers whose professional conduct indicates that they may have drinking problems.

Three attorneys in the AA Fellowship in Helena, Terry S., Michael D. and Tom D., met at a District 61 CPC Committee meeting, with State Bar counsel Betsy Brandborg.

Afterwards, the Committee discussed how to proceed, and Terry checked with Scott W, our delegate and Lloyd B, our Area CPC chair. Here is the initial plan, which has been shared by e-mail with the DCMs around the State. The email requested names and numbers of lawyers in the Fellowship to be routed to Terry.

Because some professionals who are members of the Fellowship have continuing concerns about maintaining their personal anonymity in their professional lives, it would be inappropriate (and probably unworkable) to provide to the State Bar a contact list of AA lawyers willing to be contacts for lawyers who may have drinking problems.

We can obtain and maintain such a list, as a confidential AA list, and the State Bar can provide to us (a sub-

committee of the Area CPC committee) the name and phone number(s) of a lawyer who would appreciate a contact to introduce that lawyer to AA meetings and the program, in the vicinity of that lawyer's community. We can then provide the name and phone number(s) of the State Bar referred lawyer to a lawyer in the Fellowship who is in that vicinity and is willing to contact the State Bar referred lawyer who may have a drinking problem.

Unless both the temporary contact lawyer in the Fellowship and the lawyer referred by the State Bar agree otherwise and themselves provide the information, no information will be shared with the State Bar about what happens as a result of the contact.

Proceeding in this fashion protects the anonymity of the lawyers in the Fellowship, and maintains the primary purpose of AA, without any appearance of affiliation with the State Bar.

As a voting member of the Area CPC Committee, Terry is beginning to coordinate this AA contact plan, perhaps through the end of 2006. With the blessing of our Area CPC chair, he has asked that each DCM gather names and numbers of lawyers in their districts who are in the Fellowship and are willing to call lawyers who are referred to our subcommittee by the Lawyers' Assis-

tance Program. Acting as an adjunct or subcommittee of the Area CPC Committee, the 3 local lawyers who met with Betsy will maintain those names in confidence, calling one of our lawyers on the list in the town or district where the State Bar referred lawyer is located, and asking our lawyer to contact the prospect.

*ANY AA LAWYER WHO MAKES SUCH A CONTACT IS NOT GOING TO BE IDENTIFIED TO THE STATE BAR BY OUR SUBCOMMITTEE. THE LIST OF CONTACTS IS NOT GOING TO BE PROVIDED TO THE STATE BAR OR ANY OTHER OUTSIDE ENTITY. THE CONTACT LIST AND ALL INFORMATION ABOUT IT IN THE POSSESSION OF OUR SUBCOMMITTEE WILL REMAIN WITH US, INSIDE OF AA. WHEN WE HAVE A LIST OF REFERRAL NAMES, WE WILL SHARE AN ABBREVIATED VERSION OF THIS PLAN WITH THE STATE BAR ASSOCIATION.*



## District 81 DCM Report

District 81 is faring well in our second year of the current rotation. We have 32 groups in the District and several unregistered meetings. Our newest group to register is in Alberton on Tuesday nights boasting about 8 regular members. We also have a new GSR in Plains which has not had a contact for over a year. As most of you know, many groups in the rural areas only meet once a week and struggle to keep the finances and membership going. The group in Arlee finally disbanded with most members going to Missoula or St. Ignatius for meetings.

On the District Committee, we currently have two open service positions: Archives and Treatment. But we have a nomination for the Treatment Chair who is filling in temporarily. A new Teen Recovery Center opened recently and we are taking meetings in there alternate weeks in addition to meetings at the adult outpatient treatment center. Meetings have also started at the Juvenile Detention Facility and continue in adult corrections, as well. The CPC Committee put together an

information packet of pamphlets for University students who visit open AA meetings as part of their studies. The PI committee continues to provide speakers for the local high schools and PSAs to the radio stations as well as pamphlets in literature racks all over town. At the beginning of the year, we switched from cell phones to an answering service due to a lack of volunteers to carry the phones. We're still working out some billing problems, but the AA phone is getting answered.

In October, we held a District inventory meeting with the help of Andrew, our Area Chair. This was an enlightening process and has resulted in a few changes mostly in our District meeting format and Public Information outreach. The need for the formation and use of committees was expressed in several areas.

Since "we absolutely insist on enjoying life", we have also had several fun events. Two hundred people attended the Halloween Party and many enjoyed a scrumptious Thanksgiving dinner. Marathon meetings on Christmas and New

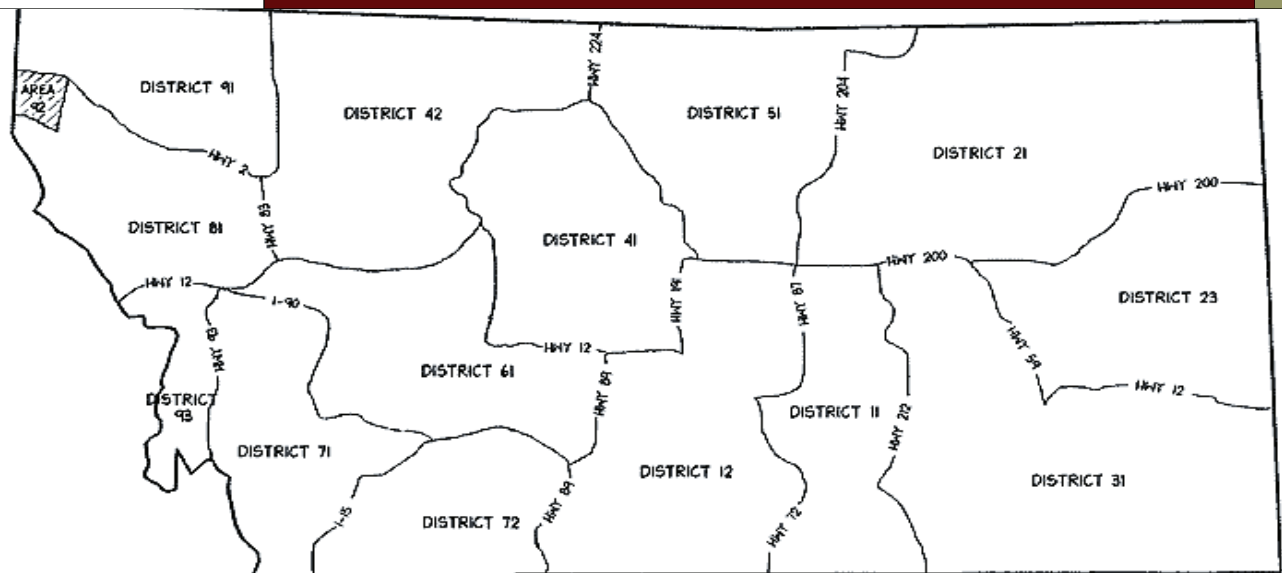
Year's kept more than a few albies sober on those slippery days. A Valentine's event called "Love and the Family in Recovery" had both an AA and Al-Anon speaker as well as a yummy potluck with a dance following it. Our next event will be a new Spring Fling/Service Fair the end of April with the District Committee officers and chairs showcasing their service functions along with hot dogs, cotton candy and prizes. As always, I look forward to our Founder's Day celebration in June where Scott will give his Delegate's report and maybe he'll help the old-timers win the softball game this year!

In between all that, I attended the Regional Forum in Great Falls last fall and the West Central Regional Service Conference in Minneapolis last month. Each time I came to a new understanding and appreciation of service in Alcoholics Anonymous. It truly is a privilege to take part. Thank you.

Julie R.



On June 15, an audio version of the Grapevine will be available at [www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org). All stories contained within each month's issue will be presented in digital audio format. Check it out.



District 11—Billings  
District 12—Laurel  
District 21—Wolf Point/Glasgow  
District 23—Glendive

District 31—Miles City  
District 41—Great Falls  
District 42—Cut Bank/  
Choteau/ Shelby  
District 51—Havre

District 61—Helena  
District 71—Butte  
District 72—Bozeman  
District 81—Missoula  
District 91—Kalispell/  
Whitefish/ Eureka  
District 93—Bitterroot Valley

## Triangle Tidbits

- Thanks to all of you who submitted articles for this issue of the Triangle. The next Triangle issue will be dedicated to the Traditions and Concepts at the Group, District, Area and Conference. If you would like to share your experience with us, please do so by submitting an article.
- The next issue will come out in July. Deadline for submission of articles is June 30, 2006. Send to the address below.
- I'm still looking for "You might be an alcoholic if..." and "Overheard at Meetings" to use. Please send one in if you have one.
- If you are having an event and would like it listed, please provide the information to the address below.
- Check your subscription date located on the mailing label. If your subscription has expired, please mail \$10 to the Triangle at the address below. Checks should be payable to Area 40. If your group cannot afford the subscription, you will continue to receive a copy.
- The mailing list is continually being updated. If your group is not receiving the Triangle, please send the correct mailing address to the address below.
- The Triangle's address is 4522 Shasta Lane, Billings, MT 59101 or [Triangle@aa-montana.org](mailto:Triangle@aa-montana.org).



## Calendar of Events

- KALISPELL- Delegate's Report—May 13- Conrad M. 296-3241
- BOZEMAN—Spring Roundup\*\*June 2- 4—Kurt W. 586-4635
- PLENTYWOOD-Campout- June 9-11-Pam C. 654-1643
- MISSOULA- Founder's Day\*\*—June 10—Julie R. 829-0756
- ANACONDA- Delegate's Day—June 17- Marcy D. 563-6714
- BIG TIMBER- Beartooth Mountain Conference—June 23-25—Jesse V. 896-0499  
www.Beartoothmountainconference.com
- HELENA—Grapefest\*\*—July 8—Terry S. 457-1393
- GREAT FALLS—Delegate's Report—July 15- Brian M. 452-2568
- SHELBY- Delegate's Report—July 16- Mike M. 873-5415
- PAINTED LAKES—Delegate's Report—July 23- Mary H. 777-4226
- GLENDIVE—Lower Yellowstone\*\*—August 19 (
- MILK RIVER, ALBERTA—Corn Roast—August 25-27—Bud W. 424-2640
- BILLINGS—Fall Roundup—September 8-10—Don B. 656-0727
- LEWISTOWN—Area 40 Fall Election Assembly—September 16-17— Andrew W. 546-2828
- KALISPELL—Fall Refresher—Oct 14-15—Paul W. 892-0278
- SAN ANTONIO, TX—AA's 75th Birthday Party—July 1-4, 2010

\*\*Includes a Delegate's report

We absolutely insist on enjoying life!

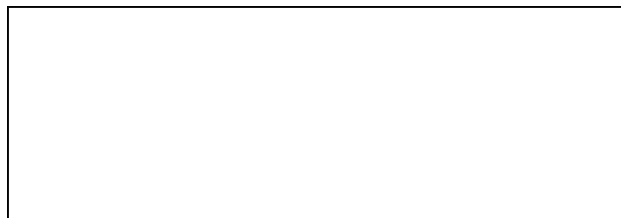
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