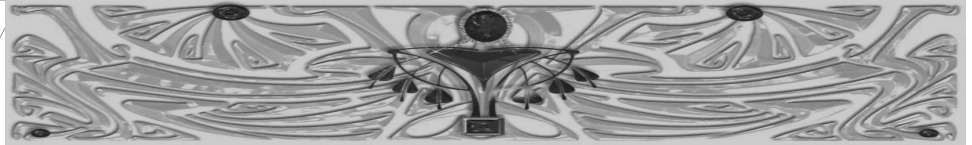


THE TRIANGLE - FALL 07



AN ASSEMBLY EXPERIENCE

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- It's never what you hear, it's what you think you hear.
- A tall tale of a fishing story
- A time line of growth in service work
- A new participants view point

I went to my first Area Assembly when I was barely a year sober. I had moved to Helena from Billings and had gotten a home group in Helena. At probably the second group business meeting I attended, our GSER resigned, because he had taken a new job. No one else offered so I volunteered, not knowing for sure what I would be doing. A week or two later, I was attending my first District meeting. As my group had told me, the meeting was partially about the upcoming Area Assembly. I confirmed where (the Yogo Inn) and when (Saturday morning at 8:00am) that event occurred and with money from my group, attended.

All the participating members of the Assembly spoke a foreign language, made up of clumps of letters ("GSR," "DCM," "GSO," "PI/CPC" and so forth). They paraded to the microphone and spoke for and against various agenda items, in terms of how it would or wouldn't help the still suffering alcoholic. I understood nothing. I knew nobody. Staying down the street from the Yogo Inn, I met virtually no one except a handful of folks from my district (none from my home group) of whom I remember our DCM, Bob McC.

Sometime Sunday morning, the vote was tallied and the chair (Bob P. from Billings) announced that the motion had failed for lack of substantial unanimity (2/3rds in favor.) I scribbled numbers on my note pad and hurried to the microphone for the first time. I asked why the

number of votes in favor, which was more than 2/3rds of the total vote cast, was not substantial unanimity.

The answer I heard (which I am now certain was not really the words and the tone that Bob used) was, "Listen, dummy, we count the total number of registered voters, and (as everybody who belongs here knows) substantial unanimity is 2/3rds of that number not 2/3rds of the votes actually cast". I slunk back to my seat, embarrassed and defensive.

Driving back to Helena, still alone, swearing to myself, I vowed to keep coming back to the blankety-blank Assembly until I figured out what you all were up to. I still haven't figured it all out but now I look forward to attending and participating, as a part of, and many of the stranger I saw at that first assembly are now friends. We applaud folks at their first assembly. I clap as loudly as anyone. The only thing that has changed is my, my attitude, my willingness, and my desire to serve others instead of myself. Participating in service as well as recovery and unity, using the concepts, the steps and the traditions, has done for me what I could not do for myself. I am a part of, rather than apart from.

In Service  
 Terry S. - Panel 57

YES, I WAS THOROUGHLY BORED

Hello, my name is Conrad and I'm an alcoholic. I do remember my first assembly. I was two or three years sober, GSR for the Tobacco Valley group and Eureka. They sent me to the assembly to do what I had no idea, having said I would do the job, I went to do the job. I sat in the way back of the room near the coffee, not understanding at all what was going on, voting along with the fellow next to me. It got to elections and I am not sure what kind of election it

was, who I was voting for, what they were running for and what would happen if I voted for the wrong person. Yes, I was thoroughly bored. But everything went ok and my home group didn't quiz me too hard. They even sent me back again. By this time I had figured out that I could sit with the rest of the District 91 group and started become an informed GSR.

In Service  
 Conrad M. - Panel 57

## SUCKERED IN

Several years ago I stood in our kitchen arguing with my wife, Connie. I recall explaining to her in a very loud voice that, "I will NEVER, EVER, get involved in the political side of A.A. NEVER!" I also recall telling her that I thought she had gone overboard with all this so-called service work, that in my opinion it was taking her away from "us" and, that perhaps she ought to ease up on it. I used every argument in the book including the classic, "A.A. is supposed to give your life back to you, not take away from it."

A few months after that night, in the spring, I believe, Connie informed me that she was going down to Lewistown for one of those political rallies that she and others called "Area Assembly". She very sweetly told me that she understood my concern about her being away from "us" and that she had hit on a possible solution to our dilemma. "I thought that you could come with me. I heard the fishing is really good down there. I could go to the Assembly, and you could go fishing. It'd be like a vacation."

"Real good"? I asked.

"That's what I was told" she answered.

I had been teaching myself to fly fish and figured that there might be something worthwhile about taking a trip to Lewistown that weekend after all.

That Saturday morning found me wading up Big Spring Creek, flogging the water with my best technique while Connie went to her A.A. Political Rally at the hotel. I really didn't want to hangout with all those A.A. Politicians, but I knew they'd have some coffee there and I had left the hotel early that morning without getting my usual six to eight cups. I was fishless, sore and going into caffeine withdrawal, a desperate man.

When I got to the assembly I was glad to see they had put the coffee in the back of the room and that most of the people were facing the front where some guy in a suit was no doubt making some sort of political speech. After getting my coffee, I found an empty seat as far away from anyone as I could. I didn't want anyone trying to get me to vote for them or their pet cause. After the fella at the front of the room finished talking, others began going up to microphones at the sides of the room and they started asking questions and making comments on things about "the still suffering alcoholic" and being "grateful to this program." About halfway through my second cup of coffee it started to dawn on me that nobody was talking about how great they were, or why everyone else should vote for them. In fact, while some people were talking about why certain things should happen when others said they shouldn't happen, everyone seemed to be concerned with "carrying the message." By my third cup I found myself taking sides with people at the microphones.

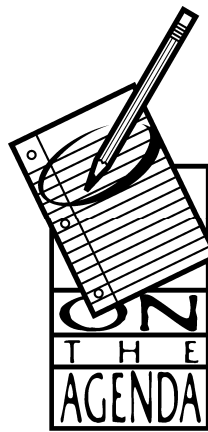
I caught up with Connie at the break and told her, "You know that big guy in the cowboy hat is kinda pushy, but he made

some good points." She smiled and chatted with me awhile about some of the things that had been discussed, and then went back to her seat when things started back up again. I decided to forego fishing that evening to see how some of this stuff they were talking about turned out.

During the course of that day I found out that there were things that did get voted on from time to time, but they were all focused around providing services to groups and drunks. I also learned that if I wanted to vote on anything that I'd have to be a GSR or on the "Committee". Well, I knew there was no way in heck I was getting on any committee by my choice or anybody else's, but I had

heard people in my home group talking about electing a GSR that summer.

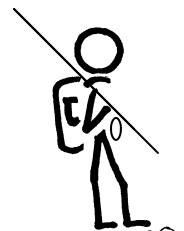
That next fall I attended my second Area Assembly as GSR for my home group and nearly voted my arm off. I even ventured to the microphone once or twice with knees so shaky my ears wiggled. After voicing my disagreement on a particular topic, the guy at the front microphone, who I had learned was called the 'Area Chair,' told me", Gee Gerry, if you feel that strongly about this issue, perhaps you might want to work up an agenda item for our next assembly so we can discuss it a bit more."



I've been told that the fish never feels it when the hook gets set in his mouth and I didn't realize that I had just been hooked until the next assembly when I had the item placed on the agenda. It was only then that I realized that when Connie had told me about the great fishing in Lewistown, she was the one doing the fishing, and I was just the sucker on the other end of that line.

After several years of making service work an integral part of my recovery, I have come to realize that, rather than taking from my life, the more I give of myself to Alcoholics Anonymous, the more my life continues to grow, often in ways I'd never dreamt it would. Prior to getting into General Service work, I thought that not drinking and going to meetings was all there was to living a sober life. I am so grateful to all those who have come before me and worked so tirelessly to make sure this program was still around when I got here. I've learned, by their examples, to express that gratitude through my service to those who are still trying to find our doors.

Gerry R. - Area Archivist



## MY BEST-WORST-FIRST EXPERIENCE

My best - worst - first experience at an assembly; Being a newcomer to the assembly proceedings, I sat close to my friend - past delegate, Bob H. for his wise council. I was always nudging him asking, "What is that about?" or "I don't understand that." Questions after question I asked until finally he told me to go to the microphone and ask that question. Nervously I went, asked the question, and a new world of service in AA opened it's loving arms to me. I have come to grow into an understanding and effectiveness of this service work.

Thank You  
Linda B - Panel 57



"I had been sober nearly 20 years before I attended my first assembly. Imagine that!"

## ME AND MY BIG MOUTH

I had been sober nearly 20 years before I attended my first assembly. Imagine that! It's not that I was not into service work, I love service work. I just had never gotten the chance to go even though I had been a GSR before. Actually, I was an alternate before I came to my first assembly and it just happen to be an election year.

So what do I do? Moved by the Spirit, when the call came for those interested in being Triangle Editor, I stood for the position and came away to serve a two year term as an Area 40 committee member! What a ride!

In service always  
Raymona C. - Panel 57

## A TIME LINE OF GROWTH IN SERVICE

It is nearly impossible for me to adequately express what service work and the Assemblies mean to me. Some of my greatest growth in recovery has been a direct result of things that have happened at Assemblies.

Late 80's early 90's egomania. The yelling and such of others scared me to death. My sponsor at the time insisted I attend. I learned AA'ers are not perfect or perfectly behaved at all times. I crossed my fingers in hope (forget prayer, I wasn't there yet).

Mid 90's wall flower, I attended. I did not participate, I never went to the microphone, I voted but I did not talk. It was easy to hide before the committees (small group, intimate in nature). I blamed my shyness for the lack of participation. Yet, I brought back information to my groups and district. I felt a 'part of'. Because of the Assembly, I developed relationships with people. Relationships of friendships, friends I still hold dear today.

Late 90's frustration. I worked in Agriculture and Spring Assembly and calving are a tight time-frame. Add to that pre-assemblies, committee meetings, Area responsibility, added communications...and I couldn't do it. It meant more involvement with others. Then I got sick, my health (or lack of) precluded me from so much. Gratefully, I had a foundation of recovery that buoyed me through the tough years when meetings and participation were lax.

New Century, new found poise. Emerging from what felt like a prison of bad health, I got back into Home Group, District and Area service work. I am surprised to learn I have matured some! I was no longer scared to go to the micro-

phone and express my opinions. I was no longer afraid to talk to 'strangers', confident enough to ask to join someone for a meal or ask them to join me. More joy came in seeing newcomers (first time assembly attendees), in seeing 'the same old people', in visiting with people. I used to NEVER chit-chat or visit. More joy came in seeing decisions made without rancor, in seeing the process work.

I am no longer a scared, emotional child in an adult body. I am so full of gratitude! Like Joe H. told me, "the steps are for my growth, the traditions for the AA group relationship, and the concepts for us to get along in the world at large, including the 'world' of Area 40."

I'm getting there!  
Hugs,  
Billi Jo D. - Panel 57



## FALL OF 07 FIRST TIMER

My first experience at Area Assembly as an alternate GSR for the Canyon Group in Columbia Falls has been a colorful and wide spread mixture of thoughts and feelings. Beginning Saturday morning, the uncomfortable mental stretching and intense feelings of overwhelm permeated my experience as the unfamiliar jargon and non-stop questions in my head demanded answers and understanding. I was grateful to my DCM and the many others who have gone before me, who generously gave of themselves in welcoming me and answering my questions. By the end of that same day, my experience had dramatically improved, shifted to an expanded sense of belonging and immense gratitude for the opportunity to participate in AA as a whole. Never before have I had the awareness of "I am responsible" for the hand of AA to be there for the next suffering alcoholic as I had at the close of Area Assembly.

**"Who would have thought? I am officially a Service Junkie!!"**

Participating in Area Assembly has jump-started my enthusiasm for being a part of the fellowship and to become actively involved in doing all I can and to reach out to the stills suffering alcoholic and all others. It also has deepened my commitment to recovery and discovery of my God-Conscious Self. It was unmistakably evident that the process and unfolding of the weekend had God all over it. It reminds me that we are all capable of being trusted servants, leading the way in AA and knowing we can not get too far off track with the guidelines of the traditions at hand. I am so grateful to be alcoholic and to find God in the most unusual places, doing the most unusual things and being with the most unusual people. Who would have thought??!!! I am officially a Service Junkie!!! A deep and heartfelt 'Thank You' to all of you who were at Area Assembly.

Jewel Lea G. - Canyon Group Alternate GSR

## "THE LIGHT CAME ON"

Hi, my name Kathy S. I've been sober since May 31, 1980. I never got involved in AA until this past year. Don't get me wrong, I went to meetings, lots and lots of meetings for years. I even made a stab at service work once. About ten years ago, Mary K., who at that time was the DCM for District 51, took me to an Assembly as a visitor. My fear of people, my self esteem, my whatever-character-defect-you-want-to-call-it kept me a prisoner. A little over a year ago, I hurt so badly emotionally that I got a new sponsor and started working in the Big Book.

Then a new group started that I hesitantly attended. I really didn't know if I would be welcomed. When I was, I decided to become a member of this group. When we had elections I was the only one at the business meeting who fit the qualifications for GSR. I really didn't know what to do. I accepted because I did not know how to say 'no'. Within a few days I started calling the Sec/Treas telling her I did not think I could be a GSR, basic fear of not being good enough. She kept saying that if I really could not do it, the group would understand but why not try for a few months.

I attended a District meeting. They welcomed me with open arms, no one said anything to cause me to feel bad about long-time sobriety and almost no service work.

Then came Spring Assembly, 2007. My life changed in a significant way during that Assembly. "The light came on", as it is said. For the first time, I really understood the three aspects of our sober life; Unity, Service and Recovery. It sounds kind of silly to say after 27 years in the program, I did not understand what it meant to be a part of this fellowship. But it's true, I did not understand how service work was a part of our primary purpose, how the service structure of AA is, how we stick together as a Society and how

we reach out to all alcoholics everywhere. Now I am excited about AA service work!

Honestly, my life has changed so much in such a short time. I no longer feel not good enough. Like I told our Sec/Treas., "You guys really did love me until I could love myself!" just like I've heard so many times in AA but never experienced until I faced my 'good-enough' fear and jumped into service work.

Thank you "Sisters in Step" (My home group), District 51 and Area 40.

In service

Kathy S. - Sisters In Step GSR



**THE AREA CHAIR SHARES SOME EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE**

I had my last drink in Wolf Point on June 24, 1989. When I arrived at my first meeting, a man named Henry was there. Henry arranged for me to have a female sponsor and she attended one meeting per week. However, Henry still took me under his wing and provided much needed guidance for being a good member of AA and staying sober.

He constantly said that we have a physical allergy coupled with a mental obsession. Long after he died, did I find out what that meant. I had gotten into a routine of arriving late (after the Serenity Prayer) and leaving as soon as they let go of my hand (being held for the Lord's Prayer).

On night, I sat next to him and he leaned into me and told me he needed to see me after the meeting. I knew he was going to tell me that I didn't belong in AA which in my mind was both good and bad. Good because I no longer needed to go to these meetings and bad because if this

isn't what's wrong with me, then what is?

I was wrong on both counts. He told me I was missing out on a big part of AA - the Fellowship. He told me to stay after and wash the coffee pot. I started attending more meetings.

Henry continued to make suggestions like go to the Fall and Spring Round - Ups and the Assembly. I did what he said for some reason and have gone to many Round Ups and Assemblies.

He was once the Area Chair. I hope Henry would be proud that I have continued to work my way down the AA structure. More importantly, I hope that I can help someone the way Henry helped me.

Thanks for letting me serve.  
Carole B - Panel 57

“He told me I was missing out on a big part of AA - the Fellowship. “

**UPCOMING EVENTS 2007**

**SEPT 28 - 30  
TRUDGING THE ROAD  
OF HAPPY DESTINY**  
  
**BEST WESTERN  
HERITAGE INN  
GREAT FALLS, MT**

**OCT 5 - 7  
PUTTING SOBRIETY FIRST  
HAVRE MINI CONFERENCE -  
DISTRICT IV HRDC  
HAVRE, MT**

**OCT 13  
HOW GROUP  
KEYS TO UNITY  
SPEAKER EVENT  
HOPE LUTHERAN  
CHURCH  
210 S GRAND  
BOZEMAN, MT**

**OCT 13  
LAST CHANCE  
RECOVERY  
GROUP  
COMMON GROUND  
BIRTHDAY  
CELEBRATION  
FIRST CHRISTIAN  
CHURCH  
311 POWER STR.  
HELENA, MT**



**OCT 20  
MCDC ORIENTATION  
5:00 PM  
CONTACT  
GEOFF D. FOR  
LOCATION**

**OCT 20 & 21  
FALL REFRESHER  
FAIR GROUNDS -  
KALISPELL, MT**

**OCT 26 - 28 WOMEN'S  
RECOVERY WEEKEND  
FLATHEAD LUTHERAN  
CHURCH CAMP  
LAKESIDE, MT**

**NOV 17  
FALL FESTIVAL  
COMMUNITY HALL  
SAVAGE, MT  
3:00 DOOR OPENS**

**UPCOMING EVENTS 2008**

**APRIL 5 - 2008  
BRIDGING THE  
GAP  
CORRECTIONS/  
TREATMENT  
WORKSHOP  
FIRST PRESBYTE-  
RIAN CHURCH  
HELENA, MT**

**SEPT 26 - 28,  
2008  
FALL ROUNDUP  
WILLING TO GO  
TO ANY LENGTH  
RED LION HOTEL  
KALISPELL, MT**





THIS SUMMER WE LOST SOME GOOD FRIENDS. SOME TO THIS ILLNESS, OTHERS TO DISEASE, OTHERS TO TRAGIC MISFORTUNE. LET US TAKE A MOMENT TO REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US AND REJOICE IN THOSE THAT DIED SOBER.

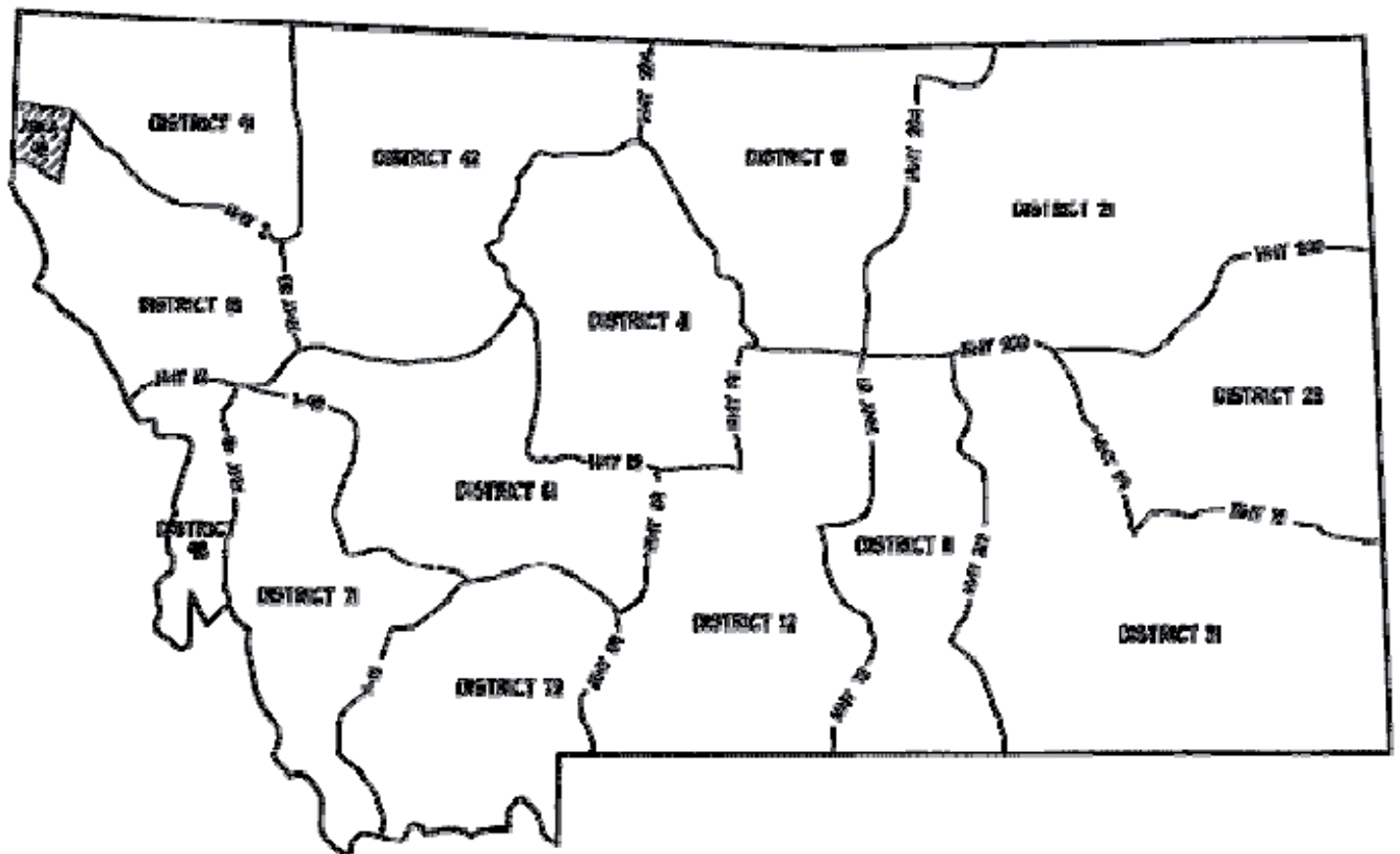
**Sara June C. of Columbia Falls, MT**

**Stephanie W. of Columbia Falls, MT**

**Susan G. of Whitelish, MT**

**Diane A. of Whitelish, MT**

**Susan S. of Helena, MT**



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