

Triangle

Volume 16 Issue 7

Area 40's Newsletter

November 2008

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Making Good on Our Word: Area 40's Group Conscience and the 7th Tradition

Hi everyone, my name is Curt and I'm an alcoholic. I also have had the privilege of serving as your Area 40 Treasurer for the past two years. Area service is a fantastic opportunity to give back to AA. I encourage all of you to consider participating in general service at the group, district, or area level.

One of my last actions as your current Area Treasurer is to issue a challenge to all the members and groups of Area 40. We all acted together at the Fall Assembly this past September to approve an ambitious budget. Now our challenge is to make good on our word and fund our budget with our Seventh Tradition and our group splits to Area 40.

In each of the past two years and again for 2009, we have adopted an Area budget of over \$30,000. In 2007, group contributions came up short of actual expenses by over \$5,000. In 2008, I estimate that group contributions will nearly match our actual expenses. That would be good news except that we've only received and spent \$23,000 of a \$30,000 budget. It means Area 40 committee chairs cut back on their activities when they learned that group contributions were not keeping up with our budget. We have not done all the work that we decided was important when we approved our 2008 budget.

In September, our Area 40 group conscience agreed on a budget of \$30,939. In each of the past years, a challenge has been put out to the Fellowship – if we want to do all of this work for the good of AA, then we must back up our wishes by fully funding our budget. Given our shortfall in 2008, I am issuing the challenge again.

Remember, money is a resource, a means to an end, a way to put our group conscience and AA's Twelfth Step into action. When we view money more as a useful tool and less as an emotional trigger, we alcoholics seem to behave more sensibly when faced with financial decisions. It often takes money to do what we decide is important to do for the good of AA.

Among the many great lessons I have learned in general service is to trust in our group conscience. The group conscience of AA is at work in our home groups, our district meetings, our Area Assemblies, and at the General Service Conference in New York. When we members inform ourselves about the issues facing our Fellowship, we can trust that God will work through us and through our collective decision making process.

The annual budget that we discuss and adopt at our Fall Assemblies is a powerful example of our group conscience at work. Our budget is the tangible expression of the priorities set by all of the groups and members of the Area. There is no clearer representation of what our Area believes is important to further our Twelfth Step work.

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Making Good on our Word Continued.....

Please consider your part in the group conscience that determined our goals for the Area in 2009. Let's make good on our word, do our part to put our collective priorities into action, and follow through with a tangible expression of our group conscience – by contributing to Area 40 to fully fund our budget.

As always, thank you for letting me serve. I look forward to seeing you all around the state at AA meetings and events as we all try to pass on what's been so freely given to us.

Toll Free Number Update

Editor's Note: Sean B., Curt K., and the 2007-2008 PI Committee have done an incredible amount of behind the scenes work. Many, many thanks to these individuals for helping this process along.

Greetings, Area 40.

Since the last assembly, several folks have been working to hammer out many of the difficult details surrounding our statewide 800# service (888-607-2000). Curt K., Area 40 Treasurer, and I have been meeting with Debra Rogers (debra.rogers@answernet.com) at AnswerNet via conference call the past few weeks to hammer out billing, service and tracking issues. Due to an emergency that took Debra out of the office we are not able to provide exact billing information at this time but anticipate an accurate and timely billing cycle next month, God willing.

Regarding the web portion of the 800#, the Area 40 Webmaster, Alex M., has completed the web interface on aa-montana.org. This is only accessible to the AnswerNet answering service and your DCM or local District hot-line chair.

Please contact Alex at webmaster@aa-montana.org to get your District's user name and password so you can update your local 800# contact list. To date only District 51 - Havre has updated their AA contact list since the Fall Assembly.

Tim M., the incumbent Area 40 PI chair, has been enthusiastically embracing your Area's public information work and hopes to hit the ground running January 1. If Tim or I can be of additional assistance, please write to pi@aa-montana.com and we'll get right back to you.

Yours in service,

Sean B.
Area 40 PI Chair

2009-2010 Area Committee Election Results

Delegate – Carole B. from Billings

Area Chair/Alternate Delegate – Terry S. from Helena

Treasurer – Linda B. from Billings

Secretary – April A. from Kalispell

Archives – Connie R. from Clancy

Corrections – Mary S. from Great Falls

Cooperation with Professional Community - Virginia R. from Shepherd

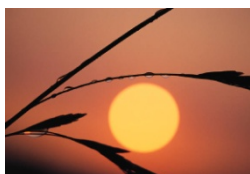
Grapevine – Rich K. from Billings

Literature – Lori F. from Ennis

Public Information – Tim M. from Helena

Treatment – Paula H. from Missoula

Triangle – The person elected has stepped down and the process for finding a replacement is underway in accordance with the Area's Policies and Procedures.



HOW THE “RESPONSIBILITY DECLARATION” BECAME A PART OF A.A.

When I first began to research the *Responsibility Declaration*, I learned that it became a regular part of the Grapevine, appearing in each issue, since in 1982. I went back in time from 1982 . . .

I learned there have been two Advisory Actions from the General Service Conference in regards to the *Responsibility Declaration* since it was introduced. The second one was in 1977 when the conference recommended that “the *Declaration of Responsibility* not be changed as is was made at the 1965 Convention in Toronto.” In 1971 the Conference report stated that, “The Literature Committee, following the general feeling of the conference, reaffirm both the spirit and the wording of the “*I am Responsible*” Declaration.

Let's go back to 1965 and find out what was happening in AA at that time.

In the December 1965 issue of the Grapevine there was an article written by Bill W. entitled; “*The Responsibility Statement is Discussed.*” In reference to the convention, Bill wrote: “Two major thoughts stood out in the remarks of the many speakers (in Toronto). . . The first was admiration and gratitude for AA’s startling success in sobering up hundreds of thousands of lost-cause drunks. The other was concern that this success . . . would not lead us to any complacency about the size of the job still to be done.” (GV 12/89 Vol 46 #7)

At the convention, in his talk to the over 10,000 in attendance, Bill stressed the need for cooperation with all who work in the problem of alcoholism. He said, “Too often we have depreciated and even derided these projects of our friends just because we do not always see eye to eye with them. We should very seriously ask ourselves how many alcoholics have gone on drinking simply because we have failed to cooperate in good spirit with these many agencies. No alcoholic should go mad or die simply because he did not come straight to AA in the beginning. The first concern of AA members should be with problem drinkers the movement is still unable to reach.”

Bill estimated that there were 20 million alcoholics in the world, five million in the US alone (in 1965). Bill continued, “Some cannot be reached because they are not hurt enough, others because they are hurt too much. Many sufferers have mental and emotional complications that seem to foreclose their chances. Yet it would be conservative to estimate that at any particular time there are 4 million alcoholics in the world who are able, ready, and willing to get well if only they knew how. When we remember that in the 30 years of AA existence, we have reached less than 10% of those who might have been willing to approach us, we begin to get an idea of the immensity of our task and of the responsibilities with which we will always be confronted.”

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Calendar of Events

- November 22 – Attitude of Gratitude – Helena
- December 5-6 – First Saturday – Billings
- February 1 – Spring Assembly Agenda Items due – chair@aa-montana.org
- February 27-March 1, 2009 – West Central Region AA Service Conference – Casper, WY
- April 18-19, 2009 – Spring Assembly – Lewistown
- April 24-26, 2009 – Spring Round Up – Missoula
- April 25-May 2, 2009 – General Service Conference – New York
- July 1-4, 2010 – International AA Convention – San Antonio, TX

Want an event included? Email calendar@aa-montana.org

www.aamontana.org

Email Address of the Area 40 Committee

Delegate - delegate@aa-montana.org
 Chair - chair@aa-montana.org
 Treasurer - treasurer@aa-montana.org
 Secretary - secretary@aa-montana.org
 Archives - archives@aa-montana.org
 CPC - cpc@aa-montana.org
 Corrections - corrections@aa-montana.org
 Grapevine - grapevine@aa-montana.org
 Literature - literature@aa-montana.org
 Public Information - pi@aa-montana.org
 Treatment - treatment@aa-montana.org
 Triangle - triangle@aa-montana.org
 Advisor - advisor@aa-montana.org
 Archivist - archivist@aa-montana.org
 Webmaster - webmaster@aa-montana.org
 DCM District 11 - DCM11@aa-montana.org
 DCM District 12 - DCM12@aa-montana.org
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 DCM District 31 - DCM31@aa-montana.org
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 DCM District 42 - DCM42@aa-montana.org
 DCM District 51 - DCM51@aa-montana.org
 DCM District 61 - DCM61@aa-montana.org
 DCM District 71 - DCM71@aa-montana.org
 DCM District 72 - DCM72@aa-montana.org
 DCM District 81 - DCM81@aa-montana.org
 DCM District 91 - DCM91@aa-montana.org
 DCM District 93 - DCM93@aa-montana.org

HOW THE “RESPONSIBILITY DECLARATION” BECAME A PART OF A.A. Continued...

The theme of that upcoming 1965 convention had been decided. A statement was wanted that would be emotionally gripping to AA's without imposing any 'musts' on them. Al S. from Florida, former trustee, former Grapevine editor, tried numerous drafts using 'we,' but none were quite right. Then it came to Al, share your personal experience; say "I"; then the statement becomes a matter of personal choice; then it talks about accountability without regulating duty.

In the souvenir book written for the 1965 convention, Dr. Jack Norris wrote: "We must remember that AA will continue strong only so long as each of us freely and happily gives it away to another person, only as each of us takes our fair share of responsibility for sponsorship of those who still suffer, for the growth and integrity of our Group, for our (District and Area) activities, and for AA as a whole. It is in taking responsibility that real freedom and the enduring satisfactions of life are found. AA has given us the power to choose – to drink or not to drink – and in doing so has given us the freedom to be responsible for ourselves. As we become responsible for ourselves, we are free to be responsible for our share in AA, and unless we happily accept this responsibility we lose AA.

I would like to pause here in my history lesson. I would like to emphasize Bill and Dr. Norris' messages. In essence, Dr. Norris said that AA has given us the freedom to be or to become responsible. With freedom **in** AA comes responsibility **to** AA. Bill wrote that the first responsibility of AA members should be with problem drinkers. Dr. Norris continued that with his statement of our responsibility to our Group, for our (District and Area) activities, and for AA as a whole eluding that responsibility is to do whatever is needed within the fellowship.

Back to history . . .

I would like you to pause and close your eyes for a moment. Imagine the feeling of hearing over 10,000 AA's reciting for the first time: "I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."

BilliJo D.
Area Grapevine Chair

Let's Make the Triangle Self-Supporting

Greetings Fellow Triangle subscribers,

It was such a pleasure serving as your Triangle Editor. I am missing it already. However, one thing that continued to stick in my mind during my service to the Area was the fact that the Triangle is not self-supporting through our own contributions. I made many efforts to request that all the groups in the area support the publication by keeping their subscriptions current. To no avail I am afraid. I realize also that there are some groups unable to send contributions due to low 7th tradition intake. There are many groups who fit the other end of the spectrum however and it would not be so difficult to help those less fortunate in paying for subscriptions.

The cost of the subscription to each group is only \$10 per year and if all the groups in the area that were able paid this, the cost to publish the Triangle would easily be self supporting. I think that it's wonderful that each group receive the publication regardless of subscription status (because of Past Actions of the Assembly) but I do feel it would be much better to have all of those able paying for their subscriptions. Area 40 would also be better able to meet its budget in other areas by diverting those funds that are currently going to support the publication of the Triangle.

This being said, I bid you all a fond farewell as your Triangle Editor officially and ask your love and tolerance with the next editor over the next few years.

In Love and Service

Raymona K.
Triangle Editor

Updating Group Information

A few years ago, the General Service Office implemented a database of those serving Alcoholics Anonymous in the United States and Canada. The database is called Fellowship New Vision. In Area 40, the Area Secretary is the Registrar.

The advantage of this database is that the data is that it is real-time. GSO and the Area Secretary has at their finger-tips up-to-date information for mailings or means of contact.

Area 40 is near the end of its current rotation and it is vital to keep your group's information as current as possible. Please send updated information to secretary@aa-montana.org.

Also, please copy the Triangle Editor to assure your group's issue of the Triangle continues to be received (triangle@aa-montana.org).



New General Service Representatives

If you have recently been elected as your group's General Service Representative, a few things may help you serve your group.

1. Read the Group Pamphlet. It is one of the most helpful service pieces. You can find it on GSO's website aa.org.
2. Read the GSR Pamphlet. Also at aa.org.
3. Make every effort to attend a GSR School. Talk to your district about conducting such an event