

The Triangle

Volume 17, Issue 1

January 2009

Area 40 Newsletter

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Your Delegate's Opening Thoughts

Greetings Area 40! Congratulations to all new trusted servants – General Service Representatives (GSR), District Committee Members (DCM), and Area Committee Members. You are privileged to take on one of the most important tasks in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Just before Thanksgiving, I went to Missoula to visit with Andrew, our Area Advisor about serving Area 40 as Delegate. Andrew gave me an assignment – re-read the Service Manual and AA Comes of Age. I would encourage you to read or re-read these pieces as well. I am having an experience with the Service Manual I have had with other pieces of AA literature – discovering I missed much the first time. There's a lot of good stuff in there.

This leads me to my charge for you over the next two years. My job is to carry the collective conscience of the groups within Area 40 to the General Service Conference and to do what is best for AA as a whole. You come here from your groups and districts in Area 40 and I rely on you to help them communicate with me and me to communicate with them.

Concept I states that the ultimate authority for AA resides with the Fellowship. The Fellowship communicates their conscience regarding issues in their groups to their GSR. The GSR communicates his or her group's conscience to the DCM and Delegate. Good communication among the GSR, DCM, and Delegate assures that we are honoring Concept I.

I enthusiastically encourage each district to conduct a GSR school. In the previous years, the Past Delegates and other past Area 40 servants have done a great job assisting with these schools. If you need information on GSR schools, please contact me at delegate@aa-montana.org.

The West Central Region AA Service Conference is February 27 – March 1 in Casper, Wyoming. The flyer can be downloaded from www.aa-montana.org. The hotel only has rooms available within the block so be sure to mention the conference when making reservations. Being in Wyoming, the Service Conference is the closest to Area 40 until we host it in 2012. The Service Conference is jam packed with service experience, strength, and hope.

Last but certainly not least, thanks to all those who have just rotated out of service to Area 40. Scott W. just rotated out as Area Advisor. Scott planned the Area Workshops in each quadrant of the State. Andrew W. just rotated out as our Delegate. Andrew is a fine example of Alcoholics Anonymous and leaves huge shoes for me to fill. Andrew's wife, Sherry also worked very hard the last two years to allow Andrew to serve us so well. Until the very last minute of the 2007-2008 rotation, Sean B. and Curt K. worked diligently on the Area's toll free number.

Please remember, I am YOUR Delegate. I am honored to serve all of you in Area 40. Contact me if you have any questions, concerns, comments, or would just like to visit. Send me an email at delegate@aa-montana.org or see my contact information on page 5 of this newsletter.

Yours in Love and Service, Carole B., Panel 59 Delegate

From Your Editor

Hi Everyone. My name is Sharon; I am your Triangle Editor for 2009- 2010.

How did that happen? You ask. Yes, you did elect someone else at the fall assembly. Cleve regrettably resigned for personal reasons. When I was asked, I said I would be willing. It was quite a process for me to let God decide what I was supposed to do, and here I am!

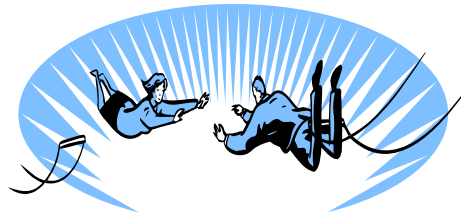
In this issue you'll find thoughts from our incoming officers and committee chairs, parting comments from outgoing servants, a "Triangle Asks" article "If I knew then what I know now...", and an excerpt from the "Concepts Checklist", a

(Continued on page 7)

Growing Trusted Servants

I first heard it from Robbie S., "Our trusted servants don't just appear. We have to grow them, nurture them and encourage them." She usually said it at the election Assembly, referring both to selection (election) of our trusted servants and to education of our trusted servants with job descriptions, policies, procedures and such tools as GSR schools.

There is another aspect to "growing" our trusted servants, and that is letting them know what we, the individual members, the groups and the districts, think and feel—what our concerns and questions are about particular items of service business.



We are embarking upon a new rotation, with folks in new service positions and new folks in service positions. Training and familiarization are very important, but equally important is input from the Fellowship.

For example, our past delegate, Andrew W., has asked us to share with him our thoughts and concerns about "the benefits and liabilities, both spiritual and practical, of fully funding G.S.O. Services to the Fellowship (G.S.O. Functional expenses) by the voluntary contributions of A.A. members and groups," by January 14, 2009. At the 2008 General Service Conference, an Advisory Action was adopted that the trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee gather input from the Fellowship on this precise issue, to be forwarded to the 2009 Conference Committee on

Finance. Andrew and probably our incoming delegate, Carole B., too, are looking to us to provide this information. Even if you miss the deadline, share your information anyway. This information is also a topic for the February issue; see page 7.

Our service structure is a good one, but it only works if we, the members of the Fellowship, participate and share our thoughts, feelings and concerns with our trusted servants. We are the ones who make the decisions. We are the ones who select our trusted servants. We are the ones who become our trusted servants. We are the ones who can tell our trusted servants what we believe.

Let's all step up to the plate and share, in our groups and in our districts, not just on this finance issue but on all service and recovery matters. Let's make sure that our trusted servants have good information about what we want and how we feel. Don't just tell your G.S.R., "We trust you." Wrestle with the issues at the group level. Get the background information, ask the questions, and share an informed group conscience with your G.S.R., to be carried to district and on to Area. There is no "them" out there making decisions for Alcoholics Anonymous. We are the "them"—it's us! Share your own concerns and questions with your group and help your group's voice be heard. Speak up!

Terry S., 2009-10 Area Chair

Incoming CPC Chair

Hello everyone in Area 40. I am the incoming CPC chair and quite excited about my new Area position. I am fortunate to have been active in service work since my first year of sobriety and the CPC committee has been one of my favorites. I hope to receive many requests to come visit your districts. I would be especially happy to visit those of you who are located by ski hills during this ski season!

Some of the things I have participated in during my experiences with CPC are luncheons with professionals, setting up and manning AA information booths at professional conferences, and holding AA information talks. I have had the pleasure of working with social workers and teachers, people in law enforcement and the judicial system, clergy and medical professionals.

Please contact me with suggestions, questions, etc.

Yours in love and service, Virginia R.



Incoming Treatment Chair

When I agreed to be elected DCM two years ago "It was with fear and trepidation." The DCM position taught me how beneficial service beyond the group level is to my own program. Hopefully, I was of service to the District and my fellows.

Today I am VERY excited about my new position, that of Treatment Chair for Area 40. My wish is to be of service to District Treatment Chairs, DCMs, and GSRs around the state. I will get to learn about treatment in the state, AA's function in that treatment, and myself. Another reason I look forward to this service is because of the lift it gives me every time I attend Area Assembly. Associating with others who are excited about our third legacy, service, shows me how it works! The members of the District 81 committee have also shown so much enthusiasm! Service has grown in importance in my life over the past several years. I hope it continues to grow.

Paula H., Incoming Treatment Committee Chair

From Our Treasurer



Hello, my name is Linda and I am an alcoholic. I will serve as your Area Treasurer for the next two year rotation. I am anxious to begin the next service position that my Higher Power has so graciously allowed me to do. I can tell you that fear can still get a foothold in my mind, saying, "What do you think you're doing, you're not an accountant. Don't screw it up!" I've learned that those thoughts just need a good dose of AA and the reminder that it is a WE program. This applies to every area of my life. I have learned that from all of you. So, for the upcoming service position, I will show up and I will ask God to work through me. I'm willing and I thank all of you for another opportunity to be of service. Linda B.

Parting Comments

Past Delegate. In thinking about writing my last article for the Triangle as delegate, the first thing that came to mind was gratitude. Yes, it is the season of gratitude meetings but that is not what brought gratitude to my mind. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to be of service, around Montana and at the General Service Conference, the last two years. It has been a privilege, an education, and a lot of fun. I'm grateful to Area 40 for allowing me this opportunity to serve.

Some people have asked me what I'm going to do with all my time once I'm no longer delegate? I think that there is always something to do in service,

I'll try and make sure we don't run out of coffee at the assemblies



at work, and in enjoying life. At home, I'm sure my wife will appreciate that the lawn will be mowed in a more timely fashion next summer.

We'll have plenty of opportunities to take our dog, Hugo, on hikes across Montana. At work, there's always more to do. For service, I'll be rotating in as Area 40 Advisor. I like to joke that the main responsibility of Area Advisor is keeping an eye on the coffee at Area Assemblies. While that is one of the responsibilities of the Area Advisor, I'll also be ready to be of service to the Delegate and Area Chair, as they see fit. I'll also miss fewer meetings at my home group.

I recently had an opportunity to spend a little time with Carole, the incoming delegate for Area 40. We talked about being delegate for Area 40 and what she can expect over the next two years. I remember the mix of thoughts I had two years ago just before I rotated in as delegate, from "What were we thinking, electing me as delegate?" to "When can we get started?" Well, I can tell you that it does start fast in January. Carole will soon have her hands full of mailings from GSO, background material, the West Central Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Conference, the Spring Assembly, the General Service Conference, and commitments across Area 40. Two years seemed like an eternity in early sobriety and now the last two years seem to have flown by.

I remain an optimist about the future of Alcoholics Anonymous. I think we need to individually keep passing on what was freely given to us and collectively keep our focus on the Traditions and Concepts. In this vein, I am reminded of a quote from Bill W. in one of his last recorded talks: "A mighty assurance for A.A.'s future, that indeed, it will go on for so long as God wants us."

I wish Carole and the new Area 40 Committee all the best over this new rotation. I'll be right there to help them out with anything they ask. And I'll try and make sure we don't run out of coffee at the assemblies.

Yours in love and service, Andrew W.

Outgoing Corrections Chair. My name is Bill and I am an alcoholic. I am much honored to have served as your area corrections chair on the 2007-2008 rotation. I must confess that was not my intention. I recall the long drive up to the 2006 election assembly when my good friend Sean B. asked me if I was going to stand for a position and I replied, "No, No, No! Not me". I also recall the words that rang out as I caromed around the literature in the back of the room, "You better think about what you are doing here!", spoken by man I regard as a great voice in Area 40, Bob H. No one at all had stood for the position of Area Corrections Chair. Sean and I talked during the break about the conscience that he and I had suddenly developed. I decided to do something I had been watching others do throughout my sobriety and had tried, against my better judgment, to do myself on occasion. I told Sean I would probably stand and if I did he would have to. Well as the room started to fill back up I thought to myself, "I hope you know what you are doing". I didn't, but I stood anyway, and the rest is now as they say "history".

I got to spend the next two years traveling the state with my friend Sean and I have been so amazed at the fun it has been. As with everything in my AA experience, I would have sold myself short doing it my way.

There are small, yet very significant things that have been added to me as the result of being willing (with a small nudge), and having an open mind. I would say that you have taught me a lot once again and the main thing I have learned is that we all have our ideas. I heard someone share last night at our meeting in Bozeman, "An alcoholic will dare cross the street to listen, but will surely travel a long distance to speak". I have found this in the area workshops we held and the other events I was asked to participate in. It is with extreme difficulty that we become "good listeners", overcoming our inability to hear and drowning out the extreme importance of our selfishness and self centeredness. To be a "good" listener is something I have always battled with. I want to share my ideas. I would ask us to please try to pay



No, No, No! Not me!

close attention to each other.

I have seen the problem we face with the friends of AA who have had a huge impact in our history and can into the future. Our ability to carry the message that brings alcoholics back from the gates of insanity and death is a huge opportunity to pass on something so much greater than ourselves. The legacy we leave behind us as members of an altruistic movement now growing up among us is a wonderful thing to be apart of and has a lasting footprint into the future. Our ability to clearly communicate our God consciousness with those who have little or no understanding of what we do is the key to the shackles that hold the fellowship back from greater progress. Together through careful consideration, thoughtful prayer and due diligence our Father may share with each of us the gifts of participation in his legacy.

Thank you for the "nudges" that have helped me to be a better servant and listener!

Outgoing Corrections Chair-Bill E.

Outgoing Literature Chair. Hello my name is Linda and I am an alcoholic. I am rotating on from the Literature chair. I have completed and fulfilled my 2 year term and have given a little back in service to the fellowship. I truly enjoyed our committee and the work we contributed to these last two years. I have a great love for all the literature available to our fellowship. Whenever I am stumped by a situation or a problem, I go



to our writings for the experience and strength of those before me. I truly feel a connectedness to Alcoholics Anonymous by reading our history and am humbled when I can point someone in the right direction through the research and readings that our literature affords us. I truly appreciate the Conference-approved process that keeps our message true.

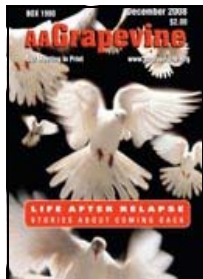
I have done a thorough housecleaning of the literature displays and have sent many items to our Area Archives. I encourage all of us to keep the legacy of Alcoholics Anonymous intact and we can do that by keeping our Area 40 history alive and written down so that future AA'ers will find what we are enjoying today.

Please pass it on! Thank you for allowing me to be your humble servant. Linda B.

Outgoing GrapeVine Chair. I learned two valuable things serving as Grapevine Chair. One, persistence and patience pays. Bowing to the (good

(Parting Comments Continued from page 3)

natured) harassment from those who I encouraged to write for the Grapevine, I submitted an article every month since the spring Assembly. The Grapevine editorial board accepted my article for the December 2009 issue. It was cool that on the last month as Grapevine chair, I was rewarded with publication in our Fellowship's journal. Gratefully Loren B. warned me about the editing. My ego reacted to the change in my sobriety date in the published article, but then I thought, *well, maybe I act as though I have fourteen years of sobriety instead of eighteen—my first four years of sobriety sucked before I took the Steps*. Regardless, it is a honor to be published in our meeting in print.



Second, self-support in all my affairs. For eighteen years I have faithfully read the Grapevine. Old issues (were) are always available. My previous homegroup subscribed and I read those diligently. But never once did I give any thought of self-support in regards to the Grapevine — until this autumn. For the first time in my sobriety, I now have a paid subscription in my name. Now I can give away my old issues to others.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have served as your Grapevine Chair. It has been a wonderful rotation.

The Triangle Asks

Enjoy the privilege to serve, stop being so unbelievably self-centered, get rid of the fear. Avoid embarrassment at your business meeting by taking good notes, show up on time with a smile, Alcoholics Anonymous. Kelley P., Missoula

Try not to take yourself too seriously.

Have a thick skin — no matter how hard you try, there will always be someone who doesn't agree! Be a true guardian of the Traditions — if your group/district/area is taking an action in conflict with the Traditions, ask them why. Be prepared to be unpopular as a result. Don't be afraid to ask difficult questions. Know and be able to explain the difference between majority rule and an informed group conscience. Put reports in writing. Keep an open mind; don't be afraid of change. Service brings many opportunities for spiritual growth (aka dealing with not getting your own way), but the benefits are great. Lori F., Ennis

I want to thank the fantastic people who serve on the Grapevine committee, and all of the group and district GVRs as well as others who continue to promote our 5th Tradition through sharing Grapevine literature. Rich will do a great job as Grapevine chair during the next rotation. He can wear the purple now, I will go back to wearing other colors. I look forward to my next service position as District 51 DCM and seeing many of you at Assemblies and Round-ups.

Thank you and God bless. Hugs, Billjo D.

Area Advisor. Greetings and Happy New & Sober Year to everyone in this wonderful Fellowship off AA.

With the conclusion of 2008, I saw my service career to Area 40 come to a sunset. I look back over the past years of service to Area 40 with gratitude and fond memories of so many events that changed my life. I think back to my first Assembly in 1991, as a guest, with no idea of what was taking place but a seed of interest was planted within me as to the proceedings that were going on in that Assembly room. I continued to attend Assemblies and started my path down the service structure. As I continued down the service structure of Alcoholics Anonymous, the level of responsibility and accountability increased at a comparative rate.

As I progressed down that structure, I learned a few things. One of them was neither credit nor gratitude can be apportioned amongst any service worker, so much to this group, so much to that. All are essential

regardless of rank or title. And for that matter, the most important title in Alcoholics Anonymous is one we rarely speak of at all and that of course is AA member. The principle of anonymity comes alive as we do not leave our name on our accomplishments but our accomplishments become a part of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous as we perform the service work placed before us.

As I rotate on, I find ample opportunity to be service home at my home District, serving the CPC-PI committee. I am one of the worker bees, filling literature racks and being of service. I look forward to continuing on in service to this fantastic way of life answering the request for my time with yes. I hope and pray that it be God's will that I continue to receive His many blessings. Scott W.

District 51 DCM. District 51 has been good for me and my sobriety. Thanks to those who stood beside me and helped carry the message of AA. The past two years helped me develop a deeper sense of responsibility to those still out there and to those who are struggling. Although all might not agree, the Big Book is the guiding light to serenity and peace. I've found that most shortcuts and resting on my laurels are half measures and don't work for me. My life working the steps is worth all the riches in the world; putting aside the 12 steps leads to discontentment, misery, and drunk. I pray and hope that all my friends and family in AA find Peace in the New Year. Thank you for allowing me to be a trusted servant.

Doug M., Havre

If you knew then what you know now, what advice would you give yourself for your new service position?

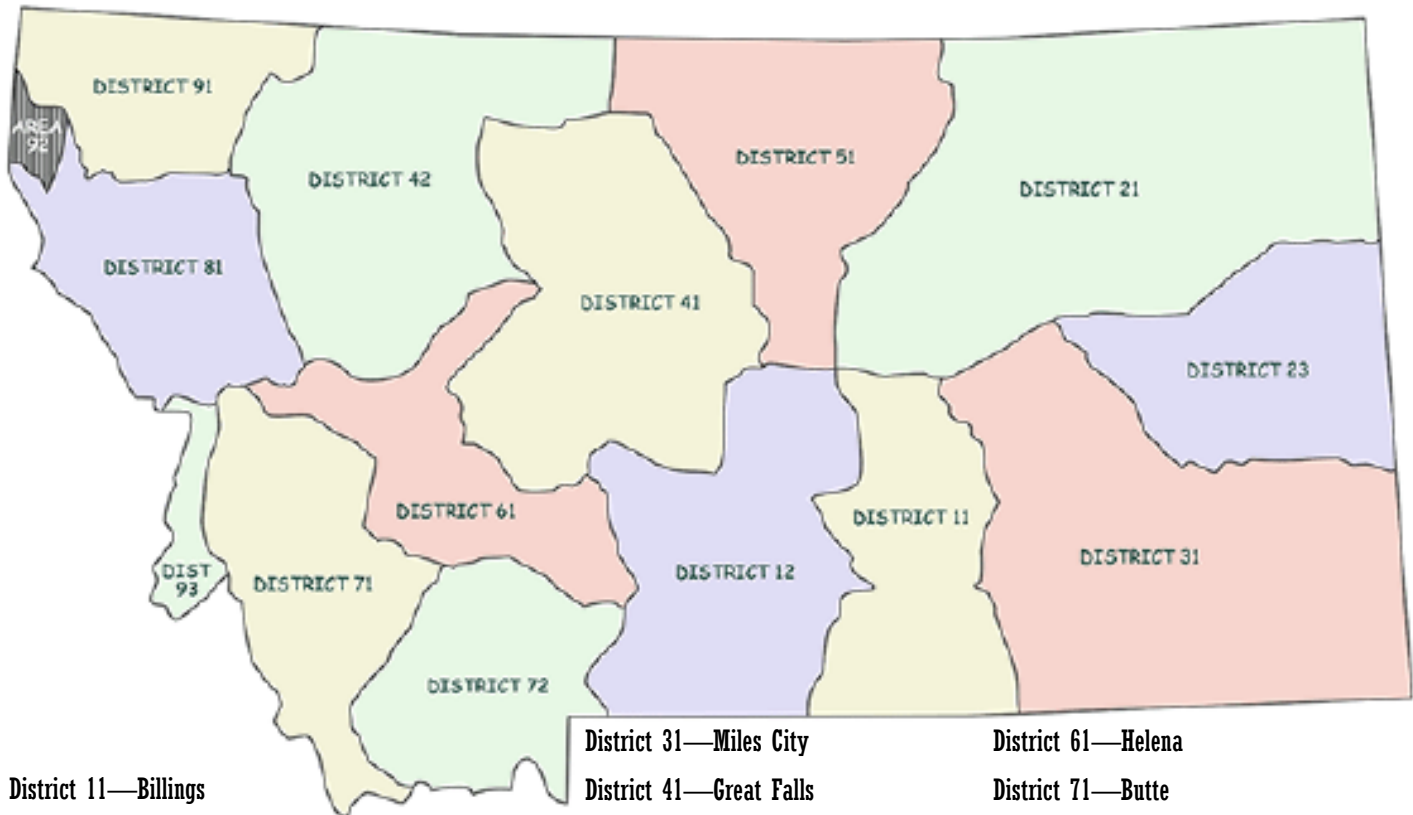
The idea of talking about AA stuff with a bunch of total strangers in some little town didn't appeal to me as I prepared for my first Area Assembly. However, I found a wealth of knowledge, a place to meet brilliant, incredible people and a fantastic chance to give back. Being of service to my home group is a privilege. It is nice to be trusted. Johnny B., Billings

"Service work is at the core of my sobriety". I am truly grateful to my Higher Power and my district for giving me the opportunity to serve and become a useful member of society. It wasn't that long ago when I was a hopeless and useless drunk. But God had other plans for me and He used Alcoholics Anonymous to change and save my life. I also learned that gratitude is an action and I show it by serving others, especially alcoholics. Happy New Year!! Paul S., Helena

Learn how to be an effective "trusted servant": bring issues for discussion from District meetings to our home group business meetings; consider all viewpoints expressed during our business meetings; bring our group conscience to District meetings.

As a GSR-in-training: read the service manual; study the AA service structure, traditions and concepts; learn what media is available from GSO; brainstorm ways to increase our group's contributions to GSO so that AA can fulfill its goal of being fully self-supporting; become a better listener and communicator; become a transparent and effective channel between my home group and AA as a whole.

Service is such a great opportunity to grow in AA and beyond, and I am grateful for this opportunity to serve! Ken G., Bozeman



District 11—Billings

District 12—Laurel

District 21—Wolf Point/Glasgow

District 31—Miles City

District 41—Great Falls

District 42—Cut Bank, Shelby, Choteau

District 51—Havre

District 61—Helena

District 71—Butte

District 72—Bozeman

District 81—Missoula

District 91—Kalispell, Whitefish, Eureka

District 93—Bitterroot Valley

Calendar of Events

- **DEERLODGE**—Prison Orientation—January 24, 2009—corrections@aa-montana.org
- **BUTTE**—District 71 CPC Luncheon—January 31, 2009
- **AREA 40**—Spring Assembly Agenda Items Due—February 1, 2009
- **KALISPELL**—Into Action Weekend--February 20-21, 2009
- **JOLIET**—Mid-Winter Social—February 21, 2009
- **CASPER, WY**—West Central Region Service Conference—February 27- March 1, 2009
- **LEWISTOWN**—Spring Assembly—April 18-19, 2009
- **MISSOULA**—Spring Roundup—April 24-26, 2009
- **NEW YORK CITY**—59th General Service Conference
- **ST CLOUD, MN**—West Central Regional Forum—September 11-13, 2009
- **LEWISTOWN**—Fall Assembly—September 18-19, 2009
- **BOZEMAN**—Fall Roundup—October 2-4, 2009
- **SAN ANTONIO, TX**—A.A.'s 75th Birthday Party—July 1-4, 2010

If you would like your event listed here, please email the editor at Triangle@aa-montana.org or send it to PO Box 542, Bozeman, MT 59771

Area 40 Officers and Committee Chairs 2009-2010

POSITION	NAME	CITY	EMAIL
Delegate	Carole B.	Billings	delegate@aa-montana.org
Area Chair/Alt Delegate	Terry S.	Helena	chair@aa-montana.org
Secretary	April A.	Kalispell	secretary@aa-montana.org
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91	Libbie L.	Kalispell	dcm91@aa-montana.org
93	Eric D.	Lolo	dcm93@aa-montana.org
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Archivist	Gerry R.	Clancy	archivist@aa-montana.org
Webmaster	Alex M.	Helena	webmaster@aa-montana.org



(From the Editor continued from page 1)

General Service Office service piece. You will also see the Area 40 District map, a calendar of events and a contact list for the area committee officers and chairs. You will notice that personal e-mail addresses appear on the list; you can also use the Area 40 e-mail addresses referenced in the articles and found on the Area website aa-montana.org.

Please remember to check the line above your address to see if your subscription is expired and use the form on page 8 for your renewal.

I am afraid, which is always my first reaction to change, but extremely grateful for the opportunity to serve. I greatly appreciate all the encouragement and help that I have received so far from both outgoing and incoming committee members and GSR's and other AA members and friends.

I welcome any articles, material, or suggestions for future issues. You can email me at triangle@aa-montana.org or use the contact information on these pages.

Thanks for allowing me to serve! Sharon S.

February Issue

Please submit articles for the February Triangle by January 20.

The Triangle Asks question will be: what are "the benefits and liabilities, both spiritual and practical, of fully funding G.S.O. Services to the Fellowship (G.S.O. Functional expenses) by the voluntary contributions of A.A. members and groups"? Please send the Triangle a copy of the information at the same time you send it to Andrew (see "Growing Trusted Servants" page 2).

Thank you, Your Editor

Self Support

Time for a split?

Send Area contributions to:

PO BOX 21577

BILLINGS MT 59104

Send GSO contributions to:

PO BOX 459

GRAND CENTRAL STATION

NEW YORK NY 10163

Concept I: Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

- Does our group have a general service representative (G.S.R.)? Do we feel that our home group is part of A.A. as a whole and do our group's decisions and actions reflect that?
- Do we hold regular group conscience meetings encouraging everyone to participate? Do we pass that conscience on to the district, area, or the local intergroup meetings?
- Is the "collective conscience" of Alcoholics Anonymous at work in my home group? In my area?
- Where do we fit in the upside-down triangle of A.A.?
- Are we willing to do what it takes to insure that our democracy of world service will work under all conditions?

Concepts Checklist (Service Material from the General Service Office for home groups, districts areas.) Some of these discussion points were originally developed by an A.A. group and further developed by the trustees' Literature Committee to be distributed by the General Service Office.

Area 40 Newsletter

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BOZEMAN 59771

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Individuals: If your subscription has expired, this will be your last issue of the Triangle.
