

Volume 21 Issue 1

The Spirit of Rotation



A MESSAGE FROM OUR DELEGATE

Greeting and Happy New Year to my Area 40 friends from your alcoholic delegate. I am quite excited, but nervous about this year. Are you feeling that way about your new service position too? Thanks to Bill W. and all those AA's who have trudged the road ahead of us, we know what to do! We've got the steps, traditions and concepts to guide us; sponsors to help us see the truth; and people who have served in our positions to offer their experience, strength and hope. Our past Delegate, Terry S, communicated with me regularly throughout the year so I felt I was well informed, plus we have talked several times the past couple of months about what is ahead. What is there to be afraid of? Fear seems to be my first reaction to whatever is going on in my life, good or bad. The great news is that the steps work on this too as I continue to apply them "in all my affairs."

As suggested, I've been reading: Alcoholics Anonymous, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, The A.A. Service Manual, Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, and our pamphlets and the guidelines. Somehow, they have all taken on a new meaning to me! Whatever

your new service position is for the next year or two, I encourage you to re-read some or all of this material too! Also, the Area 40 Policy & Procedures manual is available on the AA website at www.aa-montana.org. Select Area Committee (the last tab at the top of the page), then Forms and Other Documents and you will see Policy & Procedures listed there under Other Documents. Your district and group may have some form of Trusted Servant Guidelines that may help you get started, too.

Our Registrar (the Area Secretary) updated DCM information in early December. If you are a GSR, I hope you and your outgoing GSR have updated your group information with GSO, your district, and the Area. The AA web site www.aa.org provides a form www.aa.org/lang/en/subpage.cfm?page=236 you can use to submit group change information at GSO. When this is done, you should receive your GSR packet in the mail before long. If you don't receive your DCM or GSR packet soon, please check with

GSO, the packets have lots of valuable information to help you in your service position. If you send copies of the form to the Area Secretary and the Area Triangle Editor (mail and email addresses in this issue) and your district committee member, your group will be connected throughout the service structure!

I am looking forward to this year and the opportunity to serve you. We'll have lots of opportunity to get together: the West Central Region AA Service Conference (WCRAASC) March 1-3 in Rapid City, SD; some pre-assemblies around the Area in March; the Spring Assembly April 5-7 in Lewistown.

Thank you for trusting me to serve you! As I think about our work together in Alcoholics Anonymous, I am less afraid. Sharon S., Area 40 Delegate Panel 63

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

ALT DELEGATE	2
QUOTE CORNER	2
CONTACT LIST	3
OUTGOING DELEGATE	4
PAST DELEGATE	4
WCR TRUSTEE	7
EVENTS CALENDAR	7

MCDC MEETING UPDATE

There has been a schedule change for the day that Districts can bring AA meetings into MCDC in Butte. Effective immediately, our new day is Wednesday from 2:45 to 3:45 pm. The rotation through Districts will remain the same. The 1st Wednesday is covered by District 72 (Bozeman), the 2nd Wednesday is covered by District 61 (Helena), the 3rd Wednesday is covered by District 71 (Butte), and the 4th Wednesday is covered by District 81 (Missoula). The Wednesday meeting replaces the Friday meeting. Please share this information with your Treatment Chairs and anyone else who participates in the MCDC meetings.

SPIRIT OF ROTATION

Aaand, we're off! The 2013-2014 service rotation is now officially underway, and trusted servants from around Area 40 are all stepping into their new service positions, and are all, no doubt, uttering the same bewildered phrase, "I'm really not sure what I'm doing here."

If you've been involved in service work for any appreciable amount of time, you know that this is exactly what should be happening. It's just part of the process. After a few years of being part of this process, I have come to understand that when we are learning our new positions and trying our best to get it right, we are actually bringing our best energy to our work. Once we have the idea that we know what we are doing, and we try to "make it ours," the spiritual nature of our contribution somehow changes. Sure, after a couple years in a position we know all the players and all the dos and don'ts much better than when we first started, but there is also a different energy that we bring to our work; as if we somehow move from servant to master.



In corporations around the world, the more time a person spends in any given position, the more valuable they become to that corporation by being able to guide it with their experience and expertise. In contrast, I believe that, in AA, it is through each new rotation of our trusted servants where we lose our "experts," and have the opportunity to hear more directly from our collective group conscience through the new rotation. This is where our Fellowship must, and will always, find its best guidance and "Good Orderly Direction." I'm convinced that the fresh energy found at the start of each rotation is what keeps the AA service structure such a vital, effective and, most importantly, spiritual environment. This Area 40 service rotation, in particular, is filled with many new faces, which will bring a great energy to our work. We are also introducing a new Assembly format which will no doubt do the same. I am so excited to see what good work comes from this new group of trusted servants.

On a personal level, I am grateful for each and every opportunity that I have been allowed to be a contributing member of such a life-changing, life-saving Fellowship. When I started in service, I was so impressed with the many people in front of me who were working diligently to ensure that the message of Alcoholics Anonymous was being carried to the still suffering alcoholic. I have so much respect for those people, not only for the work that they did, but also for stepping aside, when that time came, to allow me to step up and do my part, to make my contribution.

It is in that spirit that I step into each new position I am given, not knowing for sure exactly what I'm supposed to be doing, but trusting that together, we are doing a great thing for those who come behind us. I also have great faith that they, the ones who come behind us, will do their best to continue to carry the message, when that time comes, which will help me to gladly step aside, and allow them their opportunity to serve.

Thank you, Area 40, for this brief opportunity to be a contributing member of our Fellowship. I look forward to serving you for the next two years, and together doing our best to help the still suffering alcoholic.

Gerry R., Area 40 Chair/Alternate Delegate

QUOTE CORNER

1. "Service work teaches me responsibility, reliability and integrity."
2. "Rotation into service helps me to avoid an institution in my own mind."
3. "Rationalization is a thousand dollar word for a two-bit lie."
4. "AA has not given me my life back—it's given me a life I never knew or even dreamed of!"
5. The willingness to be consistent is one of the keys to long term sobriety."
6. "Service work is a thrilling experience for those who do the work. The work itself may not be of great value in and of itself—it is the act of giving of one's self and time for the welfare of another that is of spiritual significance."
7. "Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass—its about learning to dance in the rain."
8. "Why do I have to keep going back to more AA meetings? Because repetition is recognition."

The quotes were compiled by Tom W. of the Missoula Group. If you have a quote to submit please send it to triangle@aa-montana.org.

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PASS IT ON

Thank you, Area 40, for the opportunity to serve as your Panel 61 Delegate to the General Service Conference. Thank you for your clarity and your outspoken honesty about how you felt. Thank you for the money, time and effort you gave over this past rotation to assure that the hand of A.A. will always be there when someone reaches out for help with their alcoholism.

I believe that Alcoholics Anonymous is in no danger from outside sources—the treatment centers, the courts, the jails, the schools, the tavern owners, the folks selling alternative paths to sobriety (or even ways to “control” their drinking). The world of such things poses no threat to our Fellowship. So long as we offer our program of recovery as it was offered to us, the disease of alcoholism assures that we will always be needed.

We ourselves are the greatest danger to the future of our society of sober drunks. When we try to punish and control others whose take on our steps is not the same as ours, we are that greatest danger. When we insist that our personal situation is different, so that we need not bother about anonymity, then we are the problem. When we want to rewrite just a few small parts of our basic text, because there really ought to be more room for us to do this deal our own way, then we are the threat. When we would rather see our international journal, the A.A. Grapevine, die rather than see it share stories of alcoholics who are different from us, then we are turning away from our own legacies. When we disagree among ourselves with so much venom and self-righteousness that we drive away those we could otherwise welcome, then we are the sources of disunity. Pogo got it right—we have met the enemy and he is us.

It is too easy for me to see how full of strife this world is, and to miss the love and support that people all over this world can still offer to one another. In A.A., in particular, we share both a common problem and a common solution. Survivors of a fatal malady, preserved by miracles, let us open our arms and our hearts to all who seek recovery from alcoholism, and share our program freely and fully with them. With so much in common, let us truly be happy, joyous and free in our sobriety, and within our society. Let's rejoice and share this gift of life set free from alcohol with all who seek it. If those who came before us had not done so for us, we would not be here now. May we all embark anew on this path of happy destiny in this new year. And as we trudge, let's pass it on!

Yours in service, Terry S., Panel 61, Area 40 (Montana)

PARTICIPATION IS VITAL TO THE FUTURE OF AA

First, my sponsor and I visited about the meetings I was attending. My homegroup meets weekly, as does hers, and I attend other groups. However, these groups didn't have a high number of newcomers. As a result, I shook up which meetings I regularly attend and my conduct at these meetings. I started attending a meeting, where most of the attendees have less than a few years of sobriety. I started looking for women at each of the meetings I attend that I didn't know or who seemed to be in pain rather than visit with my friends.

Next, my homegroup has a small number of members and District 11 has several monthly meetings for groups to commit to such as the psych center, men's and women's shelters, and the crisis center. Since we are few in numbers, we had a discussion about which meetings we felt useful and would support. One of our members referred to the Sponsorship pamphlet's statement that it was our responsibility to introduce newcomers to several meetings within the community. Our G.S.R. has brought our voice back to the District suggesting we only bring meetings to facilities, where their clients cannot leave the facility. Other facilities, which the clients can leave, should have members agree to take newcomers to meetings within the community on a weekly (or more) basis.

Lastly, I served as Area Advisor the last two years. Unfortunately, I did not read the Area's Policies and Procedures. Thus, I did not know that I was to participate in keeping the Policies and Procedures up-to-date. Thanks to Gerry who provided me with the necessary information, I was able to complete this portion of the Advisor's job.

With this inventory of my participation in A.A., I have a new enthusiasm. I don't believe my participation is vital to A.A.'s future, but I do believe that collectively and continually looking at our effectiveness in A.A is vital to our future. This will lend to good service leadership at all levels, which is indispensable for our future functioning and safety.

Carole B., Panel 59, Area 40 Past Delegate

WELCOMED BACK TO GENERAL SERVICE

I now know how fortunate and grateful I am that my sponsor really pushed service work during my early sobriety. At the time I may have thought it was more punishment. The first district meeting started out a little chaotic, but soon the DCM calmed everybody down and I got my first look at the inner-workings of AA. I spent the first years involved in general service. Oh, don't get me wrong, at that time I loved the drama and chaos but soon saw the outcome of the dedicated service worker.

As time moved on and I aged, I knew it was time for me to rotate out and let the younger and more eager members of AA have their time in service and I found my calling in sponsoring.

Recently, I moved from a large and very active area to a smaller, spread out district. I was asked to sponsor a few of the ladies and started to push, and motivate, my new sponsees in the direction of general service. Those involved in the general service had been in their positions for quite some time. My home group's GSR was approaching the time to rotate out of his position.

The words of the serenity prayer came floating into my mind and I realized that I could find the courage to change that which I could. I went to the next district meeting and found myself back in general service. In January I will begin serving as the District 42 DCM.

I also realized that many of the newer people in our area are very willing to get involved, and are excited to do just that. They just needed to be invited and to have the importance of service to recovering alcoholics explained to them.

I now find myself very excited to be back, and to be a part of general service. The excitement and commitment of the new GSRs, and committee members is really rubbing off on me. I am excited to go to the area conference in Lewistown, and meet the other DCMs. I will still be sponsoring and will work hard for my sponsees to have the opportunity to serve. I am hoping that at the end of my term we will have a whole new generation to carry on the legacy.

Beth Z. DCM Area 42

AN AA HOLIDAY ABROAD

Hello fellow and future members. I recently returned from Western Europe where I experienced many wonderful things—beautiful architecture, art, food and a culture I only knew from novels and movies. But for me the thing I was the most privileged to enjoy was attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and getting to know the people I met there.

I attended meetings in Paris and Amsterdam. Christmas landed right in the middle of my vacation and I was in Amsterdam at the time staying in a hostel that was a 15-minute walk from the English speaking fellowship hall. The first person I met there was a man with 11 years sobriety who was recently elected to the position of Chairman of the European Region of AA. He was really excited about his sobriety and service. On Christmas Day they had marathon meetings and a feast in the afternoon. The food was delicious and the people were warm and inviting. For me it was true what it says in the Big Book “he can go anywhere on this earth where other free men go without disaster provided he remains willing to maintain a certain simple attitude”.

Levi S., Missoula Group

Resource For Finding English-Speaking Meetings When Traveling Abroad: Europe: aa-europe.net

AREA 40 WEBSITE

Area 40's website has information, fliers and forms to help you and your AA group stay connected. Log on to aa-montana.org. In addition to fliers and forms you can find past Triangle issues, policies and procedures, Area Committee Contact information and much more. If your group is having an event that includes an AA meeting you can also have it listed on the website by emailing it to the webmaster. You send events to: calendar@aa-montana.org. Your event flier is formatted best if it includes your event's date, location, a contact name and number and any other relevant information. Here is a little clarification on what qualifies as an AA event for the website: an AA meeting of any sort (open/closed/discussion/etc.), marathon meetings on holidays, a speaker event (such as a group celebration including a speaker), or a workshop.

REFLECTING ON THE SPIRIT OF ROTATION

Welcome to a new rotation! I like the energy and enthusiasm we all have at the start of a rotation. When I was asked to share my thoughts on the spirit of rotation for the Triangle, my first thought was, how can I improve on perfection? You may ask, to what great article am I referring? I'm referring to the best article on the spirit of rotation ever written. I'm referring to Loren B.'s presentation on the spirit of rotation at the 52nd General Service Conference in April 2002. Loren is a past delegate from Montana (panels 50 & 51, our only two-panel delegate). It was an excellent presentation and eloquently expressed the benefits of rotation. If you do an Internet search for "spirit of rotation AA" you can find several links to area and district newsletters that use all or part of Loren's presentation on rotation. So my first piece of advice on the spirit of rotation is to go read Loren's article. I'm sure if you can't find a copy of the final report from the 52nd GSC, then you can just email Loren and he can send you a copy of his article. Here, I'll whet your appetite with one section from Loren's presentation:

"The spirit of rotation means more than just giving up the title of a service position. Rotation means truly letting go of the control and the actions. It means allowing new GSRs, DCMs, Committee Leaders, and Officers to make mistakes without criticism and do their jobs without undue influence from those who have rotated out of those positions. It means allowing the entire service structure to operate with God leading the way by expressing Himself in our group conscience."

This is one of the key ideas behind the spirit of rotation that is important for me to remember: that these are the current GSRs, the current Area committee, the current group of delegates, and so on. I may think I know how they can avoid certain mistakes (usually because I made them myself) or that I know what is best (a doubtful proposition most of the time), but I have rotated and it is up to the new folks to find their own group conscience.

For those of you who aren't searching your closets for a copy of the 52nd GSC final report or doing a search online for Loren's article, I will now continue with my thoughts on this topic. I like to remember (yes, as Loren has already written) that it is always possible to "rotate on" rather than "rotate out." This is the case even if rotating on means leaving a position at the Area level to take a position in your home group or to spending more time working with newcomers or to serve on a roundup committee. Sometimes we have busy times in our lives and do not have enough time for some service commitments. Those times can pass and this does not preclude standing for a position at a later time. While I was in school, I had a sponsor tell me that school should be my priority and that I would have time to get involved in the AA service structure later. How right he was. Of course, even then, his message to me was to be of service in different ways: volunteering to answer the AA phone, helping cleanup after meetings, going on 12th-step calls, taking meetings into treatment centers. It is not like a service commitment is required in order to be of service to the alcoholic who still suffers.

We sometimes talk about rotation being a potential cure for disunity, whether it is at the district, area, General Service Conference or General Service Board level. Yet, I think this is not always the case as rotation can bring in disunity where before there was more unity. In service we are all working with fellow alcoholics (and a few non-alcoholic class A trustees), many with strong personalities. We all have opinions and we care a great deal about AA. It is not surprising that we have situations that arise in general service that bring about disunity. I believe that rotation is essential but in and of itself, it is not a sufficient cure for disunity. It is the choices the people in a new rotation make that brings more unity to the general service structure.

Finally, I'd like to talk about the position I recently rotated into. It is the first four-year commitment in my service history. When I was newer in sobriety and newer in general service, four years would have seen like a very long time. I'm six months in to this service position, 1/8 of the total time has gone by, and I feel like I'm just getting started. Four years now seems like barely enough time to get used to the position, to serve effectively, and then be gone. Right now, I have no qualms about being one of the newest trustees. I ask a lot of questions and I speak up if something is not clear to me. Soon enough (this coming April, to be exact) we will have another rotation and I will no longer be one of the newest trustees. I hope to bring my enthusiasm for service to this position – one of the side benefits of rotation. I'll get more used to being a trustee and, if my past experience tells me anything, by the time I get comfortable with the position, it will be time to "rotate on."

Andrew W. West Central Regional Trustee



HELLO FROM YOUR TRIANGLE EDITOR

Well, here we are—issue one is off to the press! With amused skepticism I acted upon my interest to stand for the Triangle Editor position. And as usual the position was more complicated than I imagined.

There was a lot of prep work involved in this position. But now, I am in the fun phase of the Triangle.

For me, the fun phase involves soliciting articles from AA members and getting to hear your stories.

Everyone has a special story to tell in AA. Our experiences with service make especially-great articles. My own story involves being the outgoing DCM for District 81. I am new to the Area Committee and happy to be here. District 81 had a lot of younger folks involved in general service. To me that means that the

fellowship did a great job of ensuring that the hand of AA will always be there for the still suffering alcoholic.

The Triangle is a newsletter that the Area Board uses as a tool to communicate with groups in Area 40. The intent is to send it out to all GSRs and any individuals who also want to receive it. By past action, a group is eligible to receive the Triangle even if their subscription fee has expired. The only way we can get the Triangle to your group is if we have your correct address. I invite you to update your information with GSO and the Area Board by filling out a Group Change Form. This form is available to you either on this website: http://www.aa.org/en_pdfs/e_infchan.pdf

—or— it is also available to you through your DCM.

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Editor-to-the-Editor: Carleen L. for her watchful eye and Sharon S. for her continual supply of solutions, the webmaster and all the contributors.

If you would like to contribute to the Triangle please contact me at triangle@aa-montana.org. Your submissions, quotes, ideas and comments are greatly appreciated!

Erin G., 2013/14 Triangle Editor

EVENTS CALENDAR

Fliers and information about Area 40 events can be found at aa-montana.org. To have your event included in the Triangle please email it to calendar@aa-montana.org.

1. **Primary Purpose Workshop:** January 19th @ Vince Grange Hall in Bozeman
2. **Into Action Weekend:** February 15th, 16th @ Creston Grange in Creston (next to Kalispell)
3. **West Central Regional AA Service Conference:** March 1st-3rd in Rapid City, SD
4. **Banff Roundup:** March 8th-10th in Banff, Alberta
5. **Area 40 Spring Assembly:** April 5th-7th @ Yogo Inn in Lewistown**
6. **Area 40 Spring Round Up:** April 12th– 14th @ GranTree & Holiday Inn in Bozeman
7. **Beartooth Mountain Conference:** June 28th-30th located south of Big Timber
8. **West Central Regional AA Forum:** September 2nd-4th in Bloomington, MN
9. **Area 40 Fall Assembly:** September 21st, 22nd @ Yogo Inn in Lewistown



We absolutely insist on enjoying life!

**During our last Assembly a motion was passed to include a 2-hour Friday session for Assembly beginning at 8 pm and concluding at 10pm. It is for orientation and committee work.

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

WHERE TO MAIL

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