

Area40

Triangle



“OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE IN ACTION”

When ANYONE ANYWHERE reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA ALWAYS TO BE THERE... And for that- I AM RESPONSIBLE!

Area 40 AA Hotline-
Pick up that 10,000lb
phone!

In 2007, after an Ad-Hoc committee spent 2 years working out the details, Area 40 started to operate a state-wide AA Hotline. That means we have been at it for 10 years! Over the past decade, many desperate souls at the end of their ropes were given a life line to AA when they called that number. In that brief window of opportunity, a member of AA would pick up that phone ANY HOUR day or night, ready to swoop into action and administer badly needed “First Aid”, as our book says. Our Hotline is still in service, and now it is in need of some First Aid that we must provide. Over the past several month our Area PI Chair has reported that there has been many times when it takes up to a dozen calls to reach one of our volunteers. We need volunteers to sign up to answer these calls! If you already have signed up, it’s very important to make sure your contact info is current! Please contact your District Hotline Chair, or DCM to find out how you can help us honor our commitment to the suffering alcoholic! For this, we are responsible...

AA & THE COURTS

We of Alcoholics Anonymous have had a long lasting relationship with the courts. Our entire Fellowship was practically founded on the order of a judge who placed one Ebby T. in the care of two men who were willing to walk him through a Spiritual Awakening that seemed like his only hope. At first Ebby recalled thinking that “this time he would be going to the big house for sure.” Rowland Hazard and Sebring Graves took Ebby from that court room in Vermont back to their mission shelter in New York and gave him a safe place to stay while he embarked on a rigorous course of action. He was to confess his sins, seek a devoted relationship with God, and testify to others of what God had done to relieve his malady. Faced with the alternative, he did as he was instructed. This is where Bill W entered the picture, as Ebby carried his message of hope to Bill in his home. He didn’t exactly receive Ebby’s message well at first. He ended up going on a furious bender for a couple weeks following. Bill ended up back in the hospital yet again, and at his request, Ebby came to visit him a second time where Bill conceded he was now ready to follow the process his friend laid out for him. These are the two easiest examples to illustrate the nature of 12 Step Work. Prospects don’t always take to it right away. Sometimes they go along with it only motivated by alternatives such as jails and institutions. This does not mean God won’t reach them at some point. I still remember having my slips signed to turn into the Drug Court team while I planned my next drink when the heat was off! God reached me somewhere along the way, and I learned the solution to relieve that obsession. My life depends on my willingness to continue carrying AA’s Message to those in need. I am humbly honored with that duty. I ask you all to keep an open mind for those getting that nudge from the judge. There are some suffering alone in jail or prison, but we of Alcoholics Anonymous will bring hope into their lives. Contact your local Corrections Chair to see how you can help. I promise, you won’t regret it!

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Area 40 Archives/ Policy & Structure

The Archives Committee considered a request to make specific updates to the Policies & Procedures in the job descriptions/duties regarding the Secretary and Treasurer's positions. These updates were pertaining to the computer skills required to perform the required duties. The proposed changes reflect current practices that have been in place for several rotations. The Committee recommended that Area 40 make the specified updates, and the Assembly Floor passed the motion.

The Committee also passed a motion to the Floor to allow access to the Dashboard for all GSR's , and District Reps so that they can have unrestricted access to background material. This item was also passed by the Floor.

In the Fall of 2016 The Archives Committee considered a request from District 41 to relinquish their appointment for a District Rep to serve on an Area 40 Standing Committee. The result of the Committee's considerations were to instead reevaluate the Area's process for Standing Committee assignment, selection, and replacement. An Ad-Hoc Committee was appointed to this task, and included the DCM from 41. In the Spring of 2017 this item was recommitted to the Archives Committee to work on until this Fall. The Archives Committee took no action on this assignment, and therefore this item did not make it to the Assembly Floor.

A proposal was considered by the Archives Committee for the Area Assemblies location to rotate similar to the Roundups. The resulting recommendations were to hold another Fall Assembly in Great Falls in 2018. There was a lot of passionate discussion over this item on the Floor. The bottom line was that the cost of this Assembly is costing the Area more, and that we did not yet have any definite numbers to consider to make an informed decision. The Floor did however pass this motion, keeping in mind that we could look at other venues in Great Falls, and if the bid ends up too high, a motion at the Spring Assembly could remedy the situation.

Bridging The Gap

Area 40 has began the process of overhauling the Bridge.....

At the Fall Area Assembly we passed a motion to create an ad hoc Committee to “develop a plan to establish and operate an Area 40 Bridging the Gap Chair and Committee.” To that end I have appointed Jessica E. and Lee G. as co-chairs of this committee. They both have experience as Area Committee Chairs for the Treatment Committee and Lee has also been Area Chair of the Corrections Committee. They bring a wealth of experience about what an Area Committee is and what it does. They also have experience in the Bridging the Gap program as it is currently carried out in Area 40. The current Corrections and Treatment Chairs, Hugh and James will be adjunct committee members and will offer whatever help the committee needs. The committee members are: Buffy from District 23, Gennifer and Tara from District 12, Teresa and Anne from District 91 and Patricia from District 61. A report will be submitted at the Area Assembly in the Spring of 2018. Based on the results of that report we may be holding elections for a Bridging the Gap Chair at the next Fall (election) Assembly in Great Falls. Thank you to everyone that volunteered to help in this project.

Paul L- Area 40 Chair

In the Fall of 2016 the Area considered a proposed revision to the language of the short form of the Twelve Concepts for World Service. The language was drafted by Gerry R, our current Panel Delegate. The proposal was passed by Area 40 to forward this item to be considered for the General Service Board's Trustees to review for inclusion in the General Service Conference Agenda. The Trustee's did not include the item in the Agenda because they interpreted the revision of language as a revision of Concept's principles themselves. This Fall Area 40 voted unanimously to resubmit the request to the Trustees, explaining that our request is based on the need for a “plain language” version of the 12 Concept's in a “shorter “ form.

Letter From The Area Chair

An overview after our first Assembly away from Lewistown

“Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.” Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous p.77

The first Area Assembly in Great Falls is behind us. There were many successes in holding the Assembly at the facility we did. Numerous people were pleased with the space, lighting, sound system and overall set up we had in the main meeting room. At every committee breakout room there were tables and chairs set up for the committee to gather around and discuss their business. Each breakout room was only a few footsteps from the main meeting room except for the PI and CPC Committees, they had to take an elevator to the 7th floor to access their room. Nearly everyone that stayed at the hotel were happy with their accommodations and the restaurant moved everyone through quickly. Finally, those with special access needs found no barriers. They could attend any Committee meeting or breakout session they wanted to.

The expense of this Area Assembly will be greater than Assemblies of the past. How much more still remains to be seen as we are still waiting on some expense reports. The facility cost was a little more than what we have paid in the past. The biggest new expense was the increase in coffee price. We average about 55 gallons of coffee per assembly and any increase in coffee prices changes our total expenses. We paid \$19.95 per gallon of coffee in Great Falls. The expense for Area Assembly Officers and Committee members to attend is less than it has been in the past. A final report should be out with the October financial statement.

What does all of this mean? To me it means that we are working towards making the Area Assembly more accessible to all members of Alcoholics Anonymous, to be of maximum service to our members. By eliminating physical barriers members are no longer constrained to certain parts of the meeting room, they are free to move around and look at

the Archives, Literature and Grapevine displays. Anyone can attend any of the committee meetings regardless of where they are held. By having microphones that work reliably, room acoustics that help carry sound and a reduction of ambient noise outside of the main meeting room those of us with a hearing impairment can hear all of the comments made. For myself I find that when I can hear what is going on I am a much more active participant. I am also not distracted by asking others what did he or she said.

We will be returning to Lewistown for the Spring Assembly and then back to Great Falls for the Fall Assembly of 2018. A decision will soon be made by the members of Area 40 about what we are going to do for planning locations of Assemblies. After the work that I put into organizing this Assembly I can now clearly see that we are going to need a specific process and a new timeline for putting together assemblies. That is a discussion for another time.

From the Treasurer

Greetings All!

We paid most all of the remaining Fall Assembly expenses in October as you can see from the attached reports. The final hotel bill for the conference costs was \$2,828.96 which shows as meeting space rent on the Line Item report. (The budgeted amount was \$1,600.) But we saved about \$800 in travel expenses for the three chair people who live in Great Falls, so that helped. Final Assembly costs will be reflected on the November reports.

Also, paid in Oct. was the annual Archives storage rent of \$3,600. So our cash flow is in the negative for the month but, overall, we are about \$1,000 under budget through Oct 31st. We did not have to dip into the prudent reserve and should remain stable the rest of the year. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you to all your groups and districts for their generous contributions to our Area!!
-Julie R

If you are interested in a detailed financial report including the full budget with individual expenses for each budget item you can find the Treasurer's Financial Reports on the Area 40 Website under the "Area Committee" section by clicking the link in the task-bar.

www.aa-montana.org/committee

Financial Reports are made monthly and distributed via email to all DCM's so they may be passed along to your home group via your GSR. If your group does not have a GSR, we encourage you to share this information with your group.

Our Primary Purpose

“Let us resist the proud assumption that since God has enabled us to do well in one area we are destined to be a channel of saving grace for everybody.” -AA COMES OF AGE, p.232

The opening quote is a great reminder of how important it is that AA be considered as a solution for nothing other than alcoholism. Bill did say that the 12 Steps can be utilized to good effect by people dealing with other issues, however these words from *AA Comes of Age*, caution us that our AA Fellowship ought not be stretched, diluted or in any way utilized as a solution for those afflicted by problems other than alcohol who might come to us looking for answers. We do neither ourselves, nor these folks who come looking, any favors by pretending that our way out will work for them.

I’ve seen many who are new to sobriety (including myself at one time) enthusiastically argue to anyone who would listen, that AA should open its doors and extend its reach, to address whatever affliction people might suffer from, in order to maximize the healing potential of this life-saving program. Those of us who do this, are usually not yet familiar with the 5th Tradition, and often feel challenged when it is brought up as a seemingly short-sighted argument against our grand and novel idea.

While pride certainly has something to do with our early assumption that AA is a fix-all for the world and its problems, I also believe that gratitude is just as often the motivating factor in our lofty claims. However, gratitude, if fostered and allowed to grow, will eventually usher us across a threshold where we no longer wish to push the program, or use it to obtain what we want. Instead, a mature gratitude develops which will lead us to put forth our best effort to protect and preserve the Fellowship, not just for our own welfare, but for those suffering alcoholics who have yet to find us.

Whether it is pride, gratitude, or simply a well-intentioned effort to share the miracle that saved our own lives, it is when we hear about the unfortunate fates of the Washingtonians and the Oxford Group that our perspective changes.

The examples presented by these two organizations, do suggest that it is likely part of our prideful human nature to want to extend our influence into as many areas as possible. Tradition Five reminds us that it is humility, a product of true spiritual growth, which helps us to refrain from the same perilous overextension that preceded the downfall of our ambitious predecessors.

Many who are new to recovery develop a zealous approach to sharing our message which, in and of itself, is a good thing, however, without guidance from those whose zeal has been tempered by spiritual growth, and a mature gratitude, that initial enthusiasm can lead us in directions we ought not go. Tradition Five provides such guidance, and skillfully articulates these important principles which can also be found in other Traditions.

In the final words of his essay on Tradition Eleven Bill states; *This Tradition is a constant and practical reminder that personal ambition has no place in AA. In it, each member becomes an active guardian of our Fellowship.* 12X12, p. 183

His essay on Tradition Nine reminds us that; *Unless there is approximate conformity to AA’s Twelve Traditions, the group, too, can deteriorate and die. So we of AA do obey spiritual principles, first because we must, and ultimately because we love the kind of life such obedience brings.* 12X12, p. 174

For those who are new or unfamiliar with our guiding principles, the idea that we must resist the temptation to be everyone’s answer will, at first, appear to be the selfish one. Hopefully though, over time and through our example, the importance of keeping this life-saving Fellowship intact, undiluted, and effective, will become part of their deeper understanding, as well as a higher purpose that they are willing not only to acknowledge, but also to serve.

Gerry R. - Delegate

Reading For Recovery

The message is always there...

I first found the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous tucked neatly between a package of baby wipes and a box of Gobstoppers at the bottom of a care package mailed to me by a girlfriend's mother. On its cover was a post-it note with a single sentence written across: *I hope this finds you with an open mind*. I was entering my sixth month on a tour in Afghanistan and had just returned from fifteen days of R&R in Hawaii. She, having obviously heard of my various exploits, was reaching out a loving hand. As many an alcoholic has been known to do, I swatted it away with disdain and disgust. My mind, it would seem, was not yet open. Eight months later, while packing up to leave that place, I laid eyes on her book once more. It was where it had been for the last half year, propping up the leg of a table whose surface had slanted against the uneven earth it rested on. It served a purpose after all, I thought, and so there it should remain.

It would be five and a half years before I would find another copy of that book; this time in a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, one I had no desire to attend. The room was full of cheerful people, all eager to share in my newness and inundate me with stories. I was given a chip and a pocket-sized book and told to keep coming back (...it works). The message, yet again, was lost on my closed off, alcoholic brain. I attended for a while, read less than half of Bill's Story, and was soon going out once again.

It was seventeen months after that last bout of stubbornness that I, for what I can only hope and pray is the last time, crawled desperately into the halls of Alcoholics Anonymous. It was the same meeting I had previously tried, with many of the same faces present. As they ran another first step on me I listened and this time things felt different. There was a foreign quality to the air in that room, as if I could taste the enlightened attitudes that each of these fellows possessed. My body and mind were so tragically weakened by years of self-sabotage and poison that I had little stubbornness or fight left to give. I was, finally, ready to surrender and surrender I did.

The first thirty days were less difficult than I'd imagined. A part of me, deeply buried beneath a layer of pride and self-loathing, had completely given in to this new way of living. That's not to say there weren't obstacles, there are always obstacles in any facet of life. I simply accepted them as a part of living and, more importantly, as a part of living sober. It was around this time that I shared a thought in a meeting (one that I'd certainly considered profound) and a man spoke up to me afterward, saying, "Hey, you know, there's a reading for that." At that he expertly thumbed through a copy of the Big Book and found a passage that said exactly what I'd shared, only more eloquently and more concise. I was absolutely blown away. I would ask this man to be my sponsor shortly after that. His response to my request was welcoming but sincere. He told me that yes, he would be my sponsor, but that there were three things I had to be willing to do:

One, was to attend ninety meetings in ninety days. Sure thing.

Two, was to make his home group my home group, so that he could be there during my recovery. No problem.

Three, was the most significant by far, to read four books that he believed would be instrumental to my recovery: *Living Sober, the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous* and *Came to Believe*. I eagerly agreed.

It took me one month to read all those books. Once I had finished, I started again. It became a never-ending cycle of learning for me. I was a child again and every word read was a revelation to my alcoholic brain; an understanding that the life I had lived was not the life I was stuck with. I found renewed vigor in my daily activities and almost immediately the intoxicating effects of the knowledge passed on by countless alcoholics became my main form of sustenance. I soon discovered many more books to read. I inhaled them too and the wisdom they offered. It is funny to me that they seemed like some dark kept secret, these texts, some mythical cure to be had by a fortunate few who had chanced upon their existence. I'd never noticed, I suppose, that they lay out before us in most meeting halls across the community, begging to be seen, to be remembered, as if shouting from their lonesome pages, "People, it's okay to read again!"

My Big Book no longer levels furniture. In fact, that miniature copy I was given long ago now lives in my back pocket. That way I can, and often do, refer to its wisdom when days get tough. Positive inputs, after all, beget positive attitudes. We in recovery must remember that this abundance of AA approved literature exists for a reason: to articulate the thoughts of alcoholics as they are commonly expressed in the rooms, to preserve these thoughts so they may survive in a manner that is far more dependable than spoken word, and to present them in such a way that they are easily understood by anyone anywhere.

Bryan C- Missoula, MT

GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT

"A vast communications net now covers the earth, even to its remotest reaches... nothing matters more to AA's future welfare than the manner in which we use the colossus of modern communication. Used unselfishly and well, it can produce results surpassing our present imagination."

-Bill W AA Grapevine Nov. 1960

Printed Media Technology

The Grapevine was established in June of 1944 as a means for the fellowship to communicate the AA message in the format of 19th Century social media: Newsletter.. An entire section was devoted to members serving in WWII overseas, featuring their Anonymity protected letters under the heading "Mail Call for All AA's in the Armed Forces". They began to refer to the magazine as their "*meeting in print*".

Video Media Technology

After WWII television became a common household institution which enabled the mass of communication to be shared in a new way, with lightning fast speed and convenience. Video medias soon became everyday household communication tech, and in 1967 AA began producing PSA's. Our message began to reach many more of those suffering.

Telecommunication Technology

In the 1980's & 90's the telephone hotline service became the latest communication technology craze to sweep through the masses. AA Hotlines became a way for members to offer their helping hand anyone in need, and local Hotline numbers were paired up with PSA's to get the message out, and help alcoholics find the Fellowship of AA.

Digital Media Technology: *The Internet & AA Online*

The computer age has created an infinite advance in our ability to communicate, and share information. Computers have been a household commodity for decades, and now smartphones have made the computer a mobile accessory to our everyday life. Internet connected applications have been replacing the need to "surf the web" and keep us plugged into virtually *anything* we choose to connect with. Social Media has become the preferred method of communication amongst this *colossus* of the World Wide Web. Bill's choice of words have proven to be far more visionary than anyone could have imagined in 1960. How then shall we continue to answer the call for 12 Step work in this quickly evolving digital age? We of Alcoholics Anonymous must take the lead!

AA 12 Step Technology Workshop at a Glance

Sharon S led a brainstorming workshop at Fall Assembly to encourage us to take the lead in Area 40

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

Grapevine- mag app for smartphone online subscriptions, quote of the day, post your article online,

AAWS- powerpoints for cpc, video psa's, meeting locator, info for professionals, literature available in digital format, literature catalogue, box 459 (can subscribe online)

Area40- website, mtg schedules, calendar of events, minutes, docs, past actions, p&p, Triangle, BTG, Hotline contact database,

Districts- emails, QR codes on mtg schedules to take you to webpage,

Groups- Websites, square/paypal 7th tradition capabilities, video conferencing

WHAT ELSE COULD WE TRY? *JUST IMAGINE.....*

What if we could build onto our Area 40 online platform? GPS Meeting Locator integrated with the existing schedule. An Anonymous SMS Hotline system where newcomers who google AA in Montana can click on a link to connect to a real member in their neighborhood to talk to. In a society where people don't want to answer a phone call, let alone make one when they can just google something, this could be the 12 Step vehicle of the Future. What if people could just scan a QR code on a PSA or a Meeting List they picked up somewhere that would give them an instant link to these vital services? What if Area 40 could develop a "mini app" that the newcomer could download to their smartphone in 30 seconds which could contain every digital asset we possess? Sober members of AA could use the Area 40 app to share meeting information, events, read the Triangle, make 7th Tradition contributions, communicate with each other anonymously, and conduct 12 Step Work.... These are just some of the ideas discussed, but we would LOVE TO HEAR YOURS! Email

Triangle@aa-montana.org

AA EVENTS IN AREA 40

WE KNOW YOU WILL NOT WANT TO MISS IT.....

December 1-2

30th Annual 1st Saturday

Big Horn Resort- Billings, MT
AA & Al-Anon Speakers:
Butch M, John S, Cindy S
Workshop & Brunch (\$15+rsvp)
Scott D 406-690-6713

December 16

2017 Holiday Party

Shrine Auditorium- Billings, MT
AA & Al-Anon Speakers:
Shane M & Bobbi D
Potluck Dinner @5:00
Fellowship Fun & Games !
Lydia P 406-259-2181

January 20

MSP Orientation

Montana State Prison- Deer Lodge
Submit Application by Dec 20
Background Check Required
No Felonies for past 5 yrs
No Misdemeanors for past 3 yrs
Email corrections@aa-montana.org

February 17

Mid-Winter Social

Community Center- Joliet, MT
AA Speakers: Gerry R, Cris S

Sponsorship Workshop 2-4pm

Potluck Dinner 6pm

Gennifer Y 406-321-2045

March 2-4

31st Sober Ski

Whitefish Mountain- Whitefish, MT
Skiing Snowboarding Snowshoeing
AA Meetings in Evenings
Potluck Dinner Sat@6pm (\$5)
Breakfast 8am @Swift Creek Cafe
Jake H 406-250-8757

March 16-17

Pockets of Enthusiasm

1st Presb. Church- Helena, MT
AA & Al-Anon Speakers: Deborah
S, Nobe D, Linda D, Peg M
Irish Buffet Sat@5pm (\$18+rsvp)
Ice Cream Social & Entertainment
Registration \$25
Kevin S 406-439-3284

April 6-8

Area 40 Spring Assembly

Yogo Inn- Lewistown, MT
Make Reservations in Advance!
Special Needs Requests by Feb 1st
Email Chair@aa-montana.org

April 28

12 Step Study

Civic Center- Great Falls, MT
Debbie D from Cali
8:30am-5:00pm
Lunch@11:30 (\$12+rsvp)
Dan 406-868-7303

May 4-6

Area 40 Spring Roundup

Heritage Inn- Great Falls, MT
AA Speakers: Cody B (Lewistown),
Madeline P (Portland), & Anson P
(Miami) Al-Anon Speakers: Leah J
(Great Falls) Jeanette M(Lethbridge)
Breakfast Buffet (\$16)
Plated Dinner (\$30)
Pre-Register ASAP (\$25)
Cindy D 406-590-8283
Email idiabms_2006@yahoo.com

Need More Info?

For complete details
and
Event Flyers
please visit
www.aa-montana.org
and click on "Calendar"
in the Task Bar

Share Your Event!

If you have an
AA Event
that you would like to
add to the Calendar,
both in
The Triangle,
&
Our Area Web Page,
just email details to
Calendar@aa-montana.org

Area 40 Agenda

Do you have an idea to propose for
inclusion in our Area 40 Spring Assembly
business? Our democratic process starts
with requests from within the Fellowship
for our Committees to consider so that we
can do a better job with 12 Step Work.
You can find Agenda Item Proposal Form
on our Area 40 website, and send them to
the Area Chair by February 1st.

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OTHERWISE RETURN TO SENDER.**

Triangle Subscription Form

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A SUBSCRIPTION FOR YOURSELF, A FRIEND OR YOUR GROUP, PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM OR SUBSCRIBE ONLINE @ WWW.AA-MONTANA.ORG THE COST OF THE TRIANGLE IS \$10 PER YEAR.
PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO AREA 40.

SEND TO: AREA 40 TRIANGLE
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HUNTLEY MT 59037

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Individuals: If your subscription has expired, please renew to continue receiving the Triangle.

**WHERE TO MAIL
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