

Area 40 Triangle

A Newsletter for AA in the State of Montana

ISSUE 1 2018

Traditions Inventory Questions. These are handy for a group or an individual.

**Feature Story on Page 5:
From Drunk to Delegate by Gerry R.**

Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.

1. Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person, or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other members' inventories?
2. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious preludes such as "just for the sake of discussion," plunge into argument?
3. Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?
4. Do I make competitive AA remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting AA in one place with AA in another?
5. Do I put down some AA activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of AA?
6. Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, AA as a whole, or just the parts I understand and approve of?
7. Am I as considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?
8. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?
9. Do I go to enough AA meetings or read enough AA literature to really keep in touch?
10. Do I share with AA all of me, the bad and the good, accepting as well as giving the help of fellowship?

Pay for Your Newsletter Online!

**Groups are encouraged to be self-supporting for their Triangle subscriptions.
Check it out on the Area 40 website @ AA-MONTANA.ORG**

TREASURER'S REPORT

Greetings all and Happy New Year!

Attached are the year-end financial reports. We ended the year \$782 over our budgeted amount of \$34,930 which is pretty darn close! (The line item report shows \$835 over because it does not net out the \$53 in service manual sales which are self-supporting, not a budgeted item.)

Our 2017 income was almost the same as the previous year, just \$64 more. Unfortunately, this did not cover our budget, nor expenses, so our net was a negative \$2,976. This begs the question: will our groups, individuals and districts support our 2018 budget of \$35,280 with increased contributions of approximately \$2,500?

Our operating balance is about half of what it was this time last year. Our prudent reserve is calculated to be 4 months of budgeted expenses, so for 2018, the new prudent reserve amount will be \$11,760. Upcoming expenses in March and April include the WCRAASC in Iowa, several pre-assemblies around the state, the Area Assembly in Lewistown and the General Service Conference in NYC. If your groups would like any more information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

At the request of a group, I've also attached a short report showing comparisons of Assembly costs over the last 2 years. Again, please ask if you have questions.

I look forward to a great 2nd year of rotation and to seeing all of you soon.

In love and service,
Julie R.
Area 40 Treasurer

Area 40 Assembly Costs

2016—2017

	2016 Spring	2016 Fall	2017 Spring	2017 Fall
Gas	\$327.00	\$560.00	\$463.00	\$474.00
Mileage	\$223.00	\$217.00	\$206.00	\$178.00
Lodging	\$2,253.00	\$2,385.00	\$2,673.00	\$1,788.00
Mtg Space	\$1,562.00	\$1,644.00	\$1,504.00	\$2,829.00
Misc.	\$397.00	\$269.00	\$256.00	\$73.00
Totals	\$5,472.00	\$6,034.00	\$5,928.00	\$5,963.00

NOTE: Assembly was held in Great Falls, MT, in Fall 2017; all others were in Lewistown, MT. Some travel expenses were reduced in Great Falls due to three committee chairs being local there. Miscellaneous includes printing and supplies.

Area 40, Inc.
Budget vs. Actual by Committee / Project
December 2017

	<u>Dec 17</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jan - Dec 17</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
Unrestricted					
Program Services					
Spring Assembly	0.00	0.00	-5,927.15	-5,200.00	-5,200.00
Fall Assembly	0.00	0.00	-5,964.22	-5,200.00	-5,200.00
Regional Service Conference	0.00	0.00	-1,549.91	-1,500.00	-1,500.00
Regional Forum	0.00	0.00	-853.51	-1,500.00	-1,500.00
Regional Trustee	0.00	0.00	0.00	-800.00	-800.00
Delegate Expenses					
Area 40 share to GSC	0.00	0.00	-1,600.00	-1,600.00	-1,600.00
Other Expenses	0.00	0.00	-561.31	-200.00	-200.00
Other Expenses NYC	0.00	0.00	-94.50	-400.00	-400.00
Roundups	0.00	0.00	-634.81	-600.00	-600.00
Travel expenses	<u>0.00</u>	<u>-90.00</u>	<u>-1,759.95</u>	<u>-1,500.00</u>	<u>-1,500.00</u>
Total Delegate Expenses	0.00	-90.00	-4,650.57	-4,300.00	-4,300.00
Area Chair Expenses	0.00	0.00	-1,146.76	-300.00	-300.00
Archivist Account					
Archivist Display & Travel	-1,252.88	0.00	-1,332.38	-1,650.00	-1,650.00
Archives Storage	<u>-24.00</u>	<u>-21.00</u>	<u>-3,834.00</u>	<u>-3,850.00</u>	<u>-3,850.00</u>
Total Archivist Account	-1,276.88	-21.00	-5,166.38	-5,500.00	-5,500.00
Literature Chair					
General literature purchases	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>-37.80</u>	<u>-200.00</u>	<u>-200.00</u>
Total Literature Chair	0.00	0.00	-37.80	-200.00	-200.00
Public Information Chair					
Area Hotline Expenses	-259.12	-250.00	-2,915.94	-3,000.00	-3,000.00
Directory Listings	<u>-280.40</u>	<u>-100.00</u>	<u>-2,489.50</u>	<u>-2,200.00</u>	<u>-2,200.00</u>
Total Public Information Chair	-539.52	-350.00	-5,405.44	-5,200.00	-5,200.00
Website	0.00	0.00	-203.96	-210.00	-210.00
Triangle	-355.41	-310.00	-1,207.39	-2,500.00	-2,500.00
Committee Chair Post/Supplies	0.00	-25.00	-260.83	-350.00	-350.00
Committee Chair Travel	0.00	0.00	-3,029.26	-2,000.00	-2,000.00
Computer Hardware/Software	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>-288.96</u>	<u>-150.00</u>	<u>-150.00</u>
Total Program Services	-2,171.81	-796.00	-35,692.14	-34,910.00	-34,910.00
Management and General	0.00	0.00	-20.00	-20.00	-20.00
INCOME	<u>2,173.45</u>		<u>32,736.51</u>		
NET Income	1.64	-796.00	-2,975.63	-34,930.00	-34,930.00
Unclassified	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL	<u>1.64</u>	<u>-796.00</u>	<u>-2,975.63</u>	<u>-34,930.00</u>	<u>-34,930.00</u>

Checkbook balance \$ 17,194.74
 Prudent Reserve \$ 11,643.33
 Operating balance \$ 5,551.41

Events Calendar

February 2018

Saturday February 17

DIST 12 MID-WINTER SOCIAL
Joliet Community Center - Joliet
MT

PRIMARY PURPOSE SPEAKER

Bozeman MT

INTO ACTION WEEKEND

Bohemian Grange Hall - Whitefish
MT

Saturday February 23-25

30TH SPRING MENS RETREAT
Abba's Haven - Lavina MT

Flyers available on
AA-Montana.org

March 2018

March 2-4

2018 West Central Regional AA
Service Conference (WCRAASC)
Marriott - West Des Moines IA

Saturday March 10

DIST 11 PRE-ASSEMBLY
American Lutheran Church -
Billings MT

March 16-17

2018 POCKETS OF ENTHUSIASM
First Presbyterian Church - Helena
MT

March 24-25

HEART TO HEART
Chico Hot Springs MT

Hotline Bling:
406-248-2337

CALL LOG: 29 TOTAL CALLS

In the call logs, many calls going as much as 17 volunteers called, sometimes 2 or 3 numbers called for a single volunteer and no answer. A few of the calls were even never returned or connected due to no availability of a volunteer in small rural towns. If you are a DCM, please, please get ahold of Brandon M. our Area Webmaster. He can give you access information for your Districts online volunteer lists. We must do better at getting these callers connected fast to a member! Also please program the answer net number into your phones so it pops up on your caller ID.

The December bill was \$259.12, over the \$250 budget, but only because they put a \$15.00 holiday charge on for Christmas. No bills to the Districts.

TIM K. AREA 40 PI CHAIR

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Sober Ski March 2-3 at Whitefish

Understanding Anonymity

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

What is the purpose of anonymity in Alcoholics Anonymous? Why is it often referred to as the greatest single protection the Fellowship has to assure its continued existence and growth?

If we look at the history of A.A., from its beginning in 1935 until now, it is clear that anonymity serves two different yet equally vital functions:

- At the personal level, anonymity provides protection for all members from identification as alcoholics, a safeguard often of special importance to newcomers.
- At the public level of press, radio, TV, films and other media technologies such as the Internet, anonymity stresses the equality in the Fellowship of all members by putting the brake on those who might otherwise exploit their A.A. affiliation to achieve recognition, power, or personal gain.

When using digital media, A.A. members are responsible for their own anonymity and that of others. When we post, text, or blog, we should assume that we are publishing at the public level. When we break our anonymity in these forums, we may inadvertently break the anonymity of others.

A Drunk Becomes A Delegate

Lonely, different, and afraid; the first time I heard another alcoholic use those three words to describe how he felt, I knew I had found someone who understood. Those words described so well the nagging, and sometimes overwhelming, emotions I had felt during much of my life.



Prior to that, I had used other words to describe how I felt; stupid, useless, loser, screw-up. In fact, that's what I was calling myself as I tried to work my first step in Alcoholics Anonymous. You'll notice that I said my first step, not the first step. The truth is, I had already completed the first step. I knew that I was powerless over alcohol and my life was absolutely unmanageable.

I wrote about my first step in these pages a few months back and won't go into the story again in great detail, other than to say that I tried to complete the ninth step, without the benefit of having read the Big Book, and without the guidance of a sponsor. I felt so bad about harm I had caused others that I wanted to skip ahead to get the amends part out of the way and, hopefully, stop feeling like a stupid, screw-up loser.

Oddly, things didn't go as I had planned and I headed home feeling worse than when I started. On that trip home I had what I can only describe as a profound spiritual experience that continues to affect my life to this day.

I didn't stop feeling like a loser immediately afterward, but I did come away from the experience with several great lessons in recovery. One was that it doesn't matter your motivation, and you don't need to do it perfectly, as long as you are willing to take the action this program asks of you. But, I also learned that the Steps are in order for a reason. I learned that I was not at Step Nine, but was in fact at Step Two, and I came to believe. I acquired my first real awareness of my Higher Power, and I had found hope.

I then entered a challenging stage in my recovery filled with both hope and doubt. I faced a world where, all around me, people were experiencing the miracle of recovery in their lives, but I still questioned my own worthiness. I bounced between thinking, "Good for them," to thinking "Damn them," but always finishing with, "I can never have what they have." During this time, I learned that whoever coined the phrase, "fear cannot not exist where there is faith," was wrong. I learned that the act of stepping forward on faith, in the face of fear, is the very definition of courage, and we all need courage, just as we all need to learn to encourage others.

The Fellowship terrified me. I went to my first Roundup not knowing what I was in for. The moment my soon-to-be wife and I stepped inside the door to the main room, that first afternoon, I froze. There were approximately two-hundred people milling around there, all laughing, smiling, and hugging each other. It was surreal. I could not believe the level of cheerfulness in that room. In fact, I clearly recall thinking, "They're faking it. No one can be THAT happy." I turned to tell to my fiancé, but she was gone.

She saw a room full of friends and was off to say hi to as many of them as she could before the speaker started. I was appalled. She had to be stopped. I raced after her to reel her back in, but she got to the first one and said, "Hi Bill, this is my fiancé, Gerry!" All I could do was stick out my hand and check out Bill's taste in shoes. And so it went for the rest of the weekend. She did it to me again at the next Roundup we attended, but that one wasn't so bad. I had learned by then that it wasn't so bad being in the middle of all that happy, joyous and free nonsense.

After several years, with the help of a sponsor, the Steps, and the examples of many friends, and a wife, who were all active in recovery and in service work, I was able to recognize the fear, pride and resentment that had been standing in my way, and I became willing to try something different, just as I had done when I became willing to try my first step of Alcoholics Anonymous.

So, it was with an odd mix of faith, fear, and willingness that I raised my hand to stand for my group's GSR position.

I had actually already been to one Area Assembly before then, but I was tricked into going there. My wife had been involved in service work and, even though I had explained quite clearly that I would never, EVER, get involved in what I believed was the politics of AA, she invited me to come along with her. She said, "You could go fishing, I could go to the Assembly, and we could have breakfast and dinner together. It would be like a vacation!" "Well," I thought innocently, "I do like fishing."

There remains some dispute today as to whether the fishing sucked, the fisherman sucked, or God simply had other plans. Regardless, it was a slow morning on the creek and I needed coffee. I knew they had urns of the stuff in the back of the Assembly room, so I decided to go back to the hotel, sneak in, and steal some.

So there I was, standing in the back of this AA political rally, sipping my stolen coffee, judging everyone in the room as being AA politicians, and waiting for the stump speeches to start. What I heard instead were a lot of passionate people coming to the microphones and sharing what they believed was the best way to carry the AA message to the still suffering alcoholic. It was an odd sounding language they used, but I caught on. They talked pamphlets, PSA's and prison meetings; Hot lines, home groups and hugs; Literature, laughter, and "the language of the heart". No one said "Vote for me."

My eyes were opened wide to a level of recovery that I had earlier viewed only through the lens of contempt prior to investigation. After my rotation as GSR, I knew I wanted to continue doing service work, but I still had that whole "fear of people" thing going on, so I decided to stand for the position of District Archives Chair. My reasoning was simple, if I served in archives, it would be only me and a bunch of files and dusty books up in a room, far away from everyone else. I could do service and not have to be that sociable. I thought it was the perfect combination.

As usual, I found that God had other plans. All He asked of me was to be willing to participate, regardless of my motivation, and he would take it from there. I quickly realized that I had been walked, step by step, toward discovering a passion for history that I never knew I had. I loved learning and sharing about the early days of AA and, when the opportunity arose, I stood for and was elected to the position of Area Archivist.

I didn't deserve the tremendous amount of trust that the Area Fellowship had placed in me, but I threw myself into the position and did the best job I could, for nearly seven years. I was able to attend the National AA Archives Workshop several times, and in 2011 I was allowed to be the chairperson for that event. My world and my recovery broadened tremendously. I still worked among the files and dusty books, but I also found myself surrounded by an enthusiastic Fellowship that now stretched across the nation.

In our Area, the Archivist position is non-rotating. In other words the Archivist stays in that position until either they, or the Area Fellowship, decide it's time for a change. In 2012, after watching a few two-year rotations come and go, I decided that it was time to allow someone else to enjoy the experience that I had been allowed to have, and I gave the Area notice that I would be stepping down. I figured I would go back to district and find a position there. That was my plan.

I was encouraged to stand for Area Delegate and, though I thought the chances were slim, I decided to try. I wasn't elected, but friends then urged me to stand for Area Chair. Fear had me questioning my ability to meet the demands of that busy position. By now however, I had learned to trust that God and the Group Conscience might know better than I what the next right thing for me to do was, so I stood and was elected. I then had no choice but to step past my fear and into two of the most exhilarating years of my life.

As Archivist, I found a great deal of my attention focused on the word "trusted", but, as Area Chair, I came to comprehend the word "servant" better than I ever had. The new position was just as demanding, though ten times as rewarding, as I had anticipated. It was A LOT of work, but as with every other position I had held, the Fellowship was there from the moment I was elected, offering their support and encouragement. Though I still felt a healthy fear, I was neither alone, nor different.

At the end of my rotation as Area Chair, I had to make the very difficult decision to not stand for the Delegate position. It was not easy, but I had an uncertain situation in my personal life that I had to pay attention to and, being aware of the robust schedule of the Delegate position, I knew I couldn't stand, even if others encouraged me to do so. The irony of that situation was that my original plan was to stand for Delegate, but, because of the lessons I'd learned along the way, I knew that NOT standing was the right thing this time.

"We never rotate out, we always rotate on" these words, from a much-respected past delegate, rang in my ears as I returned to district for the next rotation where I thoroughly enjoyed serving two years as the district Workshops Chair. In many ways, I felt I had come home after an exciting trip away.

In those two years I was able to resolve the matter that kept me from standing for delegate and, when the next Area elections came around, I threw my hat in the ring and was fortunate to be chosen as the Panel 67 Delegate from Area 40 Montana.

Today, I stand smack in the middle of my rotation as delegate, with one year down and one year to go. I have the privilege to serve as the Delegate Chair of the Conference Committee on Public Information, and to serve alongside 134 other delegates, trustees and staff from around the U.S. and Canada. I have found that my favorite part of this position, however, is when I get to travel around the state, giving my delegate's report and being surrounded once again by all that happy, joyous and free nonsense. I most assuredly feel neither lonely, nor different, nor am I so afraid I cannot find the willingness to step forward when asked to serve a cause greater than my own.

Gerry R. Area 40 Delegate

Triangle Subscription Form

If you would like a subscription for yourself, a friend or your group, please return this form or subscribe online at aa-montana.org. Cost is \$10 per year.

SEND TO:

AREA 40 TRIANGLE
PO BOX 1976,
Helena, MT 59624

Group

GSR/Contact

Address

City, St, Zip

Phone #

Email

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: Groups are encouraged to be self-supporting for their Triangle subscription fee. "Expired" above the mailing address indicates that the subscription has expired.

Groups will receive the Triangle regardless of subscription status because of Past Actions of the Area Assembly.

WHERE TO MAIL GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS:

**Area 40, Inc.
PO Box 3878
Bozeman, MT 59772**

*If sending to Area please
address check to Area 40 Inc.*

**GSO
PO Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163**