



# ComLine

Adult Children of Alcoholics  
*Experience, Strength & Hope*

Volume 27, Number 2

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## Identification, Before and After

Every ACA recovery journey begins with identification. Some of us identify immediately with the fellowship name, remembering clearly the parental alcoholism or addictions we witnessed as children. Others of us identify with the Laundry List but wonder how our “normal” and “happy” childhoods could have created those characteristics in us. Some of us identify with all 14 traits of the Laundry List, while some of us may initially relate to only a few.

In every case, however, some element of identification brings us to our second meeting, or keeps us reading another page of the fellowship text. Eventually, we learn if we have the necessary “desire” to recover and the willingness to surrender to the process, one day at a time. Eventually, we commit to working the Steps and applying those spiritual principles in our lives. But before we commit, we relate.

Identification is a critical first step of our journey. It’s what keeps us coming back.

For those of us introduced to ACA by a fellow traveler carrying the message, we also know the power of hearing and relating to someone else’s story. Identifying with others reminds us that we aren’t alone or unique. We aren’t the only ones to have felt such shame and aloneness. And we aren’t the only ones struggling to reclaim a true self buried years ago in a dysfunctional family system.

Identifying with other adult children also reminds us that we don’t have to do this difficult work in isolation. Every ACA meeting we attend reminds us that others have been where we are today and have made it through to the other side. Fellow travelers light the way for us to follow, so we can carry that hope for those just beginning the journey.

Eventually, we come to identify not just with the Problem but also the Solution. We see the ACA Promises coming true in our lives. We relate more to stability and serenity, and less to fear and excitement. Slowly and gradually, we find our identification as *recovering* adult children.

### About ACA

Adult Children of Alcoholics is an anonymous Twelve Step, Twelve Tradition program of women and men who grew up in an environment of addictiveness (alcohol or other substances) or in otherwise dysfunctional homes. Our willingness and resiliency bring us together.

We share our experience, strength, and hope to validate our experience as well as give some hope to the new member. We take positive action in our lives today. By practicing the Twelve Steps, focusing on “The Solution”, and accepting a loving Higher Power of our own understanding, we find freedom from the past and a way to improve our lives.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org)

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ComLine is published thirteen times per year by ACA’s World Service Organization (WSO). ComLine is intended as a communication line from WSO to the fellowship of ACA around the world, and as a forum for the fellowship to share their experience, strength, and hope in recovery. The opinions expressed are those of the individual writing the article and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ACA fellowship or WSO.

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ACA WSO, Inc., PO Box 3216, Torrance, CA 90510.

## What is ACA WSO?

Adult Children of Alcoholics World Service Organization, Inc. is an organization of volunteer members elected to serve in the capacity of corporate trustees according to the laws of the State of California, U.S.A.

WSO provides a sense of common purpose, stability, and continuity for meetings, Intergroups, and Regions. By serving as a central point of group communication, the WSO encourages unity and similarity among ACA meetings. ACA WSO coordinates meeting information worldwide. It is one place where ACA groups and the general public can find information, literature, and locations of meetings.

The mission, the singleness of purpose, of WSO is to carry the message of recovery to all who suffer from being raised in an alcoholic or other dysfunctional environment.

## Contacting Your ACA WSO

### Have questions regarding:

**Local Meetings...**

**New Meetings...**

**ACA Events...**

**ACA Literature...**

**Fellowship Text and Workbook orders...**

**Hospitals and Institutions meetings...**

**ACA Outreach...**

**or Public Information?**

Just go to [www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org), and select "Contact WSO" from the options menu. Comments and requests submitted by this web form will then be routed to the appropriate ACA WSO committee or board member for response.

You can also write to us at:

**ACA WSO  
PO Box 3216  
Torrance, CA, USA, 90510**

(Please do not send Express Mail)

**We look forward to hearing from you!**



## The Outreach Committee Responds...

### What does "group autonomy" mean?

ACA meetings are free to make their own decisions using the guidance of the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions. Meetings do this by using the group conscience process. Each meeting is then also responsible for the results of their group conscience decisions. A thorough and thoughtful reading of the Twelve Traditions will help members to understand why and how this is possible.

### Please tell me about the monthly WSO Teleconferences and how I can join?

Every second Saturday, at 11 a.m. Pacific Standard Time, a teleconference is held by the Adult Children of Alcoholics World Service Organization. The current call-in phone number is (712) 432-0075/ pin 427266#. Each person attending the teleconference is responsible for the cost of their long distance call.

During the teleconference, working committees give monthly reports and business is reviewed for discussion and possible action by the WSO board of trustees. Representatives of the WSO office also attend to provide updates of office needs and developments. We encourage and welcome visitors in order to be 'transparent' in our work. We also encourage ACA Intergroup representatives to attend to keep current of fellowship business.

The WSO *Operating Policies and Procedures Manual* details the requirements of board membership. Those requirements include having at least two years of recovery in the ACA Twelve Step program, attending ACA meetings regularly and working at maintaining emotional sobriety. Anyone interested in becoming a WSO board member is encouraged to begin service on one of the working committees.

### Why didn't I get an answer back from the Outreach Committee?

All emails are responded to as soon as possible. Unfortunately, there are times when an email address 'bounces'. It may have been incorrectly spelled or be undeliverable for some other reason. If this has happened to you, please email us a second time.

- Phyllis R., ACA WSO Outreach Chair

## “Out of the Playpen”

*from the ACA Fellowship Text, pgs 54-55*

My parents never drank a drop of alcohol in their lives, nor did their parents before them. They were highly respected members of the church. I read somewhere that our earliest childhood memory is often symbolic of our lives. My earliest memory is sitting in a playpen on a front veranda, feeling alone, trapped, and unable to get out.

I was born and raised in a little farming town. After my parents married, three babies were born in three years, and my mother had no idea how to cope with us. My father worked in the medical field and constantly brought home drugs and pills for mother's nerves and migraines.

In our family, there was a very sharp distinction between the family image in the community and what I actually saw at home. To the community my parents were esteemed leaders and church workers, models of family life and community service. Our family life at home was actually far from this idealistic picture.

My father was a workaholic, always “on-call.” When not at work he attended meetings for a myriad of community organizations. One of his addictions was to become president of every organization he joined. My mother struggled at home with her nerves, her migraines, and her children. When I misbehaved, I was beaten, even though my misdeeds were never more than average childhood explorations. Mother's worst threat was that she would walk out of the

house and leave us if we did not behave. She often did walk out the door and down the road, taunting us with, “See! I'm leaving you until you learn to behave.” Crying, we would plead for her to come back and promise behavioral perfection.

I became a workaholic like my father and almost as neurotic as my mother. I was unable to sustain any kind of meaningful, intimate relationship. By the time I was forty I had the same dual world as my parents: a wholesome public image of success and service and a private life of loneliness, suppressed feelings, and sexual dysfunction.

I found a therapist who helped me explore the long-lost child imprisoned in the playpen of my soul. One day he mentioned that I might find meetings for Adult Children of Alcoholics helpful. I thought he hadn't been listening when I told him of my family's history of proud sobriety. He said I didn't have to join, pay, or say anything, so I went to a meeting. I was shocked. “The Problem” was the story of my life. It all fit. It is five years later now, and I am still working the program. With the help of my Higher Power, I claim my life and spirit separate from the web of past family dysfunction. The miraculous combination of therapy and working the Twelve Steps set me free from the prison of my childhood playpen to explore and experience my real and unique self.

## “Someone Finally Wrote it Down”

*from the ACA Fellowship Text, pg 118*

The first time I read the common behaviors of an adult child, I felt like a bell that had been fetched up and rang hard. I was calm on the outside, but I was vibrating on the inside. I could not believe what I was reading. I remember looking over my shoulder to see if someone had been reading my mail and had planted this stuff somehow.

I may have rubbed my fingers on the page, trying to feel the words because they seemed so real. The words of judging myself without mercy and being a people-pleaser were describing my

thinking and behaving in a language that was clear. I could not deny it. I was cursed harshly and subjected to violence as a kid. I was never listened to. Now, someone who I had never met had written down how I thought and felt without meeting me.

Until I found ACA, I had spent my whole life condemning myself and feeling no good. I took drugs and acted out in disgusting ways, feeling lost. I read the traits for the first time 20 years ago. I have been hooked on ACA ever since. The traits and the Twelve Steps have given me a new life and self-love.

## “My Parents were not Monsters, just Alcoholics”

*from the ACA Fellowship Text, pgs 412-413*

I came to ACA with the deep, dark secret that I hated my parents. I knew there was something terribly wrong with me. People are supposed to love their parents. My father, however, was an alcoholic, and my mother raged incessantly. Both were violent. They frightened me, and I hated them for it.

My parents' illness affected my siblings and me profoundly. I believed if I had been a better daughter and a better person, my parents would not have acted the way they acted. Knowing that my behavior as a child had no effect on how my parents chose to live their lives is a wonderful gift.

I thought my parents, my husband, and my children were keeping me in bondage, locked up, and unable to live my life freely. I have learned in this program that I am the only person limiting my freedom because of my fears.

In ACA I've started coming out of denial. I discovered others who had parents like mine. By exposing

many of my family's secrets in meetings I have changed the impact of my childhood on my life today. Merely stating aloud, “My father was an alcoholic,” relieved me of the overwhelming stress of keeping the secret hidden. I know now that the things my parents did which hurt me so much were not done to hurt me. My parents' behavior and their choices weren't about me. I've come to understand my parents were not monsters, just alcoholics.

I've been able to release many of my fears by using the Twelve Steps as the method and the meetings as a supportive forum. When I expose my fears to the light of day by telling others, the fears don't seem as bad or evil as they were when hidden within that dark place inside of me.

Confronting my fear was not easy, but it has changed my life dramatically. I certainly could never have made this change in myself, by myself. I thank ACA for being here and supporting me through this.

### The ComLine Needs You

Would you like to share about one of the ACA Traditions? Are you willing to share your experience, strength, or hope in ACA recovery? Want to tell the fellowship about what's going on with ACA in your region? Just send us an article!

#### ComLine Guidelines

Articles may be submitted for publication by mailing them to ComLine, PO Box 3216, Torrance, CA 90510, or by submitting them electronically through the web form found at [www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org). Articles which are not used will be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Articles will be selected for publication at the discretion of the editorial staff. Articles which might violate the Twelve Steps or the Twelve Traditions of ACA will not be printed. Profanity, related euphemisms, personal attacks on others, and libelous statements will not be used. Authors will be listed with a first name and last initial only, even if it's a pseudonym.

#### ComLine Subscriptions

ComLine is mailed to subscribers and to 7th Tradition supporters of ACA WSO. For those subscribing to receive the ComLine via postal mail, we request a donation to offset our cost of printing and postage. Rates shown are in U.S. Dollars:

Inside the US: \$16.00/ year  
Canada: \$19.25/ year (USD)  
International: \$24.00/ year (USD)

To subscribe, please send your mailing information and donation to:  
ACA WSO, PO Box 3216, Torrance, CA 90510.

Subscriptions can also be processed online at:  
[www.acawso.com/wsobook/literature.php](http://www.acawso.com/wsobook/literature.php)

#### ComLine Archive

ComLine editions published since 2004 are available to read or download, and new issues are posted each month. Just go to [www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org) and select “ComLine” from the options menu.

## Reminder: 2011 Annual Business Conference of Adult Children of Alcoholics

**The next Annual Business Conference of Adult Children of Alcoholics will be held in the Atlanta, Georgia metro area April 29 - May 1, 2011.**

All ACA members are welcome to attend.

Each registered ACA group and Intergroup is also encouraged to elect one voting delegate to attend the ABC. Only those delegates registering as the authorized representative of their ACA group or Intergroup will be eligible to vote on motions at the ABC.

### Proposed items of business for this year's conference are:

- ITEM 2011-1 ACA Inter Group IG-040, Denmark  
Issue: A motion is made, that every 5 years, the ABC will take place outside of USA. Further, that this be done the first time in 2012.
- ITEM 2011-2 ACA Meeting DEN053, Denmark  
Issue: We are proposing that the next ABC meeting can take place in Denmark.
- ITEM 2011-3 ACA Meeting AZ065, Prescott, AZ  
Issue: Request a pamphlet be developed to expand on how to have an open friendly meeting without crosstalk.
- ITEM 2011-4 ACA Meeting: CA 477, Los Altos, CA  
Issue: That ACA WSO explore the requirements to hire an outside service to provide certificates of insurance for meetings.
- ITEM 2011-5 ACA Meeting AZ054, Mesa, AZ  
Issue: We make a motion that WSO clarifies in all literature for meetings: what a "closed meeting" is.
- ITEM 2011-6 ACA meeting TX086, League City, Texas  
Issue: We propose anyone attending the ABC be charged a \$20.00 registration fee.
- ITEM 2011-7 ACA meeting TX086, League City, Texas  
Issue: We propose a new group that registers with ACA WSO be sent a welcome packet for free.

ACA meetings and Intergroups are asked to schedule a group conscience discussion and vote on which of these seven items should be considered at the 2011 ABC. Additional information, including a "WSO Analysis" of each item is available on the ABC webpage at:

[www.adultchildren.org/abc/](http://www.adultchildren.org/abc/)

Every registered group and Intergroup has been mailed a group conscience survey ballot, and an online version of the ballot can be submitted from the ABC webpage.

**All ballots received by April 15, 2011 will be counted as part of the collective group conscience vote of the ACA fellowship.** Items supported by at least two-thirds of the groups responding will be discussed as items of business at the 2011 ABC.

### Agenda Highlights of the 2011 ABC

**Location: Ridgeview Institute, 3995 South Cobb Drive Smyrna, Georgia, USA**

#### Friday, April 29

8:00 am	Registration and Delegate packet pick-up
9:00 am	ABC opens
10:30 am	Presentation of the ACA WSO Annual Report and ACA WSO Committee Reports
2:00 pm	Ratification of the 2011 ACA WSO Board of Trustees
2:30 pm	Old Business
3:00 pm	New Business and Introduction of ballot items
4:30 pm	Close of day

#### Saturday, April 30

2:00 pm to 6:30 pm	Continued discussion of ballot items
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#### Sunday, May 1

12:30 pm	Continued discussion of ballot items
2:00 pm	Close of the 2011 ABC
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm	(optional) Local ACA meeting
4:30 pm to 6:30 pm	In-person meeting of the ACA WSO Board of Trustees

**Seventh Tradition Contributions– December 2010**

*“The fund flow model of ACA is based on a 60/40 disbursement. After a group meets its monthly expenses and sets aside money for a prudent reserve, 60 percent of what is left over is usually sent to the local Intergroup and 40 percent is sent to WSO.*

*A prudent reserve usually is the amount that equals one to two month’s worth of meeting expenses. Meeting expenses would include rent, utilities, and other group expenses.”*

*\* Please note that Seventh Tradition contributions mailed to ACA WSO take approximately 3 months to appear in this ComLine report.*

Anonymous,	Arlington, VA	30.00
Anonymous,	Estes Park, CO	25.00
Anonymous,	Estes Park, CO	25.00
Anonymous,	Goldvein, VA	75.00
Anonymous,	Hilo, HI	88.75
Anonymous,	Lund, Sweden	290.00
Anonymous,	Madison, WI	47.00
Anonymous,	Marietta, GA	39.00
Anonymous,	Milford, MI	15.00
Anonymous,	San Antonio, TX	29.36
Anonymous,	Stamford, CT	25.00
AUS047,	Trinity beach, Queensland	100.00
CA717,	Santa Monica, CA	100.00
CA829,	La Mesa, CA	60.00
CA865,	Thousand Oaks, CA	60.50
CA920,	Westlake Village, CA	100.00
CA997,	Grover Beach, CA	50.00
CAN90,	Port Colborne, CN	37.68
CT082,	Naugatuck, CT	25.00
FIN010,	Helsinki, Fin	69.00
IL130,	Libertyville, IL	200.00
IL164,	Chicago, Il	120.00
LA019,	New Orleans, LA	100.00
MA036,	West Boylston, MA	10.00
MS002,	Jackson, MS	40.00
NM022,	Albuquerque, NM	17.55
NV041,	Henderson, NV	50.00
NY038,	New York, NY	200.00
NY070,	New York, NY	40.00
OH045,	Canton, OH	50.00
OK001,	Tulsa, OK	100.00
OR090,	Portland, OR	20.00
PA083,	Oaks, PA	25.00
TX083,	Houston, TX	100.00
WI073,	Oshkosh, WI	20.00
WI076,	Madison, WI	60.00

**Total 7th Tradition Contributions      \$2,443.84**

**ACA Literature Orders: 2010**

**14,631**

*books and workbooks*



*ordered last year!*

Fellowship Texts (Red Books)

12-Step Workbooks

January	704	536
February	590	416
March	735	546
April	541	390
May	654	482
June	700	581
July	809	571
August	728	521
September	695	572
October	829	602
November	723	497
December	688	521

## ACA WSO Treasurer's Monthly Report - December 2010

### Bank Balances as of December 31, 2010:

Checking Account	28,775.34
Pay Pal Account	9,137.74
Savings Account	60,106.83
 Total Funds on hand	 98,019.91

*The balances above include transfers of \$14,000 of accumulating funds in the Pay Pal account to the ACA WSO Checking account.*

*\$40,000 of the ACA WSO Savings Account remains designated for office lease prudent reserve.*

### Profit and Loss Summary: December 2010

#### Income

7th Tradition	2,443.84
ACA Fellowship Text Purchases	13,901.36
Bank Interest	7.66
California Sales Tax	305.03
ComLine Subscriptions	32.00
Fellowship Text Index Sales	70.00
Literature Sales	1,183.85
Medallion Sales	157.55
Workbook Purchases	5,267.75
 Total Income	 23,369.04

#### Expense

Accounting Services	1,300.00
Insurance	655.00
Office Expenses	5,993.25
Office Equipment	65.60
Office Supplies	1,013.77
Postage	2,816.31
Rent	1,705.00
Utilities	392.57
Pay Pal Fees	688.92
Payroll Expenses	5,777.00
Web and Support	25.00
 Total Expense	 14,439.17
 Net Ordinary Income	 8,929.87
Other Misc. Expense	162.72
<b>Net Income (December)</b>	<b>8,767.15</b>

### Year to Date Summary: January - December 2010

#### Income

7th Tradition	21,841.60
ACA Fellowship Text Purchases	155,458.45
Bank Interest	111.84
California Sales Tax	3,494.35
ComLine Subscriptions	896.00
Fellowship Text Index Sales	897.25
Handbook Contribution	27.73
Literature Sales	17,599.59
Medallion Sales	2,988.30
Miscellaneous Income	222.83
Workbook Purchases	64,675.80
 Total Income	 268,213.74

#### Expense

Lodging/Travel	1,850.00
Repairs & Maintenance	171.15
ABC Committee	3,776.74
Meals/Drinks	55.00
Miscellaneous	81.91
Room Rental	272.23
Transportation/Lodging	2,925.29
ABC Committee - Other	442.31
Accounting Services	9,400.00
Bank Fees	175.33
Business Taxes/Licenses	50.00
ComLine Expenses	958.21
Fellowship Text Expenses	49,088.81
Insurance	4,011.93
Literature Committee	13,858.92
Miscellaneous	0.00
Office Expenses	80,306.63
Office Equipment	614.29
Office Supplies	12,633.98
Postage	41,951.98
Printing	1,501.97
Rent	19,846.32
Utilities	3,751.83
Office Expenses - Other	6.26
Pay Pal Fees	7,969.50
Payroll Expenses	64,814.67
Tax	4,290.00
Web and Support	964.84
 Total Expense	 241,686.73
 Net Ordinary Income	 26,527.01
Other Misc. Expense	162.72
<b>Net Income (2010)</b>	<b>26,364.29</b>

**ComLine**

**P.O. Box 3216  
Torrance, CA 90510  
USA**

**Return Service  
Requested**

