



# ComLine

Adult Children of Alcoholics  
*Experience, Strength & Hope*

Volume 26, Number 5

May 2010

## ***ACA Tradition Five***

Each group has but one primary purpose -  
to carry its message to the adult child who still suffers.

“The AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) program learned early on that the fellowship should do one thing well instead of doing many things poorly. ACA has adopted a similar attitude. While we encourage diversity in our fellowship and taking reasonable risks for personal growth, the fellowship focus remains constant. We carry the message to others and avoid distractions that could divert our groups from this singleness of purpose. Each group decision must ultimately answer this question: “Does the decision we are about to make contribute to carrying the ACA message?”

...The message we carry in ACA meetings, treatment centers, and to professional groups is a clear message free of affiliation with outside issues. We don't mix the ACA message with other causes or philosophies, no matter how noble. To do so would cloud the ACA message of recovery. The message we carry is that ACA works for those who are willing to surrender, ask for help, and accept it. Recovery cannot begin until the adult child admits that he or she is powerless over the effects of family dysfunction. The admission of powerlessness is followed by an acknowledgment of an unmanageable life. With ACA, there is hope for another way of life that moves us away from isolation and toward others and God.

...With our experiences as children and adults, we can reach a suffering adult child when few others can. We are not bragging, but we know what we are talking about because we have lived it. We have survived family dysfunction, and we have found a sure way to move beyond mere survival. A bewildered or confused adult child, who is suspicious of most people, will trust another adult child in a matter of moments upon hearing a piece of the person's story. We have the gift of identification. By carrying the message, we embrace the power of identification. We don't have to promote ACA. Our stories and sincerity attract people to ACA and to a better way of life.”

*Excerpts from pages 514 and 515 of the ACA Fellowship Text*

### 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.

# The Twelve Traditions of Adult Children of Alcoholics

“While the Twelve Steps address recovery for the individual, the Twelve Traditions promote group unity and stability. The Traditions guarantee that we will always have a meeting to attend and that the meeting will focus on recovery from the effects of family dysfunction.

The Traditions allow our groups and service structure to remain focused on the primary purpose of carrying the ACA message to the adult child who still suffers.”

*From the ACA Fellowship Text, pg. 346*

## 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 support...**

**ACA Outreach...**

**or Public Information?**

Just go to [www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org), and select “Contact” 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, 90510, USA**  
(Please do not send Express Mail)

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

Each 2010 edition of the ComLine will feature one of the ACA Traditions:

### January

Tradition One- Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on ACA unity.

### February

Tradition Two- For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority— a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.

### March

Tradition Three- The only requirement for membership in ACA is a desire to recover from the effects of growing up in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional family.

### April

Tradition Four- Each group is autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or ACA as a whole. We cooperate with all other Twelve Step programs.

### May

Tradition Five- Each group has but one primary purpose— to carry its message to the adult child who still suffers.

### June

Tradition Six- An ACA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the ACA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

### July

Tradition Seven- Every ACA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

### August

Tradition Eight- Adult Children of Alcoholics should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

### September

Tradition Nine- ACA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

### October

Tradition Ten- Adult Children of Alcoholics has no opinion on outside issues; hence the ACA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

### November

Tradition Eleven- Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, and films.

### December

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

## Carrying and Delivering the ACA Message

Leo D.

I have attended ACA meetings both in my hometown and out of state, and I feel they are all different. In any group, regardless of how much recovery I find in myself or the speaker I'm listening to, I always leave with something that I can use, something that stays with me and contributes to my emotional sobriety. I think this quality comes from knowing that, once you feel part of ACA, your experience, strength and hope is not just yours anymore but belongs to everyone who hears it now.

Comparing the person I am to whom I was that first time I entered an ACA room, I see that my sharing has evolved from "Listen to me, World, I'm in pain!" to "Listen to me, World: over there is where I was, and here is where I am, and this is how I feel about it". This has happened as my attention has shifted from my victimized, self-centered, anguished, abandoned and revengeful self to this other self that now learns to live in a community, and likes living in a community, has something to offer and remembers where he was, and how much someone else sharing about their own life helped him in return.

Nobody posted it in the rooms where I have been heard, or made a point to tell me, that our meetings had one primary purpose. However, a purpose emerges every time we acknowledge where we came from, and where we are now; it is an intrinsic purpose, taking root in our honesty and our pain, and also in our efforts to live life as well as we can.

This purpose of serving one another by carrying the ACA message is a choice of love for myself and my fellow travelers: I don't have to make myself do it, it is inseparable from my willingness to work my program, to love me better than ever before, and to give back as well as I can. Delivering the ACA message is how I grow in love, more authentically and freely, with myself and whomever my eyes and ears are hearing; it is a task of love and of choice that I sometimes forget. However, lucky me, whenever I get lost in my defects of character, another voice full of pain, confusion, wisdom and courage reminds me that carrying the message to the suffering child is another way of remembering how I become whole in this process.

### More Tradition Five Insight...

ACA Fellowship Text, p. 513

*"I am so glad that ACA does one thing and one thing well. We don't debate politics or fuss over causes, no matter how worthy or unworthy. I know what to expect every time I attend an ACA meeting or event. I know we are going to read about or discuss recovery from the disease of family dysfunction. We are not going to get diverted into fixing one another or practicing therapy, either. Sports talk is nice, too, but it is not part of the ACA message of hope.*

*ACA groups also carry the ACA message into prisons and treatment centers. This is rewarding service work. Through the Twelfth Step, we tell our stories and carry the message to future group members.*

*In ACA, it seems to me that we focus on learning to love ourselves and to contribute to the world. That's our primary purpose. We carry the message to other adult children wanting a new way of life. By doing this, I stay emotionally sober and help myself in the process. I give it away to keep it – recovery."*

### Fifth Tradition Meditation

ACA Fellowship Text, p.517

*Higher Power. Help me remember that ACA has one primary purpose, which centers the fellowship and which simplifies most discussions.*

*Help me remember to ask myself a simple question when I am doing the business of ACA.*

*'Does what we are about to do support the primary purpose of carrying the ACA message to another adult child needing help?'*

## Every Group Carries a Message

Omer G.

Tradition Five of Adult Children of Alcoholics says that each ACA group carries "its" message of recovery to the adult child who still suffers. The wording of Tradition Five caused me to ask a question. If every ACA meeting carries "its message" to the adult child, then what is my group's message?

Since my group is registered with ACA World Services, and since it abides by the ACA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and uses ACA Conference-Approved Literature, then our message is one of ACA principles and unity. It is a message that says the Laundry List traits can be changed from a life of emotional intoxication to a life of emotional sobriety. My group's message says there is hope and a new way of life in ACA through the Twelve Steps.

My home group is located in the Central United States. I see Tradition Five and my group carrying the ACA message in the little things that group members do. The chairperson showing up on time and passing around the group readings for members to read reflects Tradition Five. Following the group format and avoiding cross-talk while listening respectfully to

others share is part of carrying the ACA message and primary purpose. Having ACA literature available and handing out phone numbers to newcomers is Tradition Five in action. Also, participating in the ACA Annual Business Conference each year by mailing in our group ballot on ACA issues and discussions is carrying its message.

My group's message also involves group members working a program and sharing about the Solution and living the ACA program in their daily lives. My group's message says we honor the ACA Twelve Traditions and the freedom the Traditions bring.

Every group carries a message.

### Questions to Consider

- 1) *What is the ACA message your group carries?*
- 2) *How does the primary purpose of carrying the message to others contribute to group unity and to consistency in ACA meetings?*
- 3) *What are you and your group doing to carry the message?*

## 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 who wish to receive 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)

**The ComLine Archive can be accessed through the ACA WSO forum:**

just go to [www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org) and select "Newsletters"

ComLine editions published since 2004 are available to read or download, and new issues are posted each month.

## News from the Fellowship



### From Natalia K., adult child of alcoholic parents, (Russia):

I remember the day when I received the ACA Fellowship Text (Red Book) in June 2007. It was very hot in Moscow; I went to the post office and got a heavy box. I opened it – and saw the book. It was the first ACA text in Russia, and it was in my hands. I was so afraid to lose it that I held it in my arms all my way home.

This book was a present from a “fellow traveller” in the United States. She had heard about the difficulties with obtaining the ACA Text in Russia, and had purchased a book and sent it to me, absolutely free. She sent it for my personal use, but I started to translate it, too. I could never imagine that I would be able to translate the entire book, but I applied the slogan “One day at a time”. I decided just to start and to let God do the rest.

I am not a professional interpreter, and I do not have linguistic education. I speak fluent English, but I had never worked in translations. Surprisingly, the translation process was very easygoing. Each day I prayed and asked my Higher Power to give me some force, concentration, and creativity to translate, and I would then translate a page. Sometimes I was so tired after work and studies, that I translated only a paragraph. But I never went to sleep without translating at least one sentence.

In the beginning I did not understand the ideas of the Red Book, because I was too concentrated on details and did not see things as a whole. Even when I finished a chapter, I still saw only grammar. I was so perfectionistic that I couldn’t detach from the text. At a given moment, however, I got help from other adult children from different cities, and the process became more structured. The texts improved.

Finally, I detached from the texts and discovered in the Red Book some very important ideas about my own recovery. Sometimes I cried in the process of translation, because every word was about me. I cried a lot when I translated the PTSD paragraphs. I learned that we were not guilty in the abuse, even if the adults said the opposite. I had a lot of abuse of different kinds in my childhood, and it was very important for me to read that I was not the reason for what happened.

Now, when I hear the translations at ACA meetings, I can’t believe that these texts were translated by me. It is incredible, because I have always been unable to start any project without outside incentive or control. I had always been very distracted and unable to concentrate. The thought of a translation process seemed too boring for me. But all these defects disappeared when I started to translate the Red Book. I became self-organized, attentive to details, energetic and performing. I got these new qualities for translation, but then I integrated them in my daily life and became better able to work independently and efficiently.

When I travel now, I carry my documents and the Red Book in my handbag. I never send it as luggage, because I am still afraid to lose it.

I hope that one day the Red Book will finally be published in Russian.

## What is our Primary Purpose?

“The primary purpose of ACA is to create a safe setting in which adults who grew up in dysfunctional homes can feel safe and find a way to share their stories with others in a meaningful manner. ACA experience shows that survival traits developed by an abused or neglected child continue to affect the adult in problematic ways that our fellowship understands and addresses. We offer hope and a sense of home for many adult children who live each day in quiet desperation without words to describe such despair.”

*From “A Message to Nonmembers”, ACA Fellowship Text, p. xvi*

## Seventh Tradition Contributions– March 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.*

CA 682 - Palo Alto, CA	40.00
MI 077 - Rochester, MI	40.00
MI 113 - Westland, MI	25.00
PA 053 - Philadelphia, PA	25.00
NY 075 - Bronx, NY	61.00
MA 035 - South Boston, MA	20.00
CA 755 - Pasadena, CA	25.00
WI061 - Oshkosh, WI	77.00
RU001 - Moscow/ Russia	20.00
NJ 014 - Toms River, NJ	50.00
MN 115 - Edina, MN	35.00
Anonymous	270.25
<b>Total 7th Tradition</b>	<b>688.25</b>

## ACA WSO Committee Highlights

### **From Linda L., Outreach Committee Chair:**

A total of 227 requests for information were received in March. Twenty-two of these requests came by phone. 205 requests came by email. A number of the requests received were forwarded on to an appropriate Board or Committee member for response. These included:

- ACA WSO Office - 10
- George (Hospitals and Institutions Chair) - 14
- Gloria (meeting updates) - 22
- Josie (ACA WSO Chair) - 3
- Omer (Fellowship Text and translations) - 8
- Scott (Webmaster) - 11
- Phyllis (Secretary) - 5
- Michele (Literature Chair)- 2
- Rachele (ABC Committee Chair) - 1
- Other - 2

The Outreach Committee directly answered questions regarding the following topics:

- ACA Literature Information - 17
- Local Meeting Information - 35
- New Meeting Information - 16
- Alternative Meeting Information - 12
- Meeting Contact Info Changes - 10
- Meeting Registration Information - 1
- Dual Focus Meeting Information - 2
- General Meeting Information - 8
- Programs for Atheists Information - 1
- Meeting Focus Change Information - 1
- Meeting Banking Information - 1
- Problems at Meetings - 1
- Meeting Affiliation Information - 1

- Offer of Meeting Space - 1
- General ACA Information - 10
- Sponsorship Information - 4
- 7th Tradition Information - 1
- Web site Information - 2
- Serving The Fellowship Information - 1
- Online Chat Information - 2

### **From Scott R., ACA WSO Webmaster:**

The ACA WSO online forum ([www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org)) continues to be quite active. Here are the statistics for March:

- + New Registrations: 254 (up from 237 last month)
- + New Topics: 178 (down from 180 last month)
- + New Posts: 966 (up from 894 last month)
- + New Private Messages: 139 (up from 122 last month)
- + Active Members: 452 (up from 394 last month)
- + Post views: 8169 (down from 8199 last month)

### **From Omer G., Handbook Committee Chair:**

The Seventh Printing of the ACA Fellowship Text (Red Book) was ordered in May at a cost of about \$23,000. Last November, WSO placed an order for 6,000 Red Books. It was anticipated that this order would last about eight months. However, due to increased sales of our Fellowship Text, we needed to reorder early to avoid running out of inventory. It appears that we are shipping between 700 and 800 Red Books every month.

## ACA WSO Treasurer's Monthly Report

### Financial Summary: March 2010

#### Bank Balances:

##### February 28, 2010

Checking Account	20,242.31
Pay Pal Account	2,835.12
Savings Account	59,263.81

##### March 31, 2010

Checking Account	29,054.91
Pay Pal Account	2,021.09
Savings Account	60,023.89

\$40,000 of the savings account has been designated for office lease.

\$750 per month is set aside in the savings account to cover expenses of the 2010 Annual Business Conference.

\$18,000 was transferred from Pay Pal to the checking account during the month.

#### March 2010 Profit and Loss:

##### Income

7th Tradition	688.25
ACA Fellowship Text purchase	11,783.20
Bank Interest	10.08
California Sales Tax	330.93
ComLine Subscriptions	80.00
Fellowship Text Index purchase	46.25
Literature Sales	2,613.50
Workbook Purchase	5,101.50

**Total Income** **20,653.71**

##### Expense

ABC Committee	422.56
Bank Fees	35.00
ComLine Expenses	212.46
Fellowship Text expenses	693.20
Literature Committee	45.20
Miscellaneous	0.00
Office Expenses	5,559.83
Pay Pal Fees	640.03
Payroll Expenses	4,382.39
Web and Support	57.17

**Total Expense** **12,047.84**

**Net Income ( March)** **8,605.87**

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

##### Income

7th Tradition	3,577.16
ACA Fellowship Text purchase	35,766.65
Bank Interest	28.90
California Sales Tax	839.40
ComLine Subscriptions	272.00
Fellowship Text Index purchase	173.75
Handbook Contribution	27.73
Literature Sales	4,866.45
Workbook Purchase	15,220.55

**Total Income 60,772.59**

##### Expense

ABC Committee	864.87
Bank Fees	35.00
ComLine Expenses	760.90
Fellowship text expenses	8,483.79
Insurance	970.00
Literature Committee	45.20
Miscellaneous	0.00
Office Expenses	16,700.60
Pay Pal Fees	1,812.84
Payroll Expenses	12,662.00
Web and Support	152.12

**Total Expense 42,487.32**

**Net Income (2010) 18,285.27**

### ANNOUNCEMENT:

The monthly teleconference of the ACA WSO Board of Trustees is held on the second Saturday of each month at 1:00 pm Central time (11:00 am Pacific time).

Visitors are given a few minutes to introduce themselves and are then invited to listen for the next hour and a half as the Board conducts business for the ACA Fellowship.

To participate, call **712-432-0075**, and when prompted, enter the access code **427266#**. Please note that this is a new phone number and code.

It is also now possible to connect to the teleconference through Skype. Details about this option can be found on the ACA WSO forum.

### From the Treasurer:

This is my last treasurer's report for ACA WSO. What a privilege it has been! Please be sure to read the upcoming Annual Business Conference Report where you will read about the comparisons of 2009 to 2008. The growth and percentage comparisons are very good to see.

The ABC report won't be printed for another month or so, as it is a special edition of the ComLine, but each registered ACA group will soon be mailed a copy, and you will also be able to read it online. The orders for our books and literature and 7th Tradition contributions from the fellowship are what make this all possible.

I've said this before in past reports, and I'm happy to say it again. I am so very grateful for being able to be a part of this movement and to watch it all grow as well as to continue to learn and grow in my own ACA recovery. Getting to meet some very special and amazing people has also contributed to my life.

If you have any questions, you may still e-mail me at:

PhyllisACA@cableone.net

Thank you one and all.

Phyllis R  
Treasurer ACA WSO

**ComLine**

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**Return Service  
Requested**

