



# ComLine

Adult Children of Alcoholics  
*Experience, Strength & Hope*

Volume 26, Number 4

April 2010

## ***ACA 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.

“ACA, like most other organizations, has a structure which begins with individuals forming ACA groups. The groups form Intergroups to help organize meeting activities in their geographical area and to carry the ACA message into treatment centers and other facilities... Regions are formed by several Intergroups in a geographical area. There is also the World Service Organization which provides support to the Intergroups and Regions around the world. WSO also provides support to areas where there is no Intergroup.

So what controls do the Intergroups hold over the meetings, and what controls does the WSO hold over meetings, Intergroups, or Regions? None. Each ACA group is autonomous, but the groups routinely seek guidance from Intergroups, Regions, and WSO for group affairs. There is no governance or enforcement of rules in ACA. Intergroups and WSO serve as a resource for the groups, and the groups, in turn, are encouraged to provide willing trusted servants to do the good work of ACA at the Intergroup, Regional, and WSO levels. One of the few times the WSO or Intergroups might become directly involved would be in matters “affecting other groups or ACA as a whole...”

The wisdom of the Fourth Tradition allows every ACA group the right to make its own decisions. Within the guidance of the Traditions, the groups run their own meetings and choose the method for carrying the ACA message within their community. The groups are given freedom to make mistakes. In other words, every group has the unabashed right to be wrong. And when wrong, their decision then becomes part of the growth process, both for the meeting and, more especially, for the meeting members. These are the groups that gain wisdom and some tenacity by learning from their mistakes. The group survives and can flourish if the members are willing to focus on ACA principles and invite a loving God into their decision-making processes. Placing ACA first and cooperating with one another is essential for healthy group autonomy.”

*Excerpts from pages 509 and 511 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)

### Inside this issue

- 2 2010 ComLine topics
- 2 Contacting your ACA WSO
- 3 “A Key Word in Tradition Four”– Omer G.
- 3 More Tradition Four Insight...
- 4 Annual Business Conference Update
- 4 ComLine Guidelines and Subscriptions
- 5 News from the Fellowship
- 6 7th Tradition Contributions
- 6 Registering your ACA Meeting with WSO
- 7 ACA WSO Treasurer’s Report
- 7 ACA WSO Office and Warehouse Update

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.

## A Key Word in Tradition Four – "Except"

Omer G.

From my understanding of Tradition Four, group autonomy ensures that each Adult Children of Alcoholics group handles its own affairs within the guidance and parameters of the ACA Twelve Traditions. ACA has no hierarchy of power or governance so each group is responsible for its own business and its own meeting.

Group autonomy is ever present at my home group in the central United States. From the selection of our group name to the approval of funds for ACA literature or our help line, these actions all point to group autonomy. We also cooperate with other Twelve Step fellowships but we avoid affiliation.

At my ACA group, we balance our group autonomy with the group conscience process. While we know that we are free to conduct our own business, we are not blind to looking around and seeing how other ACA groups do things. We don't have to reinvent the wheel every time we make a decision. There is much wisdom in ACA, so seeking input from other groups or ACA World Services is also part of group autonomy.

For me this means that group autonomy gives each ACA group great freedom to conduct its own affairs. But there are limits to group autonomy. In addition to the importance of the word "autonomous" in Tradition Four, "except" is equally important.

The ACA Fellowship Text says that autonomy does not mean that my ACA group is isolated and operates in a vacuum. It does not give my group the right to ignore the precepts of the ACA program. Groups registering with ACA World Services are asked to adhere to the basic elements of our program and our message of recovery. Group formats should include The Laundry List, The Solution, and Sponsorship, in addition to the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. ACA groups registering with ACA WSO also cannot have an affiliation with an outside entity.

My home group honors these basic tenets of the ACA program. By doing so, we have a clear ACA message which offers hope to adults affected by alcoholism or other family dysfunction. Through autonomy, ACA's primary purpose is strengthened.

### More Tradition Four Insight...

ACA Fellowship Text, p. 508

*"When I first saw the Fourth Tradition and the freedom it gave the group, I thought, 'This won't work. Where are all the rules and authority and guidelines?' As I listened and watched group members applying the principles of the program, I realized my fears were unfounded. I saw my fellow ACAs being respectful of the group and wanting to do all they could to help other adult children. They guarded the group autonomy fiercely, but they also guarded ACA's unity and image with just as much dedication. After awhile, I could see that the group members truly cared about ACA. They were thoughtful about their actions. We took care of our own business, but we were mindful of other groups. We thought about how our actions might affect the fellowship as a whole.*

*It's funny, but the Fourth Tradition almost began to look like one of the Twelve Steps to me. I began caring more about myself because I was part of something that others care enough about to keep it alive. I work the Steps, but this Tradition taught me a lot about caring for myself."*

### Fourth Tradition Meditation

ACA Fellowship Text, p.512

Higher Power.

Help my home group remain focused on the Twelve Step process of recovery while still having its own personality and flavor.

When the actions and decisions of my group might affect ACA as a whole, may we find the spirit of cooperation and a willingness to seek help from the ACA service structure.

My group is autonomous, but it is not alone.

## ACA's Annual Business Conference: Final Update

The 2010 Annual Business Conference of Adult Children of Alcoholics will be held April 23-25 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA. Every ACA member is welcome to attend.

If a voting delegate from your ACA meeting or Intergroup will be attending the conference, please make sure they have registered. Only those delegates registered as the authorized representative of their ACA group or Intergroup will be eligible to vote on motions at the ABC. Registration forms are available on the 2010 ABC webpage and can be submitted either electronically or by postal mail.

*Remember:* ACA meetings and Intergroups have until April 15th to vote on which proposed items of business should be discussed at this year's ABC. Items receiving the support of at least 2/3 of the groups responding will be presented for discussion and possible action.

The 2010 Group Conscience Survey ballot was mailed in February to more than 620 registered ACA meetings and Intergroups. If your group received a paper ballot, you may return it by mail. You can also cast your meeting or Intergroup vote on these items electronically, by following the guidelines and completing the online ballot found on the ABC webpage.

### *Proposed business items:*

- IL193 suggests that a Sponsorship Workshop be created with guidelines for ACA sponsors and sponsees.
- IL005 suggests that a Sponsorship pamphlet be created and made available for distribution.
- WI077 suggests that a Sponsorship Committee be formed for the purpose of increasing the sponsorship concept within the ACA/ACOA community.
- IL005 suggests that an ACA group inventory document be created.

The ongoing balloting process for the ABC has generated a remarkable response from the fellowship this year. To date, the ABC planning committee has received 77 completed ballots from ACA meetings and Intergroups. Ballots have been returned from groups in 26 U.S. states and 8 other countries. ACA Intergroups and telephone meetings are also represented in the returned ballot count.

To cast your group's vote, to register to attend, or to find additional information about this month's ABC, please visit the ABC webpage at:

[www.acawso.com/abc](http://www.acawso.com/abc)

### **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.

## **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)

## News from the Fellowship



### From George S. (Atlanta, Georgia):

“It has been three years this month since ACA experienced a rebirth in the Atlanta area. In 2007, with the release of the new literature – the Big Red Book (ACA Fellowship Text) especially – a few of us who had been working together on childhood trauma issues were very interested in attending an ACA meeting. Upon looking through the Big Red Book, we knew ACA was the next right step in our recovery. When we went looking for a meeting, however, we found that the Atlanta ACA meetings registered online were defunct.

That is when we started our own meeting at Ridgeview Institute, March 26, 2007. We first met in a 20x12 room, which was plenty big enough, since often during that first year, there would be a meeting of one. It was beneficial to have started the meeting at an institution with an in-patient population and family members for whom attendance at Twelve-Step meetings is a recommended recovery tool.

That original meeting grew larger during its first two years, until a typical Sunday meeting was two hours (one hour of open sharing and one hour of Step work), with 20+ regular attendees. Today we have four active meetings around the metro Atlanta area, all of which spread out of that original meeting.

The growth of ACA Atlanta over the last three years has accelerated. Many people coming into our original meeting have realized ACA is something they really need and have been unable to find elsewhere. People who were curious about ACA came to the Ridgeview meeting, and many told us it was unlike anything else they had experienced. They recognized themselves in the Laundry List, were moved by the shares, and had finally found “their people.”

The metro area is so vast that it is difficult for many potential members to attend the available meetings. We are in a constant state of figuring out how to get ACA meetings spread further in and around the Atlanta area. But the Serenity Prayer comes to mind when we get anxious about the growth of ACA in our area. We continue doing what we can do. Each week there seems to be someone who is interested in starting a meeting in their part of town. This tells us how important this program is, and that it will do what it is supposed to do – not necessarily in our time, but at the right time.”



### From Larry A. (Bronx, New York):

“My experience with ACOA in the late 80’s was of meetings that limited expression of deep feelings. This limited the ability of the members to start the work on the Solution of re-parenting ourselves. Indeed, the concepts of re-parenting ourselves, of recognizing an inner critical parent or realizing an inner Higher Power were not discussed. In the mid 90’s, the meetings I attended were dominated by angry and tearful expressions, with again little focus on the Solution.

My recent experience is that while we structure meetings around the Solution, we keep ever present the Laundry List or the Problem as the touchstone for newer members to know that we know, we identify, and we belong because of our childhood experiences, and that they may speak their truth about these experiences at any time.

In the intervening years, we seem to have learned the valuable function of the “No Cross-Talk” rule. It allows us to take the inward journey that is, in my experience, the focus of my ACA recovery. In my experience, focusing on others takes me away from the inward journey, and takes me out of my True Self in much the same way as it did in my childhood.

My current experience in ACA (we have since dropped the abbreviation of ACOA, in The Bronx and Pelham, anyway) is that we provide a space where people can express and process deep feelings, assure individual integrity, and attempt to learn about and live the Solution, one day at a time.

Many, like me, pass through and do not return for a while. From a place of service coming from love, we wisely keep the doors open in both directions; allowing people to determine when they are ready to take the inward journey.”

## Seventh Tradition Contributions– February 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.*

IL 147 - Elk Grove Village, IL	50.00
WI 076 - Madison, WI	20.00
CT 083 - Watertown, CT	41.36
MI 061 - Westland, Michigan	40.00
TN 013 - Johnson City, TN	50.00
MN 121 - Hopkins, MN	30.00
CA 682 - Palo Alto, CA	60.00
AUS 042 - Bundaberg, Australia	50.00
FL 125 and 113 - Largo, FL	15.20
FL 125 and 113 - Largo, FL	28.00
CA 998 - Irvine, CA	60.00
CA 960 - Encinitas, CA	50.00
HI 013 - Hawaii	50.00
NM 022 - Albuquerque, NM	30.00
IL 005 - Hinsdale, IL	160.00
LA 016 - Lake Charles, LA	45.00
CA 428 - Norwalk, CA	47.00
Anonymous	826.56

**TOTAL 7th Tradition            1,406.16**

## Registering Your ACA Group or Meeting With WSO

An ACA group is any group of Adult Children of Alcoholics and other dysfunctional families that is based on the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Laundry List (Problem), and Solution, and has no other affiliation with an outside entity. Some groups are listed as ACA or ACoA, but they are the same program as long as they use ACA literature and have no affiliation with an outside entity.

AI-Anon meetings with an adult child focus are not ACA groups. Some AI-Anon meetings are known as ACAP or AI-Anon ACoA, but they do not use ACA literature. We cooperate with AI-Anon and all Twelve Step programs, but ACA meetings use ACA literature that includes The Laundry List and The Solution in addition to the ACA Twelve Steps and Traditions. You can order or download ACA literature on the Adult Children of Alcoholics website ([www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org)).

When an ACA meeting is formed, a registration form should be filled out and submitted to the World Service Organization of ACA so the meeting can be listed among other ACA meetings in your area. In addition to putting you in contact with WSO, the registration also links your group to ACA members and groups across the world. Your group will benefit from the experience, strength, and hope of ACA members in many different cities, provinces, villages, towns, and metropolitan areas. Registering your group helps the WSO refer newcomers and travelers to your meeting.

An updated registration form should be submitted when group changes are made involving the group’s meeting time or place and the election of new officers. WSO needs your help in keeping our files and online

Meeting List current. Updates should also be sent to your Intergroup or Region if these ACA service committees exist in your area.

Registration of your group also allows your meeting to receive information from the ACA service structure, i.e., Intergroups, service committees, and WSO. Likewise, the registration gives you a channel to make your group conscience known to the ACA service structure. Registration confirms that your group is a Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions meeting. By following the Steps and Traditions our meetings have a consistency in message and purpose.

Typically, the WSO attempts to update the worldwide meeting list once a year. Newly elected secretaries should file their contact information with WSO so the group can receive ACA correspondence and news of fellowship developments. If a meeting has not filed a current registration, or it cannot be confirmed by telephone, mail, or a visit to the location, the meeting is considered to be dissolved and will be dropped from the meeting directory.

### How to Start an ACA Meeting

- 1) Locate a suitable meeting site
- 2) Obtain meeting materials
- 3) Register the meeting with the ACA WSO
- 4) Inform potential members about the meeting
- 5) Start meeting
- 6) Hold your first group business meeting

For more information,  
please refer to pages 559-560 of the ACA Fellowship Text

## ACA WSO Treasurer's Monthly Report Financial Summary: February 2010

### From the Treasurer:

#### Bank Balances:

##### January 31, 2010

Checking account	12,372.84
Pay Pal account	2,777.96
Savings Account	58,504.81

##### February 28, 2010

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

\$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.

\$15,000 was transferred from Pay Pal to the checking account during the month.

#### February 2010 Profit and Loss:

##### Income

7th Tradition	1,406.16
ACA Fellowship Text purchase	12,759.20
Bank Interest	9.00
California Sales Tax	262.45
ComLine Subscriptions	112.00
Fellowship Text Index purchase	77.50
Literature Sales	1,490.90
Workbook Purchase	4,827.80

**Total Income** **20,945.01**

##### Expense

ABC Committee	442.31
ComLine Expenses	283.64
Office Expenses	6,281.89
Pay Pal Fees	571.04
Payroll Expenses	4,148.84
Web and Support	50.00

**Total Expense** **11,777.72**

**Net Income** **9,167.29**

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

##### Income

7th Tradition	2,888.91
ACA Fellowship Text purchase	23,983.45
Bank Interest	18.82
California Sales Tax	508.47
ComLine Subscriptions	192.00
Fellowship Text Index purchase	127.50
Handbook Contribution	27.73
Literature Sales	2,252.95
Workbook Purchase	10,119.05

**Total Income** **40,118.88**

##### Expense

ABC Committee	442.31
ComLine Expenses	548.44
Fellowship Text Expenses	7,790.59
Insurance	970.00
Office Expenses	11,140.77
Pay Pal Fees	1,172.81
Payroll Expenses	8,279.61
Web and Support	94.95

**Total Expense** **30,439.48**

What an exciting time it is to watch ACA growing. Every day, I get 'copies' from PayPal of the orders that come in for books, literature, and recovery chips, as well as notices of 7th Tradition contributions. I also receive checks from people who prefer to pay for their orders that way.

In the last few months those orders and 7th Tradition contributions have really been increasing, and all this in spite of the economy. It shows to me that recovery is very important and is a valuable pathway for so many.

I have said this before, but I hope the fellowship knows just how grateful I am for the opportunity to witness this growth. I send out my heart-felt "thank you".

If you have any questions, email me at:  
PhyllisACA@cableone.net

Phyllis R, Treasurer

### ACA WSO Office and Warehouse Update

February and March were both record-breaking months for ACA literature orders. February felt like a really big month as the office workers were "in it", and the final shipping numbers certainly revealed this to be the case. In the past two months, office staff and volunteers have shipped out 1,651 copies of the ACA Fellowship Text and 1,203 ACA Twelve Step workbooks. Orders continue to pour in, with an average of 15+ literature orders per day over PayPal alone.

In addition, the ACA WSO office received more than 200 calls in March. These calls were primarily a mix of 1) meeting information requests 2) general inquiries about ACA and/or recovery and 3) order inquiries relative to books or literature.

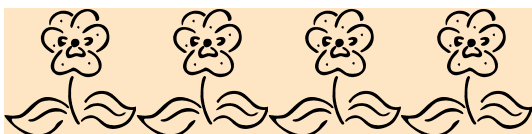
ACA's World Service Organization office has been re-opened for just over a year. You may write or call the office with any questions:

#### ACA World Services Office

1400 E. 33rd Street, Signal Hill, CA 90755  
Tel (562) 595-7831 Fax (562) 595-7822

#### Office hours:

Tues - Fri 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. - Sat 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 am.  
Closed Sunday and Monday  
Contacts: DiAnne and Vivian



**ComLine**

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

**Return Service  
Requested**

