



ComLINE

Experience, Strength, and Hope

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In this Issue

My Journey with the Birth of The BRB	1, 2
How Feelings are Healing	3
Hurting to Healing	3
Mingus Mountain Retreat for People in Recovery	4
My Life after 28 years in ACA.....	4
From a Colleague who Speaks Swedish	5
Tracing The Past	6
Meetings and an Affirmation.....	6
My First Steps	7
Universal Language	7
2016 ABC/AWC	8
Best Practices.....	9
From Our Treasurer	9
New Literature: <i>The Laundry Lists Workbook</i>	10
Verify/Update Your Meeting Information	10
November 2015 WSO Website Report	11
Make This YOUR ComLine	11

About the ACA ComLine

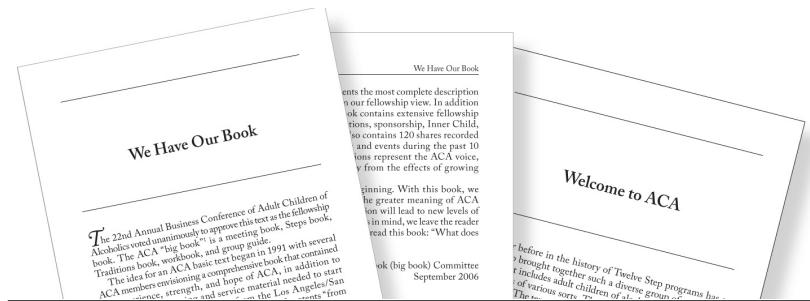
The ComLine is published quarterly by Adult Children of Alcoholics® World Service Organization, with one free report of the Annual Business Conference (ABC). The ComLine is intended as a communication line from WSO to the fellowship of ACA around the world, and as a forum for the fellowship to share recovery. The ComLine slogan is "Experience, Strength, and Hope". The opinions expressed are those of the individuals writing the articles and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the ACA fellowship or WSO.

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ACA WSO, Inc.
Post Office Box 3216
Torrance, California,
90510 USA
adultchildren.org
adultchildren.org/comline

My Journey with the Birth of The BRB

by R.V.



In February of 2005 I started a new job, working alongside a couple of individuals who would soon introduce me to a new way of life. One of these new coworkers quickly identified me as an Adult Child and suggested that I talk to "O" about an interesting Twelve Step program he was involved with. I think O had re-connected with the ACA World Service Organization in about 2003, curious about whatever had become of the ACA he was introduced to in the late 1980s. I know he heard at that point about the ongoing book project and wanted to be of service in writing a chapter on the Twelve Steps.

The ACA "Handbook" project had been ongoing for many years, and it seemed there was finally momentum in the fellowship to get it finished. Anyway, it was after the 2005 Annual Business Conference that I started to see the book writing process first-hand. Nearly every day, O would bring me draft pages he had written the night before, and I'd edit them and ask a lot of questions.

I think the first section I ever read was what eventually became the introduction to the workbook. It blew my mind, as this was before I had even started attending face-to-face meetings. I learned there were several members of the fellowship around the country submitting drafts of chapters during those months. I specifically remember L writing about work issues, P sharing experiences about spirituality, E writing about the inner child, and S detailing our Twelve Traditions. And O kept going through all the previously compiled material in the Handbook to use as much of that original fellowship input as possible. I don't think anything went to waste from the work of all those earlier years. O just connected all the dots in a new way that was incredibly clear.

Chapter 7, the Steps chapter, was completed in July of 2005. For a couple of months, about ten of us from our regular ACA meeting had been gathering at a local bakery,

(continued on page 2)

Birth of The BRB

(continued from page 1)

reading over various chapter drafts and some of the early Step material. We would read it aloud and ask questions. O always said he knew our book was a book to be read aloud, and any time one of us would stumble with an awkward phrase or have difficulty pronouncing something, O would circle it for a rewrite. He said that questions helped refine the chapters, since he wanted all the concepts and ideas to be as understandable to newcomers as possible.

There were a lot of ideas I saw come out of that little working group, such as the difference between Laundry List Traits and Character Defects, what ACA recovery looks like, what an ACA relapse looks like, and how we might measure our grief. From these many group discussions, O also collected a few additional stories and shares to add to the book. That summer, our regular ACA group voted to begin using the draft of Chapter 7 in our weekly meeting, and we continued to serve as “guinea pigs” for ACA healing! M, from Oklahoma, and E, from California, were two other long-time ACA members who contributed greatly to the editing, by correcting grammar, and catching typos and missed punctuation.

As the book material became more and more refined, I know O sought a lot of feedback from elsewhere in the fellowship, too. J, who wrote the original ACA So-



lution, and M, who had co-authored the Identity Papers, were among the many “founders” who provided input and guidance. And M, from California, kept rallying the fellowship, assuring everyone that the book they had been anticipating for so long was finally coming to be. The WSO board, of course, was reviewing all the old and new writings, but O also took drafts out to meetings around the country for comment. I remember he went to Florida and presented the drafts to several meetings and to many members who had personally known Tony A. After so many months of review and feedback, the 2006 Annual Business Conference voted unanimously to approve the book draft and send it on for publishing. Then came the final hectic process of layout, illustration, choosing fonts, researching styles of binding, finding a printer the fellowship could afford, picking a color for the cover, and all the final editing of page proofs. Layout

was such a trial until R signed on to the project. Without her efforts, I don’t think the book would have been in print by the November convention in San Marcos. Even then, the publisher only had time to produce soft cover versions! The first hardcover books didn’t arrive until around Christmas of 2006.

After the book was published, and the board had approved the concept of an expanded Twelve Step companion workbook, that review process continued in much the same way. Every new question and exercise was “worked” by the members of several meetings before it became final in the workbook. O would take feedback on what was or wasn’t thought to be helpful and kept refining the sequence and content of the Step questions until everyone agreed it was good. I know there were other meetings in other states who were also using the draft workbook.

I don’t know everyone who provided feedback and experience, but I know O was incredibly, humbly open to comments and suggestions. During those years he always had a shirt pocket full of post-it notes and ideas written on coffee shop napkins, usually about some phrase or section of the Big Red Book and ways to make it better. The ACA Fellowship Text was truly born from the loving service and sacrifice of its members. I’m still amazed by how it all came together, but I’m ever so grateful that it did. ♡

How Feelings Are Healing

by Yvonne J.

How do you feel about that?" "How did *that* make you feel?" How do you feel *now*?" Questions about feelings made me very uncomfortable, and I would withdraw in silence. The only answer I had was "I don't know." I understand that is a common answer with adult children. We are taught not to feel.

I learned at a very early age that expressing real feelings could be dangerous – "I'll give you something to cry about!" my mother would shout as she beat me. "If you can't breathe, you can't cry," my militaristic father would say as he held his hand over my nose and mouth. I learned to mask my feelings and pretend that we were a happy family. The masks I wore eventually prevented me from feeling anything at all.

Attending meetings, working the steps with a co-sponsor, and having an enlightened witness/therapist has helped me understand how the loss of emotions correlated with the inability to make decisions and organize my life. Being unable to feel, I was unable to act, I could only react.



The masks I wore eventually prevented me from feeling anything at all.

Reaction results in flawed judgment. By specifically identifying episodes of how I lost the ability to feel, and by reconnecting with these long-lost feelings, I am learning how to reason and how to act: how to advocate for myself, to parent myself, and how to love myself. A new way of life beckons, and I gladly embrace it. ♡

Promise One

"We will discover our real identities by loving and accepting ourselves."



Hurting to Healing

Working my steps is a rough road
Not working them is the heavier load

Rocks of dysfunction must be stepped over
Fresh fruits of recovery tasted sober

No one can do this work for me, I know
I pray every day my inner child will grow

Feeling the feelings can fill me with dread
Often I'm out of my body and up in my head

Loving Parent quiets my fears and holds me close
Meditating in stillness, I connect with my Host

Jill F.

Mingus Mountain Retreat for People in Recovery

by Katie

My name is Katie and I'm an Adult Child from Nevada. My experience at Arizona Intergroups 30th Annual ACA Retreat at Mingus Mountain surpassed my expectations and filled me with overwhelming joy and gratitude. This was my fourth Mingus ACA retreat in a row and as long as my Higher Power wills it, I'll do everything in my power to continue attending.

I found information about this year's retreat on the WSO website which led me to the Arizona ACA Intergroup web page. I frequently referred to that for everything I needed to know to be prepared and find the retreat comfortably.

This year, there were several educated, self-identified ACA members who presented workshops on various ACA recovery topics. I felt like I had a wide variety of activities to choose from (such as meetings, hiking, meditation, and more) if the workshops became overwhelming for me.

My decision for returning to the retreat this year was to have fellowship. I was pleased to see the friendly faces of ACA friends I met at the last retreat. I was also pleased to make new acquaintances and bond throughout the weekend.

The food on the hill is prepared with love and plenty of healthy options with varieties in colors, textures, and flavors.

I overcame my resistance of attending by trusting my Higher Power and diving in. I figured it was in such a beautiful location, I was sure to find joy



Phyllis R.

and connection to my Higher Power even if I didn't fully participate in the retreat activities.

My favorite part about this retreat was the acoustic jam sessions around the campfire each evening. To hear the unified voices and laughter and be surrounded by other loving ACAs filled me with so much joy, but to co-create beautiful sounds with them in an organic and spontaneous way was even more joyous for my Inner Child.

I am profoundly humbled each year I return to the mountain for recovery. The sweet wildflowers and grandfather pines welcomed me back as always. I saw a baby snake and an owl this year! It dawned on me that this land has thirty years of energy of my ACA family who came before me and who have given and received from the land each year. It is a power-packed, high frequency, sacred place for it and me blows me away still. I hope you consider coming – I will be there!

For information about the 2016 Arizona Retreat please go to: <http://aca-arizona.org/retreat/>

My Life after 28 years in ACA

by Anonymous

Today, I don't have to concentrate on anyone else's behavior but mine. I don't have to try to control anyone else by subtle manipulation. I don't have to try to read anyone else's mind. I don't have to have chaotic and/or overly dramatic people in my daily life.

I don't have to do any of that anymore to survive, and I don't. I live instead.

I am no longer triggered out of the blue by things that

happen to me or around me, or, if I am, I am able to trace it back and begin working on it almost immediately. With all of that drama and trauma out of my way, I can peacefully eat and sleep, play, recreate, attend my ACA meetings, and continue learning to re-parent myself, nurture my inner child, and learn about sane communication with other people.

Today, my children and I have good relationships with



each other; I enjoy many interests and hobbies, and am happy volunteering in my community. My life is simple and sweet, full of friends, serenity, happiness, and joy. ☺

From a Colleague who Speaks Swedish

by Liisa

In our last *ComLine*, we published an article in Swedish from Liisa who lives in Finland but also speaks Swedish and English. I asked her to give us the English translation which we hereby include. It is exactly the way she sent it to me. It is a lovely example of how hard it is to translate from one language to another. I know you will appreciate the work that went into it because of that and it is why we are publishing it just the way it was sent.

Hello,

My name is Liisa. My parents drank their lives away. I live in Eastern Finland. Phyllis asked me to write in Swedish. I'll try: we all in here learn it in the school.

I'm very happy that I have been in ACA for nearly 17 years. My life has changed so much! I have got my life complete to my self. I live my life the way I want.

Thanks to the fourth step, I know now how I am. I no longer believe, if someone say's I'm stupid, I just realize that I have done something, this person thinks is stupid. For me there is a big difference.

When I first started to attend ACA meetings, I did not want to learn to know people. I just spoke out my sorrows and left. But with time I opened up my self to others, started to do service and slowly ACA has became a large part of my life.

Here in Finland we have quite a lot weekends over the year where ACA people meet each other. In these retreats we work with steps or emotions on various ways. We write and draw with our

weaker hand, dance, play, walk in the forest and play with snow, talking to snowmen we build to remind the characters we wish, and many other things. The Big Red Book, that we now can reed on our mother tong, gives all the time new ideas and inspires us. All this has helped me to grow to a new person. I will no longer live without ACA. Earlier it happened that I got "healed" and left ACA, but life served me with something hard, and took me back.

Now I live in an old school in the middle of forests, long away from town. I call my house "Eheyts", Defragmentation. With my local ACA group Polvijärvi we organize here ACA retreats, and people all over the country join us. It's so fine!

In September 2015 we three Finns travelled to Arizona, Mingus Mountain retreat. It was very exciting! I wish that I have many years remaining in ACA, and see it grow in the whole world.

Thank you!
Liisa ☺



Sweden

Promise Two

"Our self-esteem will increase as we give ourselves approval on a daily basis."





Meetings and an Affirmation

by H. D.

A CA has been with me for some time now. I have learned so much. I'm still working to know my inner child. She is lovely, sweet and gets angry with me if I don't get her more cookies. Guess she's a little cookie monster. Sometimes, I wonder why I have been in ACA for so long. Some people come, get what they need, and move on to other events. I'm still here. Must be a Higher Power thing because judging by reality, that's what's happening for me as I'm still attending my meeting.

I've met some amazing people. They work diligently on their recovery. They learn and grow and I get a lot out of being in relationships with them. I've also made friends in Europe. Where else could I do that?

And some people still give me an opportunity to learn from them. I still judge them for some really little things – hair, clothes, and actions. When I realize that I've once again judged, I can stop doing that and know that it's just another opportunity to listen to the Serenity Prayer. Years ago, I remember my mom critiquing a woman for being fat. "Mama, she's pregnant," I told her. So I know where that comes from and still, I do it. So being in ACA seems to be just what I need to be doing. And I am still learning and I recently heard a great affirmation at a meeting that for some reason really means a lot to me. Here it is:

*I love you. I'm sorry. Please forgive me.
Thank you.*



My First Steps

by PHD

My first ACA meeting was huge! It was so big that we all went outside to sit on the grass. I have to confess that I was looking for male companionship so perhaps what happened was the result of false reasoning on my part. The people seemed nice to me and then.... They started to reveal the most intimate details of their lives. Things that were not what I was comfortable listening to – wow, can you really say that out in public? I didn't understand about the anonymity part of ACA meetings. At last it was over and I left without even making any friends.

Sometime later, the next meeting I went to was on a Sunday evening and turned out to be a much better fit for me. They turned off the lights and lit candles. Their flickering flames made a comforting glow. This time, I listened better to the opening readings. Come back for six meetings to decide if this is for you, they read. Hmm, I could do that. I stopped long enough to talk to a few people. I came back! Some of the people

had real horror stories to relate and somehow, I was better able to sit through that. My life wasn't that bad I reasoned. When I mentioned this to one of the people after the meeting was over, he said to me, "Your life is just as valuable as that person so don't compare yourself to what happened to her." Oh, what an idea! I'm valuable? I learned that I had to just take care of me and my own issues.

The above occurred in the late 1980s when ACA was a "fad". At that time there were so many meetings that a single piece of paper had so many meetings they had to use both sides with small size print where I lived! Eventually, the fad took its course to dwindle down.

Our fellowship has had a resurgence, thank goodness. Now there are phone meetings, so at least people in areas that have no convenient person-to-person meetings can usually find a phone meeting. So, if it works for you, think about inviting a friend to your meeting, and keep taking care of yourself. ♫

Promise Three

"Fear of authority figures and the need to "people-please" will leave us."

Universal Language

by Patti N.

I believe music has always been the Universal Language. I recently went to a speaker meeting where I was inspired by John, Paul, George & Ringo or rather their interpretation of the Twelve Steps.

It goes something like this:

- Step One: HELP
- Step Two: I'm a Loser
- Step Three: (Maybe you can) Drive My Car
- Step Four: The Long and Winding Road
- Step Five: I Want To Hold Your Hand
- Step Six: My Sweet Lord
- Steps Seven & Eight: Revolution
- Step Nine: Let It Be
- Step Ten: Blackbird
- Step Eleven: All You Need Is Love
- Step Twelve: With A Little Help From My Friends

So let me challenge all of you who read this, and those of you who love music: send your list of more contemporary music or maybe Jazz, Country & Western or Rhythm & Blues, whatever inspires you to the *ComLine* so we might share it. I know I'm looking at my own right now and hope to have something in the near future. ♫

ACA WSO 2016 ABC and Inaugural World ACA Convention to be Held in Florida

by Larry A.

The My Life is Changing ACA group of Ft. Lauderdale and the Florida State Intergroup have been selected to host the Annual Business Conference (ABC) and the inaugural ACA World Convention (AWC) April 22 – 24, 2016 in Delray Beach, Florida. This special event will be one for the history books.

Registration for both events is required by March 11, 2016. The ABC and AWC registration and details can be found online at: http://www.repository.adultchildren.org/images/ABC/2016/ABC_AWC_Registration.pdf.

Open Call and Guidelines for the AWC Meeting Chairs and Workshop

To chair a meeting:

http://www.repository.adultchildren.org/images/Meeting_Chair_Application.pdf

To lead a workshop:

http://www.repository.adultchildren.org/images/Workshop_Leader_Application.pdf
The deadline to submit applications to chair a meeting or to lead a workshop is **January 31, 2016.**



Key Dates

January 31, 2016

Applications to chair an AWC meeting or to lead a workshop due.

February 28, 2016

Ballots on proposals must be received by WSO.

March 11, 2016

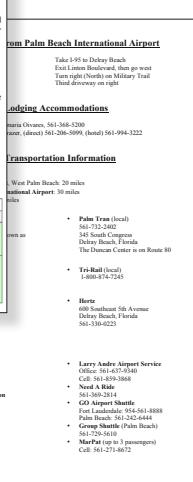
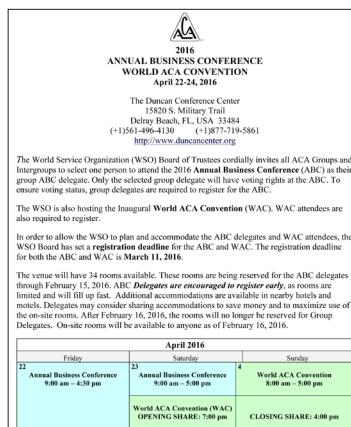
Registration for both events is due.

April 22, 2016
ABC 9:00 am – 4:30 pm

April 23, 2016
ABC 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

April 23, 2016
ACA World Convention (AWC)
OPENING SHARE: 7:00 pm

April 24, 2016
ACA World Convention (AWC)
8:00 am – 5:00 pm



“...to carry this message...”

Special Programs of the WSO Board of Trustees

30% Intergroup Discount (ID)

The Intergroup Discount is exclusively for registered ACA Intergroups. The 30% discount will allow ACA Intergroups to service their local groups' literature needs while providing the Intergroups an opportunity to generate a small revenue stream to fund outreach efforts and their operations. Intergroup registration is required.

Board Book Initiative (BBI)

The Board Book Initiative is the WSO Board of Trustees' pledge to send out 400 books annually to therapists and institutions. Referrals for recipients may come from ACA groups/members or therapists/administrators working with adult children.

International Book

Seeding Program (IBSP)

In light of the exorbitant shipping costs from the US to groups and Intergroups abroad, the International Book Seeding Program provides groups and

Intergroups outside of the US a one-time opportunity to order books (in lots of 20) and other ACA literature items at a 20% discount on both the cost of the literature and shipping costs. The hope is that groups and Intergroups abroad use the savings to set up a book fund to pay for future purchases. This offer cannot be combined with other offers.

Lights On Project (LOP)

The Lights On Project seeks to spread the ACA message to countries without any ACA meetings. The WSO will send a complete meeting starter kit for free to the individuals starting the meeting, requesting that they register the meeting shortly after receiving the materials and launching their very first meeting. This offer cannot be combined with other offers. ☺

For more information about any of our Special Programs, please use the Contact ACA WSO form at <http://www.adultchildren.org/contact>

From Our Treasurer

In keeping with the WSO Board's intent of maintaining transparency in all financial matters, monthly reports are posted on the website's Repository. The most recently published Seventh Tradition contributions are listed in the "Donations Received" sub-tab:

<http://www.repository.adultchildren.org/wso-treasurer/donations-received>

We were recently asked, "Will I have to pay taxes on anything I buy from you?"

Answer: ACA WSO is incorporated in the State of California, so only materials sold within that state are taxed. If you have any questions I can answer in future issues of the *ComLine*, please contact me. ☺

Yours in Service,

Mary Jo L.

ACA WSO Treasurer

treasurer@adultchildren.org

<http://adultchildren.org/>

New Literature

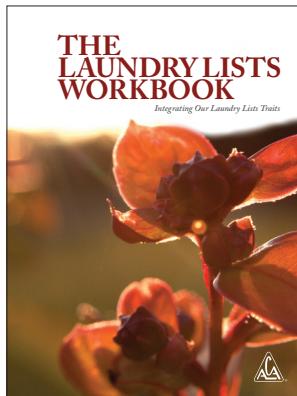
The Laundry Lists Workbook

The original Laundry List describes how we were affected by alcoholism and family dysfunction. We have also observed that these 14 Traits have an opposite, and our experience shows that the opposites are just as damaging as their counterparts.

For example, if we feared authority figures, as the first trait suggests, we may act out our fear by becoming authority figures to be feared. If we lived our life from the viewpoint of a victim, many of us may have become victimizers. If we felt guilty for standing up for ourselves, we may have acted out the opposite trait by shaming others who stand up for themselves.

The “Other” Laundry List is briefly mentioned on pp. 8–9 of the Fellowship Text. The ABC Proposal 2014-11 motion suggesting that the WSO develop a piece of literature further elaborating “The Other Laundry List” was carried unanimously. The result is *The Laundry Lists Workbook: Integrating Our Laundry Lists Traits*.

This workbook is designed for ACAs who have already gone through all the Steps in the *ACA Twelve Steps Workbook*, and who are ready to embark on advanced work on their survival traits.



The Laundry Lists Workbook was developed with the support and involvement of the ACA fellowship – adult children, groups, and Intergroups who gave of their time to seriously review, discuss, and reflect on the content and pro-

vided valuable commentary and suggestions for expansion and improvement. Their caring, concern, and willingness to share and express their views were inspiring. This book could not have happened without the spiritual guidance of our Higher Power.

“The Laundry List”, “The Flip Side of The Laundry List”, “The Other Laundry List”, and “The Flip Side of The Other Laundry List” can be found on our site at http://www.adultchildren.org/lit-Laundry_List. *The Laundry Lists Workbook* is available for purchase on our site at <http://www.adultchildren.org>. ♡

Verify/Update Your Meeting Information

In order for the ACA WSO to be of maximum service, the following information must be current, accurate, and complete. All information on this form will be used for ACA service purposes only.

The WSO asks registered ACA meetings to verify/update their meeting records at least

once a year, by submitting an updated meeting registration form. For meeting updates, please include at a minimum the meeting’s ACA WSO meeting number and Private Point of Contact including the email address. The remaining fields can be left blank once verified unchanged.

1. Go to <http://www.adultchildren.org>.
2. Click on **FIND A MEETING**.
3. Click on **CHANGE A MEETING INFORMATION**.
4. Enter your WSO meeting number.
5. Change the contact name and email address. Remember, you only need to enter new information.
6. Press the **SUBMIT** button at the bottom of the page. ♡

November 2015

WSO Website Report

by Scott R.

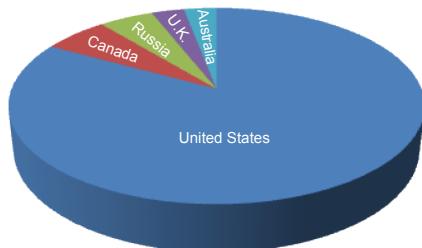
Last Updated on Friday, 11 December 2015 15:00, Web Usage Highlights. Overall November 2015 activity remained consistent with that of the previous month (October).

- Overall inquirers (site visitors): 47,089 visiting the site, up 1.9% from October.
- Number of new inquirers: 62% of total visitors, basically unchanged from October.
- Inquirers using mobile devices: 45% of total visitors, basically unchanged from October.
- Overall bounce rate still slowly increasing (percentage of single page visitors; those who left the entry page visited at the site without further interaction with the site): 65%, up 3% from October.
- Most visited pages (after home page, same top three as in October):
 - Lit-Laundry List
 - Find-a-meeting
 - Lit-Problem
- While most of the visitors are from the United States, we're also getting a substantial number of visitors from other countries (128 different countries in total). Here are the top five countries (same countries as in October, though the order has changed):
 - United States: 82.6% of total
 - Canada: 3.2%
 - Russia: 3.0%
 - United Kingdom: 2.9%
 - Australia: 1.1%

On November 24, we found a high amount of spam entries coming in through the website web forms. CAPCHA protection was subsequently added to meeting list web form, which appears to have stopped the harassment. However, we continued to receive multiple "bounce messages" due to the invalid email addresses already sent through the web forms. Hopefully, the problem is now resolved.

The website was fully inoperative on Saturday, November 28, and restored the subsequent Sunday morning by Centauria (which is closed on Saturdays). Had lengthy discussions the following Monday addressing the issue and putting into place methodologies to hopefully prevent such an outage in the future.

Website updates needed to support the 2016 ABC Proposals and Registrations are still pending review. ♦



While most of our website visitors are from the United States, we are also getting a substantial number of visitors from other countries.

Make This YOUR ComLINE

by Pattianne H.

Make this YOUR *ComLine* by sharing your experiences, hopes, and joys. I believe the greatest gift of service any of us can do is when we show up at a meeting and first, listen to other ACA members, and second, share our stories. What will keep this *ComLine* going and growing? I asked myself that and I believe it is each of you, that is what has kept me growing, the knowledge that perhaps that hopeful photo, or that story that touches me in a way that I no longer feel alone.

For the newcomer who isn't quite ready to speak their truth but perhaps can draw it. You can be anonymous, and for the old timer share your knowledge on how you have worked the Steps or used the tools of ACA. We would love to hear from you no matter what language you speak, because we all speak recovery here at Your *ComLine*.

Send your articles, photos, artwork, requests and suggestions to liststaff@adultchildren.org. ♦



ACA WSO, Inc.
Post Office Box 3216
Torrance, California,
90510 USA
adultchildren.org
adultchildren.org/comline