ACA World Convention (AWC)

As members of ACA in beautiful, sunny San Diego, California, we are honored to host the 2017 Annual Business Conference (ABC) and AWC. If you haven’t made the decision to attend yet, there is still time. The registration form is on page 11 of this ComLine or you can simply register at https://www.acaworldconvention.org. Be sure to click on the small, three white lines in the upper right-hand corner of our website to find accommodations, as our main hotel is sold out. There you will also find details regarding Delegate information, AWC program schedule, meetings, bios, and more.

This year’s logo and theme is “Talk, Trust, Feel.” It’s a wonderful opportunity to reach out to Fellow Travelers from around the world to share our experience, strength and hope to break free from the bond-age of our youth’s unspoken rules of “Don’t Talk, Don’t Trust, Don’t Feel.”

The AWC kicks off Friday, April 21, with registration starting at noon. We’d like you all to be there at 5 p.m. for the first marathon meeting, featuring Trait 1 from the Laundry List. The opening speaker meeting will be Jim Y. from San Francisco at 7 p.m. The grand finale will be Beryl V. from England at 9 p.m. with Spoken Word and Music as Healing Tools.

Sunday, April 23 starts early with yoga at 8 a.m., and workshops and panels resume. The luncheon/speaker meeting, featuring Sherry C., Tennessee, begins at 11 a.m. More afternoon activities follow, including a swimming pool gathering event (yet-to-be-named), followed with a Closing Ceremony at 5 p.m.

This is going to be an incredible recovery event, international in scope. Four continents and eight countries are already represented. Over 200 ACA members are coming, and we’re hoping to see 300! If you’d like to come and have been thinking about it, please get registered now because we’d like to meet you. Sign up now to personally meet more of your incredible ACA family and friends.

Susan C., Chair, San Diego Host Committee
We recently had a situation in my home group where we used Tradition Four to resolve a simmering conflict before it escalated. Tradition Four says “Each group is autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or ACA as a whole. We cooperate with all other Twelve-Step programs.”

The backstory is this: a group of people from our 7 p.m. home group meeting decided to start a new meeting and didn’t say anything to the rest of us. For sake of simplicity, we’ll call this meeting, Meeting ABC. Not a biggie, right? After all each group is autonomous and they didn’t need the home group’s permission to start a new meeting.

But then there’s the part of Tradition Four that says except in matters affecting other groups.

Meeting ABC set up their meeting to start an hour and a half prior to our home group meeting. Without telling the home group at a business meeting, they contacted the landlord and arranged a time slot from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. thinking a half hour before the existing meeting started was sufficient time between the meetings.

It affected our group right away because some of our members were used to getting to the meeting more than a half an hour early and setting up the 50 or so chairs, putting out literature, and socializing.

When our members arrived the first week the new group met, the people were still in the room so they waited. Then the people wanted to stand around and chat after their meeting, which is what many of us do after our meetings.

This disrupted the schedule of the members who were trying to get in and start setting up for the much larger meeting and severely limited socializing time before the meeting. Several weeks into this schedule, Meeting ABC put a sign on the outer door that they had the room until 6:40 p.m. This further ruffled the feathers of the original home group members who were locked out of the meeting room until 20 minutes before their meeting started.

It happened to be anniversary night and we had 11 celebrants, so the group chairperson was rather annoyed that he could not get into the room and gather the correct medallions from the supply cabinet. We just barely got everything set up by the time our meeting started.

Meeting ABC made an autonomous decision that adversely affected our group without talking with us about it. Even though most of Meeting ABC stayed for the much larger meeting and were an integral part of that group, there was tension building. Finally the chairperson told me he was going to say something to Meeting ABC. I suggested we bring it up at our next business meeting instead.

Once the upcoming business meeting agenda was emailed to all members, I got an email from one of the organizing members of Meeting ABC who asked if we could have a peace treaty. I humorously replied I wasn’t aware we were at war.

I explained how Meeting ABC had made an autonomous decision that adversely affected the home group without us having a voice in the matter. The group member understood immediately and took the matter back to Meeting ABC, and they moved their end time back to 6:30 p.m. So far things are working out. We realize it would be tough for people working until 5 p.m. to get to a meeting that started earlier than 5:30 p.m. and they realize that we need a minimum of a half hour to start setting up for our meeting and have some social time before the meeting.

There is an old saying in 12 Step meetings – the steps keep us from committing suicide and the traditions keep us from committing homicide! I know it is an exaggeration, but sometimes . . . LOL.
Digging Deeper Into My Fourth Step
by Frances M. / Montana USA

Out of curiosity about my mother’s early sobriety, after she passed away I started reading her diaries from my teenage years, and I learned some truths I didn’t really want to learn. Although my dad was the active alcoholic during my young life, after they divorced my mother became a nutcase alcoholic. Motherhood is something she was not equipped for or meant to do.

If my mom had not been a hoarder and had thrown more things away, I never would have learned this much about myself. While reading about her anguish and remembering what a worthless human being I felt like at that age, I started having phobic dreams. I would wake up with intense anxiety after only a few hours’ sleep, pacing around my house in the darkness. Being inside my mother’s head when I was a teenager is not a safe place for me. I was re-living my history and I needed what ACA calls a Gentleness Break.

So I put the diaries down for a while and came back to them when I felt ready. For me selfcare includes: taking breaks, seeking counseling, meditation and spiritual practice, sharing at ACA meetings, doing physical work, going for walks, listening to music, laughing a lot, and getting enough sleep. Also important were conversations with my sponsor and program friends. Most important was the knowledge that my Higher Power is always available.

After nearly a month, a life-changing insight came. I had done the ACA 12 Steps workbook previously, and my workbook group was on the Step 4 worksheets of Denial and PTSD. I realized I had been given a gift – a new and challenging way to write an ACA 4th Step inventory. I grabbed the shovel and dug even deeper! I began painfully breaking through a lifetime of denial. I admitted how damaged I was – not just as a young child, but that I was emotionally annihilated during my late teen years.

Processing this new awareness meant I needed to grieve the pain, to feel sadness for my lost young self, and to accept that my past is one of the things I cannot change.

I am not (and I never was) unacceptable. The 4th Step brought me monumental relief!!

I did not intend for this to happen, it just unfolded. My HP and willingness are what led me to a deeper understanding of my wounded inner child. This is part of my ACA forgiveness work – I can forgive my parents for being the unhappy people they were, and I can forgive myself for simply being the Adult Child of two alcoholic parents.

It may seem strange, but I like to think that my mother is making posthumous amends, something she couldn’t do in life. Through her own words she helped me learn what happened to me, helping me move toward my True Self. Thanks, Mom!

Share Your Story

Sharing our stories of our recovery journeys is one way of providing service. It’s also a loving way to encourage others to share their experiences. When adult children share stories of recovery, strength and hope, it reminds us that we are not alone.

Do you have a personal story of experience, strength, and hope you wish to share? Writing and sharing our personal story can be a profound experience for the storyteller. Sharing our personal experiences can awaken our awareness and help us to heal.

Sharing your story will help us connect with our emotions as we journey through the adult child experience. When we summon the strength to reveal ourselves and our struggles, we not only reduce our own sense of isolation, we shine a reassuring light on the path that lies ahead.

Realizing that we are not alone allows us to face each new day with courage, and to find inspiration in our own journeys.

The ACA ComLine welcomes your stories, drawings, poems, and photographs. We invite you to share yours.

Send your story as a .txt, .doc, or in an email to: litstaff@adultchildren.org. Stories should be 150-200 words.

You will also need to send a scan of a signed copyright release form.
I was familiar with the Fifth Step and had worked it in other programs, but in ACA I found there’s no transfer credit when it comes to step work. I was going to have to share what I’d written and learned through our Step Four worksheets. After some stalling on my part (fear), I finally contacted my spiritual director. He knew of my recovery history and my work in ACA. He’s an Adult Child himself, as well as clergy, so for me he was the safest person. Though he had served others with their fifth step in other programs, he was eager to read the BRB’s Appendix about hearing an ACA fifth step.

I was very surprised that another’s perspective on my “stuff” was both enlightening and affirming. For the first time I saw some positive, possibly protective, influences I had growing up. I was shown the positive traits I had developed as a result. It wasn’t all dark!

I was affirmed in ways I never expected. For example, I shared about how my parents automatically sided with teachers (or other authority figures) no matter the situation. Any problems were of my own making. I gave an example of one teacher’s semester-long shamming campaign, frequently ridiculing me in front of the class. I’ve talked about this with my siblings, my spouse and recovering friends over the years. Their reactions usually focused on the teacher. But my fifth step was the first time I was led to focus on the pain as I experienced it. It was the only time anyone acknowledged that I was being bullied by the teacher, and was powerless at the time. It wasn’t my fault. For the first time my Inner Child heard, “That was wrong; I’m sorry that happened to you.” I can’t begin to describe how liberating that validation was!

Many adult children may fear sharing “with another human being”, fearing judgment and condemnation. Actually, the process often results in quite the opposite. Another human being can bring objective clarity to the process, and show us the positive we cannot see in ourselves, and validate our Inner Child’s perceptions.

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Promise Five
As we face our abandonment issues, we will be attracted by strengths and become more tolerant of weaknesses.
Steps Four, Five and Six
by Charlie H. / Washington D.C. USA

A

fter years of painful isolation, I was at a national conference of Adult children of Alcoholics, exhilarated to learn I was not alone.

Then a workshop leader’s question startled me: “Did you ever think of never having children, because you wouldn’t want them to experience what you did?” Half the audience raised their hands. Though I had two young daughters, I hesitantly raised my hand, too.

In that moment, I understood the adult child tragedy. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn’t escape my childhood by thinking and acting like “normal people.” Inside of me remained a dark stain of inherited shame, which I felt doomed to pass along to two beautiful, innocent beings.

Thirty years later, I still thank God for ACA and all of its twelve steps.

As I began to attend meetings, I rightly focused on Steps One through Three. I needed to know I didn’t cause my family’s suffering and that I was powerless today over my Laundry List traits. I needed to meet my Higher Power and embrace my Inner Child.

It was life-changing. But after a few years, it wasn’t enough. Gradually, I had to take my own inventory, not just the inventory of my parents.

For adult children, Steps Four through Six can be confusing. Why, I wondered, was I examining my own defects? Wasn’t I the victim here? But engaging these steps was my path to freedom.

Alcoholism and childhood trauma are generational afflictions. When wounded before our personalities are formed, we struggle to be whole, healthy adults. We isolate, we control, we judge; we often become alcoholics or marry them.

Steps Four through Six are how we break the chain. We heal our wounds so that we don’t repeat them.

For me, personally, three things stand out in these steps.

A “blameless” family inventory helped my Step Four. I learned that my parents suffered profound childhood trauma. It helped to know they were victims before they became alcoholics.

I recognized I was alcoholic too. Looking in the mirror helped me attend AA.

Through trial and error, I realized that releasing one defect at a time worked better than trying to remove them all at once. One by one, I’ve created a space to let God heal my misuse of anger, isolation, judgment, etc.

Finally, ACA didn’t make me a perfect parent, but it cleansed the toxic stain inside me. My very beautiful daughters and I can talk, trust, and feel. Thanks to ACA, and the journey it led me on, I look to their futures with faith, hope and love. ♦

Ballot Issue Results

The 2017 Annual Business Conference (ABC) agenda will have 12 ballot measures that were approved by the required two-thirds majority of the ACA groups that voted. These ballot measures will be discussed at the upcoming 2017 ABC/AWC (ACA World Conference) in San Diego, April 20-23.

Out of the 16 ballots that were originally submitted by individual groups and then sent back out for fellowship approval, 203 groups and intergroups voted to approve 12 of the 16 measures to be voted on by the delegates at the ABC. The four that did not make it onto the agenda were ballot item numbers 2, 6, 7, and 14.

To see all of the ballots and the vote totals go here:
http://repository.adultchildren.org/committee-abc/ballot-prep

Come join us at the ABC and help make a difference in the future of ACA! ♦
Hi, My name is Luttre and I am an adult child and a “loner” in this fellowship. A “loner” is someone who can either not at all or not regularly attend face to face (f2f) meetings. I have been in ACA since about June last year and found myself feeling isolated because I can only attend one meeting a month. I knew I needed to start my step work but felt I needed to do it in a group setting so I would keep up the work.

I have now joined a new ACA online group which is a step workbook study and will start on April 3rd and am looking forward to working through the yellow step study workbook. I am so grateful to those in the fellowship who put so much time and effort into creating our literature. Because I am not able to get to meetings regularly, I am also reading the BRB daily and am sharing on the daily reader page (“Strengthening my Recovery”) into an online ACA group where that page gets posted each day. I find that I relate to others there, too, and am getting identification, encouragement and support.

As a loner I rely heavily on the ACA online community to aid my recovery efforts and need these online meetings and groups to stay on track with my recovery. I also use prayer and meditation daily to connect with my HP to be shown what my next step is to be in my life. As I am still newish in ACA I know I have a very long way to go. Old traumas are easily triggered and I revert easily back to fear based reactions. However, I do have great hope that through this fellowship I will get the recovery piece that is missing in my life.

Thank you all for keeping coming back.

From Our Treasurer

Greetings Fellow Travelers,

Have you ever been curious about who sends contributions to World Service? You can find out at the following web address: http://www.repository.adultchildren.org/donations-received.

Notice that the size of the contributions varies greatly. There is no set amount – there is no requirement. It’s the act of contributing to the whole that’s important.

For many groups, their regular Seventh Tradition contributions are just enough to cover their rent and expenses. But a lot of these same groups add an envelope to their basket that’s designated for their local Intergroup, if there is one, and World Service. They ask members to add something extra to that envelope whenever the spirit moves them. The act of doing so can help them understand that they are part of something much bigger – that they are able to give back.

With Gratitude in Recovery,
Mary Jo L.
ACA WSO Treasurer
Treasurer@adultchildren.org
The Literature Committee is pleased to announce the publication of a milestone piece of literature at this year’s Annual Business Conference (ABC) in San Diego. After years of service by teams of dedicated volunteers, the International Spanish Fellowship Text (international Spanish BRB) is now complete, and is being rolled out at the ABC. With Spanish being one of the most widely-spoken languages in the world, this text will bring the message of recovery to thousands of Spanish-speaking adult children who still suffer from the effects of being brought up in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional family.

¡Bienvenidos a ACA!

Strengthening My Recovery, our meditation book, is translated to Greet and vetted. A draft layout of the book will be provided to the Greek translation committee for review prior to printing. A special “Thank you!” to our Greek translation team for their service in ensuring the translations provide a clear understanding of the implications of what it means to be Adult Children.

The WSO is happy to announce that Amazon in the United States is now carrying some of our literature, like Fellowship Texts, 12 Step Workbooks (in English and Spanish), and Meditations books with more to follow.
**The 2017 ACA WSO**  
**Annual Business Conference Agenda**  
**Thursday, April 20th – Day 1**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 – 8:30 a.m. (30 min.)</td>
<td>Welcome the Delegates</td>
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<td>A Delegate is . . .</td>
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<td>Reporting</td>
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<td>Archives</td>
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<td>8:30 – 9:00 a.m. (30 min.)</td>
<td>About the ABC</td>
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<td><em>Roberts Rules of Order</em></td>
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<td>Review of the Concepts and the Commitment to Service</td>
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<td>The OPPM – the Operating Policies and Procedures Manual</td>
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<td>9:00 – 9:45 a.m. (45 min.)</td>
<td>About the WSO</td>
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<td>Service Structure Committee presentation – Q &amp; A</td>
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<td>9:45 – 10:00 a.m. (15 min.)</td>
<td>Play Break – Activity</td>
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<td>10:00 – 11:15 a.m. (75 min.)</td>
<td>Preview of Committee Reports – Q &amp; A</td>
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<td>11:15 – 11:45 a.m. (30 min.)</td>
<td>Board of Trustees</td>
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<td>Self-introductions and invitation to committee participation</td>
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<td>12:00 – 1:00 p.m. (60 min.)</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>1:00 – 2:00 p.m. (60 min.)</td>
<td>Call to Order by the Board Chairperson</td>
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<td>Welcome/Opening Prayer</td>
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<td>ACA 12 Traditions, Commitment to Service, and Meditation of the Day</td>
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<td>Introduction of the ABC Chairperson and of the participants</td>
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<td>Secretary’s Report – 2016 ABC Minutes</td>
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<td>Treasurer’s Report</td>
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<td>2:00 – 2:10 p.m. (10 min.)</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>2:10 – 3:40 p.m. (90 min.)</td>
<td>Committee Reports</td>
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<td>3:40 – 3:50 p.m. (10 min.)</td>
<td>Play Break – Activity</td>
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<td>3:50 – 4:50 p.m. (60 min.)</td>
<td>Committee Reports, <em>cont.</em></td>
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<td>4:50 – 5:00 p.m. (10 min.)</td>
<td>Close Day One</td>
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<td>Introduce Day Two Agenda</td>
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<td>Serenity Prayer</td>
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*(continued on page 9)*
The 2017 ACA WSO
Annual Business Conference Agenda

Friday, April 21st – Day 2

8:00 – 8:15 a. m. (15 min.) Welcome
Serenity Prayer
Meditation of the Day

8:15 – 10:00 a. m. (105 min.) Ballot Proposals
Discussion and Voting

10:00 – 10:15 a. m. (15 min.) Play Break – Change of Perspective and Stretch

10:15 a. m. – 12:00 p. m. (75 min.) Ballot Proposals
Discussion and Voting, cont.

12:00 – 1:30 p. m. (90 min.) Lunch

1:30 – 2:00 p. m. (30 min.) WSO Board of Trustees Ratifications
Confirm continuing Trustees and nominate/elect new Trustees

2:00 – 3:15 p. m. (75 min.) Ballot Proposals
Discussion and Voting, cont.

3:15 – 3:30 p. m. (15 min.) Play Break

3:30 – 4:50 p. m. (80 min.) Ballot Proposals / New Business
Discussion and Voting, cont.

4:50 – 5:00 p.m. (10 min.) Close Day Two and Adjourn the Conference
Serenity Prayer

Additionally: Board of Trustees Meeting – Location TBA
(All invited)
Affirm Officers and Committee Chairs
Review ABC motions for possible action
Close the Board Meeting with the Serenity Prayer

News and Views
Delegates Corner: 
Floor Motions at the Annual Business Conference
by Pam M. & Laura L. / California, USA

Purpose of a Motion
A motion is a formal proposal to a group to take some form of action, put forth an opinion, or institute a process. We get things done efficiently when we have specific rules of behavior, so we use Robert’s Rules of Order in our ACA business meetings.

Ballot Motions
At the ACA Annual Business Conference (ABC), part of our time will be spent on ballot items that 203 groups voted to discuss at the ABC. To consider each ballot item, someone will make a motion such as: I move for WSO to announce a call for groups to submit an Own Loving Parent workbook. Someone will say they also want to discuss it (“I second”). Then the Chair will set a time limit to discuss the proposal. The Chair will then call for the vote.

Floor Motions
In the process of discussing any subject, there may be a repetitively voiced need for a specific service or education. At the 2016 ABC, many new delegates were confused. Born of that confusion was a motion to have a committee form to create training for delegates at the 2017 ABC.

How to Make a Floor Motion
1. Raise your hand; wait until called on by Chair.
2. Say, “I move (state action, policy, or process wanted)”.
3. Chair asks for second. If motion seconded, Chair calls for discussion for specified amount of time.
4. Chair asks for motion to be restated and counts votes and announces if motion passes.

Disposition
Motions may be passed, amended (changed), withdrawn altogether, or tabled. If passed, the action, policy, or process is then carried out by ACA volunteers who Step Up to do the job! ✨

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

Tradición Cinco
Cada grupo tiene un solo propósito primordial: llevar el mensaje al niño adulto que todavía sufre.

παράδοση Πέντε
Κάθε ομάδα έχει έναν πρωταρχικό σκοπό – να μεταφέρει το μήνυμά της στο ενήλικο παιδί που ακόμα υποφέρει.

10 | Second Quarter 2017 • ACA ComLINE
2017 Annual Business Conference (ABC) and ACA World Convention (AWC) Registration Form  
April 20-23, 2017 – San Diego, Calif., USA  
To register as a delegate or convention attendee, complete the form below. Please print, * indicates required information

No registration fee is required for the attendance of the ABC (Thursday & Friday)

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<th>Full Name * First, Last</th>
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Name desired on Badge

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I joined ACA / my anniversary is (MM/DD/YY) __________________________________________

Mailing Address*

| Street______________________________________________________ |
| City_______________________________ State________ Zip_________ |
| Country_____________________________________________________ |

The following section is for ABC Business voting delegates only

I attest that I have been selected as the delegate of an ACA Group or Intergroup

| WSO No.* _________________ Group / Intergroup Name _________________________________ |
| (To find your group number, go to www.meetings.adultchildren.org/find-a-meeting) |

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Business Conference & World Convention Costs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Convention Registration</th>
<th>Regular Rate March 23rd - April 19th</th>
<th>$35.00 _______________</th>
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<tr>
<td>Please select only one</td>
<td>Walk up Rate April 20th – 23rd</td>
<td>$40.00 _______________</td>
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<td>Box Lunch Thursday</td>
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<td>Box Lunch Friday</td>
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<td>Thursday Night Dinner in Old Town</td>
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<td>Banquet Dinner Saturday</td>
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<td>Speaker Luncheon Sunday</td>
<td>$30.00 _______________</td>
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Scholarship — Donation to help others attend the convention:

$5 o $10 o $15 o $20 o $25 o other _______________

Grand Total - Amount enclosed USD $ _______________

Payment can be made by personal check or money order payable to Adult Children of Alcoholics. We gladly accept personal checks, however to save time and effort we would greatly appreciate Money Orders. We will accept personal checks up to 10 days prior to the event. Please print, complete and mail all forms with your check or money order to: ACA WSO, Inc. – ATTENTION: ABC/AWC – P.O. Box 3216, Torrance, CA 90510 USA  
To register online or for hotel information please go to: https://www.acaworldconvention.org