



# ComLine

Adult Children of Alcoholics  
*Experience, Strength & Hope*

Volume 26, Number 1

January 2010

## ***ACA Tradition One***

***Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on ACA unity.***

“ACA’s journey to find its identity as a fellowship has created a proven unity that underpins our primary purpose of carrying the ACA message to suffering adult children. ACA unity is based on our similarities rather than our differences. Adult children come from many different family types. We have different viewpoints, but we are the same at the core. We are a group of trauma survivors who can depend upon each other as we heal and recover...”

At first glance, the First Tradition seems to put a meeting’s common welfare above individual recovery. When we think about this possibility, we must ask: “Can we even have personal recovery without ACA unity?” Our First Tradition frankly says, “No.” ACA members working the Twelve Steps recognize the need to place the group’s survival ahead of their own selfish needs or fear-based urge to control others...

Do established meetings placing the common welfare of the group first have problems or conflicts? Sure. But at such healthy meetings, problems become opportunities to further one’s recovery. The groups’ members have learned to trust one another and to disagree without being disagreeable. The group members trust the collective decision-making process known as the group conscience...

Group members who once believed they could not tolerate one another discover their differences are not that important when the survival of the group is on the line. They realize the group suffers when ACA members fail to cooperate for a common purpose. When the group suffers, so does the individual who cannot recover alone.”

*Excerpts from pages 492 and 494 of the ACA Fellowship Text*

### **About ACA**

Adult Children of Alcoholics is a 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*

## Communicating with WSO

WSO Board and Committee members do their best to be responsive to inquiries. Please be patient with us—we are all volunteers and aren't always able to respond as quickly as we'd like.

E-Mail is usually the fastest and best way to reach us. Various points of contact are shown in the “Who to Contact” section below.

You can also write to us at:  
ACA WSO, PO Box 3216, Torrance, CA, 90510, USA.

**Please do not send Express Mail.** We don't pick up the mail every day, so it's a waste of money for you, plus it requires us to make a special trip to the Post Office during business hours.

Thanks,  
and we look forward to hearing from you!

### Who to Contact

If you 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...

Please 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 be routed to the appropriate ACA WSO committee for response.

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.

## Redefining “Unity”

Shelley M.

ACA has helped me to understand the concept of Tradition One in a more balanced, healthy way. In the household where I grew up, I came to understand that ‘our common welfare’ as a family meant that nobody spoke of my father’s drinking or verbal abuses. In seventh grade, I broke that “don’t talk, don’t trust, don’t feel” rule. As a result, the entire family was punished traumatically by my father for two whole weeks.

My little girl mind was almost sure that my family was going to fall apart, as there was serious talk of separation by my parents. The common welfare of our family was in jeopardy. There was no unity- we were all in our own separate corners, confused, frightened and hurting. Not one of us was okay.

Thanks to ACA recovery, I am an adult who no longer needs to protect the ‘common welfare’ of my family in order to feel that I will survive. Nor do I believe that my personal emotional, spiritual, or physical successes are

dependent upon the farcical unity of my family of origin.

I understand that the common welfare spoken of in ACA means our ‘ability to enact ACA’s primary purpose’, which is to carry the ACA message of recovery to the Adult Child who is still suffering.

Today, I am dependant only upon my personal recovery. When I arrived at ACA, broken and dying, my personal recovery was dependant only upon ACA. Now, after working through all 12 Steps and nearly three years of emotional sobriety, it is apparent to me that the program of ACA works. It literally saved my life. The common welfare of ACA was intact when I arrived- I have experienced recovery and new life.

It is important for me to remember and practice this primary purpose so that ACA will continue to be here for those who walk through the doors after me, broken and dying.

## More Tradition One Insight...

ACA Fellowship Text, p. 491

“When I came into the program I heard people say, ‘Do it my way, or I’ll quit.’ This was my lifelong attitude as well. I did get angry and quit, and not just once. Each time I came back to ACA, the original group was still there, still pulling together and still moving forward. They were unified in their likenesses. I had run away because of our differences.

My ego kept me a prisoner of my sickness. I wanted to overpower these people and make them do things my way, even though I knew my way did not work. I wanted to do to them what had been done to me. I soon discovered that bullying others into submission does not work here.

When I understood that the unity of my program was essential to my recovery, I took my first real step away from the survival behavior I learned as a child. Now I contribute to the common welfare of the group by encouraging the group to work together and move ahead. Even as I wander back and forth on my recovery path, my ACA group remains stable.”

ACA Fellowship Text, p. 495

“Does the First Tradition mean ACA members should give up their identity or personal recovery to gain unity? Do we all have to think alike and act alike for the common good?”

To the contrary, group members will usually find their individuality honored and celebrated in ACA. They find the greatest support for their program and identity while attending meetings that work in unity.

Those of us with dysfunctional childhoods may not have had a healthy experience in dealing with problems and resolution. Many ACA members have learned to form opinions, and to argue constructively in an ACA group business meeting, perhaps for the first time in their lives.

We may have been told to stay quiet or were scolded as children for talking. In ACA, however, we are encouraged to find our true voice and identity. We are asked to add our views and our voice to ACA unity.”

## Choosing ACA Unity

Omer G.

Unity in Adult Children of Alcoholics is essential for the survival of the group and its members. In the order of things, our common welfare comes first. Without the group, recovery from the Laundry List traits is difficult if not impossible for the individual in my opinion.

ACA groups achieve unity by focusing meetings on the ACA Twelve Steps and Traditions. Yet, I have learned that unity does not mean that disagreements will never occur. In my home group in Tulsa, Okla., we have had disagreements. We work through such conflict because we trust one another and believe that we are here to help ourselves and the suffering adult child. We trust one another because we attend meetings together and we see changes occurring in our lives.

I have learned that the opposite of unity is family reenactment which involves group members trying to recreate the dysfunction of their family by engaging ACA members in dysfunctional conflict. This typically leads to emotional intoxication and unproductive arguing. In family reenactment, group members can become divided and choose

sides against one another. We can relapse into old family roles of hero, lost child, scapegoat, victim or rescuer. Accusations fly and disunity can result. This is how dysfunctional families operate but there is hope if the group can embrace ACA recovery principles.

In my experience, this is a simple gauge to determine if group conflict is headed for ACA unity or if it is headed for family reenactment and confusion. ACA unity is identified by honesty, fairness, hope and cooperation that can result in a group conscience. Family roles are retired.

The good news is that I have seen healthy group interactions in ACA meetings and business meetings. I have seen adult children apply the principles of the Steps and Traditions to stay focused on ACA's primary purpose. I have seen group members disagree with a group decision yet support the decision because they support the group conscience and because they support group unity. When this occurs, ACA's common welfare comes first. The group feels safe and the individual experiences trust and hope.

### The ComLine Needs You!

If you would like to

- ⇒ share about one of the ACA Traditions
- ⇒ share your experience, strength, or hope in ACA recovery
- ⇒ or update 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:

<http://www.acawso.org/ipb/index.php?showforum=40>

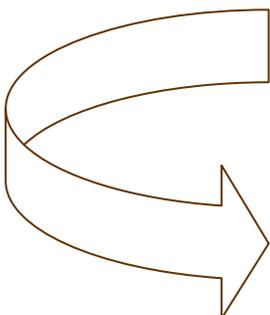
ComLine editions published since 2004 are available to read or download, and new issues are posted each month!

## ACA's Annual Business Conference: You're Invited!

The 2010 Annual Business Conference of Adult Children of Alcoholics will be held in Tulsa, Oklahoma on the fourth weekend of April 2010. All ACA members are welcome to attend. Each registered ACA group and Intergroup is encouraged to elect one voting delegate to attend the ABC. Only those delegates registering as the authorized representative of their ACA group or Intergroup will be eligible to vote on motions at the ABC. Registration forms are available on the 2010 ABC webpage and can be submitted either electronically or by postal mail.

In February, proposed business items will be circulated to all ACA groups for a collective group conscience vote of the fellowship. Items receiving the support of 2/3 or more of groups responding will be presented for discussion at the 2010 ABC. If your meeting does not receive this Group Conscience Survey ballot, it will also be available for download from the ABC webpage.

**Visit the 2010 ABC webpage for details and more information: [www.acawso.com/abc](http://www.acawso.com/abc)**



### *Did You Know...*

- The Annual Business Conference of ACA has been held since 1983?...
- The ACA Fellowship Text was "conference approved" by a motion of the 2006 ABC?...
- Invitations to the 2010 ABC have been sent to 587 registered ACA meetings and Intergroups worldwide?...
- And, all ACA members are welcome to attend!

## News from the Fellowship

### **From Illinois (IL193):**

"The Hinsdale Meeting on Saturday mornings has been growing these last couple of years. We have between 25 to 30 people. We use the Big Red Book (ACA Fellowship Text) which we are reading cover to cover. We have started six Workbook Groups since last year with four of them finishing. The other two are just underway. We use the new yellow ACA 12 Step Workbook. We have the Workbook Groups using a regular meeting format which means we do all the standard meeting readings and we observe the crosstalk guidelines. We try to be flexible and rely on our group consciences to iron out any issues that may come up on a weekly basis for these groups. We are not perfect but we are making great progress. There have been 2 new regular meetings started in the Western Suburbs. Both of these meetings use the Red Book reading one Tradition chapter each month and then the Steps, and one has a workbook group right after their regular meeting. *We are amazed at the increase of newcomers who are continuing to come back. Our Higher Power has blessed us with these newcomers who keep our meetings vibrant and alive. The Big Red Book and the ACA 12 Step Workbook have been a source of information that seems to bring much clarity to our program while remembering that each group is autonomous.*"

### **From Oklahoma (OK022):**

"In January of 2009 I was handed a copy of the ACOA text and instantly knew we needed to start a meeting in OKC. Using a borrowed book we started a meeting at the Western Club on Sundays at 4pm. That meeting will celebrate 1 year in the first week of February 2010. That meeting was strong from the start and now averages 25-30 people a week. In that meeting we are going through the Red book one page at a time with a read and share format.

From that "mothership" meeting two official meetings and a few "homegroup" type meetings were launched. On Wednesdays we have another meeting using the Red Book focusing on a Step a week. Also, on Thursdays we have a Step study using the Yellow workbook. We are basically working through the Steps together out of the workbook and also use a read and share format. *The re-birth of ACOA in OKC has been nothing short of a miracle and many people with years of recovery in other programs, as well as many, many newcomers to recovery, are finding their way to our fellowship.*"

## Seventh Tradition Contributions– November 2009

*“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.”*

CAN 141 - Nova Scotia, CAN	50.00
LA 016 - Lake Charles, LA	45.00
CA 612 - San Leandro, CA	337.13
FL 103 - P oke County, FL	50.00
FL 135 - St. Petersburg, FL	10.00
MI 109 - Marquette, MI	15.00
MA 029 - Milton, MA	60.00
NY065 - Pelham, NY	200.00
GA 021 - Marietta, GA	73.00
HI 013 - Keaau, HI	532.98
FL 135 - St. Petersburg, FL	3.00
AZ065 - Prescott, AZ	5.00
CA 717 - Santa Monica, CA	75.00
IL 172 - Deerfield, IL	100.00
CAN 020 - Toronto, Ontario, CAN	22.96
WI 045 - Green Bay, WI	243.92
FL 132 - Miami Beach, FL	26.00
CA 863 - Petaluma, CA	50.00
CA 968 - Palm Springs, CA	50.00
Anonymous	199.00

**Total 7th Tradition** **2,147.99**

## Monthly Highlights from your ACA WSO Committees

**Web/Forum:** Activity on the ACA WSO forum continues to increase with 269 new registrations, 140 new topics, 423 active members, 777 new posts, and 6379 post views. A total of 133 information requests were received through the new web form on the ACA WSO home page. In addition, 45 ACA meeting updates were submitted through this form.

-- If you would like to participate on the ACA forum, go to [www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org) and click on “Online Forums” in the left-hand menu. You can then register as a forum member. From the forum, you can view shares from other members, download PDF files of ACA conference approved literature, read archived editions of the ComLine, and access reports and minutes of ACA WSO monthly teleconferences.

**Treasury:** 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition contributions were received this month from ACA meetings from Canada to California, from Hawaii to Florida, and many points in between!

-- Our Seventh Tradition reminds us that ACA should be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. Seventh Tradition contributions collected at the meeting level and shared with the ACA World Service Organization are used to maintain services to adult children seeking recovery. As shown in each month’s treasury report, ACA WSO funds are expended to publish and ship ACA literature, operate a central office, oversee foreign translations of ACA literature, provide copies of the fellowship text and workbook to hospitals and institutions, maintain the fellowship web page, and host ACA’s Annual Business Conference.

**2010 Annual Business Conference:** Information packets containing the ABC agenda, ABC registration form, and ballot item proposal form were mailed to 587 registered ACA groups around the world. Here’s a look at where groups are located:

- United States: 405 meetings, 18 Intergroups
- Europe: 107 meetings, 5 Intergroups
- Canada: 18 meetings, 5 Intergroups
- Mexico and Central America: 11 meetings, 1 Intergroup
- Australia: 9 meetings, 2 Intergroups
- South America: 2 meetings, 1 Intergroup
- Asia: 3 meetings

-- If your meeting did not receive this information packet, the same information can be found on the ABC webpage at [www.acawso.com/abc](http://www.acawso.com/abc). To update the address or contact information on your meeting’s registration, just go to [www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org) and follow the “meeting registration” link located near the bottom of the page.

## ACA WSO Treasurer's Monthly Report Financial Summary: November 2009

### From the Treasurer:

**Bank Balances:**

**October 31, 2009**

Checking account	18,602.01
Pay Pal Account	883.75
Savings Account	56,226.02

**November 30, 2009**

Checking account	5,688.78
Pay Pal account	3,181.77
Savings Account	56,985.29

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

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

\$13,500 was transferred from Pay Pal to the checking account during the month.

#### Profit and Loss - November 2009

**Income**

7th Tradition	2,147.99
ACA Fellowship Text purchase	12,041.50
Bank Interest	9.27
California Sales Tax	158.27
ComLine Subscriptions	112.00
Fellowship Text index	122.50
Literature sales	1,548.40
ACA Workbook purchase	4,445.50

**Total Income** **20,585.43**

**Expense**

Bank Fees	10.02
ComLine Expenses	253.53
Fellowship text expenses	18,516.81
H&I Committee	10.65
Office Expenses	6,749.67
Pay Pal Fees	595.21
Payroll Expenses	4,205.58
Web and Support	99.90

**Total Expense** **30,441.37**

**Net Income** **-9,855.94**

#### Year to Date Summary:

##### January-November 2009

**Income**

7th Tradition	16,281.69
ACA Fellowship Text purchase	115,473.91
Bank Interest	113.92
California Sales Tax	1,942.88
ComLine Subscriptions	1,126.21
Fellowship Text index	415.00
Handbook Contribution	26.31
Literature sales	10,662.03
ACA Workbook purchase	45,830.28

**Total Income** **191,872.23**

**Expense**

ABC Committee	2,833.18
Accounting Services	1,112.50
Bank Fees	376.40
Business Taxes/Licenses	25.00
ComLine Expenses	2,352.45
Fellowship Text expenses	56,569.19
H&I Committee	1,197.59
Insurance	1,982.97
Legal Fees	720.00
Literature Committee	18,681.87
Office Expenses	62,121.39
OutReach Committee	2,781.22
Pay Pal Fees	5,595.11
Payroll Expenses	39,939.14
Refund	66.86
Tax	1,791.35
Web and Support	939.31

**Total Expense** **199,085.53**

**Net Income** **-7,213.30**

It is a pleasure to notify the WSO Board and our ACA Fellowship that the total amount of 7th Tradition contributions for the year so far totals \$16,281.69, with November's total coming to \$2,147.99.

To me, that means that the Fellowship is telling us that this work needs to continue and are willing to support it financially. Hurrah for the 7th Tradition and the 12th Step.

Unfortunately, the income and expenses for November leave us in the negative on our books due to the cost of printing books, office expenses and payroll.

However, this also means that we have been sending out more books – meaning that we had to print more books - which at this time is one of our primary jobs.

We have money to meet our expenses now, even though we had a \$-9,855.94 because of publishing and the afore mentioned expenses.

This is my 5th year on the WSO board so I will be 'retiring' in April 2010. The WSO Board would like to have more people join us to work on the various committees, so do consider attending our teleconferences the second Saturday of every month. All are welcomed to listen in on the activities of the WSO Board.

If you have any questions, email me at:

PhyllisACA@cableone.net

Phyllis R  
Treasurer ACA WSO

You can now write or call our office with any questions.

ACA World Services — 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.

**ComLine**

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

**Return Service  
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