


HUMBOLDT ACA INTERGROUP
P.O. BOX 6672, EUREKA, CA 95502
(707) 443-3836

Tuesday, July 17, 1990


Gary M., Barbara Z., Omaha/Council Bluffs ACA IG,
90th & Fort St. Station,
Omaha, NE 68134

Dear Gary, Barbara and others,

First of all, we'd like to commend Gary for recognizing the need for fellowship participation in such important decisions as creation/administration of Regions or Districts at the Regionalization Caucus (iWSO Board Meeting, July 14). With only 60+ Intergroups presently in existence, it's hardly beyond the scope of practicality to survey them for options and input and present them with alternatives. Since my information on your shift in perspective is second-hand (through a Board member's summary), I'd like to know if you and Joanne O. are now willing to open up the Regionalization activities to others? 

Charlie T. (Humboldt IG) has a pc program which can easily be used to map and organize communities/regions by zipcodes and he's also got the willingness and the ability to take on such a project. He wanted to do this last Spring, but Joanne O. refused to permit it or to hold a Regionalization teleconference at that time.

We are presently completing a first draft of a Tradition/Concepts based Service Manual which will be circulated in October after it's been reviewed by those who participate in the Labor Day Retreat here. The structure as envisioned so far will include (a) a congress of delegates elected directly by the IGs, which will, in turn, (b) elect 12 ACA Trustees who will act as a kind of fellowship-steering committee, coordinating the activities of (c) a body of Standing Committees in which any of the IGs can participate, thus committees like Regionalization easily transfer over to the revised structure and become broad-based. We haven't included a "regional step" in the structure so far because ACA is presently too small to need one; it would just be "red tape." That may not always be true, however. Brad M., Heart of Iowa IG has some valuable input on this and I'd like to suggest you invite him to have a voice in this. Joanne's original idea of "regionalizing" (Oct./Nov. 1989 iWSO Minutes) — getting a zip-code based data system for registering meetings was a good idea, that, as I said above, we'd like to help get into motion. Charlie T. is a wizard at data base work. He set up the template for the "Who Are We Survey?" in Lotus and it was a breeze to use. I'd never used Lotus before, and Charlie made a tough job possible, even easy.

The ACA structure and Service Manual has been presented as controversial by some, mostly those associated with the "old Board." I, and others involved in this work, have been unkindly treated and our motivations very unfairly characterized and criticized. Fortunately, some of these elements were voted down at the iWSO meeting in July, with "old and new" Trustees joining to stand against endorsing any more fear-based reaction (such as Board members having to sign "loyalty oaths" to iWSO). Although we are still out a bunch of money here for work undertaken for the fellowship, we're confident that, as sanity prevails, justice will, too. We appreciate the sane trust in a Higher Power that participation in iWSO by people like Gary brings to the "new Board" and we applaud the stands that were taken on principle at the July meeting. 

The iWSO *corporate structure* isn't Tradition or Concept based, but, fortunately now for us all, an increasing number of Board members now are. We anticipate that the structure outlined in the new Service Manual will quickly replace the present structure, and do so relatively peacefully, once IGs have had a chance to evaluate the materials and everyone gets it clear that dissolving the iWSO *corporation* is not an attack on the *ACA fellowship*. Hopefully, with the broadened Board, realization of how ridiculous the iWSO Bylaws really are will become more widely understood. The fear-based-ness of the Board's behavior is entirely due to the lack of Tradition/Concept structure. When you hatch an alligator egg, you end up with an alligator, even if you have a pheasant sit on it. You can't get pretty results "down the road" unless you start with "pretty beginnings." Bylaws like ". . . the activities and affairs of this corporation shall be conducted and all corporate powers exercised by or under the direction of the Board of Trustees¹," contradict Traditions 2 and 9, no matter who's on the Board. *Best case*, nothing gets done!

Having no references to the Concepts has led to blatant violations of Concepts III, IV and V that I could spend a lot of time discussing. Not letting me address the Conference prior to the delegate selection process is one obvious example of a Concept V violation that you cited in your newsletter. Although I did raise my voice, I didn't shout. I certainly was within the bounds of Concept V to ask to be recognized prior to such an important act as changing the Board structure without input from those affected. Not having a "mike" at the back of the room, you at least have to project a little to be heard 80' away. But, indeed, I wasn't recognized. Under the current structure, the Board didn't have to listen. The person who led the chorus chanting, "Sit down, Kathleen!" was — to illustrate my point — a former Chairperson of the iWSO (now living in Connecticut.) Incidentally, I'm sorry Barbara Z. saw fit to circulate that incident to all the IGs. People want to know if I "deserved" to be publicly humiliated, and when I explain, then the "lynchmob" looks bad. It's a form of public shaming and it's hard to imagine a Tradition/Concept based system that would have people all over the place debating such a question. That's why, in a nutshell, we've stuck with it, in seeing this structure problem through to a solution.

The Service Manual we're producing represents the shared wisdom of some remarkable people. Let me share something about them with you: Starting with the ones who've been most involved, or involved for the longest time: Mark L., from Connecticut, is a dedicated man with very practical abilities in organizing. He's written through most of the Steps and Traditions for the Connecticut newsletter and, with George M. and Marie J., did most of what it took to get the 1990 ABC Convention into reality until the last month or two before the event. He's very modest, however, and (unlike me) disinclined to respond to provocation. He is a tower of faith and commitment, in my experience, and he's been a kindly and loyal friend during "all kinds of weather." Peter G. of Chicago is a grass-roots outreach person who genuinely likes people without being sentimental about it. He's able to keep the long-ranged view of fellowship unity and, despite the flack he sometimes gets hit with in doing so, he's a master at practicing what everybody preaches about "keeping an open mind and letting everybody have their say." He's got a great sense of humor and often brings plastic dinosaurs to Business Conferences. His articles on Service are widely reprinted in IG newsletters, and his ideas are almost exclusively responsible for the Principles section in the new Manual. Jim Mi., from Minnesota, is a clear and focused idea-person with a big "gentle streak." He and others in the group in Minnesota developed materials to give an inclusive focus to ACA while

¹ Section 3.(a), Bylaws of Adult Children of Alcoholics, Central Service Board, Inc./Interim World Service Organization, A California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation.

they have provided a strong model for fellowship unity through an Intergroup internal process that is patient, respectful and simple. It is the model that is largely carried over to the new Service Manual. Jim Mo., also of Minnesota, was the original conceiver of the ACA Service Manual. He's been dedicated to building a World Service structure based on a network of Intergroups since sometime in late 1986. In 1987-88, he traveled all over the country to link up various IGs as a iWSO Board member and then-Chairperson of the APACA committee. His ideas largely shape the Service Manual sections on conference procedures and election of delegates. As for me, I'm a student of the Steps and Traditions with a writing background. I am a strong advocate of an "open" literature policy in ACA, since it is a core issue that, with "open" membership, separates us from AI-Anon. That perspective has been my motivation in sharing my skills and talents in doing much of the actual writing of materials developed by those associated with what was APACA.

Larry McL. from Seattle is the originator of the idea of having a "congress of delegates" directly drawn from the IGs. He's also a primary source of light on the issue of inclusion and of practical implications of "self-responsibility" in service. Bob N., in Connecticut, has been repeatedly able to cut through the emotional haze and get the project back on track. Brad M, of Heart of Iowa and Josie E., Dallas/Ft Worth, have repeatedly raised specific, concrete issues and goals with a positive view of seeing them met and this has been another factor in sharpening the focus of the finished draft. Alex R., Phoenix, Rita of Chicago and others have emphasized the importance of commitment to the long-range goal of seeing a program there for those who come after us — in some cases, our own children. Joyce D. of Los Angeles, Judith E. and Tim of South Sound have taken time and learned enough to bring some information to their own IGs, where it was sometimes not easy. Some "ghosts" who haven't been that actively involved in the past year but who gave a lot of input earlier include Ray W. of Washington, D.C., former iWSO Chairs Joe A. and Willie B. and former Trustees Ron R., Michael C., Judy C, Kelly M. and Michael F. Even those who've been quite negative and resistant to this project have been helpful in giving focus to the issues that must be addressed.

So, as you can see, this project hasn't been the private brainchild of a few. It has been, and remains, a fellowship-centered project. And your input is still in order, if you'd like to reaffirm an interest in this venture. Let me know if you'd like to see a rough draft of this, prior to the Labor Day event. We'd enjoy having one or more of you attend that event. We'd especially like to offer your version of the First Step as one of the options for an authorized wording. Thanks for taking time to read through this letter. I hope it helps reduce concerns!

Yours in fellowship,



Kathleen W., Humboldt ACA World Service Delegate

P.S. Your newsletter reverses the order of what happened at the ABC. The incident with the chanting happened *before* we moved to dissolve APACA, not *afterward*. The mistake makes us look like soreheads. Will you please publish that correction in your next newsletter? Thanks!

The Purpose of Service in 12-Step Groups

All Service in all of the 12-Step programs is rooted in individual expression of Step 12: *"Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these Steps, we try to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs."*

We may demonstrate our *"spiritual awakening"* by making the coffee at our neighborhood meeting or by chairing the Annual Business Conference. Each action undertaken in gratitude for personal recovery is equally of value. We each do what a loving Higher Power inspires us to do, on a daily basis, to *"carry the message."*

It is therefore important that we see in each aspect of Service opportunities for individual recovery. Thus, every Service structure is at its best when it offers simple, direct opportunities to take the actions necessary to *"carry the message"*, at whatever level of *"carrying"* is involved. Provisions for rotation of leadership and for direct feedback from those who are being served need to be built into all levels of 12-Step program Service structures.

Creative ideas, strong opinions, new perspectives — whether they prove workable or ill-concieved — represent aspects of returning health and vitality among empowered, self-respecting human beings. Individuals need to be empowered by the Service structure, not restricted or repressed by it. Individual initiative poses little threat to our program so long as we, as an organization, remain Traditions-centered. If communication remains open and feedback is encouraged, our 12-Step program will remain both vital and unified, as we continue to hear and heed the guidance of a loving Higher Power, expressed through our group conscience.

Kathleen W.

March 18, 1991

Dear Kathleen, 

This is really the first moment I have had to acknowledge your Valentines Day letter.

I'm not sure what I want to say but it is important to extend to you the common courtesy of a reply.

I have to remind myself quite frequently that I can only practice my recovery when I deal with myself thru my higher power whom I chose to call God. When I am concerned with others, like in taking their inventory, I become involved in a process over which I have no influence - notice I didn't say control. Nevertheless I am not perfect but I am making progress.

It is so important that I realize I am on a path. That path or road takes me on a journey of learning experiences. It is sometimes necessary to go through the jungle and survive dangerous and challenging situations to understand what reality is all about. The jungle exists even though I'm using it as a metaphor. To deny or circumvent the jungle may be an option - it may even be considered as safe. We all look at situations differently. I am not willing to ignore the jungle - who knows paradise may lie within. I am not afraid to walk or run, if I have to, through that jungle but it is necessary for recovery that I not turn away - that I face it head on and let God be my protector; that I have trust; that I accept I will be a better person by understanding that which I fear.


There are many, many similarities between personal growth or recovery and the growth of the ACA service structure. I don't have the answers for my own recovery. I am learning to take one day, one situation or one issue at a time and after taking action to allow God's will to prevail. I have not perfected this or even come close yet. I have even less answers for the ACA service structure. I consider my self a trusted servant. As such my purpose is to help the recovery process of the ACA both in and out of the program. This can only be accomplished by unity.


Focusing in on myself and remembering the serenity prayer allows me to take that path through the jungle. I am willing to experience all my feelings and at the same time let go of that over which I have no domain. This is not easy. It's not easy accepting that black and white are not the only alternatives. Being right is an acceptable objective; proving that I am right may be an exercise in egotism. Humility is an elusive characteristic. Perhaps going through the jungle on one's own path is like taking a trip to Oz. One of my defects is to place stock in receiving awards - not that I ever get any. I can identify with a quest to meet the Wizard and receive a medal for Humility. Yet I sense that Humility is earned by being willing to take the path through the jungle with many turns and challenges just like Dungeons and Dragons. Sometimes it's even necessary to avoid confrontation if that's what it takes to complete the course. There is a reward at the end and I believe it's a spiritual one. To be spiritual you need to be humble.


Kathleen, I am not sure we are on the same road. If we are it's not my design to knock you off. We can walk together or I can pass you or you can pass me. We can sit awhile or kid around awhile. My path is ahead. I'm going to Oz so I can go back home again. I'm going to meet a lot of different and probably strange people and encounter difficult and probably dysfunctional situations. I'm going

to be afraid, I'm going to make mistakes, I'm going to face and work through obstacles but sometimes I will avoid them and sometimes I will run. In the jungle its important to take each step carefully and to be conscious of every thing all around. It's important to be aware of others on the path. If they profess to have the same goal it would be wise to seek their counsel in the various and sundry alternatives that arise. The cliché, "Two heads are better than one" is the basis for a group conscience. I don't have the answers.

I'm taking the road alone but I welcome all. I need all the support I can get because its a difficult and scary journey. I also want to give support because I can't get what I am not willing to give. To the extent we have a shared purpose we walk alone but together. We need not be in competition because I am doing my own thing and my boundaries are large enough for me to do anything. I don't have to win. I can be right; I can be OK; but I have nothing to prove. I do not have to judge myself or anyone else.

Getting down to specifics. The service manual  doesn't help my recovery. Does it help with the growth of the ACA fellowship? There may be some parts that could work. It's of no value if its to be considered as a service manual. A manual has to be built part by part with each part, to the extent necessary, fitting into each other. Each part has to work and all the parts have to work together. It takes an understanding of the components that make up the part. When you start off with the wrong components you end up with a defective product. The contributors to the service guide used the wrong components and have some screws loose. Can it be fixed? If its worthwhile I'm sure it can. It needs input from the structure its intended to service.

What can I say about the Humboldt ACA IG? I have a very strong opinion. When you have an IG in total isolation being feed one line of thinking year after year and never allowing the alternate view to be expressed it is not surprising to have linear thinking and negative reactions. When you start from the get go that the world service organization is not worth supporting and withhold all funding and the only contribution that is made is to criticize why is it such a surprise that there is no warm spot for the Humboldt ACA IG. When you become part of the process its expected that you pay your dues. This doesn't refer only to money. This applies equally to a number of other IG's. If world service is to get its act together it is going to need all the support every IG can give. That support needs to be unconditional. 

It will be interesting to see what develops at the ACC in Calgary. Until then, 

Yours in service,



TOM B.

April 14, 1991

To:ACA IWSO Trustees
From:GSN Ad Hoc Committee
Box 25166, Minneapolis, MN 55458-6166

We received your three page summary of comments April 1 by FAX from IWSO Chairperson, Joanne O'Connor. Thanks for the effort that was involved in compiling the information and circulating it among yourselves. Whether or not the GSN Group and Service materials are formally made available to the delegates in Calgary, we trust that a loving Higher Power will eventually make appropriate use of this work. Our goal has been to do the writing, editing and compiling of these materials in the hope that they will enrich the literature and Traditions-based understanding within our fellowship. It's not up to us to make this happen. We simply wish to make these materials available for the consideration of the group conscience. The Group Conscience Survey that suggests that the Board form an ad hoc committee next year (or the year after) addresses the eventual assimilation of what the fellowship finds useful in these materials. We release them and let them go!

A lot of the questions you raise are things that can be verified independently from US Copyright Law or AA Service materials. In response to some questions you raise:

Perhaps it may not be known to all of you that the actual copyright forms that the US Office of Copyrights sends out always asks for the names of the authors. This is true even if they are anonymous on the work use a pseudonym or are doing the work "for hire," for an organization. After all, when you think about it, individuals actually write things; organizations don't. Library of Congress Form TX asks for the names of authors, compilers and/or editors, and then it asks these flesh and blood people to state how they legally want the copyright held and printed on the materials. Thus, organizations formally receive rights to materials from whomever prepares them.

We just don't see it as fact that materials copyrighted by individuals can't be adopted by anonymous programs without violation of Traditions. AA's co-founder and primary author, Bill W. (Wilson), provided almost all of the copyrighted original materials for AA, including the Big Book and the 12 X 12. This can be verified by calling AA's office in NY. It is also a fact that Bill W. and his estate receive royalties on most of AA's "official" books. Respectful acknowledgement of the contributions individual members make is a part of Tradition 8. Bill, in his comments on Tradition 8, page 25 of the pamphlet, "The Co-Founders of AA," states this explicitly, "Tradition 8 brings up the question of professionalism, a very serious matter. . . . Some of us have become counselors We have found that this sort of activity works well, as long as it involves some legitimate service that is not straight AA [12-Step] work. For instance, I've done lots of AA work I have never been paid for, but I *am* paid as an author. . . ." If ACA has a policy that differs from AA's Traditions, then we feel it should be put up to the fellowship's group conscience for a vote.

The copyright on the GSN Service Manual was sent in on September 17, 1990. It wasn't rejected by the US Copyright Office. We received a request that we make minor changes in the way we had filled out the form. Instead of turning over the materials "by donation," for instance, the authors were asked to specify whether we had turned over the materials "by contract" or "by assignment." We were also asked for additional finished copies of the work. Since we had the option to revise the filing, we discussed possible ways for extending the copyright of the materials so as to eliminate any question of "a separate organization" being involved in the use of them by ACA groups. When, after we met with the IWSO in January, we contacted a US Copyright Examiner about the problem, he suggested the

"public domain" approach as the simplest solution. By placing these materials in the public domain, the materials become available to everyone.

So far as we're concerned, the IWSO or the Intergroups can print and sell these materials and keep the money for the 7th Tradition. We don't want to see the Board's unwillingness or inability to pay the expenses that went into creating these materials stand in the way of them being made available in the ACA fellowship. We do see the question of valuing volunteer efforts as an important one. Years tick by with this unresolved, stirring up controversy and taking up a lot of Board time. The urge to create pamphlets and build channels of cooperation within ACA has prompted individuals and Intergroups in ACA to act more or less experimentally. This really isn't meant to be divisive. A lot of what's changed in the past two years on the Board is a result of taking what's been useful in this method. Individuals and even Intergroups do move at different paces, too. Inner children are creative! Perhaps, those who do thing on an ad hoc basis need to expect to create their own financing? That seems fair, so long as it kept within some maximum contribution amount guidelines. Over the years, some ACAs have indeed spent close to \$1,000. a year in Service work. Hopefully, as a fellowship, we will soon come to a level of maturity where these sorts of questions will be answered in a way that opens more doors than it closes.

We who were the authors and members of the committee that compiled these materials are all members of ACA. We worked as an ad hoc committee comprised of individual ACAs — each of us having various other service affiliations in our groups, Intergroups, and, in some cases, as past or present IWSO Board members. We feel that we, as members of ACA, are a part of the evolving service structure and our groups and Intergroups support us in this work. These materials codify input we have gathered through a variety of means — teleconferences on the IWSO Literature Committee dating back to 1987 (and including all of them, to date,) editing various materials in general circulation from a dozen or more Intergroups, meetings, individual ACAs, teleconferences and forums conducted by APACA from 1986 through 1990 and the service evolution we have experienced in our own local fellowships. A lot of this was already in the public domain, having been circulated as "open literature." The finished draft of the Service Manual is in the ACA archives. We provided a completed draft to the IWSO Board on January 13, 1991, as part of the Board's minutes and exhibits.

Does ACA welcome these materials? As individuals, some of whom are in a culmination stage of our service activities at this level, we worked very quickly to assemble, edit and print the GSN Manual. We did this in order that these materials not be lost as a resource to the fellowship. The actual writing of these materials took place between the beginning of June and middle of September, 1990. So far as we know, the IWSO Literature committee didn't meet during that time, although Peter G. (Chicago IG) did make the materials available to Eva, the Literature Committee Chair. The Literature Committee is free, of course, to take up these materials when it eventually does meet. It's really out of our hands, now.

Yours in service,

Jim Monroe, Spokesperson and members of the committee *kw*

ACA Central Coast Intergroup
P.O. Box 1525
Monterey, CA 93940

April 25, 1990

Kathleen
Humboldt ACA Intergroup
P.O. Box 6225
Eureka, CA 95502


Dear Kathleen:

Enclosed is \$5 for all of the materials listed on your pamphlet order blank.

We have just recently formed our Intergroup and hope to become more involved with the Anonymous Programs for Adult Children of Alcoholics as time goes on. We look forward very much to participating in any Teleconferences, etc..

Yours in recovery,

Kathy M.

Kathy M. 

km

HUMBOLDT ACA INTERGROUP
P.O. BOX 6672, EUREKA, CA 95502
(707) 443-3836

Sunday, June 24, 1990

IWSO Board,
C/O Josie E.,
Box 150331,
Arlington, TX 76017.

Here are the copies of the out of pocket APACA expense receipts you requested on June 10, along with copies of materials developed and circulated by APACA during the period September, 1989 and April, 1990.

With regard to the work APACA did for the ACA fellowship, you as a Board are faced with an obvious choice: (a) You can chose to validate and join with us in celebrating the dedication, wisdom, inspiration and cooperation that we were privileged to experience with each other — thus claiming unity, acceptance and progress in the care of a Higher Power for our entire fellowship, or (b) you can do something else. The APACA materials will become part of ACA's World Service archives, to be drawn upon over the years to come.

If you choose to validate us as individuals and members of the fellowship — thank us, appreciate our hard work and invite us into full participation in the further development of the service structure — I think you will be demonstrating the “serenity, courage and wisdom” some of you used to like to sign your letters with. You'll have earned my respect in such a generous act and I feel that a Higher Power will be working through the iWSO at last. Such a happy conclusion to our fellowship's strife is reason for all of us to rejoice.

And what if you don't? The realistic threat of being the object of your rejection, fear and hate is probably the sickest prospect I've ever faced as an adult. To think of 25 people (or 2,000 people, for that matter) being encouraged in a 12-Step service structure to see themselves as so threatened by a member's feedback that they are justified in acting out their fears in a frenzy of abuse is like seeing a pit of torment with “Keep Coming Back” signs on the walls!

What I have experienced in connection with the iWSO has been a very active form of disrespect for the hard work and consistent efforts that are represented by my recovery, and by the recoveries of those I've worked with here and throughout the APACA network. It's as though we exceeded an invisible “standard”, thus challenged the existing power-structure. Paradoxically, only those with little understanding of what recovery really means are likely to feel threatened in this way. Those who feel threatened by the skills, talents or abilities of others need to be encouraged to know that a loving Higher Power can and will give them gifts of similar value — if they'll allow it.

Threatened people do belong in recovery, but fear cannot be the basis of action in the service structure. We must actively and energetically give the service structure back to God. Instead of abandoning the welfare of ACA as a whole to people with no qualifications beyond

HUMBOLDT ACA INTERGROUP

P.O. BOX 6672, EUREKA, CA 95502

(707) 443-3836

Monday, October 1, 1990

Dear Friends in Service,

Attached is a copy of an unpaid bill for the APACA teleconference which you participated in on April 1, 1990. I had expected to receive \$180. funds from the Chicago account that were a donation toward APACA expenses from a Chicago group, but, instead, Alex R. received those funds. Alex has not responded to my telephone calls and notes and has been out of communication with me since the April ABC. I went ahead and paid this bill from my own personal account in June, 1990, and now, in the absence of any other resolution, I have to ask you to pick up your share of the expense as a participant on that call. This money has nothing to do with the APACA clerical and networking expenses that were billed by the Humboldt Intergroup to the iWSO. If and when I receive the \$180. from Alex, I will advise you and refund this money to you.

Thank you for your cooperation in clearing up this matter.

Yours in service,

**Kathleen W., Humboldt ACA World Service Delegate,
former APACA Co-Chairperson.**

Adult Children Anonymous - General Service Network
Post Office Box 25166
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55458-6166

January 28, 1991

Interium World Service Organization
Adult Children of Alcoholics
C/O Joanne O'Conner
Unit 10
2661 Beach Road
Watsonville, California 95076

Dear Joanne,

I first and foremost want to thank you and the other members of the board for the warm reception accorded Kathleen and me on our visit to your meeting on January 12th. The feelings of caring and acceptance shall remain for a long time.

The other reason for this letter is to clarify the position of our committee in a number of areas. We also wish to state in written form our goals and intent. The reason for forming the committee, "Adult Children Anonymous - General Service Network," was to finish the work that many of us started as members of the former APACA Committee. We have seen, and continue to see, ourselves as a part of the whole fellowship of ACA and wanted to put into written form what we had heard from the fellowship over the last four years.

We are now prepared to turn the body of our work over to the fellowship of Adult Children of Alcoholics and proceed on with our service as members of the fellowship. The method, we believe, would work the best; is to transfer any and all ownership of the written material, in the form of copyright, to Adult Children of Alcoholics and to place the material in the public domain. We are also prepared to provide copies of all work done for inclusion into the delegate packets. We would, for the delegate packet, change the front page to reflect that enclosed material is meant to reflect a final report of the APACA Committee. We would be willing to work with you on the exact wording of the cover sheet.

I, on behalf of our committee, am looking forward to working with you to the benefit of adult children everywhere.

Respectfully,



James R. Monroe

Sunday, July 15, 1990

To any ACA it may concern—

I'm not sure what I'm going to say in this letter, or what it is I'm trying to accomplish by writing it, but one thing I do know is that I need to write it.

In the last few years, there have been dozens and dozens of ACAs who have gotten involved with the iWSO. These ACAs have been from all around the country. Some of them have years of recovery in ACA and/or other 12-Step programs. Still others are new to the program, and attend only ACA meetings. A list of all of these people would fill several pages.

These ACAs can be neatly divided into two categories. On the one hand, there is the rather short list of those still actively involved with the iWSO. Then, there is the remainder of the list; those who have either been battered and driven off, or who have fled from the scene with loathing and disgust.

Count me in the second list.

I want to stay and fight. I want to stand my ground and say, "You can't do this to me, this is MY program, too!" But the sickness which is rampant within the iWSO eats at my insides, like a cancer.

In the last year, I felt really let down by those in service who didn't "stick it out". They all quit, letting the insanity have its way. Quitters! That's what they are. Don't they see that they have to hang in there, that someone's got to have the intestinal fortitude to go the long haul and beat the dysfunction that runs things at the iWSO? I mean, the quitters didn't even go down kicking and screaming. They just said something about how, in the interest of their personal recovery, they found they couldn't serve anymore.

I quit. In the interest of my personal recovery, I can no longer deal with the iWSO.

And another one bites the dust...

I have a lot of anger, of course. I want to go down kicking and screaming. I catch myself entertaining fantasies about doing really brutal things to certain Board members. I am plagued by the insanity of it all; I want desperately to make some kind of sense out of the dementia. I get indignant about the objective stuff, like the plain misstatements of verifiable fact the Board engages in so often. I relish in mocking the rubbish the iWSO mails out. Does anyone there understand the concept of a complete English sentence?

Beneath all these really harsh reactions I have, though, is a little boy with a crushed dream.

I am not an alcoholic. My spouse is an alcoholic—one who had several years of sobriety in AA when I met her. I knew for a long time that I needed the help that 12-Step programs offer. AA sure didn't want me around, though, and Al-Anon's focus was all wrong for me. Then ACA came along. While neither of my parents are alcoholics, my family background is as dysfunctional as they come. I have found hope, health, and happiness in ACA. Finally, a 12-Step program that works for people like me! After a year and a half in recovery, and after putting in a year of service locally, I decided to try to get involved with the iWSO, to help "carry the message", with an interest in seeing that ACA be there for others situated similarly to myself.

What's the dream, you may ask? I interact with a bunch of other people in the program. We are all interested in sharing our experience, strength, and hope on a grand scale. I am loved and respected by these people for who and what I am, and vice versa. We keep meetings and intergroups informed about the goals, activities, concerns, and unanswered questions. We actively solicit group conscience. While we may have differences of opinion, we work together to come to consensus. Together, we make the miracle of recovery

available to countless others who need it. My recovery is supported and enhanced by the process, and I see the power of the Steps and Traditions manifested in the things we do.

To borrow a phrase from Kathleen, my dream is for "a recovery experience in Service."

The reality of my experience with the iWSO, on the other hand, is one of being embroiled and enmeshed in a scene of unfathomable dysfunction, abuse, fear, and insanity. Jeezus, this is as bad as or worse than my family of origin!

Well, dammit, I'm not going to let them kill my dream. I'm going to pick myself up, dust myself off, and find another way to fulfill it.

I have a few things to say to various people at this point, though.

If you are one of the people I worked with in the APACA network who is still involved with the iWSO, I want to say that I had an experience very much like the one I dream of working with you this last year. I understand and appreciate your continued efforts to make some sort of positive change. Watch yourself. Keep your back to the wall, and when you can't take the heat anymore, by all means get out of the kitchen—after all, it's on fire! Should there come a day when the iWSO of ACA begins to resemble a Tradition-based structure, please let me know. Until then, I don't want to hear any more about anything going on with the iWSO, and I will consider it an affront and an insult for you to communicate to me any news of the activities of the iWSO. I believe you understand.

If you are someone new to ACA's World Service structure, I want to advise you that your energies would be much better put to use doing service work in your local area. If you really want to be involved at the World Service level, write me for details about how my dream is coming along, but avoid the iWSO at all costs.

If you are a current member of the iWSO Board who was on the Board last year, or someone who supports them, you owe me and countless other ACAs, both those presently in recovery, and those who haven't yet found ACA, a great deal of amends. Your fear and power-motivated behavior has done nothing but drain away vast amounts of human, financial, and chronological resources. People die of the kind of dysfunction ACA deals with, you know. You have the right to be as sick and twisted as you choose to be, but you have no right to stand in the way of other people's recovery. As is the case with any sexual, physical or emotional abuse perpetrator, until you work Steps 4 through 9 on these issues, there is no way I can forgive you.

Writing this letter is a big part of processing these feelings for me. I know that I can get back in touch with the dream and become my dreamer again. When I was a child, and I was frightened awake by nightmares, I would always be afraid to go back to sleep; I was afraid I would have the same nightmare again. Eventually, I always did drift off again, and I never did have the same awful nightmare again. I need to get over the fear, and affirm that I am involved in a process of growth and evolution. I am not stuck in some awful rut or cycle that repeats itself over and over. I am moving onward and upward. It is safe for me to dream again. This one nightmare is over.

In Recovery,

Jim W.,
An ACA somewhere in Northern California
where the sea shapes the rocks
and the wind shapes the trees.

REGISTRATION NUMBER

TX TXU
EFFECTIVE DATE OF REGISTRATION
Month Day Year

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1 TITLE OF THIS WORK ▼

ADULT CHILDREN ANONYMOUS SERVICE MANUAL

PREVIOUS OR ALTERNATIVE TITLES ▼

PUBLICATION AS A CONTRIBUTION If this work was published as a contribution to a periodical, serial, or collection, give information about the collective work in which the contribution appeared. Title of Collective Work ▼

If published in a periodical or serial give: Volume ▼ Number ▼ Issue Date ▼ On Pages ▼

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a KATHLEEN W. PSEUDONYM OF KATHLEEN WELSH

DATES OF BIRTH AND DEATH
Year Born ▼ Year Died ▼

1941

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USA

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GENERAL SERVICE NETWORK,
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MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55401

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KATHCEEN WELSH

P.O. BOX 6672,

EUREKA, CA 95502

Area Code & Telephone Number ▶

(707) 443-3836

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of the work identified in this application and that the statements made by me in this application are correct to the best of my knowledge.

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KATHCEEN WELSH

date ▶ 9/12/90

10

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Kathceen Welsh

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Number/Street/Apartment Number ▼

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