

2023/2024

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
**BRIDGING**  
*THE*  
**GAP**

*Winter  
Newsletter*

TEMPORARY CONTACTS

In Alcoholics Anonymous Treatment and Corrections service, Bridging the Gap programs connect alcoholics leaving Treatment or Correctional facilities with Alcoholics Anonymous in their home communities by providing them with temporary contacts.

Bridging the Gap Workshop Weekend events are full weekends focused on sharing our experiences, Bridging the Gap, and developing new ideas that enhance our Service to those requesting temporary contacts.

BTGWW Annual Workshops, Newsletters, and Digital Resource Library are tools that help us learn from each other.

Registration fees ensure BTGWW events remain self-supporting.

*This Newsletter is confidential and is for use by members of Alcoholics Anonymous.*

**BRIDGING THE GAP  
WORKSHOP WEEKEND 2024**  
Hosted by Area 40

**September 6-8, 2024**

**Fairbridge Inn & Suites**  
and  
**Big Sky Conference Center**  
**Missoula, Montana**

See the flyer in this Newsletter.

**REGISTER ONLINE AT  
WWW.BTGWW.ORG**

**2023-2024 BTGWW OFFICERS**

**Coordinator** Laura S.

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### **PARTICIPANTS**

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Eighty-three individuals attended the 2023 Bridging the Gap Workshop Weekend in Houston, TX. They came from 17 States and two Canadian Provinces, and a total of 25 General Service Conference Areas, as follows:

Two from Alabama, Area 1	Three from Western Missouri, Area 39
One from LA County California Area 5	Two from Montana, Area 40
Two from California Northern Coastal, Area 6	Three from Southeast New York, Area 49
One from California Northern Interior, Area 7	Two from North Carolina, Area 51
Three from Southern California, Area 8	One from South Carolina, Area 62
One from Mid-Southern California, Area 9	One from Tennessee, Area 64
Six from Colorado, Area 10	Two from Northeast Texas, Area 65
One from Connecticut Area 11	32 from Southeast Texas, Area 67
One from North Florida, Area 14	Six from Southwest Texas, Area 68
One from South Florida, Area 15	Two from Utah, Area 69
One from Massachusetts, Area 31	Five from Western Washington, Area 72
One from Northern Michigan, Area 34	One from Alberta Canada, Area 78
Three from Southern Minnesota, Area 36	Two from Montreal Canada, Area 87

### **GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE PARTICIPATION**

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For most of our 32 years of events, it has been our pleasure and good fortune to have either the General Service Office Treatment Coordinator (currently the Accessibilities and Treatment Coordinator) or the Corrections Coordinator in attendance. The participation of GSO staff provides valuable information about how the office works and what happened during the year or might happen regarding Treatment, Corrections and BTG at the Trustees' and Conference levels. In 2023, Misha Q, GSO's Accessibilities and Treatment Coordinator, attended our event. She shared her experience, strength, and hope on Friday night. On Saturday, Misha gave a presentation about the General Service Office. She discussed some of what has happened at the Trustees' and Conference levels. She noted there is an effort to make all Services, including Bridging the Gap, Prerelease, and the Corrections Correspondence Service more inclusive by adding language, such as non-binary to our literature.

### **FRIDAY EVENING MEET AND GREET SESSION**

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On Friday evening, we held our annual "Meet and Greet" session. This time is devoted to turning the floor over to workshop attendees who share what they do in their Bridging the Gap programs. They may have Treatment, BTG, Prerelease, or combined Treatment and Corrections programs. Those programs may be part of their Area's or District's structure, part of their local Intergroup/Central Office structure, or part of an H&I structure. This session is always lively and lasts well into the night.

## **PANEL PRESENTATIONS**

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On Saturday, we had two panels: One on Corrections and one on Treatment.

*Harold B* of Southeast Texas, Area 67, along with a couple Area 67 Corrections trusted servants, talked about how service to persons in custody has shaped them as individuals and what they have witnessed in those on the inside as they hear our message and grow in understanding.

*Brian M* of Southern Minnesota, Area 36, shared a slide presentation and discussed what he has learned about connecting alcoholics/A.A. members in custody with outside Alcoholics Anonymous through temporary contacts. He uses custom-designed software to build and maintain a database of volunteers for use in matching requests with volunteers. He can enter the information provided on Southern Minnesota's request form and then search for volunteers who may be possible contacts. Searches may include geolocation (longitude & latitude) or searches by other criteria, including address, city, or county.

*Chris G* of Southeast Texas, Area 67, shared a slide presentation on ways to Bridge the Gap.

*Ezra M* of Alberta, Area 78, shared a slide presentation that covered what Calgary is doing in its Bridging the Gap program. He addressed topics including becoming a temporary contact, speaking at detox and treatment facilities, attending events, cooperating with the professional community, and sharing best practices with other Bridging the Gap committees. Ezra included features of their Bridging the Gap CPC efforts.

*Hugo P* of Southeast New York, Area 49, shared his experience of being discharged from a treatment facility and welcomed into A.A.'s rooms.

*Paul G* of Colorado, Area 10, shared a slide presentation on planning and hosting a local Bridging the Gap workshop, including designing the message using a flyer, spreading the news about the workshop, and planning the workshop. He suggested asking your BTG committee members and other volunteers to lead workshop sections, asking an experienced "bridger" to share positive experiences about helping those transitioning to AA, and inviting treatment facility staff and Area and District Treatment Committee Chairs to speak at the workshop. He included information about what to do when a placement coordinator calls and suggestions for bridges. He concluded by talking about other issues, for example, anonymity and our Singleness of Purpose, what to do when the person requesting a bridge does not call back, and the importance of being familiar with pamphlet F-2, "Information on Alcoholics Anonymous."

## **REVISED BTGWW GUIDELINES**

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Pam K of Western Missouri, Area 39, a long-time and well-informed participant in BTGWW, presented BTGWW's revised Guidelines. After some clarification, they were accepted by the body. They are available on the BTGWW website at [www.btgww.org](http://www.btgww.org).

## **BUSINESS MEETING**

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A motion was made to include a Saturday evening banquet at future events. BTGWW had not had banquets in the past, yet the 2023 banquet attendance suggested a banquet is favored. After several friendly amendments, a motion to include a banquet, if the BTGWW committee could negotiate a banquet at each host site that met favorable cost/pricing criteria, passed.

## WEBMASTER'S PRESENTATION

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Cheri J of Western Missouri, Area 39, who serves a non-rotating position on the BTGWW committee, reviewed BTGWW's website and gave out the user and password for 2024. She discussed her plans for 2024, which include the creation of an app for use on devices like smartphones and tablets. (See Webmaster's Report in this Newsletter).

*We closed the 2023 event looking forward to 2024. The event takes place in Missoula, MT. Please see the flyer in this Newsletter for more information. You can register online at [www.btgww.org](http://www.btgww.org) or by mail.*

Respectfully Submitted,  
Laura S, Area 36  
coordinator@btgww.org

## MESSAGE FROM OUR ALTERNATE COORDINATOR

Hello friends, family, and all potential Bridge the Gap participants and attendees for the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual 2024 Bridging the Gap Workshop Weekend in Missoula, Montana, September 6-9. My name is Rob O., and I am your Alternate Coordinator for this year's festivities. Let me start by saying my experience with BTGWW began in 2016 when I attended BTGWW when it was in Tucson. For me, participation has been nothing short of festive.

Have all of you even seen Montana? If not, look it up and check out a picture or two. After that, you'll get what I mean, and I will see you there! There are a few additional mentions about the weekend that might interest you. The first bit of great news is that we are pleased to announce that Rainer C., the General Service Office Corrections Coordinator will be attending the 2024 event. She will be our AA speaker at the Saturday evening Speaker Meeting. That's just the beginning. There will be three days of informative panels, speakers, Q and A segments, and we can't forget the food aspect, including a banquet! Things start on Friday evening with a meet and greet where participants can share what they are doing to Bridge the Gap.

I suggest attending early to get in a few pre-workshop introductions and begin the conversation with fellow attendees from around the U.S. and Canada. It's our chance to take in information, methods, procedures, and the list goes on, ad infinitum. Putting each other's experience, strengths, and hopes together while forming new, long-lasting relationships and ideas is vital here. Lastly, to ensure we are as well-informed as possible, there is a wrap-up of crucial new information not yet shared during the weekend on Sunday morning. It will revolve around the website and accessibility, not to mention information about 2025 BTGWW, and confirming your newly acquired contact information since Friday while saying so long to your new all-inclusive extended fellowship family in Bridge the Gap.

P.S. Remember, we are self-supporting, so register and book your travel plans early to confirm your place in our special form of carrying the message. See you in Montana.

Yours In Service,

Rob O.  
BTGWW Alternate Coordinator  
altcoordinator@btgww.org

**BEGINNING BALANCE 1/1/2023** **\$735.13**  
**INCOME**

Registrations <i>w/ banquets</i> (61)	1,830.00
Banquets (61)	3,355.00
Registrations <i>w/o banquets before July 31</i> (5)	175.00
Registrations <i>w/o banquets after July 31</i> (6)	240.00
Walk-In Registrations <i>unknown number</i>	440.00
Contributions	64.67
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$6,129.54</b>

**EXPENSES**

Zoom <i>annual fee</i>	149.90
Website <i>annual fee</i>	90.72
PayPal <i>transaction Fees</i>	10.23
Banquets	3,025.21
Supplies	177.47
Printing	349.82
Shipping	73.80
Literature	99.50
BTGWW Committee	600.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$4,576.65</b>

**ENDING BALANCE 12/31/2023** **\$2,288.02**

**APPLAUSE TO OUR HOST COMMITTEE**

We want to extend an enormous thank you to the 2023 Host Committee. We owe a debt of gratitude to Harold B for going above and beyond to work the registration table and for his work in assembling packets and name badges. Many of you aren't aware that Harold worked up to the last minute to make things happen in time for the event to open. Roy E, the Host Committee Chair, and Sarah E rolled out a generous hospitality suite--a huge success. They provided pizza on Friday night, a Mexican lunch on Saturday, and a combination of nutritious snacks, beverages, and plain yummy junk food.

**REMINDERS FROM OUR COORDINATOR**

Here are some things to be aware of as our 2024 event approaches.

1. In 2024 we will be electing new officers for the Workshop Weekend. Everyone at the event (present at the Business Meeting) has a vote and is eligible to stand for either the Coordinator or Alternate Coordinator position. The Webmaster and Archivist hold non-rotating positions.
2. Everyone at the event (present at the Business Meeting) has a vote in selecting the 2025 and 2026 event sites. If your Area or committee is interested in hosting a future event, please contact the Coordinator at [coordinator@btgww.org](mailto:coordinator@btgww.org) to receive a bid form and more information.
3. We would love to upload your program documents and forms to our Digital Library so that others may benefit from your service experience. We invite you to forward your service materials to our Webmaster at [webmaster@btgww.org](mailto:webmaster@btgww.org).

Laura S  
 BTGWW Coordinator

## UPDATES FROM TECH SUPPORT

Hello to Everyone,

A lot is planned for the next year in terms of our technology updates. My first draft of this article was sent back to me with a note to speak English. So here goes.

Hardware and software for the website has been upgraded. Data and programming on the website have also been reorganized and rewritten so the site will load quicker than before. More improvements are in the works. Over the next few months with a completion date before we all meet in Missoula, I will be working on the following updates to the workshop website and online registration system. I will keep you all posted on my progress in future newsletters.

- Make a list
- Re-design to current website styles
  - *Just as clothing styles and car models change, so do website styles. Our website will be updated to the current "scroll" style that users have become familiar with from social media platforms.*
- Develop a more user-friendly, responsive menu.
  - *Site statistics show that more and more users are accessing the site from devices other than a desktop or laptop. I will develop a new menu to perform better on tablets and phones to make the user experience more accessible.*
  - *Currently, we are using an automated language translator for the website that distorts the menu when changed from English. The new menu will not be affected by translation apps.*
- Develop a more mobile-friendly map for choosing the release-to Area for contact requests.
- Modify the database to include multiple contact points for each Area, including email addresses for BTG, Treatment, and Corrections Committee Chairs, Area Chairpersons and Area Delegates.
- Add forms for use in updating Area contact information and email addresses.
- Add forms for use in updating Central Office/Intergroup contact information.
- Add forms for use when adding and updating workshop steering committee members.
- Modify online registration for use when including or removing banquet options.
- Automate pricing changes for online registration.
- Automate entering hard-copy snail mail registrations into the database.
- Automate workshop flyer upload.
- Create automated attendance and financial reports.
- Automate bid form upload for future workshops.
- Update email distribution to be compliant with new phishing and spam regulations.
- Redesign digital library for better search and sorting capabilities.
- Automate document upload to digital library.
- Add an online form for submitting locally developed BTG documents to the BTGWW Digital Library.
- Add a historical section for past event flyers and programs.

Cheri J.  
BTGWW Tech Support  
webmaster@btgww.org

Inventories are integral to our program at all levels, including annual events. This is a brief overview of the post-COVID finances of Bridging the Gap Workshop Weekend.

“A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke. Taking a commercial inventory is a fact-finding and a fact-facing process.”... *Alcoholics Anonymous*, p g. 64.

Following the 2019 event, BTGWW had a prudent reserve of \$3078.17.

In May 2020, the steering committee decided to purchase a Zoom account to help with communications between the officers in anticipation of putting the 2021 in-person workshop on hold in favor of holding a virtual event. The online workshop was held in the Spring of 2021 with over 100 attendees. There was no income from registrations (the online workshop was free). With two years of no income and expense for a Zoom account and web hosting, the ending bank balance for 2021 was \$2,778.27.

In 2022, the steering committee decided to try to hold an in-person workshop again. Planning for this was in a tight window. Notice of the event was sent out after most areas/ districts/committees/ Intergroups had already set their annual budget. There was no agreement with a hotel or host committee to hold the 2022 workshop.

With the support of the Southern California H&I committee and past BTGWW Coordinator, Diana A., a location was found in San Diego for 2022. Attendance was enthusiastic about getting together again and moving forward after the past two Covid years. Still, attendance was also only about a third of previous years—a total of 34 members. A contribution of \$275 was also made. From registration, recording purchases, and contributions, the total income was \$1,300. Expenses were unusually high. The hotel costs were just under \$2,000, and program costs for the GSO speaker were almost \$1,000. Zoom, web hosting, and committee reimbursement cost were \$3,588.66. In addition, pre-paid purchases for workshop recordings had to be returned due to a problem with the recordings. This all brought the loss for 2022 to \$2,043.14, leaving a balance of \$735.13 in the prudent reserve.

2023 brought us to Houston. Attendance was back up to approximately 102 members. (there are no exact numbers for the people that attended but did not pre-register). A Saturday evening banquet was included for the first time. Total income for registration and banquets was \$6,129.54.

Because of exceeding the contracted number of hotel sleeping rooms and banquets, the hotel waived the \$1,000 cost of the meeting rooms. We did have higher-than-normal expenses for supplies, printing, and shipping. Also, the steering committee did not request any reimbursement for travel to Houston. The net proceeds were \$1,552.89.

This brings the current balance in the seed money for next year's event to \$2,288.02. We are still not back to where we were pre-COVID, but we are heading in the right direction.

## LOOKING FORWARD TO 2024

The 2023 workshop attendees confirmed overwhelmingly that they wanted a banquet, if possible, to be included with the 2024 workshop. The contract for the meeting room and sleeping room costs had already been set. After discussions with the hotel, the inclusion of a banquet is available. Because of the economy, we cannot get a firm price from the caterer until later in the year. However, the steering committee feels confident that the cost will be comparable to last year. Because the caterer is independent of the hotel, having a banquet will not reduce the cost of the meeting rooms.

Another consideration when developing a budget for next year is a potential change in travel policy for GSO staff. We will not know until after the General Service Board sets the budget, but the workshop may have to cover all the costs to have GSO staff participate in 2024. These considerations have all been included in the following projected budget for 2024, with 110 (hopefully) members in attendance.

### 2024 BTGWW Projected Budget

#### Income

Early Bird Registrations x \$35	55	#	1,925.00
Pre-Registrations x \$40	45	#	1,800.00
Walk-In Registrations x \$40	10	#	400.00
Banquets x \$50	75	#	3,750.00
Contributions			0.00
<b>Total Income</b>			<b>\$ 7,875.00</b>

#### Expenses

Zoom Fee			149.90
Website Fees			125.00
PayPal Fees			15.00
Banquets			3,750.00
Hotel			1,150.00
Supplies			150.00
Printing			100.00
Shipping			0.00
Literature			100.00
Committee Expense			1,000.00
GSO Speaker			1,250.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>			<b>\$7,789.90</b>

**Net Proceeds** **\$ 85.10**



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

2024

BRIDGING

THE

GAP

Workshop  
Weekend

TEMPORARY CONTACTS

September 6th - 8th 2024

Fairbridge Inn and Suites

& Big Sky Conference Center

3803 Brooks St, Missoula, MT 59804

Missoula



Hosted by Area 40—Montana

For hotel reservations call Reservations at 1-406-251-2665

Refer to Group BTGWW for workshop rate of \$139 plus tax

The Annual Bridging the Gap Workshop Weekend consists of presentations, discussions, shared experiences, and breakout sessions on BTG topics.

Go to [btgww.org](http://btgww.org) for online registration

\$35 Early Bird Registration only

\$40 Registration only after July 31st

\$85 Registration & Banquet *Banquet Registrations must be received by August 16th*

Total Submitted: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in purchasing recordings

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Area #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I am willing to give a presentation on the following topic:

Accommodations-Special Needs? \_\_\_\_\_

Return registration form and check to: BTGWW, 2107 Watson Ave St. Paul MN 55116

Any questions contact Laura S. at (612) 309-8385 or email [coordinator@btgww.org](mailto:coordinator@btgww.org)