

SOBER CONNECTIONS

A QCGSA newsletter dedicated to informing Alcoholics Anonymous groups in Queens County

Physically Distanced but Digitally Connected

The Alcoholics Anonymous Message Carries on Amid Coronavirus (COVID-19)



A.A. in the digital age has certainly taken on a new meaning in these challenging times. Alcoholics Anonymous is not a place or an event; it exists in the hearts, minds and help freely offered by its members.

Most recently, Coronavirus (COVID-19) has affected many A.A. groups that normally would meet in-person.

The General Service Office (G.S.O.) of Alcoholics Anonymous U.S./Canada, which functions as a repository for A.A. members and groups who are looking for shared experience from the A.A. Fellowship, has some general experience to share regarding this issue.

Some A.A. members have shared that meeting online has been an adjustment and has at times had its challenges. Adhering to state/provincial and federal guidelines, many A.A. members have switched from "in-person" meetings to digital meetings, on platforms such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, Conference Calls, GoToMeeting and What's App, allowing the group to continue to focus on A.A.'s primary purpose: to carry its message of recovery to the alcoholic who still suffers.

In a sense, however, this current experience is not necessarily new for A.A. From its earliest beginnings, the A.A. founders recognized the need to reach beyond the face-to-face transmission of the A.A. message, giving rise to the development of A.A.'s basic text, the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. This book and other A.A. materials which are widely available on multiple platforms – digital, audio and video – has literally circled the globe and opened the door to recovery for thousands of alcoholics looking for help. Even prior to this pandemic many A.A. members around the world – whether homebound, living in remote areas, or service members stationed in far-flung places – have counted on participating in A.A. remotely through A.A. literature, phone calls with other members, correspondence by letter or email and meetings online.

While many A.A. members are for the first time reporting the shift from in-person meetings to digital platforms, for many alcoholics around the world, remote connections and digital platforms are how they initially encountered and maintain their recovery in A.A. even prior to the pandemic.

Many A.A. groups have shared with G.S.O. that they are now finding great connection in digital meetings and want to offer that same experience to anyone who has yet to attend their first meeting.

There are a number of other A.A. resources as well and those seeking help with a drinking problem can get local A.A. information through G.S.O.'s website https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/find-aa-resources or download G.S.O.'s free of charge A.A.W.S. Meeting Guide App.

Another resource is AA Grapevine, the publisher of the International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous. Its purpose is to provide A.A. member sharing through its magazines (in English and Spanish), websites, audios, and e-books. Members share on topics related to recovery, including recovery on digital platforms. Often referred to as A.A.'s "meeting in print," AA Grapevine communicates the experience, strength and hope of its contributors and reflects a broad geographic spectrum of current A.A. experience. For more information visit: <https://www.aagrapevine.org/we-are-here-to-help>

For information on the A.A. Online Intergroup <https://www.aa-intergroup.org/>

QUEENS COUNTY GENERAL SERVICE CALENDAR

Have a service or non-service AA-related event that you would like added to the calendar?

Send an email to
webchair@queens.aaseny.org
and we will post it.

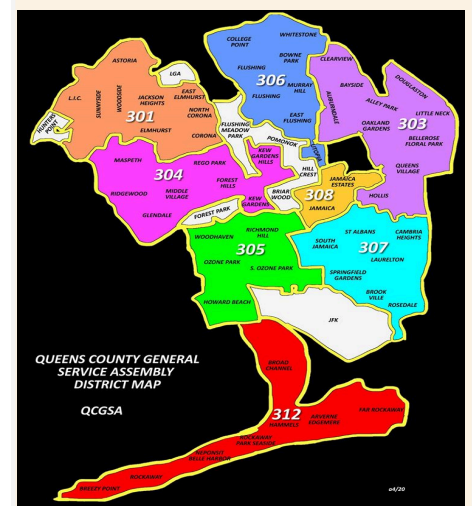
NEWSLETTER

Would you like to submit a story to the newsletter?

Send an email to
newsletter@queens.aaseny.org

and we will publish it.

Queens County District Map



Queens County General
Service
P.O. Box 670533 Flushing,
NY 11367-0533

WWW.QCGSA.ORG

Online Sobriety

My story begins in 1991 when I was first introduced to AA. I went to meetings, had a number of sponsors, and actually made it to more than a year of sobriety, but it turned out I wasn't done drinking yet.

Fast forward to the year 2006. My husband and I got our first computer. I didn't like computers at all! I thought that they were going to ruin the world. (Actually, that's still in question.) By this time, I was drinking on a daily basis. I had stopped working a few years earlier, due to other health problems. I had my days and nights mixed up. I drank until 4:30 AM and didn't get out of bed until after 1:00 PM most of the time. My selfishness and self-loathing were taking over—I didn't care if I got out of bed or if I would ever wake up again. Mentally and spiritually I was hitting bottom. But I was still not done the drinking.

But even with my drinking, I was starting to learn and figure out things on the computer. I discovered online forums of people writing back and forth on whatever subjects interested them. I first joined a cat site, since I have always loved animals, cats especially. It was ok for a while but I didn't feel like I fit in with the people on there. Then I joined a paranormal site. There were a lot of interesting things to read on that site, but the people were a bit strange, so that wasn't for me, either.

By now, I was feeling overwhelmingly lonely. I was drinking every day, with no friends anymore, no one to talk to except my husband when he was home from work. I was starting to feel worse and worse, physically and mentally. My days blended together. It didn't matter if it was Monday or Thursday because it was the same thing, day after day. Drink, eat, clean house a little (maybe), go on the computer, and then go to bed. Get up and do it all over again.

One day, I decided to see if Alcoholics Anonymous was on the computer. Yep, there it was. So, I drank and read, drank and read. I actually found somewhere or another online of an audio recording of Bill W speaking at a convention somewhere. I cried listening to that and remembering how it was when I was in AA years before. Then I ended up finding other websites, with recovering alcoholics involved in forums and online meetings. For nine months, I wrote back and forth with these people, while drinking my rum and cokes. They kept telling me to go back to AA, and I kept saying: "No, I'm scared, it didn't work for me." Eventually, in the summer of 2007, I did get the courage to go back to AA. I struggled that whole year and kept drinking every couple of weeks. I couldn't get a month under my belt. But I kept hearing over and over: "Keep coming back" and "Don't give up before the miracle." In January 2008, I picked up a white chip and I haven't had a drink since.

I have a home group and a sponsor, and I've held a few service positions. I truly believe my Higher Power reached out to me through the computer even though I didn't understand it at the time. Today I still go on my forums with my AA friends from all over the US and the world. Some of the people who helped me so many years ago to get the courage to go back to AA are still there. I owe my life to them and Alcoholics Anonymous. So, I guess computers aren't that bad after all. I wouldn't be sober today if I didn't have one.

MAY 2019 | OUR BIG BOOK—80 WONDERFUL YEARS
BY: BARB C. | ENDICOTT, N. Y.

GRAPEVINE AND LA VIÑA ARE HERE TO HELP

THE JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY GRAPEVINE PRINT ISSUES WILL REMAIN AVAILABLE AND FREE TO ACCESS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

Due to the current changing health situation, many AA meetings across the U.S. and Canada are finding it safer to close. To help members during this time, we are giving everyone **free access** for a limited period to our 2020 Grapevine (Jan. through May) and La Viña (Jan/Feb through May/Jun.) print issues.

Please share with your fellows.

Fellowships Feelings on Zoom Meetings

With the worldwide coronavirus pandemic, the world has come to a screeching halt. For the first time in our lives, we are witnessing the complete shutdown of all public events. Fortunately, there are other options for people to attend meetings now. I am truly grateful in all the work that has been put together in making it so accessible for online meetings. For me personally I have said that I wanted to travel more before all this happened and well now I found a new way to do it. It's great how I can be one hour in LA for a meditation meeting, another hour at a young people meeting in Montreal, Canada and grab another meeting if I want in Ireland. Zoom Meetings have been a big help in keeping me sober for today and I was curious to hear the feelings from our fellowship on how online meetings have helped in their sobriety?

Alanna Mc. – As a mom I find it amazing to be able to connect on meetings so easily at any time. Also been very nice to visit meetings I used to go to.

Diane R. – I am grateful to have these meetings at my fingertips. It allows you the flexibility of attending different meetings at different times. You can even attend meetings in different states. How lucky are we that we can attend meetings any time of the day and stay sober during a pandemic? One day at a time. It's a WE program.

Eileen K. (Whitestone Group) – Talking on the phone is one thing, but I really missed seeing the faces of my friends and group members. It allows me to safely attend (most) the meeting that I generally appeared at in person. As a bonus I am able to catch meetings that I sat in on only infrequently now that we are on pause. An additional joy is seeing and hearing from group members who have moved out of state but are now able to be present remotely. Finally, I Have "travelled" to meetings in other countries and States. This is a terrible time and we have lost many people. Zoom meetings are helping me to trudge this road of happy destiny.

Elizabeth S. – I am grateful that we can have access to AA Zoom meetings during the time of a pandemic. So, happened that I was hospitalized and I was able to use my phone. I did not put video on, I listened only. I believe that Zoom meetings should be available moving forward, since it's alternative especially when person is not able to get to live meetings because of illness, disability or other issues.

Jamie E. – I am a fan of the Zoom meetings and have the privilege of being the host of one every week. Just as texting has evolved into a daily tool used by many AA's Zoom meetings have become a part of the ever-evolving story of AA. We reach others by any means possible to tell our stories of recovery and hope.

Mark M. – I love them. I make a meeting a day now. I hope some form of them remain after this is over. Think how great these meetings are for the elderly and or infirmed.

Martin Mc. (Whitestone Group) – This is but one of God's opportunities that has been presented to us. I have the gift of helping people that have been helping me since the beginning with getting on Zoom, the honor of being on my homegroup's Zoom committee, to be able to host / cohost meetings and when Flushing Detox got turned into a COVID-19 ward I was able to reach out to a sober house in NYC and we started bringing in weekly meetings. Sobriety is the gift that keeps on giving. All I gotta do is give it my best shot and I never have to look back and say I should've, could've or if only.

Maureen R. (Homegroup, New Life) – For me they have been a life saver. To see the faces of my friends from my homegroup and other local groups that I belong to has been tremendously comforting during this challenging time. If I didn't have them, I wouldn't have been able to maintain my serenity.

Mayra A. (Survivors) – I am extremely grateful for the AA zoom meetings. I have been attending at least one meeting daily since the beginning of the pandemic. I am not sure how I would be staying sane and sober during these very difficult times of life on life terms without the daily connection to other alcoholics through these zoom meetings.

Wendy M. – I Love Zoom meetings. I get to meetings I would ordinarily not have the time or energy to travel to. Friends I don't get to see are now able to visit my virtual homegroup. Very helpful in taking others through the steps. I plan on continuing my Wednesday Zoom meeting even after our meeting space are open.



QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, EVENTS, NOTES?
EMAIL THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR (MARTIN O'K)

AT

NEWSLETTER@QUEENS.AASENY.ORG



Word Search - Uncover the 12-Step Recovery Terms

C O C S P O N S O R W K F B E B B L P S Q H D X N S F
 F V S R A P F W G V O T E A E Z X U Y J S A L H O X Z
 T P R O G R A M C T K S I S M Z W Z N O R L O Z K F U
 S H T E G A D N O B A U R Q C I P M D M E T I E J J B
 E M S H A R E J E E E O Z H C S L E F N H T M S E F K
 L C N E U H P O S L M G A U C C C Y E W L U P Y C V S
 T Z E A G R B I R E R I I B T I F P D E X Q M U P Y B
 L D N D A H D U R F R E B N S I R D E P T O B B H D C
 A V Y Y R U C Z G S K U B I N E M F T O Q H A H L D T
 I L E H Y G R O W T H S O O A E V E T H X V J X X E H
 N R N Y F T G V Q R I N J M S G R D I I Z E O N Z J T
 E X N J Y H I A F O G F B V R T N L M L L D O Y T N W
 D D G S G O T N D P X L F Y D X M X D R B I P X F P P
 R V B P G A O C E A E W V D Z F N B A O T O C R B K Y
 F H A E T M E O J R N Q V H C I K P B C W V E V D O K
 F O V T E E U U V E E G H H K B X R A E N E G U W O Y
 O V R S L E F R K U A S E N I N D R R Z D U A Z B B T
 V T O W Q T X A G J S M I R O F T L H O X N M K O G S
 Y A U C P I W G U D B V Z W F T E T M I M U I L U I E
 U H J R G N Z E N A R N L F A S M W Y Y R Y C T S B N
 G E P P G G D E S G J A G E S C V W I V Y I V R Q K O
 N E R X M W M K B S D U E I N O C V T S A M E N D S H
 S M O I F A E N Z X S N D F S O V V B Z D Z J C X Q H
 K X C X Z T R M S Z E O C B B I L L W S W O T X P Z X
 X B P P E R S O N A L C E L V H R G N S H A M E W F T
 C F Q R X E G R E K A E P S C Q B T Q C F T L H B R M
 T Q X Y A L C O H O L Y K M W E E C N A T P E C C A M

- ACCEPTANCE
- ADMITTED
- ALCOHOL
- AMENDS
- AMENDS
- ANGER
- ATTRACTION
- BASKET
- BEGINNER
- BIGBOOK
- BILLW
- BONDAGE
- CHAIRS
- COURAGE
- DECISION
- DENIAL
- DISEASE
- DRBOB
- FAMILY
- FEAR
- FREEDOM
- GROWTH
- HALT
- HONESTY
- HOPE
- HUMBLE
- MEETING
- ONE
- PERSONAL
- POWERLESS
- PRAYER
- PREAMBLE
- PROGRAM
- REMORSE
- SERENITY
- SHAME
- SHARE
- SIGN
- SOBER
- SPEAKER
- SPONSOR
- STEPS
- TIME
- WISDOM

We Are Not A Glum Lot

HINT: "The Hot Commitment"

ECROAGU
 KNITH
 TENMEIG
 EDEMFR
 FRELIE
 ICLERMA

Arrange the circled letters for the answer.

A.

HUMBLE

Unscramble these 5 Humbles. One letter to each square to form 5 ordinary words.

NGTRRPOEIU
 OORPATT
 BATFILEO
 REMIACL
 YRD

THAT SOBER WORD GAME
 By Chris Z



Be here now. Be some place else later. Is that so complicated?

Now arrange the circled letter to form the surprise answer as suggested by today's cartoon

Online meeting spaces make it difficult to “pass the basket.” Some groups have set up digital contribution accounts with services like Venmo, PayPal, Google Pay, etc. to deal with this problem. Now might be a good time to review an essential piece of AA literature, “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix.” Each group is autonomous and might consider taking a group conscience on whether digital contributions are an option, and which platform (or mix of platforms) best suits their groups’ needs.



But first, why collect 7th Tradition for an online meeting?

- **Our regular meeting locations still have operating expenses...**
 - Our meetings facilities may rely on our regular rent to help pay their rent, utilities, and employees
 - Meeting supplies will still be needed when our meetings reopen – coffee, paper products, literature, refreshments. And after an extended closure, we may experience a large influx of people who are motivated to re-join the fellowship in person.
- **Intergroup and the General Service Office still have operating expenses such as...**
 - Websites – which we may now rely on more than ever!
 - Phone lines, rent and insurance on office space
 - Utility and other ongoing expenses
 - Paid Special Workers who deserve our continued support. Their compensation is crucial to their ability to serve us.
- **Our Districts and Areas and CTFC still have expenses...**
 - Regular expenses to support the work of committees and events that will take place when the crisis has passed are still there.
 - Web services support for groups
 - Expenses for venues for events that have been cancelled may still need to be met, since any income from the event won't be there to support the pre-payment of reservations, cancellation fees, etc. The expense of re-arranging for venues to reschedule events is very real.

Let's continue to support these folks during the crisis.

- We realize that even though the immediate need for virtual connections is relatively inexpensive, the real expenses of our fellowship continues. Please consider continuing to practice our 7th Tradition and make contributions to the service entities that support your group – your Intergroup or Central Office, your District, Area and the General Services Office. Individual members may choose to contribute directly to service entities—consider becoming a [Faithful Fiver](#) or make a [one-time contribution](#) to Intergroup. Contributions to GSO can be made [here](#).

Now, how does our Group go about collecting digital contributions?

- **Understand the role of treasurer** – read [The A.A. Group Treasurer](#) to learn about the role of treasurer within the group. Here you will learn the importance of selecting a treasurer, how to safeguard and distribute group funds, what a “prudent reserve” is, and more!
- **Group bank account vs Treasurer's personal account** – Your group likely has this sorted out already. For smaller groups, treasurers tend to use their personal bank account and account for group funds using a spreadsheet. A larger group might have a bank account established in the name of the group. *For more information on how to set up a group bank account, see this [Guide to Obtaining a Tax ID Number](#).*
- **Digital payment options** – Venmo, PayPal, Zelle, Cash App, Google Pay, Stripe, and Apple Pay are all viable options.
- **Take a group conscience** – A group conscience is recommended as each member who wishes to contribute will need to open an account with the chosen service. Many members may already have a service they use and prefer.
- **You can select one or multiple** – A group can agree to use just one service, but larger groups may even want to consider multiple options for their members.
- **Consider the costs and benefits of each platform** – each service has varying fees for money transfers depending on the users’ chosen method of payment (debit, credit, checking account, etc.). Some may have a more user-friendly interface than others.

We're hosting 2,500+ Remote Meetings a Week!

Help us **support 2,500 Free Zoom Meetings** per week!
Contribute with **credit card, PayPal, or venmo: @nyintergroup.**

Last month, as AA venues were forced to close, AA members everywhere immediately responded by creating online meeting places for fellow AA's to find and share love, support, and sobriety. New York Intergroup is a big part of this effort—setting up a Zoom account which any AA group may use without charge. Currently we are facilitating more than **2,500 meetings a week**, a figure that grows each day. New York Intergroup has enabled members from **132 countries** to pass through the virtual doors of AA meetings **419,710** times to date. Our help desk has been amazingly busy as we have navigated this transition.

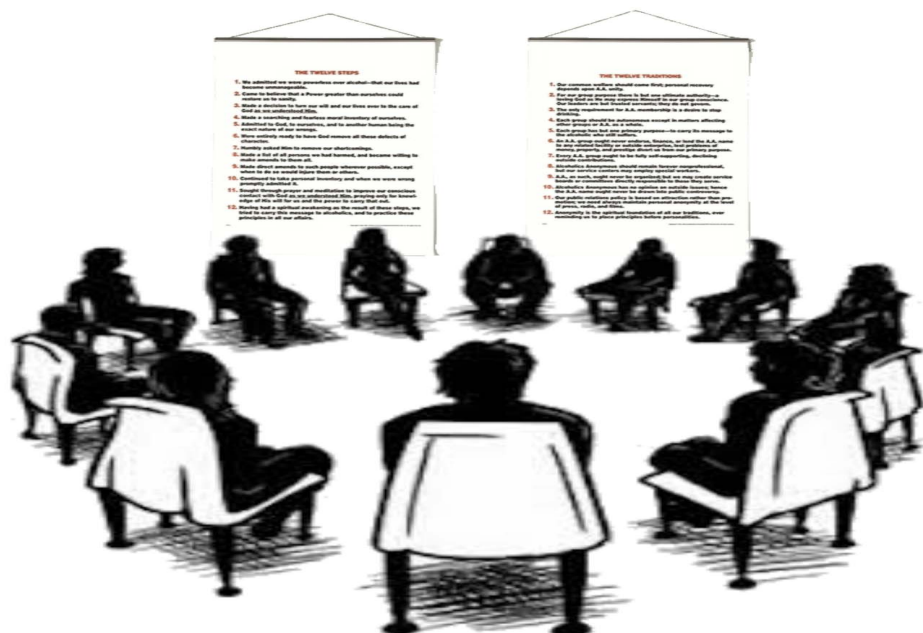
To continue to do our work, we continue to need you. In the past, we could rely on Seventh Tradition contributions from our member groups to assist us in carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic. That has become more difficult as groups no longer pass a physical basket and many have not created virtual ones. Whether as an individual or a group, we hope you'll consider making a Seventh Tradition contribution to us so that we may continue to do vital Twelfth Step work. **You may make a contribution via credit card, PayPal, or venmo: @nyintergroup.**

The team at New York Intergroup is brimming with gratitude for both our sobriety and the many, many expressions of encouragement, appreciation, and support you have sent us—thank you!

Keep coming back!

Where to Mail Your Group Donations

For G.S.O. A.A. World Services, Inc., P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station New York, NY 10163	For Area 49 - S.E.N.Y. S.E.N.Y. P.O. Box 571 New York, NY 10116-0571	For Queens County Queens County General Service Assembly (QCGSA) P.O. Box 670533 Flushing, NY 11367-0533	For Queens Intergroup Queens Intergroup 105-29A Metropolitan Avenue Forest Hills, N.Y. 11375	For NY Intergroup New York Intergroup 307 Seventh Avenue Suite 201 New York, NY 10001-6007
---	--	---	--	---



"It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. 'How can I best serve Thee – Thy will (not mine) be done.' These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will."

From page 85 of the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book.

2020 QCGSA Officers and Committee Chairs

DCMC
Alt DCMC

Treasurer

Secretary

Registrar

Website

Treatment

Accessibilities

Corrections

Grapevine

Literature

CPC/PI

Service Sponsorship

Archives

Queens Share-A-Day

Newsletter

Spiritual Breakfast

Intergroup Liaison

Dcmc@queens.aaseny.org

Altddcmc@queens.aaseny.org

treasurer@queens.aaseny.org

secretary@queens.aaseny.org

registrar@queens.aaseny.org

webchair@queens.aaseny.org

treatment@queens.aaseny.org

accessibilities@queens.aaseny.org

corrections@queens.aaseny.org

_Grapevine@queens.aaseny.org

literature@queens.aaseny.org

queenscountypi@queens.aaseny.org

servicesponsor@queens.aaseny.org

archives@queens.aaseny.org

queensshareaday@queens.aaseny.org

newsletter@queens.aaseny.org

spiritualbreakfast@queens.aaseny.org

intergroupliaison@queens.aaseny.org