



QUEENS COUNTY
GENERAL SERVICE ASSEMBLY

SOBER CONNECTIONS

The Official Newsletter of
Queens County General Service Assembly

APRIL 2021 | VOLUME II

"Our Living Legacy"

Big Book Published

April 10, 1939

In the Spring of 1938, Bill W. began working on the first draft of what would become the Big Book, "Alcoholics Anonymous." Bill had been sober for three and a half years, Dr. Bob, a few months under three years. The other 100 members who would contribute to the Big Book had been sober for periods ranging from a couple of years to a couple of months.

When we look at the process of getting from that bare beginning, we can clearly see the hand of God at work. Our non-alcoholic friends pitched in, Mr. Charles Towns, to the tune of \$4,000 helped bring the volume into publication. Ruth Hock, our non-alcoholic secretary, had taken reams of dictation, typed and retyped edit after edit often going without pay and taking seemingly worthless stock in Works Publishing. Our members realized that some form of testimonial would be necessary to show the program in action would be necessary so they wrote their personal stories to be added to that first edition. Dozens of members bought stock in Works Publishing to keep the operation moving. When I read the accountings of this in "Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age," I can't help but be grateful.

Our founders and predecessors were flying by the seat of their pants. The finance of the operation was haphazard and sloppy and it would not be until well after publication that a formal accounting of the book finances would be undertaken.

While the Traditions and Concepts were not yet a thought, they were clearly in action in the writing and publication of the Big Book.

We saw the group conscience shine as the words "a Power greater than ourselves" was written. The hand of God assured us that the strong minority opinion would win the day when there was approval for paid missionaries, hospitals, and the book. Those that we sought finance from, assisted that minority opinion by assuring that we would remain poor, leaving us with only the book option.

As our society evolves, so does the book Alcoholics Anonymous. Subsequent editions have included new personal stories that more accurately reflect the society of that time. The stories also give outreach to persons, ethnicities, or groups who may have previously felt excluded. The inclusivity of the Third Tradition gives us a great opportunity to expand and grow.

An unofficial Spanish translation can be found as early as 1946. Several more Spanish translations would appear for several years and in the 1950s there would be substantial printings of a Spanish Big Book. It would not be until 1987 when the General Service Office produced a very carefully reviewed Spanish language text that included 12 Spanish Language Stories.

The hand of God may today be seen in the fact that a small group trying to cobble nickels and dimes together through the sale of seemingly valueless stock, is now the vehicle to free millions from alcoholic bondage in more than 70 languages in approximately 180 nations around the world.

Anonymous

Virtual Calendar of Events

May 5 @ 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm

SENY Grapevine/La Vina Committee Meeting

May 7 @ 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

SENY Archives Committee Meeting

May 10 @ 8:15 pm – 9:15 pm

District 301 Committee Meeting

May 17 @ 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm

District 305 Committee Meeting

May 17 @ 7:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Nassau County General Service presents ~A Workshop~

May 20 @ 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

SENY Public Information (PI) Committee Meeting

May 23 @ 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

SENY Service Sponsor Committee Meeting

Jun 2 @ 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm

SENY Grapevine/La Vina Committee Meeting

Jun 4 @ 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

SENY Archives Committee Meeting

Jun 7 @ 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm

SENY Area 49 Committee Meeting

7:00 pm – 7:30 Orientation Breakout Room

Jun 14 @ 8:15 pm – 9:15 pm

District 301 Committee Meeting

Jun 17 @ 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

SENY Public Information (PI) Committee Meeting

Jun 21 @ 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm

District 305 Committee Meeting

Jun 27 @ 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

SENY Service Sponsor Committee Meeting

*ALL MEETINGS ARE VIRTUAL AND NOT IN PERSON YET.

**Please see the Queens County General Service Assembly (QSGSA) website for details on these events.

Sober Connections

**Would you like to submit a
story to the newsletter?**

**Send an email to
newsletter@queens.aaseny.org**



"Horizon of Hope"

We are all feeling it! Remember the time when we sought isolation? We didn't want to be bothered by anyone. We wanted to live in our minds while we drank and we made misery the gold standard of our existence not only to ourselves but to those poor souls around us.

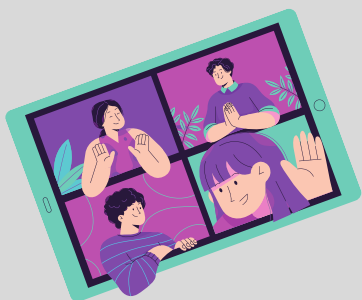
But now that we are sober, we feel differently. We seek to belong in community with one another. Especially for those of us who live alone, the idea of isolation can be a scary prospect as we shelter in place but even for those living with people, the air does get tight and there can seem like no escape at times.

The virtual connection has been such a gift to families and communities in general but to us alcoholics in particular, it has been a lifeline and for that, there is tremendous gratitude for us all. There is a lot of buzz now about whether we should keep the virtual door open. It has helped to reconnect members to their old home groups either due to their moving away or becoming unable to attend meetings in person for other reasons. The reconnection has become a blessing and it has also opened up the global world to give us a better understanding of how far and wide our fellowship really does extend. What will our home groups decide to do for these instances?

As we all follow the guidelines of wearing a mask, sanitizing our hands, and vaccinating, we are slowly starting to see the recovery process all around us, even in the rooms. There are now more and more in-person meetings opening up. In Queens alone, there are at least two meetings per day that you can check out to get an elbow greeting and to see others in living color. The link for these [Queens meetings](#) is here.

While there are still some of us more reluctant to attend these actual meetings yet, rest assured that there will come a day when we will all be together again as we trudge the road to happy destiny but hopefully now this pandemic has opened us up to more and more possibilities to grow in love and service.

Patty H.
Newsletter Chair



GRAPEVINE | APRIL 1963

How AA Came to Them

BY: J. H. | MANHATTAN, NEW YORK

Anonymous Literature

With time fast running out for me, I had finally managed to isolate myself from all human contact except my daily brief encounter with the liquor store delivery man.

I could control my own telephone and doorbell, by not answering them. (They were about the only things left I did have control over.) But I couldn't stop the U.S. mail.

So one day, when I opened the door just wide enough to accept the bottles, there was a package for me on the floor, with no return address.

Puzzled, I took it in and opened it. It contained a dozen back copies of The AA Grapevine, several AA pamphlets, and a dog-eared Big Book. It was someone's "private stock" of literature. At that time, eight years ago, I knew absolutely nothing about AA, and did not know anyone in it.

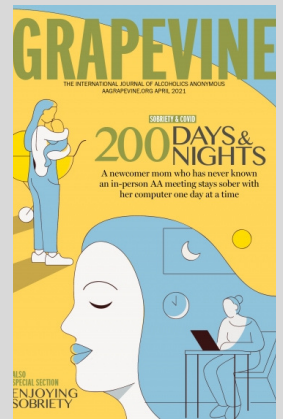
On the flyleaf of the Big Book, in a handwriting strange to me then and never to this day identified, was this note: "From someone who loves you, and understands."

It worked.

I began gulping at my bottle, angrily reading snatches of the hateful literature, and plotting despotic vengeance on the nervy so-and-so who had the gall to do this to me. I kept that up all day and all night.

But the following morning I gave up and called AA. A sponsor came, and I've had big gifts of new time ever since, thanks to that anonymous literature-giver and the U.S. Mail.

Click on
the
magazine
cover
to order
your
subscription
today!



QUEENS COUNTY 2021-2022 STEERING COMMITTEE

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QC Spiritual Breakfast Chair MaryAnn L. QCSB@queens.aaseny.org



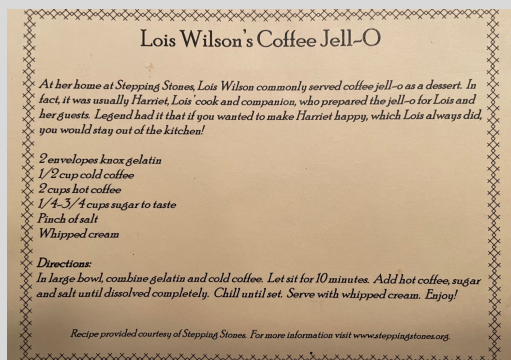
OPEN POSITIONS **Accessibilities Chair** **Corrections Chair** **Grapevine Chair** **CPC Chair**

Please contact Bert L. dcmc@qcgsga.org
*to learn more about doing service below
 your home group level.*

*A little token that was offered at a previous
Stepping Stones Anniversary.*

and to commemorate the 70th on Saturday, June 21, 2021

**Check out the website by clicking the link above in mid-April for more detail.*



The General Service Conference

In the summer of 1948, Dr. Bob was diagnosed with cancer which would ultimately take him from this world. Bill W. had been concerned about the disconnect between the worldwide fellowship and the Trustees. Where would we be when our few oldtimers either passed away or become incapacitated? There had been vague discussion about a hand-picked advisory council or a conference. When Dr. Bob became ill, the problem became instantly apparent to Bill.

The majority of the Board did not share these concerns. They felt that creating a conference or advisory council would bring on both politics and unnecessary expense. As Bill pressed the issue, the Board became even more resistant, resenting Bill's "sledgehammer" tactics. As the storm brewed, Bill would send "blistering" memos to the board. Bill would later see this as a "dry bender of the worst possible sort."

Bill set out on the road to speak with the groups. The AA old-timers advised the Board that things were okay as they were and that there was no need for a conference or advisory board. While Bill did not directly address the issue with the groups, he returned from his trip with the conviction that they would like to have full access to their affairs through an elected conference.

By 1949, Dr. Bob's health was failing. Bill began to see the tide turning a bit amongst the Board. Non-Alcoholic Trustees Mr. Leonard Harrison and Mr. Bernard Smith would help to end the conflict despite Mr. Harrison's objection to the conference. A Trustee's committee on the proposed conference was formed.

In 1950, the first international convention was held in Cleveland. At this convention, it was sensed that Dr. Bob would soon be leaving us and other early AA members would soon follow. The Convention voted to adopt the 12 Traditions at what would be Dr. Bob's last appearance.

A few weeks after the convention, Bill would meet with Dr. Bob in Akron. He brought the news that the Trustees would most likely consent to the Conference. Bill pressed for Dr. Bob's consent. After some discussion and careful consideration Dr. Bob said "Bill, it has to be AA's decision, not ours. Let's call that Conference. It is fine with me." At the end of this visit, Dr. Bob said "Remember, Bill, let's not louse this thing up. Let's keep it simple!" That would be the last time that our co-founders would see each other.

The conference would be launched for a 5 year trial period.

At the 1955 Convention, the fifth General Service Conference was assembled. A resolution was read to establish the General Service Conference as the permanent replacement of our founders in assuming the responsibility for our affairs. The convention approved the resolution and the Conference adopted it. A conference was born.

How Do You Slice Your Pie?

AA's generally associate contributing to the basket (virtual or in-person) as a matter of the 7th Tradition: Being self-supporting is the reason we pass the basket.

But since it's April, consider Tradition 4—"Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole"—your freedom to decide where your group's basket money goes.

Gener Service Representatives (GSRs) or any group member might consider opening a discussion at their group's next business meeting about whether, as COVID-19 shutdowns continue and while we slowly reopen, you want to change your contribution pie chart and direct contributions to where they're needed more. Some groups were giving more to New York Intergroup while NYIG was hosting virtual meetings on Zoom. But now the groups bear that responsibility themselves in being self-supporting, is it now time to consider giving a higher percentage of your contributions to Queens County General Service, Queens County Intergroup, or AA's General Service Office (GSO)?

County contributions down—but so are expenses:

Speaking only for Queens County General Service, our contributions have definitely been down over the past year—but so have our expenses. We haven't had to pay for meeting rental space, printing costs for the newsletter, and various reports that GSR's take back to their groups, or literature typically sold at in-person events. There are no expenses for breakfast, lunch, or rental space when we host an event. We do still have storage rental, website hosting, our own Zoom accounts, and a few other expenses. But for now, we are not in danger of having to use our prudent reserve. And we are very grateful to the groups who support the service structure below the group level.

Distribution structure: Big pieces, small pieces:

However, the GSO, which helps AA's around the world carry the message, has a paid staff and an office space to maintain, along with other significant expenses. A decline in basket contributions during the COVID-19 shutdown has led to GSO having to dip into their prudent reserve twice during 2020 to cover expenses. That's no small thing and a dangerous precedent. So look at your group's contribution pie chart and consider if adjustments are in order. Maybe you're giving 30% to Queens County General Service Assembly (QCGSA), 30%, Southeast New York (SENY) Area 59, and 40% to the General Service Office (GSO). Your group might vote to change the percentages to 25%, 25%, and 50%, respectively. Or 20%, 20%, and 60%. See the graph for more ideas on how to distribute contributions.

Individual contributions made easy:

By the way, you can easily give to GSO as an individual AA. Many people give annually on their anniversaries, matching dollars for each year they have been sober. Some estimate how much they used to spend on drinking and contribute that on a regular basis. You can set up an automatic or one-time contribution from the main page at AA.org—just click on the tab "Make a Contribution."

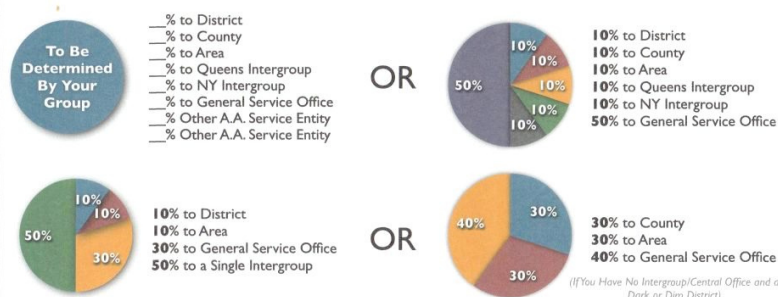
One last note—remember this number: \$8.16 (I think that was what I paid for coffee and a croissant the last time I went to Starbucks). GSO estimates that they could be fully self-supported without literature sales if every AA contributed \$8.16 just once a year. Kinda' mind-boggling, isn't it?

—Jan A., Queens County Treasurer



Suggestions of Group Contributions to A.A. Service Entities

Some groups are no longer sure of where or how much to donate to their AA service entities. Please give your group number on any donation you send in. If you don't have the group service number you may obtain it by contacting GSO at NortheastRegion@aa.org and provide them at much information about the group as you can. (These are suggestions only)



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 10001-4007

