

Stay  Safe!

{NO BOOZE NEWS}



The more dependent we become on a higher power, the more independent we become
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Intergroup bulletin

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The Intergroup meets 2PM, the last Sunday of each quarter January, April, July, and October at 411 Sellers Street. We urge all groups to have an intergroup representative so you will be up to date on what is going on with your intergroup, and also to provide us with any input from your group. We need your input for this Bulletin on items of interest, i.e. birthday lists, upcoming events, personal stories, we are always in need of guest writers, and anything else that you would like to see in your bulletin. You can E-mail your information to Keith S. at bigalaapal@gmail.com. Please put “NO BOOZE NEWS” in the subject line. Bulletins will be E-mailed to group representatives for reproduction and distribution. You can also receive the Bulletin in your E-mail by providing your E-mail address to Keith S., or you can pick up a copy from the book store at 411 Sellers.

AA HOTLINE PHONE # 501-623-ODAT (6328)

[Our website is https://aawcar.org](https://aawcar.org)

IMPORTANT CHANGE IN OUR NEWSLETTER

We are going to start something new in the newsletter. We would like your stories pertaining to alcohol and/or alcoholism. So if you have an anecdote, poetry and even a short story that you have written and would like to have it published please submit it. The purpose is to hear from you, your thoughts. AA is built upon our experiences, strengths and hope. It is what we remember most about others and what we have to offer our fellows. One or two articles will be published each issue along with articles that we may use from the Grapevine. So, pass along the word of what we are doing and please contact us with your writing. We will of course have to have your permission in order to include it in our newsletter. Absolutely no plagiarism will be tolerated, so if you see an article that someone else has written please just notify us of the source. The purpose is to hear from you.

In addition to submitting your work we would also like to reach more people so if you know of someone in the program that would like to get our monthly newsletter please forward their email to us and we will include them on our list.

Thank you kindly, Keith S.

So now what?

We simply do the same things that we've been doing since Bill W., Dr. Bob, and the First 100 have been teaching us from the beginning: we practice the principals of the program in all of our affairs and in by doing so, we incorporate behavioral change with a continued spiritual presence. The manner in which we achieve this, however, will be unlike anything 12-step programs have ever seen before. We have never been as reliant on technology as we are in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing has moved us to meetings hosted by technology such as Zoom or our precious time with our sponsors (& sponsees) now being facilitated by Facetime. We will continue to share our experience, strength, & hope, we will continue to be of service, and we will continue (social distancing or not) to remain united!!!

The Red Cross recommends the following steps to help prevent the spread of germs during this situation: Click on link below.

<https://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020/coronavirus-safety-and-readiness-tips-for-you.html>

1. Practice social distancing by keeping a distance of about six feet from others if you must go out in public.
2. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after being in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
4. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
5. Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care

General Service of Alcoholics Anonymous (G.S.O.) position on Coronavirus

The General Service of Alcoholics Anonymous (G.S.O.) U.S./Canada functions as a repository for A.A. members and groups who are looking for the shared experience of the Fellowship. As the global situation related to Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to develop, we are fully committed to continue to serve as a resource center of shared experience to help navigate this unprecedented public health emergency.

It is important to note the G.S.O. is not an authoritative body over our groups, nor does it initiate rules or directives, as each A.A. group and entity is autonomous and decisions are made through its group conscience. Providing guidance on health issues is outside the scope of the A.A. sharing that G.S.O. offers. For anyone experiencing health and safety questions, it is suggested they contact national, state/provincial and local health authorities for appropriate information.

However, in response to the global outbreak, we do have some general experience regarding how some A.A. groups and members have begun to address this issue. Many are following “social distancing” guidelines established by local,

state, provincial, and federal officials, while at the same time maintaining their recovery and attending digital A.A. meetings.

By attending digital meetings, groups can focus on A.A.'s primary purpose: to carry its message of recovery to the alcoholic who still suffers. Many groups have alerted local A.A. offices or hotlines if they are temporarily not meeting in their regular space. Some groups have shared that they are utilizing digital platforms such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, or conducting conference calls.

A.A. groups are also creating contact lists, keeping in touch by phone, email or social media. Many local A.A. central/intergroup offices, and areas have added information to their websites about how to change a meeting format from "in-person" to a digital platform. A.A. in the digital age has certainly taken on a new meaning in these challenging times.

Grapevine and La Viña are here to help

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** to all of our 2020 Grapevine and La Viña issues. (The audio to Grapevine's stories will be available as well, so people can listen to the stories if they like.) Please share with your fellows. We have also included a link to our Youtube channel with some original audio stories as well as other important information.

To enter, visit: www.aagrapevine.org/we-are-here-to-help

Options for meeting online

Our collected experience suggests that groups that are unable to meet at their usual meeting places have begun to meet digitally. Below is some shared experience around meeting online.

Decide if you want to create your own online meeting or attend one that already exists.

There are a variety of existing online A.A. meetings accessible via <http://aa-intergroup.org/>

If you decide to create your own online meeting, you'll need to choose a platform to use.

A.A. does not endorse any specific way to meet as a group digitally. Each group must decide what works best for their needs. You can visit the following providers to get more information on how to use their platforms to set up an online meeting.

There are many options for converting to audio/video or phone meetings. See below platforms groups have shared:

[Google Hangouts/Meet](#)

[Zoom](#)

[Free Conference Call](#)

For more information on other online platforms visit: [G2.com](#)

Share information about the meeting

Provide your group members and your local A.A. offices with information and any relevant instructions for your meeting.

Getting additional help

You may be able to request additional help and guidance on this topic by reaching out to your local A.A. office, technology committees, or the online [Technology in A.A.](#) forum.

For more information on anonymity please see: [Understanding Anonymity](#)

For more information on passing the digital basket please see: [Winter 2017 Box 459 p. 3 "Passing the Digital Basket](#)

Shoemaker, Stick to Thy Last

I Hope I Never Stray

By Rick R.

I remember how it was when I was a child in the 1940s when there was only one doctor in the community where I lived. I was one of ten children in my family and we had to deal with all of the different physical ailments that kids went through in those days. We were poor and didn't have the luxury to take our pick of doctors. Today I could liken it to what you see in many of the third world countries. Since then, as medical research has evolved, many of problems of that time have been eliminated and the medical profession is made up of an abundance of specialist that focus on specific fields that they have experience in and as a result become experts in that field. Not being distracted by the need to know the specifics of all of the other specialists, they continue to dig deeper into the field that they are familiar with and new ideas about how to identify and cure those specific ailments.

If a person in AA attends a weekly step study meeting that also studies the 12 traditions they would know; by the stories in the book, the pains and struggles that those first hundred members, that put the twelve step program together, suffered through. The 12 traditions came later when they realized that mixing outside issues with the AA program would probably end in disaster as it happen to the Oxford Group and The Washingtonians. The first printing of the 12X12 was in 1953 and those traditions were pounded out on anvils of steel and they have been the protective coating that has insulated Alcoholics Anonymous from getting affiliated with outside organizations.

Tradition Five *"Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic that still suffers."* I have known many members of AA who have worked outside of AA itself in rehabilitation centers and such, and there is no conflict of interest as long as that person does not imply that he/she represents Alcoholics Anonymous. Some of those members are pillars of AA at their own group level but maintain a healthy separation when it comes to non affiliation.

We learn in AA that we have to give it away to keep it. If carrying the message was not the primary purpose of the group how could AA sustain itself as far as new membership was concerned? My experience in the program has been one of appreciation for the wisdom of the founders who understood that carrying the message benefit's both the giver and the receiver. In the words of Shakespeare: The quality of mercy is not strain'd, it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath: It is twice blest; it blesseth him that gives and him that takes.

I find that the AA program is the most successful approach to the disease of alcoholism. I hope we never stray from this tradition and that spirit of carrying the message to those who still suffer. I owe my life to it.

Coping With COVID-19 Crisis: A Connected Friend Of Bill W's On Staying Sober And Recovery In The Age Of Isolation

“Adversity truly introduces us to ourselves,” the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous declares. Certainly for so many, recovery from booze or drugs or both is a constant battle, no matter how many days, weeks, months or years sober or clean they are and how many chips they have acquired. Now, along with job losses, subsequent economic challenges and more, add to that battle the stress of living in the coronavirus pandemic. Suddenly, face-to-face support systems like dropping into a 12-step meeting evaporate as stay-at-home orders keep us isolated to flatten the curve, but struggling in other ways.

By the way, the rest of that Big Book quote is: “We need never deal with our adversities alone as long as we can find another alcoholic in a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.”

My name is M. and I'm an alcoholic.

Like my brothers and sisters in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, I struggled with the characteristic “restlessness, irritability, and discontentedness” for years – until I discovered drugs and alcohol. They had a magical power to fit the shape of every hole inside me, plaster over all the surface cracks, and buoy me in the rough seas of my everyday life.

Then, as it does, my medicine became my poison.

My attempts to manage the side effects quickly gave way to absolute dependence, widespread disappointment, the erosion of trust and relationships, the collapse of executive function, and total system failure.

Not a minute too soon, the program, meetings, and fellowship of AA began to work together to build me a new life centered around emotional honesty, acceptance and sobriety; three ideas which heretofore had no value to me. Now, in my second tour of sustained abstinence from drugs and alcohol, I can scarcely imagine life without those notions, in or outside of AA.

In the weeks before the coronavirus forced major cities into lockdown, I attended about one Alcoholics Anonymous meeting a week in person, sometimes fewer when traveling for work. Having attended meetings in the likes of Mumbai, Tokyo, Zagreb, Cape Town, Barcelona and Buenos Aires, this is both a poor excuse and a simple statement of fact. There are AA

meetings absolutely everywhere, and now they are pushing their way into my laptop screen.

To support a program built around the simple idea of two alcoholics sharing their experience, strength, and hope; and for a community framed by hugs, hand-holding, tight rows of folding chairs, meeting greeters, and face-to-face confessionals; what AA has done in the face of the new reality of COVID-19 isolation is truly remarkable.

Two weeks ago, while I was still in New York City on a job that was about to be shut down, I got a group text proposing that we migrate our Thursday stag meeting to the Zoom platform. We had our first such online meeting a few days later.

It worked well enough, pretty much everyone was visible/audible and the novelty of communing in this way was exciting. There were the guys with the art directed backgrounds arriving well-lit and presentable, the guys with their faces super close to the camera looking like every dad selfie on Facebook, and the newcomers with no video who can't manage to find the mute button or shut up their dogs or kids. It was great to hear them all. It was proposed that we hold the meeting every night at the same time. OK, great.

Then a friend from New York set up a Zoom meeting as well. Then another out of LA. Then another. And another. Then this morning, I received a Google Doc containing links and information for 491 Zoom meetings around the world.

After a few days of doubling and tripling up on meetings, I found I didn't have much to share beyond re-emphasizing that I still enjoyed being isolated, how I felt about the latest COVID-19 stats, and that I was grateful. Truth is this was more recovery than I had seen in months and it was wearing me out.

Continual group texts reminding me of upcoming meetings interspersed with unrelated memes or Mr. T Gifs forced me to mute the chains. I had to pull back. I was feeling put-upon, and I was getting resentful.

Still, I know for many that the platform works well and, by and large, the message gets through.

Yet, and this is my take, it is hard to imagine that this model is sustainable. In my opinion, and this may simply be an insurmountable reality of this pandemic right now, the digital meeting is missing two key things: equal access and human contact.

In a pre-coronavirus era, the only price for admission to a church basement AA meeting is a memorable enough ass-whooping, a desire to stop drinking or drugging, and maybe a dollar if you have one. That's it. In exchange, you get to be sober for a day, maybe tomorrow too if you are willing to do the work.

By comparison, to attend an AA meeting on Zoom, one needs a smart phone or computer, some basic degree of online literacy, and an invitation from another drunk with same. Surprisingly, this simple list of prerequisites now precludes the attendance of a number of alcoholics who may be skittering along their own personal bottoms without a phone or a home, but who nevertheless have their valuable experiences.

Often, it is this very Group of Drunks whose carnal testimonies have a way of reinvigorating the base and reminding those of us more comfortable in sobriety of our own humble beginnings in AA. Their presence also re-opens our eyes to the fact that continuous sobriety is dependent upon a willingness to help those still struggling to get this thing.

I have been to plenty of meetings with alcoholic men and women who will have their only meal of the day (coffee and a donut) at that meeting. Yet these same individuals also have an astonishingly profound understanding of the principals of AA, of human nature, and the willingness to share these insights with the group such that their words can move even most closed-off alcoholics to take the first step.

AA, specifically the actual AA meeting itself, has a way of bringing together people who would not usually mix.

The Big Book of AA likens this phenomenon to one of a shipwreck, wherein surviving passengers from different classes of service and walks of life suddenly find themselves sharing in an intense and life-changing event, forging a connection between them that cuts through class, race, age, gender or any other qualifier one might wish to assign a person.

Life as an active alcoholic or addict is a tough row to hoe. When one's medicine becomes one's poison, the best one can hope for is to manage the side-effects while on a steep downward spiral.

By contrast, to be an alcoholic as a sober member of AA is another experience entirely; hope is restored, the world is revealed, the expression "multiply joy, divide pain" comes to mind. When I meet someone who casually drops an AA-ism into a conversation or orders a cranberry and soda at dinner with the client, the kinship I suddenly feel towards them is so incredibly extra.

We alcoholics have grown reliant on in-person human contact and cross-cultural diversity for our very survival.

Now as humans forced to live in isolation during these COVID-19 times, the closing of in-person meetings and their migration to digital platforms will probably work to homogenize the groups that went digital, and at least temporarily dismantle others. On hold too are the Hospitals & Institutions panels, where members urgently bring meetings to rehabs and jails. I do worry that this isolation will break down the fabric of diversity woven into our recovery culture. I also know that with confirmed coronavirus cases growing every day that shuttering such in-person gatherings is the only responsible thing to do.

Additionally, I deeply appreciate the Zoom meeting secretaries who make sure, even in the face of a global health pandemic, to still stick to the format, manage the time, assign the readings, and run the whole thing by the quasi-Robert's Rules of Order which we have adopted.

After thousands of these meetings, there is a certain ol' reliability to the rhythm of a well-run AA meeting. It has a way of keeping everyone in their lane and focused on the same thing: sharing from the heart about their experience with alcoholism and how they are staying in the solution.

So, yes, things are different, but in these uncertain times, with fear run rampant, I am still so grateful to still have a community of friends with whom I can continue to share my feelings, my struggles, my joy – and for a weirdly OK digital platform on which to convene.

I'll keep coming back.

Quotes from The AA Grapevine:

.“The other Steps can keep most of us sober and somehow functioning. But Step Eleven can keep us growing, if we try hard and work at it continually.”

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., June 1958, “Take Step Eleven,”, The Language of the Heart

.“In great measure, we AAs have really found peace. However haltingly, we have managed to attain an increasing humility whose dividends have been serenity and legitimate joy.”

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., June 1961, “Humility for Today,”, The Language of the Heart

.“While I wouldn’t recommend that anyone become an alcoholic, I believe that sober alcoholics living the AA way of life have been blessed with a gift. It’s a gift that can’t be bought, that can’t be won in a lottery, that can’t be stolen, forged, or rented.”

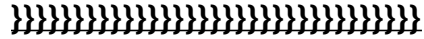
Edenvale, Gauteng, South Africa, October 1996, “A Healthy Appetite for Beer,”, The Best of the Grapevine, Volume 3

.“When I begin to worry about things I can do nothing about, I tell myself to accept what you can’t change. Often I’ve used the ideas in the Serenity Prayer as a trigger for relinquishing my need to control and as a reminder to take action when some discontentment can be remedied.”

El Granada, California, March 1989, “A Program of Action,”, The Best of the Grapevine, Volume 3

.“If I am to have a share of those promises enumerated in the AA book, there is a price I must pay. That price is destruction of self-centeredness.”

Tulsa, Oklahoma, July 1978, “The Power of the Program,”, Spiritual Awakenings



The Stage of Fear and Insecurity

By Rick R.

Shakespeare said the world's a *stage*, and we each *play our part*.

My *stage* was in a bar room and that's where I got my start.

It was the place where I felt safe to dream of things to be.

"I think I'll be an astronaut," it all made sense to me.

Where *fear* and *insecurity* where words you'd never hear.

For they were safely locked away, behind a keg of beer.

But this can only last so long and the Piper we must pay.

The fallacy was ripped away, and I had to face the day.

I had to find a different *stage* and play a different *role*,

To face my insecurities and fears would be my goal.

Instinctive fear is not a fault that I need to replace,

for it saves me from recklessness and falling on my face.

Irrational fear is where I falter whenever I'm in doubt,

while doing shameful things that I don't like to talk about.

In later years I changed my *role* to *acting* like a *clown*.

My drinking used to mask these things, that weighed my conscience down.

Desperation was the final *roll* that brought me to my knees.

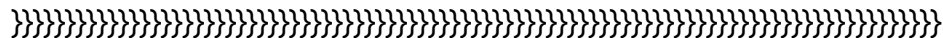
My conscience told me "Call AA and deal with your disease".

It's in the program that I learn the habits of right living.

Abandoning all the *taking* and replacing it with *giving*.

AA has been the answer and I go there every day,

now *acting* like I'm a grown-up, knowing God *directs* the *play*



AA GROUPS AND CONTACTS

Arkadelphia	Arkadelphia Group U-turn Group	Terry B. Bob S.	501-865-1363 870-260-9277
Benton	Back to the Basics Before and After Eastside Group Lamp Lighters Group Round Table Group Rock Bottom Group S.N.L.	James O. Cory H. Trish L. Tommy N. Randy P.	901-279-0493 501-658-4902 501-231-0032 501-303-6507 501-413-2234
Bryant	Keep It Simple Group Came to Believe	Ron E. Jerry A.	501-860-1967 501-249-6389
Diamondhead	Lake Catherine Group	John S.	501 547-2188
Gurdon	Green House Group	Jim F.	512-656-6837
Hot Springs	Central Big Book Last House on the Block We're Not Doctors Hot Springs AA Group	Marvin D. Ernie H. Rasa M. Gwin H.	501-627-5265 501-617-1714 501-655-0288 501-802-0939
Hot Springs Vill.	Evergreen Group Newcomer's Meeting Welcome Group East Gate Group	Mara M. Russ V. Paul K. Janice D..	501-984-3556 501-209-1372 501-922-7331 901-500-6887
Jessieville	Rockhouse Group Living Sober Group	Richard H. Russ V.	501-209-5963 501-209-1372
Malvern	Open Door Group Inside Sobriety Group © ADC Ouachita River Correction Unit(ORCU)	Kevin S. James A.	501-732-1340 501-467-3490
Mount Ida	Resentment Group	Frank S.	870-490-0453

