

QUEENS INTERGROUP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS NEWSLETTER

105-29A Metropolitan Avenue,
Forest Hills, NY 11375

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays from 7pm to 9pm Saturdays from 10am to 2pm

Office telephone: (718) 520-5024

Queens Intergroup Mail: QIAA, P.O. Box 754088, Forest Hills Station, N.Y. 11375-9088

Intergroup/Central Office: Then and Now

Established and supported by local groups to carry out the functions of a centralized office, intergroups have provided thousands of desperate alcoholics with their first contact with Alcoholics Anonymous, either over the phone, in person, or, increasingly, online. With 469 intergroups/central offices listed with G.S.O. in the U.S./Canada alone (and nearly 700 worldwide), A.A. is so easily "searchable" these days that we often forget that, at one time, it played a little hard to get. Back in early days, "A.A. wasn't that easy to find," wrote one old timer. "A carefully selected group of priests, judges and policemen knew about A.A.; our phone number wasn't listed, and it could be gotten only by dialing Information." This was deliberate attempt to ensure that anyone wanting to get sober was sincere enough to make a real effort. But gauging the level of someone else's desire to quit drinking was an often subjective, judgment that the Third Tradition fortunately did away with.

In the very beginning, there was the Central Committee in Cleveland, Ohio, where by October 1939 as a group of seven members convened on a regular basis to coordinate efforts regarding hospitalizations and sponsorship, doing crucial work at a time when the slip of just one member or the dissolution of just one group seemed to threaten the very existence of A.A. itself.

What Bill W. called "A.A.'s first organized servicer center" - the forerunner of today's intergroup - sprang up in the Chicago suburb of Evanston. Around 1940, an A.A. member named Sylvia used the process of her monthly alimony check to rent an apartment and establish a phone line. In 1941, after publication of the Jack Alexander article about A.A. in the Saturday Evening Post, Sylvia's apartment began to resemble, according to Bill, "a sort of Chicago Grand Central," with so many phone calls that Sylvia had to enlist the aid of Grace Coultice, a nonalcoholic secretary. Eventually, Sylvia and Grace upgraded to an office in the Loop (only a few blocks from where the current Chicago Area Service Office now has its offices), where they welcomed, Bill wrote, "a stream of applicants for Twelfth Step attention, hospitalization, or other help."

Most early intergroup offices were nowhere near as elaborate as this: they were simply phone lines listed as belonging to A.A. but that were in fact connected to members' homes. But Sylvia's office inspired the opening of numerous early intergroup/central offices all over the Midwest, notably ones in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and Minneapolis, Minnesota.

On the East Coast, New York Inter-Group essentially started when the doors of the 24th Street Clubhouse at 334 1/2 West 24th Street opened in June 1940 and began serving the members of A.A. in the metropolitan area. By 1942, the Club, as it was called, began to serve as more than a meeting place and to function as a de facto central committee for over 20 A.A. groups, with two paid clubhouse secretaries who answered phones and manned the desk 12 to 14 hours a day. These were some of A.A.'s first "special workers," as articulated in Tradition Eight, who were paid to make A.A. Twelfth Step work possible, as opposed to individual A.A. members who, on a voluntary basis, carry the message as part of their own Twelfth Step efforts. Eventually, in 1946, New York Inter-Group was established, moving away from the clubhouse (it was difficult to carry on the work of intergroup in a social atmosphere that included an endless poker game and, at one point, a restaurant) to a space on West 75th Street.

By the time of the first General Service Conference in April 1951, at least 16 intergroup/central offices were serving local groups. Since they predated the formation of the general service structure and performed a different A.A. function, they were not a part of the A.A. structure (except in Chicago, where the area service office and area committee are essentially one). At times over the years, there has been an overlapping of services, but, for the most part, intergroups and general service have come to work in harmony.

Excerpts from A.A. literature and current publications are reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc. and The Grapevine, Inc.

Upcoming Events

Queens Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous

INSTITUTIONS LITERATURE
FUNDRAISER

DANCE

Friday, Jun 21st 2019

St. Francis of Assisi Church
Basement

21-17 45th Street, Astoria, NY 11105

8:00 PM to 12:30 AM

SUGGESTED DONATION

\$10

Institutions Information Meeting

7:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Light refreshments will be served

FOOD DONATIONS

ARE WELCOMED

LONG ISLAND SPIRITUALITY
THROUGH SERVICE

2019

Long Island Spirituality Through Service ("L.I.S.T.S.") aspires to affirm the spiritual practice of
Unity & Service to recovering alcoholics.

SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2019

8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

ST. ANTHONY'S SCHOOL

110 ANCHOR AVE.

OCEANSIDE, N.Y. 11572

NYSIW 2019

August 2, 3, 4, 2019

AA SENY

Area 49



40th
ANNIVERSARY

Graymoor Spiritual Life Center
Route 9, Garrison, NY

Email nysiw@aasenys.org for more information

MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE TRADITIONS

When I began writing this article, I asked myself, "When were The Traditions written? And, when were they first published? After doing some research here is what I found. Several of the tenets of what was to become AA's Twelve Traditions were first expressed in the Foreword to the First Edition of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1939. By 1944 the number of AA groups had grown along with the number of letters being sent to the AA headquarters in New York asking how to handle disputes caused by issues like publicity, religion, and finances. By 1946 AA cofounder Bill Wilson had more clearly formulated the basic ideas for the Twelve Traditions directly from such correspondence with groups (via the group conscience method), setting guidelines on how groups and members should interact with each other, the public, and AA as a whole. The Traditions were first published in the April 1946 AA Grapevine under the title ***Twelve Points to Assure Our Future*** and were formally adopted at AA's First International Convention in 1950.

Because the long form is more explicit and of possible historic value, it is also reproduced. A.A.'s Twelve traditions appear in the so-called "Short form", the form in general used today.

This is a condensed version of the original long form:

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

In my early days of sobriety, I began attending step meetings in the Woodside, Elmhurst, Jackson Heights areas of Queens. Many times, but not always, The Tradition meeting would be the last week of the month. I must admit I wasn't too inspired by them. Many times, I would hear that old cliché "The Steps are for the individual, while the Traditions are for the Groups. While there is a lot of truth to that, it wasn't until an old-timer said to me The Traditions are also for the Individual, that shifted my perception of them. So, I tried to practice them, in other areas of my life, and much to my astonishment, found I would have better relations with my family, co-workers, different clubs, etc. So, as time has passed, I have come to really appreciate the value of them.

To those now in its fold, Alcoholics Anonymous has made the difference between misery and sobriety, and often the difference between life and death. A.A can, of course mean just as much to uncounted alcoholics not yet reached. Therefore, no society of men and women ever had a more urgent need for continuous effectiveness and permanent unity. We alcoholics believe that we must work together and hang together, else most of us will finally die alone. We believe that Twelve Traditions of A.A are the best answers to those urgent questions, "How can A.A best stay whole and survive?"

Love and Service,
Eddie F.



Questions, Comments, Events, Notes?
Email the Newsletter Editor (EDDIE F.)

at

newsletter@queensaa.org

