

Sober Connections

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



QUEENS COUNTY
GENERAL SERVICE ASSEMBLY

MARCH/APRIL 2017

www.qcgsa.org

Edition 1, Volume 2

This issue is driven by the importance of the homegroup. As I was reading old Grapevines, I came across a story about a newcomer who walked into a meeting. I read the story numerous times as I completely identified with her. How many times have I walked into a new meeting and have not been greeted OR how many times have I walked into my homegroup and not been welcomed. Even after I have walked in saying hello. I remember when I walked into my first meeting which happened to be the last meeting of the Queens Share-a-thon years ago. I was welcomed as I managed to squeak out a hello through my tears. I always say hello because you never know who is new, coming back or just visiting. Here's Sharon's story:

I feel nervous walking into this meeting. I have never been here before, and I feel like I might not fit in. The notion that I 'm disconnected from the entire world has raced back into my sober self, and it makes me want to turn around and leave. I try to talk myself out of this by musing,

"Maybe I don't need a meeting tonight." Then I curse myself for being a coward and know I will surely drink and die if I don't stay. I force myself to walk through the darkened parking lot, toward the smokers standing around laughing outside the church doors. Inside, the light vaguely warms their faces, but I recognize none of them. Oh God, I wish my best friend were here with me.

I take a deep breath and walk through the gauntlet of happy friends chattering around me. Nibbling on brownies and drinking bad coffee, I look toward the cushioned chairs set in rows facing the speaker. Having compromised hearing, I search out a seat a close to the speaker. But as I get closer, I see keys, chips, lighters, and books saving seats. I see a row of empty seats and sit down, still close enough to see the speaker's lips.

I'm tapped on the shoulder by a smiling woman my age. "Excuse me," she says. "These seats are saved." Yes, of course they are. Saved or all the friends who want to sit together – rows and rows of them. Saved for the regulars who come each week and stick

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
web@queens.aaseny.org and
we will post it.

NEWSLETTER

Have a story that you would like to submit to the newsletter?

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

UPCOMING QC ASSEMBLY MEETINGS:

- JUNE 26TH
- AUGUST 28TH
- OCTOBER 30TH

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

together. How wonderful for them to have close relationships in AA. I'm reminded of how I felt in high school, when I didn't know which group to sit next to because no one invited me to join them. I feel excluded, physically and emotionally.

I do stay through the meeting, and I'm glad. I've heard a wonderful chairperson, who I feel God picked out just for me. I feel close to my Higher Power and

rejuvenated once again. Thank God for Alcoholics Anonymous.

I have seventeen years of sobriety, and this is an experience I've encountered recently and frequently since I've moved to a new area. It's an experience that I can share with newcomers because I know how disconnected they feel. So, I re-double my efforts to speak to a new woman and give her my phone number. I offer her a

seat next to me. "I saved this seat for you," I say in my heart.

Can you imagine what would happen if God picked out who we sat with? While I enjoy sitting next to a friend or two, I don't think we have to inhabit an entire zip code every time we're together. After all, are we having meetings to reach out to people we don't know especially the newcomer who may feel excluded and different?

C., Sharon. "Who's Saving the Seat for the Newcomer?" Grapevine Aug. 2006: 25-26. Rpt. in Grapevine. New York: AA Grapevine, Inc., 2006. 25-26. Print. *Reprinted with permission.*

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO A MEETING

I was on my way to a speaking commitment at a meeting I had never attended. Like any "normal" person who wasn't familiar with an area, I left early enough to find parking and arrive with time to spare. I was driving around looking for a space and saw a woman walking by. I said to myself, "I wonder if she is going to the meeting?". I don't know what made me think that. Maybe it was the look on her face. Or maybe it was her body language. Since Murphy's law follows me around I grabbed the first spot opened and parked about a block and a half away. I sat for a few minutes to gather my nerves. Even though I have been around awhile I still get nervous before commitments. I noticed the same woman walking by again and now wondered if she was lost.

I got out of the car and headed toward the meeting. As I turned the corner, I saw a bunch of men standing in front of a building and knew that had to be the meeting space. I went inside and there were more men but no women. I was wondering if this meeting was for men only. I jokingly asked one of the members I knew if it was. Shortly after, the woman I saw walking around outside came down the stairs.

I welcomed her and she said she had been walking around and around and was scared to come inside because she didn't see any women but when she saw me go in, she was relieved. We laughed and I told her I accused them of having a "men's meeting". This was her first meeting and it was also a beginners meeting. I was the speaker and shared my experience, strength, and hope. She shared during the meeting that she could identify with some of my experiences and thoughts but she was not sure if she was an alcoholic or really needed our program. As I would tell any newcomer, I said to her, "give yourself a break and make 90 meetings in 90 days and see how it goes".

I did see her a few months later and she reminded me where we met. She said at first, she didn't come back but after a while she did. I am glad that she heard my story and hope that I inspired her to give our program a try.

Jo Ann M.

ASK AN ALKIE

The question and answer column for Queens County General Service.

Dear Alkie:

I have done my own inventory but now I keep hearing about a "group inventory". What exactly is a group inventory? How long does it take and what are the benefits?

Sincerely,
Jammin' in Jamaica

Dear JJ:

Good question! Seek and ye shall find. A group inventory is a way for your home group to review itself and take stock at how well it's doing in fulfilling its primary purpose. Remember our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. Our literature further states that an A.A. group's purpose is to help alcoholics recover through A.A.'s suggested Twelve Steps of Recovery. Sometimes we think our group is doing just fine and that there are no problems. That's the perfect time to do a group inventory. The other time would be if you hear negativity about your group or you are struggling to keep your group open.

Now that we have clarified that, here is how it usually goes down:

- The group decides if it wants to do an inventory.
- A block of time and a meeting place are secured.
- An A.A. trusted servant with experience in facilitating a group inventory is invited to come in and facilitate the meeting. The trusted servant can be the Service Sponsor Chair of your county or area or a member who has knowledge on the traditions and

concepts. This is someone who is impartial and has no emotional stake in your group. It's like when you share with your sponsor and he/she asks how many sponsees you have, or are you going to your commitments (on time and on a regular basis).

- The group has a meeting that lasts for 1-2 hours and is facilitated by said trusted servant. The facilitator will give each member a chance to share and voice an opinion.
- After you have answered the questions the trusted servant will come back and read to you the answers to the questions. They will summarize what the group is doing well and what it could do better. That member may offer suggestions so that your group can be more effective in reaching out to fellow suffering alcoholics.

Some groups use the **Twelve Traditions Checklist** (http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/smf-131_en.pdf) as a guideline while others find the questions in the A.A. pamphlet **The A.A. Group...Where it all Begins** to be a useful guide.

I am glad you asked this question because it's an important and worthwhile endeavor. The next step for you would be to start talking to group members about how an inventory could help your group. There are plenty of trusted servants who have assisted many groups. They are willing to assist in the process and Queens General Service can help you find one.

Keep in touch with us and let us know how it goes!

In the meantime, hold onto your seat!

Got questions about service or how you can be better serve AA? Then Ask an Alky! Email us your questions and we'll answer them here in each newsletter!



District 301 – 12 Concepts Study Meeting

May 21, 2017 @ 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

June 18, 2017 @ 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Good Shepherd United Methodist Church (Basement)

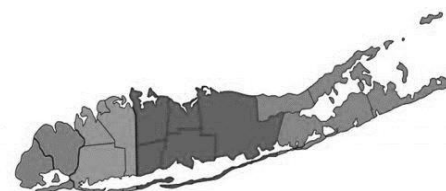
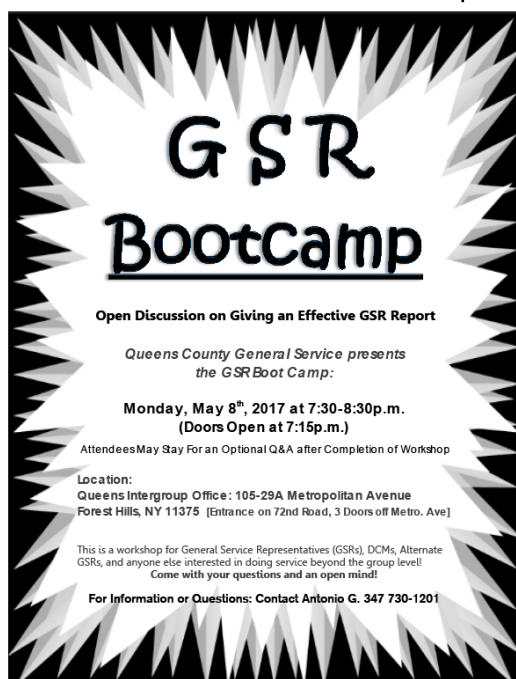
3044 Crescent Street (Entrance on 30th Rd), Astoria, NY 11102

This Concepts Workshop is presented by District 301

and is every 3rd Sunday of the month.

Come study the 12 Concepts with us. Each month, we have a different speaker come to share their experience, strength & hope on them. We would love to have you join us.

WWW.QCGSA.ORG



Long Island Spirituality Through Service (LISTS) Workshop Planning Meetings

Hosted By Queens County

Every 2nd Tuesday of the Month at 730 PM

March 14, April 11, May 9, June 13, July 11, August 8.

Location: Nassau Intergroup Office
361 Hempstead Turnpike
West Hempstead, NY 11552-1342

All are welcome!
Service is the Key

For information: email DCMC@qcgsga.org