

SOBER CONNECTIONS

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

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2018

www.qcgisa.org

Edition 1, Volume 6

FOR ALL (NON-AA) FUNCTIONS:

MEETINGS, MEETINGS, MEETINGS AND OTHER SOBER SUGGESTIONS FROM YOUR GSRs FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

- ❖ For all functions: Arrive late, Leave early. You will never be missed.
- ❖ Go to Share-a-thon meetings as often as possible
- ❖ A three prong disease: Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day
- ❖ Double up on meeting attendance.
- ❖ Plan (and stick to it) the amount of time you spend with active family.
- ❖ Stay connected. Do service.
- ❖ Call someone first. Get a sponsor!
- ❖ Attend Share-a-thons.
- ❖ DDGTM: Don't drink and go to meetings!
- ❖ We know the 3rd Tradition but what are the requirements to stay sober?
- ❖ The storm of the holidays is no comparison to the joyful storm of sobriety.
- ❖ With recovery every day is Thanksgiving. Enjoy the "present".
- ❖ Importance of sobriety in any attempt to rebuild our lives.
- ❖ Keep busy, sober parties, meetings, phone calls, readings, etc.
- ❖ Get involved in any kind of service. Keep busy.
- ❖ Don't drink and make lots of meeting.
- ❖ We can have fun at parties too but we don't have to drink!
- ❖ Don't drink. Trust.
- ❖ Pray and ask God to help keep you sober before you go to event!!!
- ❖ We are not a glum lot. Take the steps, elevator doesn't go to the top.
- ❖ Spend a lot of time at QIAA (Queens Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous) Share-a-thon, and spend New Year's Eve at Rockaway New Year's Party.
- ❖ One day at a time.

(Reprinted from November/December 2017 QCGSA Newsletter)

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
webmaster@qcgisa.org
and we will post it.

NEWSLETTER

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

Send an email to
newsletter@qcgisa.org
and we will publish it.

UPCOMING QC ASSEMBLY MEETINGS:

- February 25, 2019
- April 29, 2019
- June 24, 2019
- August 26, 2019
- October 28, 2019
- December 9, 2019

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

WWW.QCGSA.ORG

ASK AN ALKIE

The question and answer column for Queens County General Service.

Dear Alkie:

The holidays are here and I wanted to know how I could include A.A. on my list. Any suggestions?

Sincerely,
Endurin' in Elmhurst

Hi Endurin'!

Excellent question and great reminder to us all to be grateful and generous with what we have been given: sobriety, peace, and serenity.

My suggestions are:

- 1) Go to www.aa.org and click on the **Make a Contribution** button on the top of the screen. Here you can make a one-time donation or you can sign up for the A.A. Birthday/Anniversary contribution option. This latter option will allow you to make an automatic donation every year on your sober date.
- 2) Put a little extra money in the basket at your home group especially if your group supports the Intergroups and the General Service Office.

This is also a good time to remind our readers that Spirituality and Money do mix. Remember, our 7th Tradition states that A.A. must steer clear of outside contributions to maintain its autonomy and independence. The money necessary for A.A.'s survival has to come from individual A.A. members and groups. As Bill W. put it in 1957, "Our spiritual way of life is safe for future generations if, as a Society, we resist the temptation to receive money from the outside world. But this leaves us with a responsibility — one that every member ought to understand.

We cannot skimp when the treasurer of our group passes the hat. Our groups, our areas, and A.A. as a whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and their bills are paid." get out of me and stop thinking about me either, one of my major downfalls. And I can't meet new friends, make new connections, or welcome new comers or those coming back.

Now let me be clear – we are not asking for you to dump your savings account into A.A. coffers. Despite some criticism, we are NOT a cult. This merely means putting in a little extra in the basket and sending a bonus contribution every year on your anniversary. For me that means putting in anywhere from \$3-5 in the basket. I know I can certainly afford \$3-5 a meeting. I was a bar drinker and a dry goods connoisseur. I would think very little about spending \$8 on a cocktail or \$50 for some non-conference approved substances.

So, let's keep this thing going and not louse it up!

Happy Holidays and I hope to see you on the AA campus.

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- www.aa.org
 - www.aaseny.org
 - www.aagrapevine.org
 - www.icypaa.org
 - www.aaseny.org/link

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

SOBER HOLIDAYS "ARE" POSSIBLE
Simply Use Your Sober Tool Kit

I will never forget the very first time I attended a non-sober event after joining AA. I received an invitation to an airline reunion and ran it by my sponsor who strongly suggested that I not go. I argued that it was an industry event I could not miss and accepted the invitation against his wishes. You see, my disease would not allow me to fully comprehend the danger of not taking my sponsor's suggestion. I felt that at four months sober - a whopping 120 days without a drink - I was invincible and all I'd need would be my sponsor's number and a pocket full of quarters (1992 - no cell phones).

By the time I arrived, the soiree was in full swing and everyone I saw was either drunk or well on their way. The fully stocked bar appeared to be as long as the Great Wall of China and the musical playlist was amazing. My former airline roommate pulled me into the center of the room and announced my arrival as I hadn't seen most of these people since we'd flown together and partied around the globe years earlier.

In no time at all, I was being hugged, kissed and bombarded with barely intelligible conversation propelled by "whiskey-breath." It was a nightmare. I was extremely uncomfortable but my disease just loved this 1970's-style crew party.

"I'm on medication" is how I answered the never ending "have-a-drink" requests and after an hour of suffering I felt H.A.L.T. to the max:

- ❖ HUNGRY: Because I was afraid to eat and not sure which food did not contain alcohol,
- ❖ ANGRY: At the miserable feeling of realizing that I'd made a big mistake,
- ❖ LONELY: Because I was probably the only person in the room not drunk and
- ❖ TIRED: Of people insisting that I drink.

I finally announced that I was going for cigarettes (I'm a non-smoker), left the building, ran to a payphone and called my sponsor who calmly suggested I go to a meeting and share. I complied. Lesson learned.

When we come to Alcoholics Anonymous, we join men and women with a plethora of sober reference. We may feel better each day that we don't pick up a drink but our thinking takes quite a while to improve. To that end, it's suggested that we rely on a sponsor's assistance. Not ready to admit defeat I ignored the "people, places and things" suggestion as I wanted exhibit a power that I really did not possess. What I didn't realize at the time was that my unwillingness to take suggestions could have killed me.

The holidays, a time for family gatherings, parties and reunions can be stressful if not deadly for an alcoholic. Feelings of isolation and abandonment frequently pop up which can lead us back to a drink. Fortunately we also have many sober tools and events to help us survive these feelings starting with a sponsor's suggestions. If you have reservations about attending any non-sober event, share about it at meetings and above all, follow your sponsor's lead.

There are Queens County Share-A-Thons over Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years with back-to-back, round-the-clock meetings (and lots of great food!) The Queens Intergroup Hotline and your group's GSR can tell you about events and sober parties/dances in your district and county. We are fortunate to live in a city with nonstop 24/7 meetings in Manhattan so there are a lot of lifesaving options. One of the best ways to survive a holiday period is to intensify that which we do on a daily basis. Meetings, meetings and more meetings. Meetings are our medicine. Arrive early, help setup, stay late and help others by doing service.

Attend the "meeting-after-the-meeting" at the diner or other venue and fellowship with your (hopefully expanding) sober network. Make a commitment to stay sober at all cost and stay close to the rooms. Above all, ask your Higher Power for guidance and follow your sponsor's direction.

So is it possible to stay sober over the holidays? ABSOLUTELY! Simply reach for your sober "Tool Kit" as it's just an arm's length away.

Yours in Service,
 Antonio G. - Public Information Chair, Queens County

"From Betrayal and Drunken Fools to Merriment and Glee"

On the cusp of this commercialized, notoriously party-filled holiday season, we AAs must turn to our arsenal: our tools gathered in our fellowship and the hand of our Higher Power. Our former instincts are truly tested and bring our "isms" into high gear. We are flooded with preparations laced with red ribbons, gluttonous sit-downs, parties with family and friends, parties with colleagues, and finally, parties with whoever will have "just one more." Chasing that joy that our beautiful City promises cloaked in a red suit and indulgences strung together like kiosk pearls, only to flake apart at the sight of reality and January.

Shakespeare said it best, "with what I most enjoyed, contented least." After all the presents are nothing but balled up costly basketball shots into oversized, black lawn receptacles, after all the distant relatives take flight back to their respective lives, after all the celebrations are nothing but stale stains on our bedroom floor. No more shiny dresses, glittering lights or hearty ho-hos. It is January, and we are left with nothing but emptiness: pockets, homes and hearts. Resolutions dispelled with hangovers, despair and addiction -- the only friends left after stripping ourselves of the true meaning of this holiest of holidays.

Not this year for an alcoholic that spends the year in the muted grays of the basements and backrooms of Alcoholic Anonymous! Cue Miracles -- for through HP's grace and the fellowship of His minions, we have found another way to spiritualize and embrace the grandeur, hope and celebration-worthy meaning of these three glorious holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas and the New Year. We can dive full force into these celebrations today in God's love through a better communion and understanding of his love and our fellows. We are taught through prayer, meditation, and the acceptance of His will for us, that this year we can truly be thankful for our family, fellowship and the miracles He's graced us with throughout the year, unwrapped and unwarranted. We can join with our fellows in celebrating the birth of our leader, our light, our life's guide. We can experience true joy and love without a tree, presents, or drink. We can embrace the new year with hope and love. We are alcoholics that have found "the rooms" and all the love and peace it brings to us today. We can experience the joy in giving of ourselves to the next alcoholic and spread our message of true love and peace in service. We can be happy and grateful for our earthly family and see the joy in their hearts because we are sober. We have learned to truly appreciate life and all its flavor. We are freed from the weight of our addiction just for today, and we can pray for continued sobriety through active participation in our new family of hope and love -- Our AA family. We can experience the intrinsic euphoria of thanking and giving on Thanksgiving, rebirthing on Christmas and renewing on New Year's Day. We are AA and we want to stay.

Vivian M.

From the Shadows to the Forefront of Leadership

My time as Alternate DCMC has been one of the most interesting times in service for me in the Program. It taught me so much about how to be a true team player and how to support our DCMC, which gratefully, was JoAnn Mc. Through her patience, tolerance and understanding; we were able to face new challenges with laughter and love for the program and for Queens County. Being an Alternate "seems" like it would be a job that's just a seat-filler. I learned nothing could be farther from the truth. By working together with your primary, I found you both learn and grow, you bounce ideas off each other, you have questions, and you support each other, and just have fun experiencing service below the group level.

Here are some of the ways I've grown in my position: 1) Sitting in Committee meetings not understanding what someone is saying; 2) Always questioning if the idea rattling around inside my head is valid; 3) Getting up at 6 a.m. to pile into the car to go to a Spiritual Breakfast in Putnam County to represent the County and 4) Getting to see all of the new friends that service below the group level has enabled me to have.

To show you how "when I got busy - I got better" has played out in my life, just nine short years ago, I would be getting home at 6 a.m., hopeless and penniless, etc., etc., etc. Today, it is a very different story for me - and THAT is truly life-affirming. Now I sit at the precipice of a new change going from Alternate DCMC to DCMC-Elect and it's with great apprehension but also exuberance for the future.

In a couple of months, I'll stand before the body on the shoulder of Chairs of the past that have laid an impressive legacy of service before me who have inspired me to take the plunge myself into service below the group level forever, beneficially altering my program and my life. Additionally, I'm truly awe inspired by the trusted servants that have so graciously stepped up to the plate to help with the County this rotation. I'm very excited at the possibility of what these people's energies can bring to the County this rotation and excited to what we may possibly be able to accomplish.

Together, we can do what none of us can do alone. Let us remember what Bill said in Tradition One, "The unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our Society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. We stay whole, or A.A. dies. Without unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat; our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God." With YOUR help - we CAN do this! God Bless! Thanks to the program, and great sponsorship (Recovery and Service).

Frank G.

Alt DCMC/DCMC-Elect, Queens County

From County to Area: A Reflection

With the end of the rotation nearing, I was asked to reflect on my position as DCMC for Queens County General Service over these past two years and the transition to my new position as SENY Area 49 Treasurer which starts January 1st.

To describe the experiences in one word; I would use Humbling. It was a truly humbling experience to be given the opportunity to lead our County in service to our groups. The officers and committee chairs who stood during this rotation were a bunch of valuable people that wanted to make a difference. We wanted to come up with ways to not only carry our precious message to others but to also do it in creative and entertaining ways, which I believe made the workshops and events enjoyable to all who attended. I feel that it has helped me to understand rather than to be understood, to listen rather than to be heard, and to have faith in others rather than worry. I found service to others to be the best medicine for this alcoholic. I tell my disease "No Not Today" and I keep it moving.

Moving forward to my next trusted servant position as Treasurer of SENY Area 49 Panel 69 is very exciting and scary for me. I would be lying if I claimed it wasn't. This will be my first position in SENY down the service ladder from County to the Area. Service to my homegroup, service to our Intergroup, service to our county and now service to our area have contributed to my sobriety, spirituality and serenity in countless ways. Am I practicing the Traditions? I have moved from "me and my" to "our" in the service structure and that is a huge observation for me. I expect a challenge and tell myself "Don't Panic", because I always remember there is always help if I need it and am willing to ask. The "Joy of Service" I experienced by giving back what was so freely given me is Priceless. What can I say to someone who shies away from service below the group level? I tell them "You just don't know what you are missing".

JoAnn Mc.
DCMC, Queens County

Service Sponsorship

I started doing service below the group within my first six months of sobriety. Most of my service has been along the line of General Service Structure including intergroup. My love for service was solidified by my attendance to my first SENY convention which opened my eyes to the world of AA. I spoke with my sponsor and network and was gently nudged in the right direction. These directions and suggestions that were given to me have fully enhanced my service participation and sobriety.

My most recent service responsibility as Queens County Service Sponsorship Chair was truly fulfilling. I wanted to provide help to the GSRs coming in because I knew the issues and hurdles I faced as a new GSR. I also wanted to provide support to them. In this commitment, I learned how to remove myself from the explanation and refer to the literature in speaking with new people in service. I was able to draw from my past service experiences to help and provide proper information. My usual line to people new to service is "I don't have all the answers, but I will help any way I can or point you in the right direction".

The service sponsorship chair is to help new people to service find a service sponsor and to help answer questions from new GSR or their alternate. I was also responsible for doing the orientation for these servants, provide workshops (for e.g., the GSR Boot Camps) to help acclimate them to the general service world.

In my service responsibility, I was able to find most of the new GSRs a service sponsor; at a minimum, give them an idea of what is a service sponsor; able to assist the new trusted servants in acclimating to the

various levels in GSO and SENY; provide the basics information that they will need to get started and the list of various meetings that they need to attend. This was truly fulfilling and my hope is I helped someone do their responsibilities for their group a little better.

Saadi H.
Service Sponsorship Chair, Queens County

Out With the Old and In With the New??? We think not!!

As the calendar flips to 2019, a new service rotation will begin in SENY and in Queens County. With the new rotation comes new officers and new committee chairs. Not the least of which is the Queens County DCMC.

You may have noticed that at the end of their rotation, the SENY Delegate and the Queens County DCMC are suggested to stay away from the meetings of the body that they have just served for 6 months. Some may ask "why is this so? Couldn't pulling that experience away hurt the body?" We cannot find mention of this policy in any service handbook or service manual. When asking past delegates, SENY Officers and County Officers what the reason for this unofficial policy is, the answer that I have heard most is that it is to let the new body develop its own "personality". The new leaders can spread their wings and fly. Fortunately if any help is needed the past officers are only a phone call away. The 36 principles that help to guide our program and service structure do not change. As long as the leaders of our service bodies embrace and utilize these principles, we will be just fine.

Mike H.
Past DCMC, Queens County

Expand your Horizons! Grow Spiritually! Humility in Service! How Can I be of Service?!

These are the comments given to me by Elder Statesmen, Sponsor and Service Sponsor. I was blessed with people in my life who were Trusted Servants of AA not Trusted Bullies. Their principles were based on helping AA, not making a reputation for themselves. I've worn many hats in AA and was taught that all these "titles" meant were who I was serving at that particular time. I didn't get an extra vote, or a seat up front. As Accessibility/Special Needs Chair my responsibility was to serve those with Special Needs. As Public Information Chair, it was my responsibility to be sure the public was well informed as to what Alcoholics Anonymous was all about. After serving at the Group, County and Area Level, I wasn't sure what was next. I attended the Queens County General Service Assembly elections and no one stepped up when the Treasurer Position was announced. I had already served as GSR, Special Needs chair, Literature chair, DCM, ALT DCMC and DCMC. I waited patiently and finally raised my hand and made myself available. For some people who don't understand Love and Service, they thought it was a step down after serving as a SENY Chair for three different committees, but my Service Sponsor's word rang through me! You grow spiritually by taking on something you haven't done before. When I was asked to chair the SENY Convention a few years back I turned to my Service Sponsor and said what should I do? He calmly said, 'if you haven't done it before, then do it!' So when I took on the Treasurer position I was able to look at it not as a step down but as a NEW challenge. I've never worked excel spreadsheets before, so I got to learn something new. Humility in Service. I learned to ask for help, instead of trying to go it alone. When I was asked to do Public Information for SENY, which I've never done before, I asked the previous chair a bunch of questions as well as being in constant contact with the PI desk at the General Service office.

So as QCGSA Treasurer, I not only learned the basics for spreadsheets and formulas, I was also able to apply them in my personal finances. It was a thrill, an Honor and a joy serving as Treasurer. I've been serving Alcoholic Anonymous for the past 22 years at different levels, many of those years before retirement, LOL. I say that because I don't want the new guy/gal to think they have to wait 30-40 years to retire before they do service. I started out like many of us, making coffee. I'm getting old and tired, with a few disabilities that are making it difficult. Am I done yet? I have a service sponsor who I've been having conversations with and God who always has the final say.

Together We Can

Ben Lavorino – Treasurer, Queens County General Service Assembly

7th Tradition Addresses

Queens County General Service Assembly (QCGSA) P.O. Box 670533 Flushing, N.Y. 11367	General Service Office (GSO) Box 459 Grand Central Station New York, N.Y. 10163	Area 49 of AA (South Eastern New York -SENY) PO Box 571 New York, N.Y. 10116	Queens Intergroup (QIAA) P.O. Box 754088 Forest Hills Station Forest Hills, N.Y. 11375- 9088	New York Intergroup 307 Seventh Avenue Suite 201 New York, N.Y. 10001
<p>***QUEENS SHARE A DAY (QSAD) Same address. Please be sure to mark envelope and check for QSAD***</p>				



Man in a hot air balloon realizes he is lost. He lowers his altitude and spots a man fishing from a boat below. He shouts to him, "Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am."

The man consults his portable GPS and replies, "You're in a hot air balloon, approximately 30 feet above a ground elevation of 2,346 feet above sea level. You are at 31 degrees, 14.97 minutes north latitude and 100 degrees, 49.09 minutes west longitude."

He rolls his eyes and says, "You must be a Sponsor!"

"I am," replies the man. "How did you know?"

"Well," answers the balloonist, "everything you tell me is technically correct, but I have no idea what to do with your information, and I'm still lost. Frankly, you're not much help to me." The man smiles and responds, "You must be a Sponsee."

"I am, replies the balloonist. "How did you know?"

"Well," says the man, "You don't know where you are or where you're going. You've risen to where you are due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise that you have no idea how to keep, and now you expect me to solve your problem. You're in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but, somehow, now it's my fault."



QUEENS INTERGROUP

Happy Holidays!

SHARE-A-THON IN SPRINGFIELD GARDENS

Meeting Place:

"Fresh Way To Start A Day"
Christ The King Center
 145-02 Farmers Blvd,
 (off South Conduit & Farmers Blvd)
 (Across the Street from the 2 Churches)

"IT'S YOUR INTERGROUP, PLEASE SUPPORT IT!"

Lottery Planning Meeting
 Saturday, December 8th 2018
 at
 Christ The King Center
 11AM SHARP

SHARE-A-THON

DATES:
 Sunday,
 December 23rd, 2018
 thru
 Tuesday,
 January 1st, 2019

(First Mtg begins 12/23/18
 @ 6PM- Last Mtg ends
 1/1/19 @ 8PM)

*Share-A-Thon will run around
 the Clock. AA Meetings every
 Hour on the Hour!*

*For More Information
 contact:*

Burr L. @
 2018shareathons@gmail.com

*Please Send Individual or
 Group Donations to:*

QLAA, P.O. Box 754088
 Forest Hills, NY 11375
 C/O
 QLAA Holiday Share-A-Thons



The 34th Annual

Queens Share-A-Day

"Our Big Book – 80 Years, 71 Languages"

Saturday, February 2nd, 2019

From 8:30 To 3:30 pm

Tri-Community High School / JHS 231

145-00 Springfield Blvd, Springfield Gardens NY 11413



The Agenda Includes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of meetings (Steps, Traditions, Topics etc.) Concepts with Q & A Old Timers Meeting Archives Fellowship with Friends 	<p>AA SPEAKERS NEEDED FOR MEETINGS (SUGGESTED 1 YEAR OF SOBRIETY)</p> <p>SPEAKERS FOR OLD TIMERS MEETING (25+ YEARS SOBRIETY)</p>

Anonyme
Alkoholiker

Meetings in Spanish
 Day Care available
 ASL Translation
 AI Anon & NYCPAA Meetings
 Breakfast and Lunch will be served

NHỮNG NGƯỜI
NGHIỆN RƯỢU
ÁN DANH

Individual and Group contributions are being accepted to support this event
 Please mail contributions to
 Queens County Share-A-Day
 PO Box 670533
 Flushing NY 11367-0533

Visit www.qcgsa.org and www.aaseny.org for more information

2018 QCGSA OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

DCMC	Jo Ann Mc.	dcmc@qcgsga.org
Alt. DCMC	Frank G.	fgrove036@gmail.com
Treasurer	Ben L.	treasurerqcgsga@gmail.com
Registrar	Adina	registrar.qcgsga@yahoo.com
Secretary	Francine S.	fransd646@gmail.com
Archives	Burt L.	blanca5118@aol.com
Corrections	Eric V.	ericvoronoff@icloud.com
CPC	Wes Y.	queenscountycpc@gmail.com
Grapevine	Johnny D.	johnnydeedamato@gmail.com
Literature	Debbie L.	dlucey715@gmail.com
Newsletter	Malini M.	msmqaa@gmail.com
Public Information	Antonio G.	queenscountypi@gmail.com
Service Sponsorship	Saadi H.	saadi31@gmail.com
Website	Gerry B.	gerald.bollinger@verizon.net
QSAD	Raj B.	712sag69@gmail.com



12 CONCEPTS & 301/318 DISTRICT MEETING

EVERY 3RD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH - 2:30PM TO 3:30PM

CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD 30-44 CRESCENT STREET, BSMT

Open To All!!!

Learn About The 12 Concepts!!!

It's Only an Hour!

Be Part Of Something Greater

GSR's / Alternates District Service Positions Available

I AM RESPONSIBLE...

WHEN ANYONE, ANYWHERE, REACHES OUT FOR HELP, I WANT THE HAND OF AA TO BE THERE. AND FOR THAT, I AM RESPONSIBLE.

SAVE THE DATE

NERAASA 2019

28th Annual Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly

February 22 – 24, 2019

Hosted by Area 29 Maryland



Marriott Hunt Valley Inn

Hunt Valley, MD

For more information: www.neraasa.org

THE 2019 CONVENTION REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

Save the date.

51st SENY Convention
“Our Big Book 80 Years 71 Languages”



March 22-24, 2019

Westchester Marriott Hotel

670 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, NY 10591

Speaker Meetings • Workshops & Panels • Alkathon • Banquet • Archives
 Literature & Service Tables • AA Videos • Spanish Translation
 Entertainment • Al-Anon • Much More

Get involved. Upcoming Convention Planning Committee meetings are September 23 & October 28, 2018. (At NY Intergroup, 307 Seventh Avenue, Room 201, NYC 10001.) Submit logo artwork for our theme.

convention@aaeny.org



THE 2019 CONVENTION REGISTRATION IS OPEN!