

# SOBER CONNECTIONS

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

## Virtual Share-a-Day Makes History. Draws a Crowd

Like everything else this year, the Queens 2020 Share-a-Day couldn't be held physically. When the news was announced, the committee gathered to discuss: "So—do we go ahead and hold it on Zoom, or postpone it till next year?"

Despite not knowing how it would be received or attended, the committee gave a resounding yes to going ahead. So, on Oct. 24, 2020, Queens County saw its first virtual Share-a-Day, with the theme "2020: A Clear Vision for You."

Chair Maura Z led the committee, assisted by Maryanne L and Joe R (with a whole cadre of room hosts) on tech detail, Jan A and Patty H co-chairing the programming committee, and other dedicated AA servants committed to making sure the event had no glitches. Almost everyone who'd originally signed up to speak in person was ready and willing to shift gears to a virtual platform.

After an opening session with keynote talks by Maura Z and Queens County DCMC Frank G, attendees chose from four separate tracks, each with their own Zoom room:

- "Living Sober in the Solution"
- "Guided by the 36 Principles"
- "Service 101: Living a Useful Life"
- "What's Happening in Queens County?"

Individual talks were held on such topics as "Carrying the Message," "The Road to Happy Destiny," "GSRs Connecting Groups to AA," "Nuestra Gran Responsabilidad," "Queens County: What We Do," "Al-Anon: Detachment," "The Golden Doorknob" (a panel of various county service reps), and many more.

Three AAs known in Queens County for their many years of service, Ben L, Diane S, and Roslyn T, delivered powerful personal stories on the Longtimers Panel. Topping off the event was a fun virtual sobriety countdown led by our incoming Queens County DCMC, Bert L. Unlike live countdowns, everyone got the chance to individually introduce themselves and appear on screen as their number of years sober was called. This gave it a very personal feel and was a truly memorable ending. Attendance for the day was close to 100 people, so it certainly felt like a success.

"I am so grateful for the fabulous experience of serving with AA members who shared their time, generosity, and AA experience. I learned so much, all the while having tons of fun. I look forward to my next opportunity to serve," Maura said, "and especially to all the sober fellows I will meet." She also thanked the many AA groups who contributed. Because the cost was much lower on a virtual platform, we have seed money for next year. We are all hoping and praying it'll be a live Share-a-Day in 2021. But now we have the experience on how to run one virtually!

Thank you to all who helped plan and those who spoke, contributed, or attended.

Yours in service,

Jan A., co-chair, programming for 2020 Queens Share-a-Day

## QUEENS COUNTY GENERAL SERVICE CALENDAR

Have a service or non-service AA-related event that you would like added to the calendar?

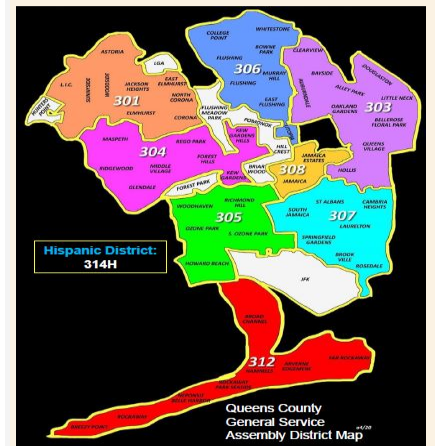
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## NEWSLETTER

Would you like to submit a story to the newsletter?

Send an email to  
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## Queens County District Map



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Service**  
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**Flushing, NY**  
**11367-0533**

**WWW.QCGSA.ORG**



## A Very New Year

**At four months sober, a New Year's Eve party seemed daunting. But she took her sponsor's suggestion and got a big surprise**

When I was just four months sober, an old friend came to town for the holidays. She invited me to spend New Year's Eve with her at a party her relatives were throwing.

My friend was highly regarded in the career we had both chosen. At that time, I was experiencing some difficulty in life, getting sober and starting over after losing both my job and the dream house I had built with my husband. I felt very unsuccessful compared to my friend. Frankly, I wasn't thrilled to see her because I would have to confess that things in my life had gotten so bad that I had actually "joined the program." Couple that with my lifelong social anxiety (which I usually dealt with by drinking). Spending several hours at a New Year's Eve party seemed like a very daunting prospect. Despite all this, I did long to spend time with my old friend.

I called my sponsor with my concerns and she reminded me that I needn't avoid going to a place where there would be alcohol so long as I had a legitimate reason for being there. The way to get through the evening, she said, was to look for ways to be helpful. So, I took some deep breaths and headed to the party.

I arrived at a picture-perfect scene: family and friends gathered around food—and drink—in a cozy home. I politely declined the first of many drink offers and found a place to sit. I joined in the conversation as best as I could, and I got up to help in the kitchen or entertain the kids whenever I felt nervous. Things were going well, but my friend started to look at me funny as I continued declining drink offers.

Eventually, guests began to disperse and my friend and I had the chance to sit together and talk. She asked me what was up: why wasn't I drinking on New Year's Eve? I decided, since there was really was no way around the issue, that I would level with her. I said that I had stopped drinking about four months earlier when I joined AA.

I don't know what I expected, but I was pleasantly surprised by her reaction. She put down her own drink, gave me a big hug and told me how impressed she was with my decision. Not only that, she confided that her husband had begun attending AA meetings as well—something none of her other friends knew about.

She and I spent the rest of New Year's Eve sitting next to the fireplace chatting about life, the challenges of problem drinking and the benefits of sobriety. I felt supported by my old friend, and she appreciated being able to talk freely about what was really going on in her seemingly perfect life.

I'm so glad I decided to face my fears and attend the party that night. I am also grateful to AA for giving me the tools I needed to get through the evening without drinking and to strengthen a good friendship in a way that I never even imagined possible

MARY P. | DULUTH, MINN

**AAGRAPEVINE**

The International Journal of Alcoholism Anonymous

DECEMBER 2020 | REMOTE COMMUNITIES + SOBER HOLIDAYS



# Carrying the Message, not the Mess

This alcoholic had to be taught the difference between the message and the mess. This used to be referred to as two stepping, Step One and Step Twelve. This never works well. Someone new, after hearing the same mess several times, becomes repulsed not attracted.

When I attended my first meeting an immediate result was that my episodes/seizures that I had experienced for months ceased. In hind sight I know this was because I walked away from that meeting with a kernel of hope that I did not have to drink anymore and stopped wanting to die. Yet at the time it was just amazing! A close friend followed me into the program three days later as a result. I felt no gratitude at that time, only selfishness and anger. This pretty much describes my first six months in A.A. As a result I carried the mess, always sharing about the issues I faced, being misunderstood; always angry; and bitter because nothing had changed except I was not drinking.

Around that time or perhaps before, the members of my group and sponsor had been gently and less than gently asking what I was going to do about my issues. It was finally suggested rather strongly I might want to work the steps. Although I had real issues with Step Three I did do an honest Fourth Step and afterwards a Fifth Step. The Fourth Step took several months. While I could easily identify the bad stuff about me I could not identify anything good. As a result my sponsor asked me if I was still doing those things. I had to start over owning some good stuff and why these changes had occurred.

At the end of my Fifth Step two things became apparent. One; I was not unique or evil, just another drunk. Two; to be effective in A.A. I would need to share my experiences and talk about how the program was enabling me to change my behaviors, actions, and remain sober. In other words I had to begin to care about others more than myself.

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Once I started practicing Step Ten daily I found that doing it in my head or on paper was not real effective. Only when telling another alcoholic or sharing with your group does it work for me. I find that this keeps my sharing more current, yet the requirement for honesty (my actions or thinking), and what I am doing about it remain the same. This always entails Steps Eight and Nine. This is carrying the message of how the program works in my sobriety and hopefully how it can work in others lives also.

Carrying the message keeps self and character defects in check. Mine did not go away or become magically healed after the Fourth Step. Only the program keeps them in check. The formula of the Tenth Step and telling on myself to other alcoholics has allowed me to share about my faults and the program's solutions honestly. Hopefully allowing me to effectively carry the message and work with others.

Grateful for another daily reprieve,  
Bill F.  
12/24/1980



## WORD SEARCH

S H A V E A W O N F Y D P U S  
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S B E E R H O U L E I M A S O  
I E D N A Y N C C A M R C E I  
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A C T T I R O P C A O S F I D  
K B I F E C Y I Z I N N M S A  
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H S Z H A B Q L Q J D H A D L  
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AWAKENING  
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FOUNDATION  
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PEACEOFMIND  
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PRINCIPLES  
SPIRITUAL  
TOLERANCE  
TRADITIONS  
TRANSFORMED  
UNSELFISHNESS

# Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous



Holiday parties without liquid spirits may still seem a dreary prospect to new A.A.s. But many of us have enjoyed the happiest holidays of our lives sober — an idea we would never have dreamed of, wanted, or believed possible when drinking. Here are some tips for having an all-round ball without a drop of alcohol.



**1** *Line up extra A.A. activities for the holiday season. Arrange to take newcomers to meetings, answer the phones at a clubhouse or central office, speak, help with dishes, or visit the alcoholic ward at a hospital.*



**5** *Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about. Remember how clever you were at excuses when drinking? Now put the talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.*



**9** *Don't sit around brooding. Catch up on those books, museums, walks, and letters.*



**2** *Be host to A.A. friends, especially newcomers. If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to a diner and spring for the coffee.*



**6** *If you have to go to a drinking party and can't take an A.A. with you, keep some candy handy.*



**10** *Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations. Remember — "one day at a time."*



**3** *Keep your A.A. telephone list with you all the time. If a drinking urge or panic comes — postpone everything else until you've called an A.A.*



**7** *Don't think you have to stay late. Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep.*



**11** *Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy. Maybe you cannot give material gifts — but this year, you can give love.*



**4** *Find out about the special holiday parties, meetings, or other celebrations given by groups in your area, and go. If you're timid, take someone newer than you are.*



**8** *Worship in your own way.*



**12** *"Having had a . . ." No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.*



## **The Twelve Steps to a Life Worth Living – by Joseph Ganci, Jr.**

On the First Step to a life worth living my Higher Power gave to me: the gift of desperation and a life of unmanageability.

On the Second Step to a life worth living my Higher Power gave to me: a belief that there was something much bigger than me, and the hope of being set free.

On the Third Step to a life worth living my Higher Power gave to me: That the Bigger than me could set me free if I could and would agree wholeheartedly.

On the Fourth Step to a life worth living my Higher Power gave to me: courage and a writing pen and spoke about notes and the loss of friends, family and morality, and this would give me new eyes to see what was my part in a stock taking bottom line accountability.

On the Fifth Step to a life worth living my Higher Power gave to me: a chance to speak of my worst and my best and get it off my chest with another caring being who could introduce me to God for the very first time.

On the Sixth Step to a life worth living my Higher Power gave to me: the strength to let go of all things that were spiritually blocking me.

On the Seventh Step to a life worth living my Higher Power gave to me: a sense of time that was no longer mine, and said to overcome I have to let go and learn about trust, and if I was to grow this was a must.

On the Eighth Step to a life worth living my Higher Power gave to me: a list of all those who had felt my sting and be willing to patch the scratch, fill the gouge and cross the fiery bridge with humility and an olive branch.

On the Ninth Step to a life worth living my Higher Power gave to me: seven league boots to travel to ends of all creation and a hat to hold when asking for the forgiveness of gold, and to make whole what once was broken, to give back what was stolen, recant the vicious lie whatever the cost, and do no further damage to another man's heart.

On the Tenth Step to a life worth living my Higher Power gave to me the mirror of accountability, the task was to examine all my actions for it was journey with many distractions and when off course set it right immediately no matter how big the bite, and God would see to the rest, and it was after all for my very best if done each and every night.

On the Eleventh Step to a life worth living my Higher Power gave to me a personal conversation with God to speak the words of gratitude for the rescue from a hopeless state, and listen for thoughtful instruction for course corrections to my spiritual compass and examine every mistake.

On the Twelfth Step to a life worth living my Higher Power gave to me: the spirit of the universe now alive and growing in me. With the agreement that if I stay the narrow way, I would find my greatest joy in work or at play, for when I am in the service to my fellow beings, I am but in the service of my God. When sharing the living gift of recovery we fill the measure of our creation and find joy therein. For love and tolerance is our code and service to our fellow beings we have found to be the lightest load.

From: <https://newlifehouse.com/12-step-poem-alcoholics-anonymous/>



**QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, EVENTS, NOTES?  
EMAIL THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR (MARTIN O'K)**

**AT**

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# Queens County General Service Election Assembly

Congratulations to the newly elected trusted servants to serve Queens County (2021-2022).

DCMC – Bert L.

Alt-DCMC – Adina C.

Treasurer – Maura Z.

Registrar – Jan A.

Secretary – Cheryl R.



## 2020 QCGSA OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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**For Queens County**  
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