

DELEGATE / delegate@aageorgia.org

Confidential for members
May/June 2020
Volume 56, Numbers 5-6

It's Times Like These

By Debi K.

Area 16 Delegate

"Adversity truly introduces us to ourselves. But we need never deal with our adversities alone as long as we can find another alcoholic in a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous (page 536)."

I have been following the developments of the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and considering the impact it will have on recovering alcoholics as well as the service entities of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are now faced with a global pandemic that has affected our ability to attend face-to-face AA meetings but also has presented many of us with other pressures. This is not a situation any of us could have expected.

To support a program built around

the simple idea of two alcoholics sharing their experience, strength, and hope; and for a Fellowship framed by hugs, hand-holding, tight rows of folding chairs, meeting greeters, and sharing from the heart, what we have done to face the new reality of COVID-19 isolation is truly remarkable!

In a matter of days, groups from all over the State of Georgia have started virtual AA meetings using a variety of platforms. These meetings were initially announced through social media and simple word of mouth. They are now posted on our Area 16 website, Intergroup websites, and the Meeting Guide app. I have witnessed newcomers attending these virtual meetings. I have attended virtual meetings from all over the country with as many as 100 attendees. We are still carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous and supporting

one another as we wrestle with the impact of this surreal situation.

If you have closed your face-to-face meeting and have set up a virtual meeting, please inform the GSSA office and your intergroup. We want the newcomer to be able to find us.

It has been through this same sharing of information that we have learned of various ways to uphold our AA Traditions of anonymity and self-support as groups work through the

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Important May Assembly Update

The GSSA Office Committee met virtually on April 14th and made the decision to cancel the physical meeting of the Georgia State Service Assembly scheduled for May 15th -17th. We will be contacting DCMs to notify GSRs of an abbreviated virtual GSSA Business meeting for Sunday, May 17th. This decision was not made lightly.

However, in consideration of the current state of emergency in Georgia due to the COVID19 virus, we felt it was prudent to put the health and safety of our members first.

We will be accepting nominations from the GSRs for Area Secretary and Treasurer as well as Regional Trustee and Trustee at-large at the virtual meeting. Please prepare your service resumes for publication in the next *Georgia Message*.

ALTERNATE DELEGATE / alt_delegate@aageorgia.org

Did You Know?

By Jim T.

Area 16 Alternate

Firstly, I hope this edition of the Georgia Message of AA finds everyone safe, sober, and healthy. The month of March is one to go down in history for us. We have seen cancellations of group meetings, a Cluster Forum, the Pre-Conference meeting, an Area Workshop, the 70th General Service Conference, and the 2020 International Convention in response to the coronavirus. And that's just so far. As disruptive as this pandemic may be, I have been in awe of the resilience, courage, and creativity of our groups and members to not only keep Alcoholics Anonymous in Georgia alive, but to keep it moving forward throughout this crisis.

I was fortunate to be asked to make

a presentation at Unity Weekend in Lawrenceville during the last weekend in February. My assigned topic was "Attracting and Retaining Those in Need of Recovery". I began my research for the presentation in the AA literature and on the aa.org website. Some fascinating information came to light as I began to look into our past and I would like to share some of that with you here.

Estimated worldwide AA individual membership data revealed some interesting trends: AA membership from 1935 to 1965 grew slowly from 2 to 232,105 members (an average increase of 7,737 new members per year).

A rapid period of growth in our Fellowship occurred from 1970 to 1990: AA went from 311,450 to 2,047,469 members (an average increase of 86,800 per year) and

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THE GEORGIA MESSAGE OF AA

TREASURER / treasurer@aageorgia.org

Time for Creativity By Christie G. Area 16 Treasurer

We are in interesting times for Area 16. We currently have a deficit of -6,466.06. But our Group Contributions are equal to last year. I expect this to equal out soon. It has been nice not having to go into our prudent reserve, but we are monitoring the situation.

I am aware of the current situation where most of our groups are not meeting or they are meeting online. This is where we as members have to be creative in our giving. We can give to GSSA on our Birthday or Anniversary online at aageorgia.org. We could volunteer to make our group's contribution, if it does not have a debit card.

The groups that are meeting online and passing the "virtual" Seventh Tradition basket, should have a group conscience and remember all services are still going on. Your self-support is what makes AA services work.

When making the decision on how much to give, think about the upside-down triangle. First the group. Your expenses may now include Zoom, Venmo, and other electronic platforms that your group may be using. District/Zone — Zoom and other electronic platforms as well. Area — Conference call networks, Zoom, and other platforms as well. GSO — Conference platforms. Area and GSO are still paying their staff as well.

Through all of this I believe this will be helpful in the long run. We will learn about ways to collect money when people forget their dollar, or if there is not enough change in the basket.

This is the time were members should be wanting to be informed about their group's financial situation. Your group Treasurer should have a report ready, including all documentation, at all scheduled group business meetings.

SECRETARY / secretary@aageorgia.org

Recovery, Unity, and Service By Tracy M. Area 16 Secretary

As I sit on my back porch today, I am so grateful to be a part of Alcoholics Anonymous. I know that Recovery, Unity, and Service have never been more important than they are today. I believe that the principles that we have in our Three Legacies work for us in every part of life, whether it is in a worldwide pandemic or carrying the message to the next suffering alcoholic.

Recovery tells me that I am powerless. Unity reminds me that we pull together and lean on each other. Service asks the question: How can I be of help? While I may be powerless over what is going on in the world today, it has been my experience that my Higher Power can restore sanity in the most chaotic circumstances.

Our Steps, the Traditions, and our Concepts all depend on a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.

The unity of our groups as they pull together and find creative ways to still have meetings, whether online or in small numbers where possible in order to keep reaching out and stay connected. We

have the comfort of knowing that we are in this together, and we will still be together after this storm passes.

Service is the natural result of our gratitude to be able to be helpful where we are needed today. I am amazed at how Alcoholics Anonymous has adapted to continue on at all levels of service. We have a General Service Office that has been right in the middle of the worst of the pandemic and yet it has continued to find a way to carry on and move forward.

I look forward to seeing all of you when we can be together again at our home groups, Districts, and Assembly. I hope I never take for granted being able to hold hands and pray or greet folks with a hug again.

I want to remind everyone to please keep your group information updated by going to our Area website, aageorgia.org, and making any meeting changes you have. Tamera is working very diligently to keep our information accurate. You can contact me at Secretary@aageorgia.org. You can contact Tamera at gssa@aageorgia.org

SELF-SUPPORT

GROUP CONTRIBUTION PLANS TO AA SERVICE ENTITIES

"To help support AA's essential services, the General Service Conference

suggests that individual groups, *through an informed group conscience*, adopt a specific contribution plan tailored to meet the group's financial situation."- *Self-Support: Where Money & Spirituality Mix*

Self-support begins with each of us as part of a group. After group expenses are paid, remaining contributions should be disbursed to cover the expenses of our service entities so others can discover the miracles of AA.

Below are sample distribution plans. The group conscience should be informed on the financial needs of each of the service entities when making their distribution decisions as those needs change over time.

Group Conscience Decision

State Office, Macon:	_____%
District/Zone:	_____%
Central Office:	_____%
Pre-Paid Convention:	_____%
GSO:	_____%
Total:	<u>100</u> %

Sample Distribution A B

State Office, Macon:	50%	30%
Central Office:	-	35%
District/Zone:	10%	5%
Pre-Paid Convention:	10%	10%
GSO:	30%	20%

Mailing Addresses:

GSSA (State Office) & Prepaid Convention
P.O. Box 7325
Macon, GA 31209

GSO (General Service Office)
P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

*If you need additional information,
please call 478-745-2588*

How You Can Help

Whitney S., Chair
Mark J., Co-Chair
Area 16 Grapevine Committee

NEWS and UPDATES:

EVERYONE now has FREE access to most of the 2020 Grapevine and La Viña issues. This is the perfect time to check out what you may have been missing. April's issue is titled, *Glad You Made It: AA's share warm, lovely stories about their home groups.*

BECOME A GRAPEVINE REP AND GET INVOLVED

Does your group or District have a Grapevine Rep? Are you looking for the most fun way to be of service? As the link between the Grapevine, your group, and/or your District, you get to share the voice of every AA member who writes an article or joke or submits a caption. You also get to put on Grape-A-Thons. A Grape-A-Thon is a workshop that is focused on a topic from one of the Grapevine books. Ask your home group or GSR what you can do to be more involved.

CARRY THE MESSAGE PROJECT:

The Carry the Message Project offers ways to sponsor Grapevine subscriptions for alcoholics in need. Your help is much

appreciated! Individual members, groups, Areas, or Districts can sponsor a subscription for anonymous alcoholics in need by purchasing print subscriptions and forwarding the gift certificate email to nherron@aageorgia.org for redemption.

DID YOU HEAR?

Grapevine has a YouTube Channel? Check it out and subscribe:
www.youtube.com/aageorgia

Many of the stories have also been created as audiofiles. Get an online account, and listen to experience, strength, and hope while you cook, exercise, or get settled for bed.

2020 STORY SUBMISSIONS TOPICS AND DEADLINES. Money (Financial Insecurity) Due April 15th; Remote Communities & Holidays Due June 15th

THANK YOU District 8 hosted an amazing and well-attended Grape-A-Thon on Exploring Emotional Sobriety. Districts 16C and 16D hosted Unity Weekend. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your events and for enriching our sobriety.

Carrying the Message

By Micah G., Chair
William B., Co-Chair
Area 16 Public Information/Cooperation With the Professional Community Committee

I would like to thank all of our past and new PI/CPC Representatives at the Group and District levels and those District chairs who have formed a committee of volunteers to assist in carrying the message to local DUI schools, hospital ER's and Departments of Social Services at colleges in their District by bringing them AA pamphlets and meeting schedules.

COVID-19 has changed life as we have known it in most of the country. During these changing times, we want to practice safety and be responsible by reaching out to other members by phone who might not be able to

participate in Zoom meetings.

Micah G., our PI/CPC chair, made a video on how groups can update their meeting schedule on the Area 16 website and how to participate in Zoom meetings. This was sent to all DCM's. You can email any concerns or questions to picpc@aageorgia.org.

PI/CPC will continue to focus on AA's Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service with literature and emails, and by phone.

This can also be a time when PI/CPC Representatives review GSO's website at aa.org and review the Public Service Announcements (PSA) for radio and TV and become familiar with PI/CPC pamphlets and literature.

Preparing for When We Can Help Again

By Richard R., Chair
Karen S., Co-Chair
Area 16 Treatment / Accessibilities Committee

Currently, we are at a standstill. The treatment facilities are not allowing anyone to bring a meeting to their facilities due to the coronavirus. They are holding meetings in-house on their own. That being said, now is a good time to review some past suggestions on how to get started carrying the AA message into a treatment facility.

1. Attend District/Zone meetings and talk with your District Treatment Rep. He or she can share how they got started.
2. The Treatment Workbook is a good source of information on how to approach a program director, along with many other subjects.
3. Volunteer to go with one of the committee members to a facility.
4. We have a workshop at 11 a.m. on Saturday at Assembly.
5. Review AA Guidelines (Treatment Facilities Committees, MG14).
6. Review AA Guidelines (Accessibilities for all Alcoholics, MG16). This publication has information about carrying the message of AA to the deaf or hard of hearing, the homebound member, and/or the member who is blind or has low vision. It also has an accessibilities checklist for meetings and groups.

Treatment and Accessibilities has begun to send out a newsletter every other month. This newsletter will answer questions you may have, or it is a way you can share with us how you are working with the treatment facilities in your District/Zone. It will contain information on making AA groups accessible to everyone, no matter what their barriers may be (Bridging the Gap, etc.). Sharing your experience with us will help us

ARCHIVES/ archives@aageorgia.org

Keep in Mind

By Mike S., Chair

**Mark G., Co-Chair
Area 16 Archives Committee**

“Whenever a society or civilization perishes, there is always one condition present; They forgot where they came from” — Carl Sandberg

Our job in Archives is to remind ourselves and others in our Fellowship what it used to be like, what happened, and what it’s like now. Before our Fellowship, we alcoholics were destined to live a life of misery, then die a lonely alcoholic death. Bill Wilson, an alcoholic struggling to stay sober, decided to pick up a phone rather than a drink. Then through a series of seeming “coincidences” that proved to be an act of provenance, Bill was introduced to Dr. Bob Smith, a struggling but still wet alcoholic. Both men stayed sober and

lived happy and very productive lives. It was from that relationship that our Fellowship was born on the premise of one alcoholic helping another; both men could recover from a “seemingly hopeless state of mind and body”.

The telephone was the tool used to allow this to happen. In 1935, when this all began, telephone communication was in its infancy. Bill used a pay phone outside the bar at the Mayflower Hotel, which cost a nickel. My, how times have changed.

I believe our co-founders would be amazed at the wireless communication of today. We carry a device in our pocket that allows us to instantly contact almost anyone on the planet while still serving the same purpose as the one Bill used that fateful day. Let us never forget that picking up a phone is always a better alternative than picking up a drink.

COMMUNICATIONS [communications@ aageorgia.org](mailto:communications@aageorgia.org)

An Opportunity to Communicate

**By Chuck H., Chair
Janie C., Co-chair
Area 16 Communications Committee**

“When a few men in this city have found themselves, and have found the joy of helping others to face life again, there will be no stopping until everyone in that town has had his opportunity to recover — if he can and will.” — Alcoholics Anonymous, pages 163-164

Communicating can be hard work, not just for the transmitter, but also for the receiver. Both need to be ready and willing to make the effort to share. How bad does it have to get for some of us to become willing?

One of my favorite acronyms is G.O.D., or Gift of Desperation. As difficult as the past weeks have been for folks in sobriety, it has to have been worse for folks still drinking. Offices and workplaces have been closed, but the liquor stores have been open. I believe that many people in our communities have been in the process of finding G.O.D.

We have seen the power of one person sharing with others, and seeing it shared around the world in a matter of months. There will soon be many who are ready to hear that message for the first time.

Don’t doubt the power that we have as recovering alcoholics to communicate a message of hope to others who are still suffering.

CORRECTIONS / corrections@aageorgia.org

Oh, No! Change

By Ken P., Chair

**David J., Co-Chair
Area 16 Corrections Committee**

The State of Georgia Corrections Training is seeing some changes. As always, some are beneficial, and some are challenges. The most beneficial change coming is that you can leave future training with a five-year badge that only needs annual paper updates along with PREA training.

With the retirement of our longtime trainer in December, AA is now fully integrated into the regular Georgia Department of Corrections (DOC) digital training process. The DOC has a three-step training program. First, a website introduction to the training process is provided. Second, there is a formal submission of background check information. Third is group training. (Bring your lunch.)

The Corrections Committee hopes to have a step-by-step guide to the process

on our website by the time you read this article. There are opportunities for AA members to have individual training, but we will have to have at least 25 people at a training session. We are expecting that the state will have additional training sessions scheduled shortly.

We thank everyone for working through this transition period. Please keep up your enthusiasm as we work towards a regular process.

A request, please: If you are going into a prison or jail, we would like to know how long you have been performing this service work. Please let us know by sending an email to corrections@aageorgia.org

<u>Website Visit</u>	<u>Document Submission</u>	<u>Group Training</u>	<u>Location</u>
March 19	March 26	April 25	Forsyth
April 30	May 7	June 6	Forsyth
Aug. 20	Aug. 27	Sept. 26	Savannah

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represented the most expansive period of growth in our history.

Interestingly enough, from 1990 to 2019, something happened, and our growth slowed down to the lowest we've experienced since AA's infancy during the period 1935-1940. Since 1990, our growth has been basically flat, increasing by only an average of 655 members per year (from 2,047,469 in 1990 to 2,130,419 in 2019).

This intrigued me and I began to wonder if we're experiencing a growth problem, a retention problem, or perhaps both? Since AA does not keep attendance records, these numbers from the General Service Office in New York are only estimates from group records, but the trends are there, nevertheless.

Looking at the 2014 Alcoholics Anonymous Membership Survey also brought some interesting information to light. This pamphlet is our most recent membership survey and one of the data tables shows the percentage of our Fellowship broken out by years of sobriety: Less than 1 year: 27%, 1-5 years: 24%, 6-10 years: 13%, 10-20 years: 14%, 20+ years: 22%.

The numbers indicate that we are losing significant numbers of members after five years of sobriety and I began to ask myself why. Clearly, we are not retaining our membership as well as we could. This may very well be a contributing factor to AA's overall lack of growth since 1990.

I was grateful for the opportunity to participate in Unity Weekend and as a result, I have an increased interest in the 2018 Communications Audit. I believe the action that we take based on that audit report may very well address what the above-referenced data shows.

Birthday Contributions

District 3 Zone D

12 & 12 Group
Jean G – February 8, 1968

District 7 Zone B

Byron Warehouse Group
Ione B – December 6, 1980

District 10, Zone B

Fresh Start Group
Laura P – April 8, 1999

District 14, Zone B

Easy Does It, But Do It Group
Don P – January 1, 2005

District 16, Zone E

4th Dimension Group
Michelle B – November 17, 1987

Lakeland New Beginnings Group
Claudia K – January 17, 2013

New Groups

District 13 Zone J

Fairground Group

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challenges of protecting personal anonymity on virtual meetings and utilizing electronic payment applications. This has been accomplished through trial and error and the sharing of ideas from those who have experience. Just like in our personal recovery, we can rely on those who have come before us and have experience to share. We still have bills to pay to meet our responsibilities as sober members of society.

If your group has not set up a

method to continue your Seventh Tradition contributions, there are many options available that your group conscience can discuss.

We are also continuing to support the service structure of Alcoholics Anonymous. Although the New York General Service Office is closed, it is continuing to work to support AA through the website and email. We will hold an abbreviated General Service Conference (GSC) in late May or early June through a virtual platform. In order to prepare for the GSC, our DCM Pre-Conference meeting will be held through a virtual platform on Saturday, April 4th. As of this date, the Area 16 General Service Office Committee plans to host our Area Assembly in Macon May 15-17, 2020. We are monitoring the situation closely and will keep you informed of any changes to the Area Assembly.

The General Service Board announced the cancellation of the 2020 International Convention with heavy hearts. Due to the size and scale of the International Convention, contracts and other logistical considerations had to be addressed in a timely manner. The decision was based on the facts available at present and a sense of responsibility and care for the health and safety of all attendees and the citizens of Detroit. We call all look forward to the 2025 International Convention in Vancouver, British Columbia!

Alcoholics Anonymous is not a meeting place or a single event, it exists in all of us. It is the language of the heart and the desire to help one another. We continue to focus on our primary purpose of reaching out to those who are still suffering. I am in awe of our fellowship in Area 16 and am comforted by the fact that AA always finds a way. It's in times like these that we truly learn to live, love, and give again.

Stay healthy and we will see you soon as we "trudge the Road of Happy Destiny. May God bless you and keep you until then."

THE GEORGIA MESSAGE OF AA

CALENDAR of EVENTS

Events listed here are presented solely as a service to the readers, not as an endorsement by the State Assembly. For any additional information, please use the addresses provided. Please check with the organizers closer to the date regarding cancellations or changes.

West Central Cluster Forum

Locust Grove

June 6

Includes (6, 7A, 7B, 10A, 10C, 10D, 11C)

***The Message* article deadline for July and August publication is June 1st.**

There is no subscription fee for this newsletter, however all contributions are appreciated.

Please mail to: G.S.S.A., P. O. Box 7325, Macon, Ga. 31209

**DON'T LET ALCOHOL
FLUSH AWAY YOUR FUTURE**



AA

© 2016 Reuben Buchanan

Title: Future Flush -
Words by William B. and design by Reuben B.

Got Art?

Send your original cartoons, artwork, photos, etc. to Amy B. at publisher@aageorgia.org for consideration in upcoming issues of *The Message*.

Show us what you got!

Treatment/Access. Cont. from Page 3

answer questions for other members. If you would like to be on the mailing list, just send your name and email address to treatment@aageorgia.org.

Just a reminder that the Area 16 Treatment Workshop is scheduled to be held in Valdosta on June 27th, hosted by District 2A.

(Publisher's note: the treatment and accessibilities workshop has been cancelled as of 4/29/20).

THE GEORGIA MESSAGE OF AA

Virtual Zoom Assembly Agenda

Sunday May 17th

9:00 AM Fellowship/Familiarization with Zoom Virtual Assembly environment – hosted by Communications/Web Committees – Chuck H.

10:00 AM **Area 16 Virtual Business Meeting**

Spanish Translation will be provided.

Call to Order/Serenity Prayer – Area 16 Chairperson – Rick M.

Welcome to the Virtual Assembly – How will we operate in this environment?

Recognize Past Area Officers

Area Officers reports (Alternate Delegate, Secretary, Treasurer, and Office Manager)

Old Business

Report from “Your Voice Matters” action planning committee – Tom B.

June trip to Dublin, Ga. Announcement – Ernie M. – Area 16 Office Chair

New Business

Nominations for Treasurer (Secretary Reads Qualifications)

Nominations for Secretary (Secretary Reads Qualifications)

Candidates for S.E. Regional Trustee

Candidates for Trustee-at-Large U.S.

General Sharing

Adjourn with Responsibility Statement

Join Meeting: Zoom Meeting **Login: 709 870 9964**

Zoom Meeting **Password: Gssa@2006**
(password is case sensitive)

Please be sure to use the following for your naming in the meeting:

First name, last name initial, service position or “Member” (if no current service position) and District. Example – Mary M. GSR 5A, or John S. Member 13B. Zoom allows you to rename yourself once in the environment.



67th Georgia Prepaid Convention

"A Clear Vision for You"

October 15th – 18th 2020

*Callaway Resort & Gardens
17800 US Hwy 27
Pine Mountain, GA 31822*

AA Speakers

**Liz W. – Savannah, GA *Brad S. – West Palm Bch, FL *Chris C. – Frisco, TX *Don L. – Bellingham, WA *John S. – Atlanta, GA*

**Teresa F. – Van Nuys, CA *Victor V. – Springdale, AZ*

Al-Anon Speaker: TBA

Accommodations and Restaurants listed on reverse side

Name _____ AA _____ AL-Anon _____ Alateen _____

Home Group _____ Badge Name _____

Name _____ AA _____ AL-Anon _____ Alateen _____

Home Group _____ Badge Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

***Spanish Translation Needed # Headsets _____

Saturday Country Barbecue Picnic Beach Lunch – Prepay by Sept 30 2020 - #Tickets _____ @ \$32 ea. = \$ _____

Golf – Prepay by Sept 30 2020 Callaway Golf Club (limited space available) - #Tickets _____ @ \$65 ea. = \$ _____

Other Area Activities- Zipline, Tennis, Fishing, Nature Trails, Birds of Prey, Butterfly Center, Horseback Riding.

Special Needs

Hearing (Signer Available) _____ Sight _____ Wheelchair _____ Other _____

Mail Registration Form to: 67th Ga Prepaid Convention P.O. Box 242 Senoia Ga 30276

Out of State Registration fee: AA & Al-Anon \$25.00; Alateen \$10.00 – Cash or Checks only.

Make Checks Payable to: 67th Ga Prepaid Convention. - Email Contact: 67thprepaid@aageorgia.org