

C A M E T O B E L I E V E



I LOVED THE MEETINGS AND THE SINCERE SUPPORT I WAS GIVEN FROM SO MANY CARING MEMBERS.

AA meetings have always enthralled and inspired me. This was especially true in my early sobriety. I loved listening to how Alcoholics Anonymous had revolutionized people's lives. Each time I'd hear a story I'd gather courage to tell my own, and began wondering if what worked for others could work for me. I loved the meetings and the sincere support I was given from so many caring members. When people shared, they'd often thank their sponsor and the group. I was fine with all that. It was that which invariably followed that puzzled

and frightened me—they'd thank God. I had no personal resentment or barrier toward this God they were thanking, and I was willing to do anything to stay sober, but I simply didn't know how to believe in God. I thought the entire God thing was akin to some sort of magical presence that had sanctified them and had passed me over. In my mind, I'd constructed this abstraction about some mysterious force that others saw, felt, and touched, and that I didn't. I thought if I told the truth, which was that I didn't know what I believed or didn't believe, that I'd somehow be ostracized. It became a harbored secret that was alienating me from the

group. I began mimicking thanking God, parroting faith, an old habit from my drinking days, to cover my underlying fear about being discovered as some sort of heretic. This false conveyance towards something that I didn't really believe was eating at me; separating me; reinforcing this inner voice that has always wanted to tell me that I am different.

After about six months of this self-imposed torture, I decided to share this problem and get honest. I called a fellow member aside; a man I respected, who'd been sober a while. I confessed my honest doubt about believing in God. He listened intently and smiled pleasantly. What he said to me in response changed my life and gave me an entirely new and genuine sense of belonging. He said that it wasn't required that I believe anything in Alcoholics Anonymous, only that I continue to do certain things which I had been doing, which was to keep an open mind, continue reaching out, attending meetings and staying away from the first drink, and that if I continued to do those things that I would come to believe. My secret wasn't such a big secret after all. The danger wasn't in what I did or did not believe. The danger was

allowing my fears to separate me from the group.

—Mike L.

My secret wasn't such a big secret after all.

HELLO TO ALL IN AREA 61, RHODE ISLAND

I hope this writing finds you safe, healthy, and content. Over the past many weeks, we have come up against something no one has ever experienced in their lifetime. It's a strange time for the world. It's a strange time for Alcoholics Anonymous. Our meetings, the lifeblood of every AA member, have been shut down, but AA members have adapted well. Technology, once the aberration, has become the new normal. Groups and meetings have shifted quickly to Zoom and other meeting apps. Our Area website, aainri.com lists over 160 weekly virtual meetings. It's certainly not the same as real life, but it's an adequate solution for a while.

So the meetings are taking place, but what about our 7th Tradition? My Home Group recently added a Venmo Account so we could take contributions digitally.

Area 61 also needs contributions at this time. Our rent is not tied to a good-faith gesture. We HAVE to pay our rent and our bills. PLEASE consider a one-time or recurring monthly contribution to Area 61. This can be done at aainri.com.

of the groups in RI, through their GSRs, were heard regarding such topics as the changing of the Preamble, the beginnings of a Fifth Edition of the Big Book, the beginning of an Instagram account for AA, podcasts for AA, the brand new Ser-

We covered about 40 Agenda Items throughout the week, culminating in our first ever Virtual Area Assembly

The business of AA is still being addressed, with the forthcoming first-ever Virtual General Service Conference. The Conference will take place from May 16 - May 19, and will be a 'mini' version of the regular Conference. Any Agenda Items not covered

vice Manual, as well as many others. We covered about 40 Agenda Items throughout the week, culminating in our first ever Virtual Area Assembly. I want to thank all who attended and all those who took the polls which were posted on our aainri.com website. I feel as well-informed as any Delegate

could be on the items we are about to undertake this month at the General Service Conference.

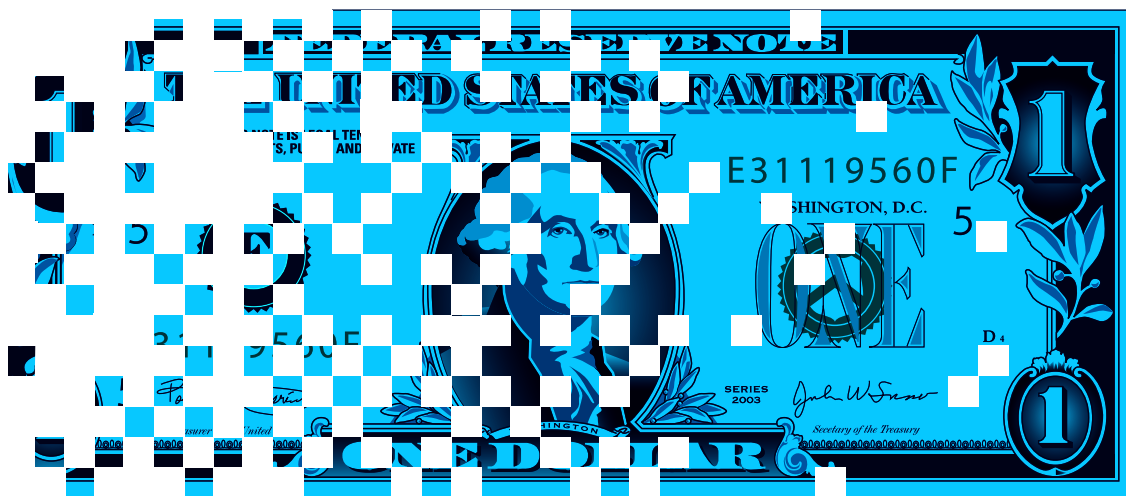
The obstacles are great, the venue is challenging, and the time is limited, but I've been told and I believe that God has me right where He wants me. We, as a Conference, will try to rise to the occasion, just as Alcoholics Anonymous has done all over the world.

In Love and Service,
Steve L.

Panel 70/Area 61, Rhode Island
Never Refuse, Never Rest

Venmo is simply an app which is tied to a debit card and can be used instead of cash. There's no charge for an individual contribution. Our group is still paying rent to the church as a good-faith gesture, so contributions are vital.

this year will be forwarded to next year's Conference. We still hope to address some of the items we covered in our Pre-Conference Assembly, which took place virtually over a period of 6 evenings in late March and early April. This is where the voices



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COVID 19—EMBRACING CHANGE

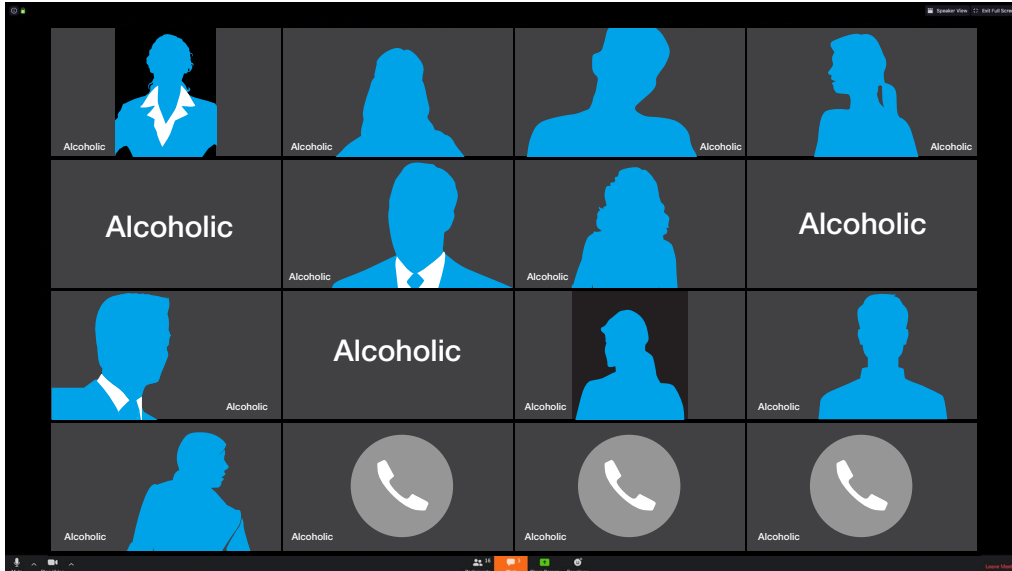
One alcoholic experiences the transformation of their AA group

It started with subtle increases in the spaces between the chairs. Then the church discontinued all their activities but allowed us to stay if we so chose. Then one morning before the meeting a member of the fellowship who is also a medical professional firmly read us the riot act. I thought they were overreacting. I was wrong. Then God did for our meeting what we could not do for ourselves—the church shut us down.

A week later we were up and running with an online meeting. We came together and did what we're good at: helping other alcoholics. The tech savvy helping the less tech savvy. We use phones, tablets and desktops in a variety of operating systems. Our devices are as diverse as our membership.

Our daily group, which typically had 15-20 people, now helps 30-40. I personally look forward to the resumption of in person meetings, but in the meantime I'm grateful for what I have. With God's help, we will survive.

—Anonymous



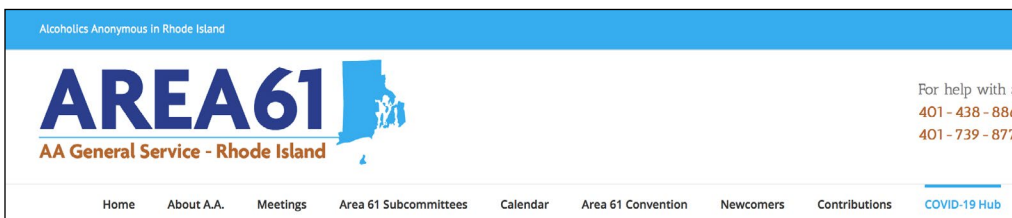
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TO SEE YOUR ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETING OPTIONS DURING THE PANDEMIC GO TO: AAINRI.COM



← Then click “COVID 19 Hub”



← Scroll down and click “GO TO MEETINGS” button

Time	Meeting	Location	Address	Region
6:00 am	Morning Glory / Temporary Closure	Saint Matthews Episcopal Church	87 Narragansett Ave	Jamestown
7:00 am	Footprints / Temporary Closure	Lincoln Woods	2 Manchester Print Works Rd	Lincoln
7:00 am	Breakfast with Bill / Online Meeting	Online Meeting	3649 Post Rd #1	Warwick
7:00 am	Daily Reflections / Online Meeting	Online Meeting	3649 Post Rd #1	Warwick

← Search and click as you normally would and follow the instructions as indicated