

"Pass It On" April 2020

<https://www.northernutahaa.org>

Northern Utah Intergroup Newsletter

Amid coronavirus, recovery community urges: Even if you skip 12-step meetings, stay connected

By [MARISA GERBER](#)
LA TIMES STAFF WRITER
MARCH 16, 2020

It was time for the coveted sobriety chips, so Grace snapped on a pair of plastic gloves and kept a bit of distance as she doled out medallions to members who had gone 30, 60 and 90 days without a drink.

Normally, she hugs the people gathered here in this church on the Westside, but on Thursday she offered them a small namaste bow instead.

This is what an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting looks like during a pandemic.

"AA can't totally close its doors," said Grace, a 49-year-old yoga teacher, who asked to be identified by her middle name to respect the group's anonymity pledge. "We don't know when someone's going to crawl in in desperation."

She started coming to the rooms, as she calls the gatherings, two decades ago and now tries to attend two or three meetings a week, a tiny sampling of the more than 350 groups that meet every day in L.A.

They restored her life, she said, and she can't help but think about others like her, who at this very moment, were considering whether they had the courage to attend their first meeting. What if, like Italy, we're headed toward lockdowns?

These were the questions running through the minds of many in the recovery community this week. As the words "Cancel Everything" began to trend on Twitter and people quipped online about how they planned to self-quarantine with three bottles of tequila, some people wondered what would happen to the 12-step meetings they rely on.

What about the people who are understandably panicked and tempted to drink or pop a few pills? What exactly does the mandate to "practice social distancing" look like for people who so intimately know the dangers of isolation?

"We rely on community," said Rick Manelius, an active member of a 12-step program. "It is very hard for people to white-knuckle it."

For Manelius, 39, who lives in Colorado and works as a chief technology officer at a start-up, the questions started swirling in his mind last Friday toward the end of his weekly meeting. He's the youngest member by about a decade, he said, and he noticed that instead of interlacing hands with people beside them during an end-of-meeting prayer some members decided to clasp their own hands together.

He began to think about all the other meetings like this across the country and how, sometimes by design, they're rather low-tech. A church, chairs in a circle, some coffee. A real room people can walk into and find community.

In the days ahead, if quarantines come, Manelius said, he hopes people will turn to online platforms like Zoom to hold meetings via video chat or maybe download an episode of The Recovery Show podcast to listen to when they're feeling alone. Still, he worries about older people, who might not be as familiar with technology and who are at the highest risk of dying from COVID-19.

"Our elders are being given an extra dose of fear and anxiety," he said, and for many people these meetings are like free therapy. "You don't want to help spread this contagion with a high mortality rate, but at the same time, it's like your mental and emotional health is on the line."

He's been thinking, too, about people who are in the early stages of recovery. There's the 90-in-90 concept, he explained, in which, early on, people often try to attend a meeting per day to set new

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habits. If we move toward mandatory quarantines, he fears, that will set up yet another barrier for newbies.

“Anyone who’s on the recovery train knows that the second resistance comes up, it’s like, ‘Eh, I can skip it,’” Manelius said, encouraging anyone who doesn’t yet have a sponsor to get one as soon as possible and check in with them often by phone.

Back in Los Angeles, this week felt like a tipping point.

Before then, you could see signs of concern on the face of the pregnant cashier at Vons who held her breath when she heard a customer sneeze or in the stern scolding from the mother whose infant child had just gripped the metal pole on the Metro.

But now, the signs were almost everywhere — light traffic, emptied out shelves of thermometers, a tweet saying the L.A. Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous had told members not to hold hands.

A woman who answered the phone at the L.A. Central Office this week explained that that simply wasn’t true — each group is autonomous, she stressed, and free to make their own decisions. But members had been calling about the coronavirus, she said, and she’d started pointing them to [a memo](#) on the national Alcoholics Anonymous site.

Some groups had started discussing precautions, the memo said, such as avoiding handshakes and cutting back on serving snacks. Others had started creating contingency plans in case they can’t meet in person, the memo said, such as swapping phone numbers, emails and social media accounts so members can check in on one another.

The memo also pointed members to www.aa-intergroup.org, a directory of virtual meetings in different time zones, which are conducted by phone, email, video conference and 24-hour-a-day chat rooms.

There are dozens and dozens of different groups.

For Spanish speakers in rural areas, there’s Grupo Universal de AA, which conducts voice-only meetings through Skype, and for those who are hard of hearing, there’s Wednesday Text Chat, which conducts meetings via Zoom. There’s the group a Safe Place for members of the LGBTQ community, a Spiritual Recovery for agnostics and freethinkers, and even Sober Stogies for people who stay away from alcohol but still love a good cigar.

For Grace, the yoga teacher, it was comforting to see others start to brainstorm and prepare. She’d been charting the coronavirus’ path closely since January, keeping in touch with a friend who works as an emergency room nurse in Seattle.

“They’re *really* strapped,” Grace said.

She had started to feel a bit discombobulated, she said, as she read horror stories from Italy and then looked around Los Angeles and saw most people acting rather blasé. Well, either that, she said, or behaving as if Armageddon had already set in and they needed to ransack Trader Joe’s immediately.

There didn’t seem to be a lot of in between.

So, during her Alcoholics Anonymous meeting Thursday, Grace said she decided to make a bit of a show of her heightened precautions. After putting on her gloves, she gave each member who got a sobriety chip a bonus gift: an antibacterial wipe. “We’re living in interesting times,” she told the group, which was about half the size as usual.

Grace has also been thinking a lot about newcomers to recovery and how these next few days could be so fragile for them. She thought back to the weeks before she finally went to her first meeting — back to when she was convinced she was terminally unique.

“You feel like you’re in a desert just gasping,” she said, “and this oasis comes, and you go, ‘Oh, I’m not the only one.’”

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These are stressful and unnerving times and fear can be such a big trigger for addicts. For some, Grace said, this will be a breaking point and, for that reason, she's confident that some meetings will stay open. But she's hopeful, too, that members will adapt by upping the frequency of their group text conversations or hosting meetings on Google Hangouts.

In many ways, she said, the recovery community is better prepared for this moment than almost anyone.

"We're taught resilience," she said. "We're taught that there is a way through and that we figure it out one day at a time, step by step."

People in recovery also have a lot of practice channeling their fears and anger into service, she said. If you have two days of sobriety, the mantra goes, you can help the person who has one day, and if you have one day, you can help the person who has one minute.

Right now, she said, the world could use another message her community knows well.

We support one another to survive.

Even in self-protection, we do not wish to erect the slightest barrier between ourselves and the fellow alcoholic who still suffers. We know that society has been demanding that he conform to its laws and conventions. But the essence of his alcoholic malady is the fact that he has been unable or unwilling to conform either to the laws of man or God. If he is anything, the sick alcoholic is a rebellious nonconformist. How well we understand that."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W.,
February 1948, "Tradition Three," The Language of the Heart

>> **District Information** <<

Many open Service positions.
GSR's need to be present.

➤ **District 1 – 2nd Thursday, 6:30PM**
131 W Forest St.
Brigham City

➤ **District 11 – 2nd Wednesday 6:30PM**
25 N. 200 W.
Bountiful

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Events listed on this page are presented **SOLELY** as a service to readers, **NOT as an endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous OR Intergroup Service of Northern Utah.**

For any additional information, please contact Central Office at (801)393-4728

Email CO at igrcentraloffice@gmail.com

Central office Web Site <https://www.northernutahaa.org>

Women's Retreat House

340 W. 2550 N., Pleasant View
(801) 393-0344

WRH Is Temporarily Closed to outside visitors Due to the current public health situation

Alano Club **Activities**

available for rent/use (we favor recovery groups always) for dances, meetings, dinners (full kitchen and soda's) and various other events.

684 24th Street, 801-393-5054

alanoninc@gmail.com

Alano Club Is Temporarily Closed Due to the current public health situation

From the Book

"Therefore, the main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind, rather than in his body."

- Alcoholics Anonymous, pg. 23

April "Birthdays"

Tuesday Morgan Group

Andy P. - 4/6/2018 - 2 years

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Ogden Intergroup Central Office

IGR Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2020

Attendees: Central Office Comm. Chair, Nick D.; CO Mgr. Randy C.; CO Treasurer, Wendy P. **(3) IGR's attending**, Dustin H. (Courage to Change) Mike T. (Upon Awakening), Goose (Newcomers Meeting), **////** Mike L. (Morgan Group), Excused.

- Nick D. opened the meeting at 6:35 pm with a moment of silence for the still suffering alcoholic. Dustin read the Intergroup Service preamble, Wendy read the Twelve Traditions, Nick read February's minutes and the 7th tradition basket was passed, collecting \$6.
- Randy gave the February Central Office report:

Sales Summary:

- Books: 101
- Chips: 315
 - Brass 51
 - Aluminum 263
 - Tri-Plate 1

Donations: \$ 1,449

- Groups: 13 groups \$ 1,449.74

Office Activity:

	<u>Manager</u>	<u>Volunteer</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Hours:	76	21	97	
• Emails:	72	0	72	
• Calls/Msgs:	54	7	61	
• Visits:	45*	14	59	*(less than ½ January)

Prudent Reserve Ending Balance: (Goal = \$4,500 \ **\$1,500 per mo.** x 3 mos operating expenses)

January: \$ 1,150
February: \$ 1,175 +2.1 %

Checking Account Statement (ending) Balance: **February \$ 1,156**

<u>Current</u> checking account balance	\$ 897
QuickBooks CC pending	\$ 20
Deposit pending	\$ 145
Customer Pre-Orders	\$ 344
<u>Less</u> Accts Payable (Mar) - \$ 1,158 (incl. April Rent)	
Available projected Mo. End balance =	\$ 248

Steffi is here Saturday & Lisa is here Sunday, both 1:30-4:30pm. Please stop in and Thank them for their service. I Thank **YOU** for the opportunity to serve as your 8th Tradition special worker.

- Wendy P. was introduced as the new IGCO Ogden Treasurer.
- Dustin H. asked about the progress of the new format printed meeting schedule, Randy said he hopes to have it by April IGR Meeting.
- Nick asked to have the weekend activity 12 month summary posted in the newsletter.

Nick Closed with the Responsibility Statement at 7:00 pm

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Ogden Inter Group Central Office

- **NEW Central Office hours:**
Tuesday thru Saturday
1:30pm - 5:30 pm
CLOSED – Sunday & Monday
- The April 13th, Steering Committee Meeting and the InterGroup Rep Meeting are **CANCELLED** in the interest of public health.
- We ask that each Group send a representative to the Central Office Inter Group meeting the second Monday of May at 6:30 pm.
- **Ogden Central Office (801) 393-4728**
email: igrcentraloffice@gmail.com
Website: <https://www.northernutahaa.org>

IGR Meeting Attendance

- **Three (3) District One** groups sent IGR's to the March 9th meeting.
- Groups represented:
 - Newcomers Group
 - Upon Awakening
 - Courage to Change
- *Please* send an IGR to represent your group and help Central Office reach the still suffering Alcoholic.
- Wendy P. is our new IGCO Ogden Treasurer



Suggested Contributions

(from pg. 13 of AAWS Pamphlet F-3)

50% - Intergroup/ Central Office
3480 Washington Blvd #108
Ogden, Utah 84401

10% - Area 69
P.O. Box 471
Fillmore, Utah 84631

30% - GSO
P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station
New York, NY. 10163

10% - District 11
2320 Wood Hollow Way
Bountiful, UT 84010

OR
(whichever applies)

10% - District One
P.O. Box 953
Brigham City, Utah 84302

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**AA Ogden IGCO
Year-to-Date
through February
Donations**

Group Name	3/1/2020 February	2020 YTD Total
Beyond the Horizon Group	96.00	96.00
Clearfield Group		61.00
Courage to Change Group (R R)		63.70
Grupo Primer Paso de Ogden (SP)	15.00	30.00
Higher Ground Grp-Fruit Hghts	80.00	80.00
In the Solution Group		100.00
Meat and Potatoes ABSI Study		126.02
Meat and Potatoes Big Book Study		126.02
New Comers Group	25.00	25.00
Our Ladies of the Mountain (WRH)		15.00
Quitting Time	50.41	50.41
Recovery Together Group (5)	100.00	100.00
Sat Am Men's Brotherhood Group	400.00	400.00
Stone of Sisyphus Group		90.00
Sunday Night Unity Group	360.00	360.00
Tyler Ave Group	53.00	160.50
Upon Awakening	50.93	104.52
Valley Camp	55.00	90.00
Wednesday Night Alumni ORMC	150.00	150.00
Women's Circle Of Hope	14.40	51.70
Totals	1,449.74	2,279.87

Acceptance
is what
"A Day At
A Time"
is made
from.

- Bob M. 2016



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Utah Area 69 Calendar of Events

April 3-5, 2020	Pre-Conference Assembly	CANCELED	CANCELED
April 19-25, 2020	General Service Conference	Teleconference	Teleconference
May 22-24, 2020	Post-Conference Assembly	District 5	Price, UT
June 20, 2020	Bridging the Gap Workshop	_____	_____
August 17-18, 2020	Pre-Assembly Workshop	_____	_____
September 25-27, 2020	Fall Assembly	District 6	_____
November 2-3, 2020	Fall Workshop	_____	_____
December 5, 2020	December Committee Meeting Pass the Gavel	_____	_____

District One GSR Meeting Minutes for March

Unavailable at time of publication

District 11 GSR Meeting Minutes for March

Unavailable at time of publication

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LOCAL Online Meetings

Saturday, 10:00 am

Women's Circle of Hope Meeting.

Layton, UT

Topic: Saturday AA

Women's Circle of Hope Meeting

REOCCURRING- use this link every Saturday

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/635561473>

Meeting ID: 635 561 473# then # again when prompted

+1 646 558 8656 - To dial in

Wednesday, 6:00 pm

Quitting Time Meeting [Reoccurring]

Layton, UT

Join Zoom Meeting

USE THIS LINK EVERY WEEK

<https://zoom.us/j/279047154>

Meeting ID: 279 047 154

to dial in use

+1 646 558 8656 US

Sunday, 10:00 am

Sunday Serenity Happy Hour

Layton, Ut

USE THIS LINK EVERY WEEK

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/966872838>

until Jul 26, 2020,

Meeting ID: 966 872 838

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 6:30 pm

BYOB Group

Huntsville, Ut

USE THIS LINK EVERY WEEK

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/9546629858>

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Alcoholics
Anonymous®
www.aa.org

General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous

475 Riverside Drive, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10115 / Telephone: (212) 870-3400

Please direct all
communications to:
P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163
Fax: (212) 870-3008

March 19, 2020

The General Service of Alcoholics Anonymous (G.S.O.) U.S./Canada functions as a repository for A.A. members and groups who are looking for the shared experience of the Fellowship. As the global situation related to Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to develop, we are fully committed to continue to serve as a resource center of shared experience to help navigate this unprecedented public health emergency.

It is important to note the G.S.O. is not an authoritative body over our groups, nor does it initiate rules or directives, as each A.A. group and entity is autonomous and decisions are made through its group conscience. Providing guidance on health issues is outside the scope of the A.A. sharing that G.S.O. offers. For anyone experiencing health and safety questions, it is suggested they contact national, state/provincial and local health authorities for appropriate information.

However, in response to the global outbreak, we do have some general experience regarding how some A.A. groups and members have begun to address this issue. Many are following "social distancing" guidelines established by local, state, provincial, and federal officials, while at the same time maintaining their recovery and attending digital A.A. meetings.

By attending digital meetings, groups can focus on A.A.'s primary purpose: to carry its message of recovery to the alcoholic who still suffers. Many groups have alerted *local* A.A. offices or hotlines if they are temporarily not meeting in their regular space. Some groups have shared that they are utilizing digital platforms such as [Zoom](#), [Google Hangouts](#), or conducting conference calls.

A.A. groups are also creating contact lists, keeping in touch by phone, email or social media. Many local A.A. central/intergroup offices, and areas have added information to their websites about how to change a meeting format from "in-person" to a digital platform. A.A. in the digital age has certainly taken on a new meaning in these challenging times.

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