

GAL-AA

GaL-AA Spring Newsletter vol. 2.3

Apr/May/June 2018

2020 Detroit International Committee Introduction:

Greetings, and welcome to the preparations for the 2020 International AA Convention. My name is Megan M, and I am the GaL-AA 2020 convention chairperson. My deputy chair Marty and I will be giving you steady updates on our progress - and updates on ways you can get involved both at the convention itself and in pre-convention fundraising near you to support GaL-AA's 2020 events, including the Friday night dance and a hotel hospitality suite.

Please sign up on the GaL-AA website, gal-aa.org, to receive email communications about the 2020 convention (and the rest of the great work GaL-AA does!). On behalf of the entire 2020 convention GaL-AA team, we are looking forward to working with you, and we are excited to welcome you to Detroit.

Yours in service,

Megan M., Detroit Committee Chair

It was very exciting at "Together We Can" the LGBT recovery conference in Detroit, held at the Troy Marriott this March. The GaL-AA Board came out in force to help get us started on the 2020 International Convention to be held in Detroit. The Board was here in Detroit back in 2017 to plant the seed for "Love and Tolerance is Our Code" in 2020. This year they held a meet and greet before the conference, where we met the Atlanta 2015 chair. They also held a very successful workshop to help us start getting organized for 2020 and to think about fundraising.

Atlanta had a very successful LGBT presence at the 2015 International Convention and we hope to be equally successful. Atlanta instituted the first "Miss International Sobriety" and we plan to continue this tradition. It was a very fun and engaging fundraiser for the Atlanta Committee. Speaking of Fundraising, we

plan to start off small, first with events among the LGBT groups in Detroit. We will need your help, we can not do this alone. Between the March Roundup (mainstream AA) And Together We Can, we collected over 50 e-mail addresses.

We would like to get support from across the country and around the world. We in Michigan have a traditional rivalry with Ohio and we have garnered some interest with our friends from the Buckeye State. The attendees from Toronto, Canada have already shown support. Just as AA grew from a handful of people, we plan to grow in order to have the best LGBT representation at the 2020 International Convention. The theme of "Love and Tolerance is our Code" could not better reflect our attitude of acceptance of ourselves and others in AA, as well as the world at large. Hope to see you and meet you at the convention.

Yours in service,

Martin Mc., Detroit Committee Deputy Chair

GaL-AA committee meeting in March at the Together We Can Roundup in Detroit, MI:

Spring is right around the corner and the GaL-AA committee wanted to share some of the exciting news from our last face-to-face meeting. This year we decided again to meet in the days before the Detroit, Together We Can roundup in Troy, Michigan. The purpose of our trip was twofold: 1) to tour some potential host hotels in downtown Detroit and 2) gather the troops forming the Detroit International AA Convention host committee of GaL-AA. To top off the meeting, the GaL-AA committee participated in the conference and got to know many of the wonderful LGBT+ and

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Statement of Inclusion

GaL-AA (Gays and Lesbians in AA) was established to serve and have the involvement of lesbians, gay men, and others in Alcoholics Anonymous, regardless of how they choose to identify themselves. In selecting the name, careful consideration was given to a variety of combinations. While the name only directly reflects gays and lesbians, we embrace all LGBT+ members of the AA fellowship.

Contact Us

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allies in the Metro Detroit area and surrounding cities.

Our first day of business kicked off with typical GaL-AA business, such as Secretary and Treasurer's reports and additional committee member updates. Once finished, we loaded up the committee and headed downtown to check out a few hotels. If you've never been to downtown Detroit, or it's been a while, you'll want to mark your calendar for July 2-5, 2020 when thousands of alcoholics are expected to pour (no pun intended) into the city of Detroit to celebrate A.A.'s 85th year for the International Convention. Thankfully, we had a beautiful sunny day to walk around a few blocks of the city's financial and business districts. Some of the hotels we toured include the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center, The Westin Book Cadillac and the Crowne Plaza Detroit (originally known as Hotel Pontchartrain).

In between hotel tours, the committee stopped for lunch at a Detroit classic restaurant, American Coney Island. This Detroit gem is famously located next to its competitor, Lafayette Coney Island. It's been said that that Lafayette and American Coney islands are owned by different brothers of the same family and have been immersed in a decades-long friendly competition for the title of best Coney in Detroit. The restaurants feature decades of history in pictures and memorabilia of the City of Detroit.

To top off the afternoon of touring, we walked around downtown to Campus Martius Park and even took a short ride on the People Mover, an elevated monorail train that connects many of the businesses and hotels in the downtown area, from Cobo Center to Grand Circus Park and every-

where in between. Downtown Detroit is bustling and people were walking everywhere. It felt like any of the large cities around the United States and was amazingly beautiful with the classic Art Deco architecture everywhere you looked. All of us on the committee are very excited for The 2020 International Convention and we're sure you'll want to join us.

Oh, and be sure to bring your passport if you want to hop across the bridge or take the tunnel to Windsor, Canada, directly across the Detroit River. Many of the committee members were surprised to see our neighboring country to the North, or from Downtown Detroit – directly East, up close. Or take a stroll along the beautiful Detroit Riverwalk which is expecting a multi-million-dollar renovation before 2020.

In addition to our wonderful excursion in Detroit, the GaL-AA committee met with our hopeful Detroit International Committee members. We're so thankful that many of the members of our program have stepped up to be of service over the next few years. Megan M. will serve as our Detroit Chair, partnering with Randall R. (GaL-AA's liaison between the executive committee and host committee), along with Martin Mc. (Deputy Chair). In addition to Megan and Martin, we were excited to meet Steve L. (Hospitality Chair) and Jesse N. (Entertainment Chair). At this meeting, we were thankful to have Pierre B. (current GaL-AA Treasurer and previous GaL-AA liaison to Atlanta 2015) and Ron D. (2015 Atlanta Committee Chair) who were both heavily involved with the 2015 International Convention in Atlanta. They were there to meet with the new Detroit committee to present an over-view of their work from the previous convention, answer questions and to provide their experience in putting together a massive committee of service volunteers. Megan

and Martin came with great questions and we were very thankful to have such positive, energetic folks to help make Detroit 2020 the best International Convention yet.

To finalize our business meeting, Rob F. (Technical Liaison) gave an extensive overview of our new website face-lift which we're on track to roll out in the next few months. This has been an undertaking over the past few years and has gone through a few different iterations, but we finally landed on a simple, easy to navigate template that will work well on all technology platforms. The highlight of the overview is the preview of our new meetings database. We're implementing the API from meetingguide.org. This technology will allow us to plug into existing meetings all over the country in a similar format and hopefully enable us to automate meeting updates as more Inter-groups and Central Offices plug into this technology. We are currently working with the folks at Meeting Guide to help us integrate these meetings since LGBT+ meetings are a subset of the A. A. meetings listed. If you happen to logon to their site at meetingguide.org, you'll be able to see if your local office is connected to them, and if not, ask your office if they'd like to participate. As of this writing, there are already 151 offices connected and 68,000+ meetings listed. They even offer help setting up a free, modern meeting finder using WordPress if your local office is not up-to-speed with all things technology. The folks at Meeting Guide have a whole host of information about their service, including a declaration of "Who Is Responsible? This project is developed and operated as an AA service project by AA members." Of course, at GaL-AA, we are committed to help you find all LGBT+ meetings near you.

Your in service, GaL-AA Executive Committee

“A.A.’s far-flung Twelfth Step activities, carrying the message to the next sufferer, are the very lifeblood of our A.A. adventure.

Without this vital activity, we would soon become anemic; we would literally wither and die.

“Now where do A.A.’s services—worldwide, area, local—fit into our scheme of things? Why should we provide these functions with money? The answer is simple enough. Every single A.A. service is designed to make more and better Twelfth Step work possible, whether it be a group meeting place, a central or intergroup office to arrange hospitalization and sponsorship, or the world service Headquarters [now the General Service Office] to maintain unity and effectiveness all over the globe.

“Though not costly, these service agencies are absolutely essential to our continued expansion—to our survival as a Fellowship. Their costs are a collective obligation that rests squarely upon all of us. Our support of services actually amounts to recognition on our part that A.A. must everywhere function in full strength—and that, under our Tradition of self-support, we are all going to foot the bill.”

Bill W., October 1967 Grapevine

Contributing to GaL-AA

7th Tradition: Self-Support and 12th Step Work

We received inquiries from members on our committee’s use of funds. Like all groups in our fellowship, GaL-AA is self-supporting and relies on contributions from groups and individuals. In keeping with the 7th Tradition, we do not accept contributions from non-AA sources. Groups (regularly, some sporadically) send monies to GaL-AA from meeting collections. We also receive contributions from AA round-up committees, and individual AA members send contributions as a way of giving back to the fellowship - in short, GaL-AA’s operating funds come from you.

What we do with contributions? We maintain an internet website, operate hospitality suites at AA’s International Conventions, distribute literature, sponsor registrations for round-up attendees that lack resources, maintain databases of LGBT+ meetings and roundups, mass mail communications about and from GaL-AA to AA members, and pay fees to service providers necessary for our operations. None of our committee members are compensated with contributions (each donates his or her time freely). We do not use funds for travel expenses (other than hotel accommodations for limited in-person meetings annually), and we meet monthly online so we do not have normal rental expense. Although different from home groups’, our expenses are necessary in performing 12-Step work. A summary of contributions from groups/sources is below. Is your group contributing or should it consider contributing? There is an AA world outside any home group that includes special purpose groups (other groups similar to GaL-AA with individuals from distinct backgrounds: International Doctors in AA, In-

ternational Lawyers in AA, “Birds of a Feather”/airline pilots and aviation professionals in AA, International Conference of Young People in AA, etc.), the fellowship’s General Service Office (GSO), regional intergroups, district and area committees. No matter what their composition, special purpose groups have the same primary purpose as any AA group: carrying the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers. We are united in the first tradition with one another as it states our common welfare comes first with personal recovery depending upon unity. What a great tradition that binds us.

AA’s GSO has suggested guidance on the 7th Tradition and financial matters groups should consider in adhering to the traditions and upholding the concepts for AA service. GSO’s guidelines remind groups to consider distributing excess funds for 12-Step work. Naturally, the home group’s expenses (rent, literature, coffee/snacks, other supplies) are paid before any distributions outside. The guidance recommends groups consider a plan of distribution (a matter for your group’s own conscience) for funds in order to further carry out the 5th Tradition and 12th Step work. Many group treasurers are familiar with the percentage plan for sending monies to GSO, intergroup/central office, district and area. If your group doesn’t already contribute to GaL-AA, ask your group members to consider us as another AA service entity that relies on your support to carry the message. We are grateful to the groups and individuals for their continuous support. See the website and newsletter for more information on ways to contribute. Those interested in GSO’s guidance may find it in the AA pamphlet “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix”: aa.org/assets/en_US/f-3_selfsupport.pdf.

GaL-AA

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Dec 2017—Feb 2018 Contributions

Group/Individual	Contribution
G&L AA, Des Moines, IA	25.00
Rose City Men's Group, Portland, OR	11.50
Thurs LGTB "8:08" Meeting, Brattleboro, VT	39.00
Lambda Group of AA, Dallas, TX	15.00
Sunny Dunes 5th Tradition, Palm Springs, CA	23.39
The Light Group, Raleigh, NC	75.00
Lambda Group of AA, Dallas, TX	15.00
Group #715768 (Darian G. Glen Ridge, NJ)	9.80
Primary Purpose AA, Columbia, SC	111.43
AA Pozitive Sobriety Group	40.00
Naples, FL Free 2 Be	19.65
Brothers & Sisters in Sobriety, Toledo, OH	11.32
Bell Book and Candle, Atlanta, GA	60.00
Live & Let Live AA, Saint Paul, MN	10.43
Sunny Dunes 5th Tradition, Palm Springs, CA	36.49
Unknown Group (NJ?)	24.00
Lambda Group of AA, Dallas, TX	15.00
Sunny Dunes 5th Tradition, Palm Springs, CA	21.63
Positives in Sobriety, West Hollywood, CA	15.00
AA - G.A.Y.S., Huntington Woods, MI	100.00
Rainbow Recovery, Rockford, IL	50.00
Kerry W., Davie, FL	75.00
Anonymous	10.00
R.I.L.G.B.T. Group, Providence, RI	38.00
Amber P., Ann Arbor, MI	50.00
LGBT Grapevine Meeting, Lexington, KT	260.00
Total	1,161.64

Thank you for your continued support of the 7th Tradition!

Executive Committee

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Personal Story Submission:

Angel on Interstate 81 North

In 1982 when I limped down those basement church stairs, I didn't believe AA could possibly help. I was a broken woman, literally; I had nine broken ribs, a fractured hip and a broken heart. I was 28 years old. My only possessions in the world were a 10-speed bicycle and a nap sack. I'd been through hell and back. I was afraid to live and afraid to die, at that jumping off place with nowhere to go.

To my surprise I was welcomed into AA. That felt good, no one had welcomed me anywhere in a very, very long time. I didn't think that a bunch of old white men had anything to offer. Everything inside of me screamed run, run fast and run far, especially when they started talking about God. As far as I was concerned they could have left God out of the whole damn thing. I was angry with God, I figured if God was so powerful and good, why didn't he make the world a better place. Way too much pain in this world. I didn't trust God, every time I asked something of God, it was to no avail. Years earlier my little brother drowned, his body wasn't found for three days. During that time, I begged God that he'd be found alive. It was devastating when he wasn't, he was only 18 years old. This solidified my distrust and anger at God.

I was raised in an alcoholic family, surrounded by insanity and poverty. I had little upbringing, no coping skills, no sense of self or self-worth. I was on a one-way street to self-destruction. When I came into AA I had many secrets, secrets of shame and abuse, feelings of loneliness, hopelessness and despair. And to top it off, I was gay. In West Virginia you sure as hell wasn't going to let anyone know you were gay and open yourself up to even more pain. I'd been rejected more than my share as a trouble maker, a poor girl, and "one of those", whatever "one of those meant". So, I just figured this was going to be "another let down". Besides, I knew God didn't want to have anything to do with me. Down deep inside, I believed God was totally disgusted with me and I was just getting what I deserved.

Despite myself somehow, I managed not to drink, one day at a time. I moved to Pennsylvania and as

the years passed, I learned to follow directions like "fake it till you make it". And that's exactly what I did. I hung in there, attended meetings regularly, got a sponsor and started working the steps; and slowly I changed.

When I was 10 years sober I found the courage to come out as a lesbian in my home group. I'm not going to tell you everyone accepted me, homophobia was evident in our country as well as in AA. I made like it wasn't a big deal and showed no shame for being who I am. What more could be said? Besides by this time, in AA I not only learned "God doesn't make any junk", but I believed "God doesn't make any junk"! "To thine own self be true", and so it was.

Over time I gained an incredible relationship of love and acceptance for God and myself. The more I honored and valued myself, the more I honored and loved God, funny how that works.

It is often said in AA "God doesn't give us more than we can handle" I disagree, I believe God does give us more than we can handle, so we will have to call upon him for help. In 1996 I was diagnosed with Stage IV breast cancer. I had just finished graduate school, my partner and I had a little boy who was 2 years old and we just bought a house. I was so afraid and not ready to leave this world. It felt like a cruel joke.

Right after we received the bad news we attended an Al-anon Convention in Gettysburg PA. We found lots of love and support, but my head was still spending and I had no idea what I was going to do.

We left the Convention Sunday afternoon both in a solemn mood. The traffic was ridiculous and the temperature had soared above 85 degrees. I saw an elderly couple pulled over in the break down lane. I pulled over to see if we could help? The little old lady asked if we had a cell phone, "I need to call AAA" she said. I asked the little old man, "What's wrong"? He told me he had a "blow out". I got out of my vehicle and went back to see if I could help. There was a little donut laying by his flat tire. Obviously, he did not have the strength to remove the lug nuts. I loosen the nuts and began jacking the car up, he looked over my shoulder and said, "you know you're going to show me up". I told him "I'm from West Virginia and the women down there do more than just cook". I changed the tire and we were ready to leave when his wife walked up to me holding out a folded handkerchief with a tip inside, "here take

this". "No" I said, "I just stopped to help, that's ok". "NO, no, take this" she insisted. Finally, I said to her, "If you want to help me, you could say a prayer for me because I was just diagnosed with breast cancer and it's spreading", "I could use all the prayers I can get". And she said, "Well honey I did pray for you and you stopped". I was chuckling inside... when she added, "You know I had breast cancer 16 years ago". That stopped me in my tracks; all I can say is "God does work in mysterious ways", "I am grateful for the message of hope the Angel brought me that day on Interstate 81 North".

-Sherry L.
Beckley, W.V.

Sober & Out

In keeping with our mission to support LGBT+ in AA, we will supply the book **Sober & Out** (LGBT stories from the AA Grapevine) to Hospitals and Institutions (H&I) groups upon request to Jim A.:

jim@gal-aa.org

Contribute to Gal-AA

We heard your voice and have made available two alternate ways to send your contribution.

You can go to the web or download the mobile apps for each of

Venmo or Square Cash:

Venmo: venmo.com/GaLAAContribution

Square Cash: [cash.me/\\$GaLAAContribution](https://cash.me/$GaLAAContribution)

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The Steps...

Step 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Step 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Tradition 4: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

Tradition 5: Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Tradition 6: An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

...The Traditions

Upcoming Roundups around the US and Canada

If you see a roundup missing, please email eric@gal-aa.org with the information..

City	Roundup Name	Website	Start Date	End Date
Atlanta	The Highlands Retreat by Hotlanta Roundup	thehighlandsretreat.com	5/4/2018	5/6/2018
San Jose	Sober & Free	soberandfree.org	5/5/2018	5/5/2018
Long Island	Long Island Roundup (Fire Island)	longislandroundup.org	5/10/2018	5/13/2018
Palm Springs I	Sober in the Sun	soberinthesun.net	5/17/2018	5/20/2018
Phoenix	AZ Spring Break	azspringbreak.org	5/18/2018	5/20/2018
Los Angeles	AALA	aalaroundup.org	5/25/2018	5/27/2018
Dallas	Big D Roundup	bigdroundup.com	5/25/2018	5/28/2018
New Mexico	New Mexico Roundup	nmroundup.org	5/25/2018	5/26/2018
New York City	Gay and Sober Men	gayandsober.org	6/21/2018	6/24/2018
New York City	Big Apple Roundup	bigappleroundup.org	6/23/2018	6/24/2018
New Orleans	New Orleans Roundup	nolaroundup.com	6/29/2018	7/1/2018
Austin	Austin Roundup	austinroundup.com	7/20/2018	7/22/2018
Halifax	Courage Roundup	courageroundup.ca	8/10/2018	8/12/2018
Chicago	Chicago Roundup	chicagoroundup.org	8/24/2018	8/26/2018
Ohio	Ohio Roundup	ohioroundup.org	8/24/2018	8/26/2018
San Antonio	San Antonio Roundup	sanantonioundup.com	8/31/2018	9/2/2018
New Jersey	New Jersey Roundup	njroundup.org	9/14/2018	9/15/2018
Tacoma	Lakeshore Retreat	lakeshoreretreat.org	9/28/2018	9/30/2018
Toronto	Toronto Gratitude	torontogratitude.org	10/5/2018	10/7/2018
Provincetown	Serenity by the Sea	provincetownroundup.org	10/17/2018	10/21/2018
Houston	Houston Roundup	houstonroundup.org	11/22/2018	11/25/2018

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