



AREA 83 ARCHIVES October 2021

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Many thanks to all who submitted from their areas.

Bill W foresaw the change to online meetings while he was still alive.

Zoom/online meetings have allowed newcomers to come to AA and get/stay sober. I was able to celebrate my own 50th Medalion in person with a zoom speaker from my original place of sobriety.

As the 4th edition states "Modem-to-modem or face-to-face, AAs speak the language of the heart"

The Eighty - Three

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Area 83 Archives Newsletter

Here are the pandemic experiences of a few groups in District 66

Perth Tay Group

All I've got to tell you about Perth Tay group is that about a week into the pandemic, we had our last meeting in the gymnasium of the church in an effort to social distance instead of the cozy room that we are usually in. However, after that week, the pandemic and first lockdown hit full force, and we formed a best effort of group conscience over the phone to shut the meeting down until we felt it was safe to reopen.

While other meetings evolved into Zoom meetings, our group never really got on board with that. There seemed to be enough Zoom meetings to choose from, and our group who normally attended our business meetings are not all as computer savvy as some, plus our group is generally a speaker meeting and finding a speaker week after week for a Zoom meeting to match our format probably would have been much harder than during normal in person meetings before the pandemic.

Tuesday Mississippi meeting in Carleton Place On

On Monday March 16, 2020, we received confirmation from Zion Memorial Church that the church hall was going to be closed for at least a week. In response to the news that the shut-down's were going to be widespread and likely for a while to come, the Tuesday Mississippi group's GSR asked the group on March 19 if the group wanted to open a zoom account.

The group put forward the motion and it was voted we would transition to zoom in the short term. The GSR acquired the account and set up the first meeting which was held on Tuesday March 24, 2020. Two group members attended training held by the area and the online script was immediately developed and shared amongst group members.

In the ensuing weeks, the group went through growing pains of transitioning meetings to the virtual world. A safety statement was included in the meeting script, the zoom account details were shared to allow for rotation of host duties, the meeting details were published on the District 66 website. The Tuesday group also voted

That said, we did put on one Zoom meeting. It was a joint meeting with the Al-Anon group from our location to celebrate the groups anniversary. It went well except that the bandwidth from the host wasn't good enough, so everyone had to turn off their video, which took away from the experience in my opinion. Since that Zoom meeting, we have had no others.

We haven't even had a business meeting since March 2020, but from time to time I as the GSR have touched base with a few members and the general idea is we are riding it out until the church and society allows us to reopen...hopefully sooner than later, but it's up to our higher power I guess eh!

That is what has happened at Perth Tay in a nutshell during this crazy pandemic. We all miss in person meetings, and it will be great to see you at an in person meeting sometime in the near future too Janet!

Take care and have a great day!

Paul N

GSR Perth Tay group

to host a second online meeting on Friday nights.

As the pandemic continued, support for the online format grew. Members started assuming rotating host and co-host roles and attendance grew to include individuals from other towns, cities and countries. Although the online meetings do not allow for the same intimate one on one sharing conducive to face to face meetings, many members have expressed gratitude at once again being able to share the AA solution amongst their fellows, albeit virtually.

In the summer of 2020, we received guidelines from the church about requirements for opening back up for face-to-face meetings. The fellowship was split between those who did not feel safe to return, and those who might risk returning to accommodate individuals unable to do online meetings. There was not enough support to physically re-open meetings but the point became moot when the second Covid wave caused the venue to close again indefinitely.

The group has decided to keep paying the church this past year to hold our spot for us. The desire to see each other again in person

Always stay with virtual meetings. It appears that the future AA landscape may be a hybrid approach between in person and online meetings. Our hope is that the still suffering alcoholic will find us and trudge the road along with us either way.
Yours in Service,
Angie R.

12&12 to Serenity – Perth On

It was March of 2020 when open AA meetings came to a halt all over the world! Our church was closed until further notice. We had no idea as to how we could continue to carry the message and we found ourselves with no place to go. All of a sudden meetings were starting to pop up all over the place using the Zoom platform. Our group started a chat on Facebook with our concerns and decided that we should be doing the same. Our first on-line meetings was April 6, 2020, for our 12 & 12 study and April 10, 2020 for our Big Book study. The Zoom platform was not for everybody and we have members we have not seen except for the odd occasion, yet still not participating on-line. We have celebrated birthdays and hold all our business meetings on line. For our members who don't drive at night and for a member who is unable to leave her home can now come to a meeting. We have found this to be an unexpected blessing. In February and March of 2021 we had one year celebrations for two of our group members. A whole new meaning to "willing to go to any length". We were able to open face to face on November 16, 2020 under very strict guidelines and we Literature and chips have been delivered to newcomers by our newcomers. There is active participation with our Zoom meetings and our most of our members are just as active as prior to March 15, 2020. Instead of standing out in the parking lots for fellowship we are still doing that from the comfort of our own homes and many times in our pajamas! There is plenty of fellowship before and after and newcomers are finding their way into the rooms and getting a are still collecting a 7th tradition by e-mail transfer and our group has remained strong a steady. Is it a strange world for AA? It sure is! From virtual hugs to chips and birthday cakes - we are growing and adapting! It has been a year full of challenges and growing pains. It is still all about the primary purpose - no matter what happens; the hand of

AA is there!
yours in love and service, Carrie C.

How Ottawa AA Stayed Alive Through the Pandemic

The world basically shut down March 2020 due to the Covid 19 Coronavirus. All over, Alcoholic Anonymous' Groups closed with it.

In Ottawa, Groups, Districts and Intergroup started using Zoom for meetings.

As per the Intergroup Webmaster, the first group in all of Ottawa to use Zoom was the Vanier Early Birds.

District 54 started holding their District meetings on Zoom Thursday, April 2, 2020. The first Group to use Zoom in the District was the Vanier Early Birds Group.

District 58 did not use Zoom and has not met since the Pandemic.

District 62 started holding their District meetings on Zoom Monday, April 13, 2020. The first Group to use Zoom in the District was the Stittsville Second Chance Group.

Newcomers to AA were coming to Zoom meetings. Many of them have stayed sober through all of this and have yet to attend an AA meeting in person.

Intergroup held their monthly meetings on Zoom.

Out of the groups in Ottawa that met online, there were five new pop-up meetings formed.

The New Day Group met in the parking lot of the Church they held their meetings at for a few months in 2020.

There were also some members from a few Groups who met in a parks / parking lots, when the weather was nice.

When the City was no longer in lockdown, a few Group's opened up their meetings again and followed the Covid 19 guidelines. They would have to close again when Ottawa entered another lockdown. This happened a few times for these Groups.

Westend Group – District 74 – Pembroke

When the province went into full lockdown the Group was instructed by the church to not enter the facilities. Even though AA was considered an essential service the Group did not challenge this directive. The Group switched to a virtual platform shortly after.

When the lock down was lifted and meeting could take place again the Group switched formats again to a zoom/face to face hybrid. All protocols laid out by the province, the local health unit and the church were followed by the group to ensure everyone was safe.

At a business meeting it was predetermined that if more than the allowed number members showed up for a meeting a pre-determined member of the Westend Group would leave the mtg. Celebration were celebrated virtually and even included a cupcake for the celebrant. The meeting reverted back to the Zoom format with the second lock down in December. The meeting opened once again in the new year. The Westend Group added an additional meeting to their roster Big Book group that meets in person on Tuesday nights.

Please find a brief history of the New Hope Group

Pembroke on pre-covid to March 2020 through March 2021.

The New Hope began as a meeting in The Pembroke Hospital. It was founded by a group of members led by Alfie H. Alfie passed away a number of years ago. The meetings began in the early 1990's.

In 2005 the meeting was relocated to basement of the Pembroke Legion where it has remained ever since. The meeting has gone through some day-of-the-week changes, at one time there was a Monday and Wednesday meeting open discussion.

Around 2015 Cammy B. suggested to our member Mary R. that there should be a lunch meeting in Pembroke and suggested a Friday Noon meeting as the Legion Ladies Auxiliary had begun hosting a soup and sandwich luncheon upstairs. The group proceeded to follow that direction and a Friday 12:00PM meeting was started.

The Friday Lunch meeting has been a great addition to the community.

In time the Monday meeting was discontinued as the Hand of AA opened up a few blocks away when their Allumettes Island Group QC had to relocate.

The group has carried on with membership of 8-10 with 2-4 of these members being active in group service-setting up the meetings, and roles of GSR, Treasurer, secretary at any one time.

The group has attendance of 10 to 18 on most nights

and has always been known as a first stop for many newcomers due to its proximity to the downtown core. The Legion Closed it's facility when Covid-19 reared itself. The group was not in favour of hosting a Zoom meeting. Money from the Bank account was distributed to Area and District and the Pembroke Legion. Our Group has been in touch with the Legion Executive and we gather that when Health ,Municipal and the Legion is ready THE NEW HOPE GROUP will begin anew. Yours in Service
Michael M
Group Treasurer
The New Hope Group

The Petawawa Triangle Group:

Sunday to Saturday Morning Meetings

Monday Night Literature Meeting

Tuesday Night French Meeting

Wednesday Night Closed Discussion Meeting

Saturday Night Closed Discussion Meeting

Sunday Night Open Speaker Meeting

When our group had their last in-person meeting on March 13th, 2020 it was believed that we would be back sooner than later, at the time we did not realize

that the way we do meetings would change quickly. Our group started a Facebook group chat to

stay connected to one another and one member

held socially distance morning meetings in the beginning. Other groups within our district were

beginning to hold "Virtual Zoom Meetings" and we

knew that we had to jump aboard as well. Our GSR Bob M worked hard with other members to learn what

was needed to make the virtual meetings happen. Our Treasurer set up e-transfer for members who still wanted to contribute 7th tradition.

On Wednesday March 26th we held our first virtual

zoom meeting. George M was instrumental at

helping us get set-up. He held a zoom training session

for some of our members, answered many phone

calls, e-mails, and attended many meetings offering his

help to our group. By April 1st, our group had

purchased our own zoom account and over the next

few months we implemented morning meetings 7

days a week and just recently a “Young Person’s Meeting” on Saturday nights via zoom. As the restrictions eased in our area members were eager to get back to in-person meetings and the other half of members were happy to stay on zoom. After lots of discussion with the church, and the group it was decided that two members would work on a plan of what was required to re-open in-person meetings. Our group would run the Monday, Wednesday, and Sunday evening meetings hybrid. By the second week of September our group held our first hybrid meeting, there were a few hiccups including sound and connection but over time we have been able to iron these out. We are still working on connectivity solutions. When the second lockdown hit, we were easily able to move into zoom-only meetings again. Since the re-opening in February, we can only have 10 people in attendance.

This pandemic has been hard on AA Groups all over the world and our group is no exception. There have been many disagreements and frustrations, but it has also brought group members closer together.

Many group members continue to show up and keep the “virtual doors open” and the “physical doors open” for the still suffering alcoholic.

Lindsay D

The Hand of AA
Pembroke, Ontario

District 74, Area 83 Eastern Ontario International
Covid 19 and the Hand of AA:

The hand-cleaning started in full force in March 2020 followed by mask wearing and spacing chairs two meters apart and forgoing handshakes and hugs. Within a relatively short period of time, our location was closed and our zoom meetings started, spear-headed by Jane S., and accessed through the Pembrokeaa.org website. Within a short time many of us became familiar with hand-raising and later sharing screen and reactions. We have continued 2 meetings a week on zoom, supplemented by seasonal outdoor farm meetings over the warmer months.

No start date yet for resuming in person meetings at our location in the Seniors Centre, so will keep it going on zoom. Welcome one and all!

Lori M., GSR

In April 2020 some members from The Hand of AA began an outdoor meeting at a members farm on Friday nights. This was meant to be a temporary situation at that time as none of us knew the magnitude that the Covid 19 virus would have on our community yet.

We continued to meet on Friday evenings through the summer and in to the fall with bon fires, birthday celebrations (we had 6 one year birthdays over the summer) guest speakers and pizza parties. We extended the invitation to all as an open meeting. Providence provided beautiful rain free Friday nights for the entire period! We were watched over by a herd of beautiful horses that would gather close by each time the meeting was to start. The energy was indescribably beautiful. We practiced safe covid protocols with hand sanitizers available, masks were optional as we were meeting outdoors.

We averaged 25-30 people each week (the largest was 40 for a celebration) with new comers and long timers alike. The meeting ended when it became too cold to meet outdoors.

We have decided to continue this meeting as soon as the weather permits. “We believe that any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group provided that, as a group they have no other affiliation” Bill W. February 1948.

Jane S.

Pembroke, Ontario

My home group (Fall Island Big Book Group) decided to stop meeting in person mid-march 2020. We evaluated the free Zoom program vs FreeConferenceCall and decided on Zoom. So I purchased a monthly account. At the next District meeting we agreed to have District 42 pay the account, use it for our District meetings, and make it available to all groups in the District. (Subject to only one meeting at a time.)

We have had four groups use it at some point in the last year - Sunday - Fall Island Big Book Group (just did our 50th week last night; first was on 3/22/20)

Monday - Potsdam Women’s Meeting

Wednesday - St. Lawrence Freethinkers

Friday - Friday Night Responsibility

As well, other groups and meetings have their own accounts: Friday night Came to Believe Group / Monday Night Big Book Meeting (Zoom)

Potsdam Nooners Group (6 days a week - FreeConferenceCall)
Friends and Neighbors (7 nights a week, a Zoom-only meeting) operated for several months, but is now inactive

An interesting result of online meetings is that my home group typically has 12-15 people and about half are from Florida (friends of / “snowbird” members of our group) and, occasionally, from Illinois, New York, and even Canada :)

Also, we now have two District servants who have said they can serve ONLY via Zoom due to health or family reasons. So we may stay with Zoom District even after we would be allowed to meet in person. It is a big advantage during winter weather to not have to drive up to 25 miles to attend the District meeting.

I hope there are some usable “nuggets” for your article. Thanks for your service as Archivist!

Milner