**Queens Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous Newsletter**

**105-29A Metropolitan Ave. Forest Hills, NY, 11375**

**Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 7pm to 9pm, Saturdays 10am to 2pm**

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I thought it would be a wonderful idea if our departing QIAA Chair could submit an article elaborating on her experience as QIAA Chair for the past year. She acquiesced and submitted the following composition. Here it is in her own words.

**A Message from our QIAA Chair Stephanie P.**

The year 2021 marked the 30th Anniversary of our own Queens Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous – and what a year it was!

QIAA rocketed into the third millennium with a new website that is not only upgraded but is also simple and very user friendly. A few of the many features that QIAA’s website includes are (1) an interactive meeting list which, with a single mouse click, takes you right to a Zoom meeting, (2) the ability for groups to easily update their meeting information online, (3) Google maps for locating live meetings, (4) a calendar of QIAA events, and (5) a downloadable, printer-friendly list of “live” meetings. If you haven’t done this already, check out the new website at [www.queensaa.org](http://www.queensaa.org/).

Most of us finally got a handle on Zoom, and we experienced the “Zoom Boom” – the ability to attend AA meetings every hour of every day - not only here in New York, but throughout the United States and around the world. QIAA held monthly Speaker Exchange Meetings and quarterly Group Representatives Meetings on Zoom. These activities provide a virtual forum for the Groups that comprise the core of QIAA, keeping alive the vital connections among us during the spread of pandemic.

And, thanks to the Zoom Boom, we celebrated first anniversaries of members who never attended a “live” meeting. Miracles, all!

On September 18, 2021, we had a party and celebrated the 30th anniversary of our QIAA – a real, honest-to-goodness live, in-person event! Thanks to the support of the groups that constitute QIAA, attendees enjoyed a delicious COVID-safe meal, followed by a meeting featuring AAs who shared their stories of how QIAA was founded and how QIAA continues to strive to be of service to Queens AA groups. And then, music and dancing! For so many of us, this was the first time in a year and a half that we were in a room that was **real**, populated with dozens of other flesh-and-blood AAs. What a gift!

As I write this article, we are in the midst of the Thanksgiving Virtual Share-A-Thon, and are now accepting registrations for the upcoming Holiday Virtual Share-A-Thon. AA members provide the lifeblood for these Share-A-Thons. They would not be possible without the service of our AA volunteers!

Now, we are about to enter 2022, and the challenges it presents. More meetings will be returning to “live” format, and groups will have to deal with the health concerns of their members as well as with the COVID-related conditions imposed by meeting venues. Some groups have lost their meeting space as a result of the pandemic and will need to find new homes for their meetings. Other groups have experienced a shortage of members who want to do “live” service, either due to health concerns or due to, what I call, Zoom malaise (i.e., the state of mind that says “Someone else can do that while I keep my able-bodied-self planted in front of my computer screen”).

Yes, Zoom is a wonderful tool that has greatly expanded the reach of the AA message – but live meetings are essential to AA’s existence, and we need people to keep the doors open. I pray that 2022 will be a year where an abundance of willing AAs step up and give service as meetings reopen.

For me, doing service has always been a joy – even though I may not have realized it at the time. In September of 2019, Antonio G. and I met for lunch in my hometown of Astoria. Antonio was the tireless Chair of QIAA, and he had asked me to be his Vice Chair – and at this lunch I told him that I would accept the appointment. I admitted that I was a bit fearful at the prospect of succeeding him as overall Chair. Antonio said “Don’t worry. It’s easy – not a lot to do. Just watch me and you’ll learn. And you’ll have a year to do that!”

And I watched that handsome, energetic, dedicated man from that point on – until February 1, 2020, when he called me from Queens County Hospital to tell me that I had to take over as QIAA Chair because he was too sick to continue. I was so jolted by this, feeling very fearful and believing myself to be totally incapable of fulfilling the duties of Chair. But Antonio coaxed me in off the ledge – telling me that I did not have to do the job alone, because the great group of people that comprise the QIAA Steering Committee would help me. And that I always had to remember that God would guide me through all of it.

Antonio was right! The Steering Committee members, past and present, were there for me every step of the way, educating me in the workings of Queens Intergroup and the many services it performs throughout the AA community. After a while, I comfortably settled into the position of Chair, and at last I realized what a wonderful gift from God this service is.

I will be stepping down as QIAA Chair at the end of this year, to be succeeded by the beyond-excellent Emily M. I consider Emily and me to be Antonio’s prodigies, because it was his enthusiasm, good humor and love for AA that brought us into Queens Intergroup service. I wish he were still here with us (he would have loved the 30th Anniversary celebration!), but I know his beautiful spirit lives on in the many people he helped.

So, I now raise a glass of Martinelli’s Sparkling Apple Cider (the BEST non-alcoholic alternative to champagne!) and offer a holiday toast in gratitude:

* For all the people who did service for QIAA this year;
* For all the people who laid the foundation upon which Queens Intergroup is built; and
* For all the people in 2022 who will commit to AA service - so that our fellowship will continue to grow and thrive, no matter what trials and tribulations present themselves.

God bless!

Stephanie P.

**QIAA Elections**

In the Spirit of Rotation, the following Open positions were elected in December:

1. Stephanie p. is the new Office Manager

2. Laurie (Forest Hills Workshop) is the new 12th Step Coordinator

I would like to congratulate the newly elected officers. Welcome!

The following positions are still open and the full descriptions and requirements can be found at <https://www.queensas.org/service>

1. Vice Chair (1 yr, then rotates into Chair)

2. Vice Treasurer (1 yr, then rotates into Treasurer)

3. Vice Webmaster (2 yrs)

4. Newsletter Chair (2 yrs)

5. Intergroup/General Service Liaison (TK yrs)

The following positions were not elected in December, although they are technically up for reelection, according to By-Laws:

1. Special Events Coordinator (2 yrs; Adina will continue for one more year)

2. Secretary (2 yrs; Chelsea will continue for one more year)

3. Webmaster (2 yrs; Martin will continue for one more year)

Chair for Institutions’ Committee – Mike L., 718-757-9317 will stand and be ratified by that committee and that person must have served on the committee for one year.

\*Darren, the Institutions/Literature Coordinator is looking for members wanting to do service commitments. Spots are still available at Jamaica VA, Creedmor, Flushing Detox and Cornerstone. Please contact Darren, 516-592-9517 or Eddie, 347-223-3558, if you are interested.

**Share-A-Thons**

 The Thanksgiving Share-A-Thon was held from Wednesday, November 24, 2021 at 3 pm and continued through Saturday, November 27, 2021 with the last meeting ending at 11:50 pm. As usual, it was another successful event held by QIAA. Thanks to the tireless efforts of all the QIAA facilitators, and you know who you are! There were 81 total meetings with an average of 42 participants per meeting.

I had the honor and privilege to participate in the overnight slot (12 am - 6 am) with my homegroup, Elm Heights. I know during my drinking days, I went many nights where I drank right through the night and past 6 am. So the question is, what am I willing to do to stay sober today? Sometimes, you have to put the pedal to the metal.

Back in September, while I was attending the 30th Anniversary of QIAA held at Our Lady of Mercy RC Church in Forest Hills, I ran into none other than Bobby J, who has done tireless service for QIAA for many years. After chatting with Bobby, he told me that he had an article he wanted to submit to the QIAA Newsletter. I said, “Give me that story!”. After reading it, I said, “This has to be published.” Here is an excerpt from Bobby J’s metaphorical story:

**ANTS**

I’m so grateful for the gift of desperation that led me to the doorstep of AA . As I’ve been here the gift has been replaced with a Higher Power, an amazing program, and a fellowship full of patience and tolerance. There is another gift that is so awesome. The gift of identification. Once you have it everything old seems new, different, and downright astonishing. I’ve seen Star Wars 30 times, but in recovery it’s different. The Force is the higher power. Obi-Wan Kenobi is the sponsor, Luke is the willing sponsee, Han Solo is the guy on the fence not sure AA works, and Darth Vader is the disease. Now I watch other shows with the same AA eye. I saw a nature show about ants, big ones and little ones, and these big ants go out to a tree that has little ants living in it. They attack the little ants, destroy them and take the eggs back to the nest. I thought they would eat them. Wrong. The big ants hatch the little ants and raise them into slavery. Teaching them to do the things they themselves should be doing. The little ants go on happily doing their jobs never knowing that they are different. Never knowing freedom.

When they can no longer live up to the big ants desires, they are discarded or killed.

Every now and then a little ant puts out the waste and cannot find his way back to the colony. Out of nowhere he picks up a different pheromone he has never smelled before. He doesn’t seem afraid of it; it just calls him and he follows. As he draws closer to the new group of little ants, he knows he is in the right place. The colony begins to teach him how to do service for the group, caring for the eggs, and keeping the colony area clean. He also went out with other ants to gather food and pick up lost ants. I was one of those little ants that was born and raised with a disease, and didn’t know it, I thought it was just like every other ant. It was all I knew. Then another ant just like me led me to a group of little ants just like us. The AA colony (group), my higher power (God), the fellowship (other human beings), and the program (12 & 12). I didn’t know what freedom & happiness was, but somehow it found me.

AA is a wonderful world of answers. Today I am blessed to have a chance to live the questions. The past is perfect.

Special thanks to Chelsea M., John Francis B. for edits, my sponsee Atif C., and the entire QIAA Steering Committee. If you have any articles that you would like to submit, you may email me at shearseddie@gmail.com. Please limit articles to 1-2 pages and a maximum of 2,000 words. Lastly, I would like to personally thank Chelsea for emailing all the Group Representatives the 3rd Quarter Newsletter.