

# Pandemic Pandemonium in AA Groups-Town Hall Mtg

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## Opening Remarks

At first, I thought the pandemic would suspend AA meetings for only a few months and then we would simply return to our regular meetings. Now, it is clear this world-wide event has overwhelmingly changed every day life for most people. With the thought the already lengthy interruption to established AA meetings will continue for an unknown period of time, it is safe to say the Fellowship is now past the time when we will return to meetings and find them as we knew them.

The regularly-occurring and unmanageable life events that affect the membership of any meeting have continued with the pandemic. Members have continued to stop coming to meetings because they die, move their residences, become isolated due to a serious illness of their own or of a family member, return to drinking, or simply leave AA. While there will be events that remain outside our control, we need to understand more about what we can control and share information on how we maintain our AA groups as the foundation of our Fellowship.

Overall, the membership has responded well to keeping AA meetings available with the widespread use of internet meetings. While internet/online meetings have existed for decades, the pandemic has made them the experience of the majority of AA members. It is interesting that online meetings that for many years have been the subject of much criticism by fellow AA members, has served to open the doors for many people who for a variety of reasons would be totally or partially limited in their attendance to meetings. It has also allowed us all to access meetings across the country and around the world. On the other hand, there are members who for a variety of reasons do not at all care for the media with some simply refusing to attend an online meeting.

The most significant effect upon AA life is concern for newcomers who wish to access AA. We need our service committees to understand how well the usual referral sources for newcomers are actually working right now. Serving the newcomer is regularly cited as the reason some in-person meetings have been ongoing or have resumed. We have been hearing the degree to which all members of a group cooperate in their observance of social distancing practices will determine a member's decision to attend or stop attending a group. Also, can we assume all newcomers desire to attend in-person meetings?

The point of this workshop is to begin a discussion on how the groups as the foundation of the AA Fellowship are navigating through this event. Our group has decided to continue online for now, we specifically hope to hear about re-establishing some of the foundational elements of group life:

- Welcoming Newcomers
- Literature
- 7th Tradition
- Local 12-Step Work

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- Communication with other groups - local as well as AA as a whole

Because the 7th Tradition sustains our service boards and committees that are responsible to perform 12-Step work in our geographic area, we want to give you an idea of the numbers of groups that were listed in the directories of our two local central offices pre-pandemic and compare them to the type and number of meetings that are listed today.

The table below shows that before the pandemic, there were over 1640 meetings listed in the directories of our local central offices. The following number is presented to give you an idea of the strength of the current ability to reach groups in matters about AA as a whole. Groups need a General Service Representative, commonly referred to as a GSR, to be informed on matters affecting AA as a whole. Pre-pandemic 14% of the listed meetings were represented by General Service Representatives; this means 85% of the meetings listed are likely to be out of the communication loop. The numbers and varieties of meetings appearing on the websites of each central office are displayed. It is noted the total of the Post Pandemic meetings is 29% of the number listed Pre-Pandemic. What this means for the number of represented groups is unknown. I want us all to think about what this may mean for the future of AA and its service committees.

**Table: Count of Groups in the San Diego-Imperial Area**

| <b>PRE-PANDEMIC</b>              |                          |                             |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Listed                           | 1640                     |                             |
| GSO & Central Offices            |                          |                             |
| <b>General Service Structure</b> |                          |                             |
| Represented                      | 225                      | 14%                         |
| Unrepresented                    | 1415                     | 85%                         |
| <b>TODAY*</b>                    |                          |                             |
|                                  | San Diego Central Office | North County Central Office |
| Zoom Only                        | 210                      | 230                         |
| Room & Zoom (Hybrid)             |                          |                             |
| Room Only                        |                          | 12                          |
| Phone Meetings                   | 10                       |                             |
| Outdoor Meetings                 | 20                       |                             |
| <b>Total Today</b>               |                          | <b>482</b>                  |

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\*Please know the meetings numbers in the table above are constantly changing; many meetings created after the pandemic are not listed. A few examples of what we don't know are:

- The total of Video Conference meetings
- The total of face-to-face meetings
- The total of suspended meetings that but have not re-listed?

### Unlisted Meeting Information

As requested in the Chat, we are listing the unlisted, face-to-face meetings that were mentioned by one of the speakers. Information on unlisted Zoom meetings and upcoming events can be found in **red type** under the **Excerpts from Chat**. Within the Chat are links to resources and information on Zoom meetings. To access the links, you may need to copy and paste them into your browser.

Mondays 6:30pm. Women's Closed.  
San Carlos Recreation Center  
6445 Lake Badin Ave, 92119.  
Meets on grass closest to Lake Adlon,  
bring a chair & jacket. Facial mask required.

Tuesday men's 7:00pm 4567 Acacia in La Mesa

Wednesday men's 7:30 2705 Bancroft Dr, Spring Valley

Thursday men's 4:30p Lemon Grove Alano Club

Sat men's breakfast meeting at 4567 Acacia in La Mesa. Breakfast from 7:30-9a.  
Meeting from 9a-10:30

Sunday mixed 6:45p at a park in La Mesa on Fury 2 blocks east of Avocado.

Daily mixed 5:30p  
4425 Valeta St. in O.B.

Wednesday Mixed 7:30pm  
Bonfire meeting at Crowne Point.

### ZOOM Meeting Information

1000+ zoom aa meetings at [aa-Intergroup.org](http://aa-Intergroup.org)

Noon meeting 7 days a week (San Diego) Midday Miracles, ID 393 949 572, pwd 831480

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**319 zoom meeting info:** Meeting ID: 144 108 372 PW: 169258, <https://zoom.us/j/144108372?pwd=RmJuRytnOG54R3hQb0Q0MHc2TkdiQT09>, [319zoom@gmail.com](mailto:319zoom@gmail.com)

**Sunday International Zoom Big Book Step Study Workshops** (5:30 pm EDT / 10:30 pm Great Britain) - send your email address to [thebigbookstudy@aol.com](mailto:thebigbookstudy@aol.com). That way you'll be placed on the list to receive weekly handout material.

## Upcoming Events on Zoom

**The Unity & Service Conference, coming Sept 5 & 6 on Zoom, will have ASL interpretation for all sessions.** <https://unityandserviceconference.org>

**North County Hospitals and Institutions Committee** [nchandi.org](http://nchandi.org) or email us at [northcountyhandi@gmail.com](mailto:northcountyhandi@gmail.com)

## Meeting Support Resources

Meeting Reopening Document: <https://www.area8aa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SDIAA-Reopening-Condensed-REV-6-3-1.pdf>

Electronic Newcomer Packet: <https://tinyurl.com/AAnewcomers>

**These documents are on the area8aa.org website for zoom meetings:**

<https://www.area8aa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/How-to-use-Zoom.pdf>

<https://www.area8aa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Suggested-Steps-to-Support-Anonymity-on-ZOOM.pdf>

<https://www.area8aa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Digital-Meeting-S>

## Panel One - The AA Group

Moderator: Rose

Timer: Bill

**Panel 1: Richard – Topic: We're Meeting Face-to-Face**

Richard spoke about attending 3 different meetings, all of which are meeting in-person; one of which has been meeting live since the pandemic began. At first, the Monday evening group made efforts to follow COVID guidelines with no more than 10 members in a room; splitting into different rooms if more than showed up. He stopped attending one meeting for a month when group members stopped wearing masks, however, after a group conscience reinforced both mask-wearing and social distancing, he returned. While some members choose to wear masks, and others don't, the group's attendance has remained consistent and rent is being paid.

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A second group he attends initially shut down until clear guidelines were established and put in place. This group continues to follow protocols and members are slowly returning to the meeting. He spoke about members' need to see people and meet newcomers in-person.

A third group Richard attends meets outdoors, on the church's patio; social distancing is practiced.

### **Panel 2: Richard (filled in) - Topic: We're Meeting by Video Conference**

Richard, stepping up to fill in at the last minute, spoke about his experience with a Zoom meeting in Bonita that began using Zoom in early April. One issue plaguing many meetings, "bombing" was dealt with in two ways. First, the room is opened 20 minutes prior to greet individuals and identify anyone who may not be legitimate members of AA. The group also conducted a group conscience and closed the group chat down until they instituted the pre-group check-in. While this group uses Venmo for their 7th Tradition, others have established PayPal accounts.

Richard notes that Zoom meetings have allowed people with health concerns to attend. Members who have left the area as well as visitors from other parts of the county, state and country can attend. One drawback he has noticed is the multi-tasking that can go on while on Zoom; doing dishes and other tasks have been observed.

### **Questions/Comments**

George; thank you for the presentation. Multi-tasking at zoom meetings – not much different than knitting at face-to-face meeting . eat sometimes – not comfortable to attend f2f yet, thinking about going to out of town meetings on Zoom.

Jay – two-part question: Isn't there a health ordinance that we're not to gather in San Diego? Are we jeopardizing AA by ignoring this directive? Among other things, if busted, isn't there a fine of up to year in prison for violating the order? AA groups are not classified as essential businesses. What is our responsibility when groups are not following the social distance?

Meredith: this is my first town hall – I'm going to more meetings than before (the pandemic) – it's good for us with agoraphobia – people and God have come into my house. I (suspect) we're in a grass roots learning curve. Will central office get involved in developing protocols and incorporate zoom as an official meeting? Why aren't we in an essential business?

Joni – thank you to Three Legacies for hosting – I came with an open mind – Our women's meeting went to Zoom at first but have returned to in-person meetings. The church provided clear guidelines for the group to follow and we respect these. For example, remaining 6 feet apart. Other protocols include not passing tokens or birthday cards and keeping the donation basket up front and center. Currently, we average 9 to 18 women and we continue to take every precaution to keep people safe.

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Jane – I am aware a meeting in Orange county has been declared as essential. We need to recognize that there is no authority in AA to police meetings; I (personally) would not want to be the meeting that makes the nightly news as a bad example. We are free to put together classes about Zoom. As I said in the opening, the Fellowship has no outside dependence. Unity means any member can step up and take the lead. We are solely responsible to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Submitted by Notetaker: Harlan

### **Panel 2 - Our Primary Purpose: staying sober and helping other alcoholics achieve sobriety**

Moderator shared that the Spanish Women's Group has been classified as a Remote Community struggling carry the message with hispanic women in our community. The Zoom platform has been reaching and connecting women worldwide, from U.S., Mexico, South America, and Europe.

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Speaker 3: Jeremy L., Area 08 DCM District 2; Committee Chair, North San Diego Young People in AA.

Topic: Do Zoom meetings (video format) attract newcomers amongst young people?

Many young people are coming to AA now because of the Zoom experience (video format). I have two sponsees that I've never personally met, that live outside of California, that I met on Zoom meetings. It works well with their schedules; so much more flexibility with meeting efficiently and comfortably. You can attend a meeting in Australia where you think no one would recognize you.

The number of people coming to AA for their FIRST meeting is huge. This is true not just from San Diego, but from all over.

However, in my district meetings, I regularly hear that some can't wait to meet in person (like they are used to.) Others question how good AA can be through the electronic medium. It is our responsibility to make (electronic) meetings attractive, especially ones with a first-time experience.

Some ways are opening the meeting early and have music playing or invite really good speakers from anywhere to come and share.

We recently had a workshop called The Modern Doctor's Opinion, with a panel of a physician, a therapist, and an AA member. It was well-attended from all over the U.S.

The benefit of Zoom is that you don't have to spend all this time and money traveling to get the AA experience that best benefits you.

Many members say that when they can go back to physical meetings, they want the electronic method to continue. There is a feeling amongst the younger crowd that AA in this digital world is one we are very comfortable with....almost more attractive than a stuffy room. This technological version of A.A. most closely resembles the world we live in.

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We need to keep the experience accessible to all, young and old, new and long-timer. Thank you. Speaker 4: Laurie R., 29 years of sobriety, held service positions at group level, as Alternate GSR, and on the San Diego Spring Round-up committee.

I've observed that some newcomers seem to be having a hard time connecting with the fellowship. We may praise and welcome them to on-line meetings, offer them a phone list, and stay afterwards to but not facilitating a way to make them a part of the group.

Another event I observed with a long-standing member of my home group. She was struggling and exhausted from prolonged stress and was having trouble making it to the zoom meeting. As she shared, she morphed into a political rant. Normally, the job of the Secretary of the meeting would have stepped in. However, a Co-Moderator jumped in quickly, and asked her to stop in a less-than gentle manner. She sent a message through the chat to the member (co-moderator) stating her hurt and anger. It went not to him privately, but to the whole group. She left early and hasn't been back. I'm not aware that anyone followed up with her.

I wonder if it was the Co-Moderator's place to jump in and correct that situation? These new zoom roles have left some grey areas on who's responsible for what.

I researched and found a document in the past minutes that outlined some roles, and others, not defined. I questioned whether they are valid because these role guidelines because they hadn't been brought back to the group specifically for taking a group conscience. Also it seemed that some traditions (especially 2 and 4) were ignored for expediency, or not acted upon. There was immediate pushback from the committee that created the document.

Where does that leave us and the accurate functioning of our groups? These are unprecedented times. I hope we can care for our members and for newcomers so all can feel safe during this stressful time.

Thank you.

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Speaker 5: Danny V., 4 yrs sobriety, and home group is Casa de Oro Tradition Five.

I am very passionate about this topic (carrying the message to the alcoholic that still suffers.). I attend in-person meetings 2-3 times a week and have since the pandemic started.

There are some of us that haven't been sober that long that need the tools, and I get it at the in-person meetings. I have some young sponsees, and I need to see them face-to-face to see them and feel their energy.

I come to Alcoholics Anonymous because I do not want to die. And, I will continue to hold my hand out to others to help them get it.

Zoom doesn't give us the same contact as in-person meetings.

I know more people who have died from alcoholism than from the pandemic. For me (this disease) is life or death.

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When I go to meetings, I don't go to govern. ie. To wear a mask or not wear a mask. If newcomers see us arguing about these guidelines, they are going to leave. Who can blame them?

I don't get what I need from the screen (video format) because people get too distracted. It's completely different in a face-to-face meeting.

My Sunday night meeting can't meet in our room at the church, so we've moved it to a nearby park. We started with 12-15 people, and now it's grown to 36-40. We sit farther apart from each other and all are welcome. My Tuesday night meeting is doing the same, meeting in a park and practicing social distancing.

I do zoom meetings on Monday and Wednesday nights.

I need the physical meetings and I will continue to attend and will continue to reach my hand out to others.

I give my phone number to newcomers and will meet with them anytime I can. I don't want to die, and I don't want anyone else I know to die from this disease.

Thank you.

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### Q and A, or Comments:

- Attends 2 daily zoom meetings where I feel very connected.
- Zoom mtg: people willing to sponsor post their phone numbers, and members follow-up with newcomers.
- Zoom since April. Never have done as much work with newcomers, and has been so rewarding. I "troll" for newcomers at zoom mtgs to follow through with their contact.
- Have been attending a Zoom mtg now for 24 weeks. Phone List is actively used. Many people are taking tokens for 30, 60, 90 days of sobriety.
- Service and H and I: alive and well. Facilities can't have panels coming in now, but we are providing zoom mtgs weekly in the facility. Contact me or H and I to get involved.
- Don't want us to put AA meetings in jeopardy by breaking local ordinances about gathering together.
- Area work done on "re-opening" pamphlet for questions to ask your facility.
- Been meeting as deaf over zoom from all over the world. The deaf wants to keep zoom meetings going because many in-person meetings do not have interpreters.
- Had to find the proper type of meetings that work for me. With Zoom format, a smaller group works better for me.
- Miss live meetings, but things have changed. Zoom meetings are here to stay.

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-Some comments from Chat:

-Area 8 (San Diego/Imperial) has created a flyer of questions a meeting can discuss with its facilities to establish guidelines. Link given.

Big Book Step Study Workshop, Great Britain 10:00 pm, 5:30pm EDT. Email address to receive weekly handout material: [thebigbookstudy@aol.com](mailto:thebigbookstudy@aol.com)

## PANEL 3 - Our Common Welfare

MALE: Thanks, Tom. The name of this panel if you guys see in the poll or is that just something I have. I'm sorry. The name of this panel is Our Common Welfare. The note taker is Jane M. The timer is Rose.

FEMALE: Do you want me to say something?

MALE: Just to repeat. So it's the same as the other two panels. You have 60 seconds to share and I'll give you a little voice notification when you have 52 seconds left.

BILL: Thanks, Rose. So the theme of this panel, again, is Our Common Welfare. And I just want to share that this conversation for me is of immense importance and speaks well, I think, to the purpose for this entire gathering, Our Common Welfare, which should come first, our first tradition states. It reminds me on how I talk about a meeting, perhaps the times in a negative way, in the message that that might send or divide that can negatively impact the welfare of a group and especially an individual. This more often than not prompts me to be more mindful and to better practice the principle of anonymity. And that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions ever reminding us to place principles before personalities for the sake of our common welfare. Our speaker for this segment was Kimberly and unfortunately I was just made aware that she is ill. So we wish her the best, of course, and Matt L. will be standing in her place and he's ready to go. Matt is a friend of mine and, Jeremy, he's probably younger than you, so he may be the youngest in the room. I'm taking a shot when I say that and Matt is extremely active with NSDYPAA and GSDYPAA. That's North San Diego Young People's and Greater San Diego Young People's. I know he's co-treasurer for one of them.(2:21) chair, and I appreciate you being here, Matt. Now, I'll let you take it away.

MATT: Thanks. Thanks, Bill. Hi, everyone. I'm Matt, an alcoholic. You already asked the question. Yes. Does attending AA meetings and video conferences, conference platforms enhance or diminish my sense of a

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common welfare? When I was sent that question, you know, my initial thought was both, so that's the answer I'm going to go with. That's the short form. The long form is, you know, like there is something that comes from seeing a human being on a spiritual and emotional level to being in person with another human being and being with a large group of people together, that's something -- that's something that you can't really substitute with Zoom. You know, so the common welfare for me suffers in that regard. You know, that's what I have noticed. You know, there is something to be said for being with people that are around you. Given that the circumstances that we are facing as a society, it is just the way the cookie crumbles, and it is as someone with several, you know, compromised people in my life, in-person meetings aren't something that I can undertake. What I have seen though on the other side of it is enhancement of the common welfare from the sense that I have, as a member of NSDYPA, been party to seeing 16 members of the ASL community in a room at one of our events express how ??bare?? the breadth and scope of their recovery circle is now larger as a result of Zoom meetings, right? There is only so many people who in the deaf and hard of hearing community in San Diego and the meetings that they would normally be able to attend. Now, with Zoom, they're able to go and meet people from all over. I've been at Zoom meetings with people from Australia, from Ireland, from Czechoslovakia, from all over the entire world. So like being able to see this business of Alcoholics Anonymous is so much larger than me. You know, beyond the scope of Escondido, California, beyond the scope of San Diego County, beyond the scope of California. We're like in the international -- like we're an ICYPAA made up mostly of people from the United States. I've been able to experience what recovery and the perspectives of people from all across the world, you know, and in other countries, AA is a lot smaller. AA is not what it is in San Diego where every hour of every day you can find a meeting. You know, if it's midnight, you can go to a meeting. Go to Lestat's and find the recovery, you know. In places like Australia, like various parts of Europe, you know, like these people and people in remote parts of the United States, you know, they might have one meeting at one time a week, and so being able to carry the message to a new subgroup, a new different segment of AA to the underserved populations that exist in AA, it is really, really cool, and I've seen the common welfare of our fellowship as a whole blew in this Zoom environment. You know, it is a clean sustainable form of common welfare that we would normally not be able to obtain in a normal circumstances -- sorry, my computer was slipping.

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It's been a different experience for sure with this remote recovery type stuff. The thing that I have noticed is that my -- the way in which I think and consider the common welfare has definitely changed, you know. Meeting makers make meetings and that's about it, right? Meetings are a place to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous, you know, and so when I see a newcomer identify when I hear a friend who is struggling with alcohol, you know, and I invite them to come to a meeting, you know, I have to reconsider the effort that I made beyond the meeting in order to make sure that they are hearing the message of Alcoholics Anonymous and make sure that they are able to find the recovery that is necessary for them to see that they realize that the steps are what are going to keep them -- are going to get them and keep them sober, you know. And, you know, it's not as simple as just like staying after and talking to someone, you know. It requires me to like to take their number down and call them and, you know, text them and see how they're doing. Maybe if I can invite them to different recovery groups that I'm a part of, or like see their Facebook pages, maybe try and bring them into the fold of my friend groups, you know, all the stuff that goes into the unity aspect of my recovery, I have to try and open that up to new people which is really uncomfortable for me. You know, and so in trying to enhance my sense of common welfare, I have to reconsider the way that I am trying to carry the message to the newcomer rather than just stay set in my ways. You know, like I can't talk to them at the meetings, although, you know, I have to make a special extra effort in order to ensure my own recovery in this pandemic. So with that, I'm assuming I think I've spoke for my 5 minutes. So with that, I'll pass it off to whoever's next.

MALE: Okay. Thanks so much, Matt. Tom and everyone, regarding the poll popping up, it doesn't seem to be on the screen any longer. So I think we're in front of that. So, next speaker is John M. and give me one second, find my place. Yes. Okay. John's experience is -- spans over 3 decades with Alcoholics Anonymous and John has served as the San Diego Coordinating Council's Business Committee Chair and is currently, after all that time, is serving as a GSR. So, with that, welcome -- let's please welcome John M.

JOHN M: Welcome to every one of you that's here as well as some of the regulars and their usual suspects among us. I've been asked if I could speak to whether or not one of our, quote, unquote, live or in-person meetings is

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able to adhere to the TC guidelines. GSR for my home group which is approaching 7 years old that went virtual on Zoom as soon as the pandemic word came down and decided that we, the facility, and others have been on Zoom, and that's not to what I'm going to speak to tonight. What I'm going to speak to is another one that of Imperial Beach. Richard mentioned our second speaker that there are several meetings down in the Imperial Beach area and ours is about the 4th one besides the Alano Club where they are still meeting in person. The one that Richard mentioned along with 2 other ones, they're meeting inside and are in a room in a small enclosed classroom that seats no more than about a dozen. The Sunday night I Be Sober Group, which is a 3-1/2 year old Big Book study meeting, where you basically take a paragraph of the book and tear it apart until there is nothing left of it, then move on, that one, when the pandemic hit, the treasurer disappeared, never to be heard from again -- although we did recover the money -- and then the secretary disappeared, never even heard from again. So the group sort of scattered once the pandemic orders came down and a couple of us came back into our reconstituted group, there were 2 or 3, and then we said we can't meet inside, that violates -- Tim and Dave talked about earlier -- the letter of the law that's come down from the San Diego County Health Authority, as well as the spirit of being good tenants to our landlords, and in the course of doing that, they said, well, what's -- there's just a few of us, why don't we each go grab a chair from inside the room, we'll drag it out in the parking lot where we have our meeting. So that simple little spark of an idea has turned into that meeting on a Saturday night, basically becoming, I think, Jane had a count of meetings outside, it's probably the 13th meeting that actually meets outside on a fairly regular basis. Can a group adhere to the TC guidelines? Yes. Now, able versus willing are not the same thing. In most dimensions we do. We have a basket in the middle that no longer gets passed around, people throw money in or not, the money sits and dries out for a week. We do welcome newcomers but no longer hand out tokens or literature pamphlets, but they're welcome to dip into a bag and take a book, a Big Book out of it if they want to. We are keeping a physical distance and everybody handles their own chair. We're not using masks and I think the group has deliberately avoided the discussion about having a mask because we're outside in the parking lot. There's usually a stiff wind coming off the beach since we're about 2 miles away from it and we're maintaining that distance. So after 5 months of doing this, the group seems to have settled into a rhythm and a comfort section. The only other touch point about complying with the CDC and County Health guidelines is minimize the touch points. I mentioned the basket and the

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tokens, but the other thing we're doing is there's a common key for the bathroom. That one is basically hung on a sanitizer bottle so you can sanitize your hand when you grab the key, and after you use the bathroom, when you come back, sanitize your hands again. So in most of those, dimensions that are weighed out in the CDC are able to provide masks, doesn't look quite as willing to do that, and again that's something that the group is going to have a discussion on, and that's going to be in September. With that, let me shut the hell up. I've trying to go the whole 5 minutes. If there are any questions, I'd be happy to answer for you. Thank you all for the privilege of letting me be here.

MALE: Thank you, John, very much. That was very good. Okay. I seem to have lost my Page 3 of my notes, but I think I can handle it. So, Tom, we'll have another sharing session for a total of 7 minutes.

FEMALE: Yeah.

MALE: So, timer, be aware, and I will now look for raised hands and I'm going to see -- I saw Susie's hand just pop up.

SUSIE: Hi, I'm Susie. I'm an alcoholic. We have -- we meet outside in La Mesa offering discussion meeting in Jackson Park, but we'd require everybody to do the socially distancing and wear their mask. Only when they're sharing they can take their mask off. And it seems to be working. We do have a fairly good sized meeting. We do put the box in the middle for people to donate and we've been really doing quite well. The church won't let us come back yet. They -- we sent them all kinds of different guidelines and they're not willing. So that's where we are right now. Things that we're worrying about is that we moved it up from 7:30 to 7:00 and it's going to be dark here pretty soon and we're going to probably have to go back on Zoom, and, you know, that's what we're going to have to do. So and when it gets colder out. But right now we're good and it is about -- well, 15 to 25 people in a park. So that's it. Thank you.

MALE: Okay. Thank you. Jean S.

JEAN: Hi, I'm Jean. I'm an alcoholic. And I just wanted to say and I don't know if there's any way possible to get a whole count but I know on Jane's count that she came up with, I personally know of several meetings that have just never been meetings before that have been started up because of Zoom. I know I do one just with my own sponsor. And that's been a joy. That's something totally new. And the other thing is that there are -- there is some concern about meetings that one of my home meetings

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which is now not on the website, I don't believe, because we got severely bombed right at the beginning and we just decided to start over and do it again. I was just at a meeting, the King School meeting in Akron, Ohio, which is the first meeting of AA, and that loudly bombed on Wednesday. So I'm hoping that we'll get more guidance from others about -- and maybe a workshop -- on how to handle bombings in meetings. Thank you. That's it.

MALE: Thank you. Is there anyone in the Spanish room or the ASL room or the ASL room who would like to share? And just speak up. Take your time while you're hopefully coming aboard.

MALE: -- in the ASL room that would like to share?

MALE: Please, go ahead.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Brian. I'm an alcoholic. And I'm in the accessibility committee and the ASL interpreter coordinator. I noticed that in our home groups that's for deaf and signing people, it's called No Barriers ASL, we have some people who are from out of state who are looking for sponsors and there, you know, we are willing to sponsor. What's your opinion about sponsoring people who are from out of state or out of San Diego? That's it.

SPEAKER: There's no rule against it.

MATT: Okay. Anyone else? ASL or Spanish? Is my timer on board? Yeah, right.

FEMALE: Yes, I'm right here.

MATT: I'm sorry. I got thrown by questioner. I don't know what the hell I'm doing anymore. Alecia, please, go ahead. Three participants. Alecia, did you have your hand raised?

ALICIA: Yes, I did. Can you hear me?

MATT: Yes.

ALICIA: Hi. My name is Alicia. I'm an alcoholic. As far as the Spanish speaking groups, I understand at this time there is 3 Spanish -- or 3 Zoom meetings that held in Scottish. One in Chula Vista. The other two, I'm not too sure. I know that out of San Diego there is a couple of Zoom meetings and they seem to be going well. I love them. I love the Zoom meetings. As a matter of fact, I attend the meetings now that they're on Zoom. I attend the afternoon meeting and it's just great. I love it. And I

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attend my home group which is at the location where it's held once a week and at that meeting, you are required to wear a mask, a mask I'm sorry, and there is flyers on the walls -- can you hear me? --

TIME: 15 seconds.

ALICIA: Okay. Regarding the safety, that you're required to wear a mask and it's going really well, and the other thing was in the Zoom meetings, a couple of people I've heard mention, is people that are annoying and alcoholics I think it's great. Thank you.

MATT: Thanks, Alecia. Rose, do we have time for -- how much do we have left?

ROSE: You mean in the 7 minutes?

MATT: Yeah. I have 3 people's hands up. Do we have time for all 3?

ROSE: Let me ask Tom if we have time.

TOM: Let's take the last 3 hands that are raised.

MATT: Very good. Let's start with Esther, followed by Justin. Esther?

ESTHER: (interpreter) My name is Esther.

MATT: So, Richard, are you going to translate her? Richard might have lost his signal.

RICHARD: I'm here.

MATT: Oh, good.

RICHARD: Esther. Okay. My name is Esther and I'm an alcoholic. a Spanish speaking group. She can't hear. Brianna's just so everybody understands, I translate and Brianna needs to tell her to stop because she's in another room. So, Esther, March 20th, you will start a Spanish speaking women's meetings startup. They meet at 10 o'clock every day. They have experienced great fellowship of women from other areas. And these Zoom meetings are giving us the opportunity to -- the difficulty is with the newcomers and that is something we can change We have had the opportunity to meet We do our best to make them feel at home and we share our telephone numbers for those that are local or as close as possible. Sometimes these are from San Francisco and across the country.

ROSE: Esther, your time is up.

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ESTHER: (Through Richard.) It has been a great advantage to have these meetings on Zoom. Bryana, let her know that she's done. We have also been able to listen to women in the hospitals.

ROSE: Okay. Thank you.

ESTHER: (Through Richard.) It has given us the opportunity to be with women who are in the hospitals as well as people who cannot come to meetings in person. Thank you.

MATT: GSR, District 13. (24:03)

MALE: Thank you. Thanks for putting on the town hall. This has been really great. I think my experience with Zoom, the evolution of it, is it's taking and experience strength and hope global. There is a gentleman at one of morning meetings and he always does this pleasant reminder, you know. This is a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is not our meeting. And it kind of open up and made people feel welcome and people from out of the country are signing up on the phone with and actually taking commitment that what was once just a local meeting that we made internally. So the last thing I wanted to know, you know, the reason I'm -- I wanted to know -- how are people handling court slips in the digital meetings, in the Zoom meetings? So if anyone can answer that, that'll be great. Thanks.

MATT: You're welcome. Tom, should we answer that now or just hit that later?

FEMALE: We should answer that now.

MALE: Yes. A quick one.

MATT: Okay. Um, so, one group announces it before, maybe during a break, for people to chat them, that they're in need of a court slip. Um, and I think one of the central offices also may have a form on line as well. Does that answer your question?

FEMALE In our three legacies meeting what we do is the secretary asks at the beginning of the meeting if anyone needs their court slip signed and then puts her email in the chat and the person who needs the court slip signed emails her and then she emails them back.

SPEAKER: Also this is a great service position. The secretary asks for the information and then they contact them either during or after the meeting. So again it's a great service position. Something to think about for Zoom meetings.

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FEMALE: Thank you.

SPEAKER: Okay. I know, I'm sticking to the plan. The possible last share at the discretion of the facilitator Tom is Michael E.

MICHAEL: Hello. My name is Michael and I'm an alcoholic. I attend the Sunday morning breakfast discussion meeting in the North Shores Alano Club at 11:00 a.m. I also work on the Board, but I will speak from my perspective as an attendee our meeting. There has been a large monitor set up there in the room at the North Shores Alano Club, and it's given a great opportunity to attend these hybrid meetings that we've been able to put on. We've started out, they were very poorly attended or very lightly attended, I should say, and over time, they've really gotten to be fairly popular. There's room for about 30 people upstairs. Maintaining social distancing, the chairs have been positioned to where we not have them moved around. As we enter the building, our temperatures are taken and there's hand sanitizer there at the time, and signage regarding social distancing, and as everybody is required to wear a mask, and I have found it to be very beneficial because we get a lot of people that were able to -- that formerly attending our meeting that are not able to get out there now because of either an age or an underlying health condition, and they really enjoy being involved in the Zoom meeting and being able to see the room, and then there's also people that have come back in some -- you now, on and off every other week. So it's really beneficial to have not only the people that have been part of our meeting all along, but also we're starting to see a lot of newcomers. There was discussion about the young people. We are seeing a lot of young people coming in because I feel like they are interested in that hands on and face-to-face approach, and it just seems to be working really well for our particular meeting on Sunday morning, so -- thanks for letting me share.

MATT: Thank you. All right, with that, I will now turn the meeting over to Tom.

### Excerpts from Chat

(The Chat was sanitized for last names, private messages, and information that is repetitious or non-relevant to the topic.)

18:52:28 From Peter B Santa Maria, Ca : 1000+ zoom aa meetings at [aa-Intergroup.org](http://aa-Intergroup.org)

19:15:51 From Tom: Three Legacies Meeting email- townhall@area8aa.org

19:35:52 From dan : [319 zoom meeting info](#)

Meeting ID: 144 108 372 PW: 169258

Minutes

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<https://zoom.us/j/144108372?pwd=RmJuRytnOG54R3hQb0Q0MHc2TkdiQT09>

319zoom@gmail.com

Thank you

Dan A

19:43:18 From Jo Ann Z to Tom: Are the members aware of the re-opening guidelines on the area website?

19:43:57 From Howard (Beacon Falls, Ct., USA) : Anyone interested in joining our **Sunday International Zoom Big Book Step Study Workshops** (5:30 pm EDT / 10:30 pm Great Britain) - send your email address to [thebigbookstudy@aol.com](mailto:thebigbookstudy@aol.com). That way you'll be placed on the list to receive weekly handout material.

19:46:32 From Penny P. – Livermore, CA : Sitting in a meeting with a newcomer and want to reach out? Here's a page with a [packet of pamphlets for newcomers](https://tinyurl.com/AAnewcomers) <https://tinyurl.com/AAnewcomers>

20:07:38 From Michael H : To stay in service work and join a zoom panel for those who can't get to a meeting, [visit nchandi.org](http://nchandi.org) or [email us at northcountyhandi@gmail.com](mailto:northcountyhandi@gmail.com)

20:09:42 From Jo Ann Z : <https://www.area8aa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SDIAA-Reopening-Condensed-REV-6-3-1.pdf>

20:11:00 From Mary and Bob: **The Unity & Service Conference, coming Sept 5 & 6 on Zoom, will have ASL interpretation for all sessions.** <https://unityandserviceconference.org>

20:11:54 From Ernest : Thank you Connie at Central Office for posting all the local Zoom meetings on the website.

20:13:55 From Jo Ann Z : <https://www.area8aa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/How-to-use-Zoom.pdf>

20:14:37 From Jo Ann Z : <https://www.area8aa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Suggested-Steps-to-Support-Anonymity-on-ZOOM.pdf>

20:16:47 From Jo Ann Z : <https://www.area8aa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Digital-Meeting-S> These documents are on the [area8aa.org](http://area8aa.org) website for zoom meetings

20:26:21 From Tom: If you want to contact us about this meeting our email is [townhall@area8aa.org](mailto:townhall@area8aa.org)

20:33:01 From John M-Imperial Beach : I think Bill Wilson sponsored a guy in Akron, Ohio (Bob Smith) from New York, so that's a pretty good legacy of long-distance sponsorship

20:34:01 From Tom: If you have ideas for more town hall meetings please let us know at [townhall@area8aa.org](mailto:townhall@area8aa.org)

There's a great noon meeting 7 days a week "based" in San Diego:

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## Midday Miracles

ID 393 949 572, pwd 831480

20:36:27 From Veronica S : Does anyone have more information on how the 7th tradition is operating in digital platforms for Zoom meetings?

20:37:32 From Jean S : some do Venmo, some send checks to the treasurer, some just send to GSO and Central.

20:37:56 From Butch M., Downtown Discussion : My home group, Downtown Discussion, makes information available in the chat so individuals can contribute to the Area, Central Office and GSO in the name of the group.

20:38:42 From Butch M., Downtown Discussion : We also make sure the group service numbers are provided to properly credit the contribution.

20:38:42 From Ann G : My groups use PayPal or Venmo. Some Secretaries have also had willingness to take checks. We have a Treasurer for Zoom and InPerson if a Hybrid Meeting to mingle the funds.

20:39:54 From Terry L. : One of my groups (a zoom meeting) makes it possible to pay electronically or by check for 7th Tradition. We also welcome newcomers and talk with them after the meeting.

20:39:57 From Joni: Is there anyway to get a copy of the list of live meetings Danny gave Tom?

20:40:16 From Tom: Yes, I will put it in the minutes

20:42:33 From NAVA M : had anyone experience a meeting where you c

20:43:26 From NAVA M : some attend in person and also in Zoom

20:43:42 From Moses: Thanks to all our presenters and our trusted servants that made possible this Town Hall Meeting. Our first five (5) traditions and how well they can be practiced in the zoom environment is what's key to our survival through this challenging period of our fellowship!

## Closing Remarks

(We ran out of time before these could be delivered but please consider these remarks.)

Our meeting studies all three of AA's Legacies: the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. Our discussions focus on how the use of the spiritual principles held all three of AA's Legacies contribute to our individual spiritual growth. You are welcome to join us. For this meeting, the

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best contribution each of us has to make is based on what we do't know. Using what we don't know to to form a question for discussion serves us by opening our minds to new information.

We meet Tuesdays on Zoom 6:30 PM to 8 PM. Zoom info for our meeting can be found at [aasandiego.org](http://aasandiego.org).

Please send an email to: [townhall@area8aa.org](mailto:townhall@area8aa.org)