

The Gay and Lesbian Community in Alcoholics Anonymous at 2010

There are special opportunities for gay/lesbian members of AA to meet and share. These events are sponsored by the International Advisory Council for Gay/Lesbian Alcoholics in AA (IAC); the AA community of gay men/women in San Antonio; and the gay/lesbian AA community of Texas. All planning is in cooperation with AA-GSO. Some frequently asked questions.

Are there special social events? Yes!

Fellowship Dance on Friday, July 2, 2010 along the beautiful Riverwalk at La Villita. Photos of the site are available at NING.

Hospitality Suite at a major hotel to be open throughout the weekend. AA-GSO has not decided which hotel as yet. We will post the information on NING as soon as we know which hotel. Also, the location will be listed in the AA convention program.

Are there special workshops for gay/lesbian alcoholics? Yes. The AA-GSO selects the topics and the presenters in the same way that it does for all other workshops.

How can I learn more about the gay/lesbian events? Go to NING at <http://aa-iac.ning.com>. Sign on and learn more.

What is NING? IAC offers an anonymous social networking site for information about the 2010 events of special interest to the gay/lesbian attendees. It is fully private. There are no portrait photos or last names. No list selling. NING's sole purpose is to get the word out to you about 2010!

Can I help with the dance or the hospitality suite?

Yes. We need you and want you. Please sign onto NING. Once you sign-on, go to the section on groups and pick-your area of interest. The committees will be in touch.

Is there another way to reach the 2010 Steering Committee? Yes.

Questions may be directed to iac2010@sbcglobal.net

Does IAC coordinate housing for gay/lesbian attendees? No.

Do volunteers get special options? No, this is service work. IAC Executive Committee members (all volunteer) and all 2010 volunteers will not receive any financial benefit/special treatment. AA-GSO provides one hotel room for IAC 2010 to be used as a "coordinating workroom" only. All committee members/volunteers will be self-supporting and pay personal convention expenses.

Why doesn't the IAC Web site have details on the dance and hospitality suite? The site is not feeling well so we moved all 2010 convention communication to NING.

SERVICE WORK! What you can do @ 2010

Share: Tell everyone about the 2010 Convention. Invite old-timers, newcomers, sponsees and sponsors to join you. Encourage people to watch the AA Web site at www.aa.org

Sign-Up: Go to <http://aa-iac.ning.com> and sign up for NING.

Join: AA individuals, groups and roundups are needed. If everyone does something, then no individual will be doing so much that they do not get to enjoy the convention. Committees need help.

Self-Support: Donations are welcomed to cover expenses for the dance and hospitality suite. Can you or your group help? Expenses include rental of dance site, band/DJ, security, decorations, rental of tables/chairs/sound equipment, napkins, cups, banners, flyers, volunteer ID tags, etc.

Dance: Make coffee. Plan the decoration theme. Pick the music. Host the coffee/snack bar. Meet and greet everyone. Put up decorations. Set-up tables. Host guests in the garden. Host guests in the Fellowship Hall. Take down site. Help transport supplies. Design a flyer. (Beverages and snacks will be purchased in advance and available at cost.)

Hospitality: Meet and greet. Provide information. Guests need time to visit, rest, unwind, make new friends, etc.

Communicate: Be the 2010 representative from your group or roundup. Write an article for the IAC newsletter. Type. Send emails. Mail packets. Design a button. Data entry.

my STORY...

I think from the time I was a small child I felt like there was something different about me; I never felt like I truly belonged. I was lonely in groups, sad much of the time and had a low self-worth. In junior high and high school I started having crushes on my girl friends and that terrified me for a time. I didn't get over it until I joined a gay and lesbian group in my early college years away from home. In the Marine Corps I started drinking heavily and it wasn't long once I got out before I picked up right where I had left off. College, after the Corps, was a blur — I didn't finish until after I got sober. I went to my first AA meeting in May 2004 but didn't stay stopped until September 2005.

When I first started going to AA meetings, I could only get a month, two months, another month, but I could never get three months. I was out another year before I came back this time. I remember being in my bedroom thinking, "I'm never going to get it unless I go to meetings — even if I'm still drinking. I better keep going to meetings." So I went, sometimes drunk and high. I went for two weeks and picked up a desire chip every day and then every day went home and drank. One day I was in the smoking room with some fellow alcoholics in recovery when a gentleman came in and said to me, "Remember rationalize," he said as he made quotation marks with his fingers: "rational-lies." Something clicked when he said that. Then, as I was relating that I didn't think I had hit my bottom (I was listing all the things that I hadn't lost) my sponsor said "[I] could lose all this."

By "this" I thought he meant all the peace and serenity, what little bit of it, that I felt while I was at our gay AA club in Houston when I showed up sober instead of sitting home alone drinking. I also thought he meant all the friends who had become family that I knew at the meetings and who were constantly telling me to "keep coming back." I decided that no matter what, I wouldn't drink that day. I knew, though, that at home alone I would drink. That day, and for three weeks after that day, I went to three meetings a day, went to coffee, went to lunch, got phone numbers and dedicated myself entirely to Alcoholics Anonymous. It worked. I finally got three months and then some. I have been sober since.

That day in the smoking room with my sponsor I took the first step, though I didn't know it then. I admitted later that I couldn't do it alone and that there was something bigger than me, I didn't know what, that was keeping me sober and giving me the willingness to give myself the best chance possible in Alcoholics Anonymous.

I took the third step on my knees in a non-religious meditation chapel, one that I felt comfortable with and had gone to previously for spiritual stillness. My sponsor said the third step prayer with me as he held my hand.

I made a list of those I had a resentment against and began to fill-out my forth step as instructed by my sponsor. We talked about it and I had some clarity of my past behaviors and what I needed (and even wanted!) to work on. I made another list of those I had wronged while drinking and discussed it with my sponsor. He suggested adding a couple more people to the list and taking some others off. We discussed whether I would make the amends in person, on the phone or by letter and he gave me an example of simple and direct phrases that I could keep in mind when making them. Most people on my list I could get in contact with in person or over the phone, but some I wrote a letter to and included my home address in case they wanted to get in contact with me afterward. After making the first few most difficult amends, I felt like I had a new life coming to me. I felt self-confidence in taking responsibility for my actions and began to look at myself differently in the mirror.

In order to continue to take a personal inventory, my sponsor today had me write-out a worksheet and print off copies. It lists the tenth-step questions from the Big Book. I always feel better when I take the time to do it before I go to bed at night. Every morning I remind myself of those last few weeks drinking and that first day sober and thank my higher power for giving me the life I have today. I admit to my Higher Power and myself that I'm powerless and state that I believe my Higher Power can return me to sanity, listing what that might look for me now. Finally, I turn my will and my life over to the care of my Higher Power for that day. I do twelve step works every time I give my phone number out to a newcomer, attend a meeting, volunteer for service work or meet someone for coffee, but recently I've also had the honor of being asked by someone if I would sponsor them.

If someone would have told me that I'd be continuously sober for this long and have the life I live today, I wouldn't have believed it, but it's true, and it happened just by recommitting every morning to my recovery. Before I even started drinking, I was angry most of the time and felt like I was the only one (terminal uniqueness). Today, through this program, I'm more content than even before I started using and drinking. This program is a blueprint for living. I'm grateful today to be a sober alcoholic, going at it one day at a time, facing my past behaviors, working on forming new ones, and feeling truly blessed in recovery.

— Boston B. Houston, Texas

Money in a Spiritual Program

The 2010 International AA Convention registration fee will cover the expenses for all conference activities. The gay and lesbian community will be self-supporting in plans for the dance and hospitality suite. The financial goal is simple. We plan to budget at reasonable cost, pay bills and set aside a reserve for the 2015 convention. After the convention, there will be full financial disclosure. IAC follows the A.A. Guidelines for "Finance" and "Conferences, Conventions and Roundups". Copies are available from A.A. and at most Intergroup Offices. The fall 2009 issue of Box 459 carries an article "Why Should We Pay to go to AA Events."

The International Advisory Council (IAC) serves the gay and lesbian members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our sole purpose for existing is to provide our experience, strength and hope to any arm of AA when called upon to do so, and to work in the spirit of Unity and Service with AA for the betterment of the (gay/lesbian) members of AA and for AA as a whole. IAC was chartered in 1981 and it is recognized by Alcoholics Anonymous as a special interest group. IAC is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation.

IAC- 2009 Executive Committee

Chairperson: Hebert G
Deputy Chairperson: Vacant
Secretary: Marty S
Treasurer: Kevin W
Advisor: Fred S
Advisor: Vacant
Advisor: Lynn W
Past Chair: Roberta "K" Kelly

IAC Donations

In keeping with AA traditions, IAC is self-supporting. It accepts donations from AA individuals, meetings, groups and roundups. Monies are not accepted from outside the fellowship (non-AA members, other 12 step programs, treatment facilities or non-AA groups/roundups/clubs). The maximum AA donation for an individual is \$2,500 per year. Donations to IAC can be general funding or specific to the 2010 convention events. Please note your preference if you wish.

IAC Donations List February & March 2009

Sunday Night Step Group	Oakland	CA
Sunny Dunes 5th Tradition	Palm Springs	CA
Live & Let Live	Birmingham	AL
GLBT & Friends	Urbandale	IA
G & L AA Group	Unknown	
Back to Basics	Alexandria	VA
Rhode Island G & L	Rhode Island	
Third Tradition AA	Grand Rapids	MI
Living Sober	Charles Town	WV
Free to Be	Nashville	TN
Free 2 Be Group	Naples	FL
60 Minutes Gay Group	Clifton	NJ
Monday Night	Maplewood	NJ
Friday Night Mens Group	Montclair	NJ
Light Group	Raleigh	NC
Lambda Group	Dallas	TX
AA Group #130846	Los Angeles	CA
H.O.W Group Lambda	Phoenix	AZ
Cleaning House Group	Houston	TX
Kanaelli Group	Honolulu	HI
AA Group (sent by Paul S.)	Batavia	IL
The Rainbow Group	Joliet	IL
Sober and Free	San Jose	CA
AA Group (sent by David C)	New Jersey	
Live and Let Live	Pacheco	CA
Spiritual Awakenings	San Diego	CA
Tampa Group	Tampa	FL
Club 449	Kihei	HI
AA Group (sent by Alan K.)	Sicklerville	NJ
Sober in the Sun	Palm Springs	CA
7th Tradition Group	Toronto	Canada
6 p.m. Friday Group	Washington	DC
Lambda Group	Dallas	TX
Tuesday AA Group	East Falmouth	MA

Doylestown Men's Group	Doylestown	PA
Sunday 5:30 Group	Montclair	NJ
Sunday Nite LGBT Step	Oakland	CA
PBA Gays	Unknown	
AA Groups at Lambda Ctr	Houston	TX
Big Book Discussion Group	Orange	NJ
2010 Houston Committee	Houston	TX
2010 Committee	Texas	
Martin S.	Ipsilanti	MI
Lynn W.	Houston	TX
G. Rodman W.	Covington	VA
Joseph M.	Washington	DC

IAC Treasurer's Report

Date: June 30, 2009 Balance: \$24,066.50

Editorial Policy.

The oversight of the IAC Newsletter and the IAC Web site is the responsibility of the IAC Executive Committee. AA members, groups and roundups may make copies of materials for local distribution. We invite articles, letters, questions, suggestions and comments.

Contact us:

IAC - AA • P.O. Box 783
Belleville, MI • 48112-0783
www.iac-aa.org



International Advisory Council
for Homosexual Men and Women In Alcoholics Anonymous

GREETINGS to Everyone in Alcoholics Anonymous

We are almost there!

Only ten months until the 2010 International Convention of Alcoholics in San Antonio, Texas. (July 1-4, 2010). It is the 75th birthday of AA (Diamond Jubilee) and the theme is "A Vision for You". Convention registration opens September 1, 2009 at the AA Web site www.aa.org with information on housing and transportation. Convention registration includes the workshops, meetings, dances and speakers open to all attendees.

Some frequently asked questions:

Who are the speakers and workshop leaders? AA-GSO plans all these events. The full listing will be in the convention program.

How can I volunteer to help with the whole AA Convention? The San Antonio Host Committee meets in January 2010 to plan activities and information will be available after that at www.aa.org

Must everyone register? I thought I didn't have to pay to go to an AA event. Everyone must register. Attendance at this special celebration is voluntary and as responsible AA members "we pay our own way". The international convention is paid for by those who participate in it

Do international attendees need a visa?

Please visit the U.S. Department of State for details at www.travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html

Meetings & Roundup Directories

The IAC Web site [www.iac-aa.org] accepts changes any time. To maintain privacy, IAC lists only the information that you provide. If a group, meeting or Roundup wants to be listed, please go on-line and enter new information or changes. When an alcoholic needs a gay/lesbian AA meeting, we want the information to be available.

IAC Volunteer Opportunities

Lend a Hand...

Executive Committee Elections. IAC is seeking new members to the Executive Committee. Elections will be in late 2009 by mail. Positions are volunteer; there are no paid positions.

Newsletter Editor:

Writers and layout designer are needed.

Area Representatives. Volunteers work in local areas to link AA members and groups. Representatives carry information to groups and from groups as well as to and from IAC.

2010 AA Convention:

Volunteers for all IAC events are needed.

If you are interested in any of the above positions, or if you have any questions, contact us at: iac2010@sbcglobal.net

Deadline is Here!!

Button DESIGN

IAC introduces a new button for the 2010 International Convention. Artists and amateurs are invited to submit designs. (The official logo for IAC will remain as it is for the Web site, newsletter and letterhead.) The final selection will be made by a review panel. Designs must include the name or abbreviation of IAC. The submission deadline has been extended to August 31, 2009. Send designs to iac2010@sbcglobal.net