



HAPPY! FREE! JOYOUS!

SOBER

not boring



Kent County Central Office

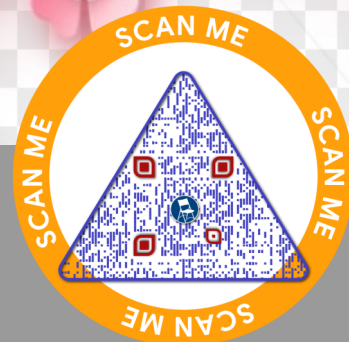
4920 Plainfield Ave. NE, Ste. 19, Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Office Phone (616) 913-9216 (M-F, 1-5 PM)

Website: www.grandrapidsaa.org

AA 24-hour Hotline (616) 913-9149

May 2024 Issue
KCCO Newsletter



Upcoming Events

Friday Evening Speaker Meetings

May 3, 17, 24, 31 (no May 10 speaker)
7 p.m., North Alano Club
(see attached flyer)

District 7 Business Meeting

Saturday, May 4, 9am-1pm
Montcalm Alano Club (MAC)
Greenville (see flyer)

KCCO Business Meeting

Thursday, May 16
6pm, KCCO/ZOOM
(for ZOOM sign-in, contact KCCO)

Area 34 Assembly

Sunday, May 19, 10:30am
(see attached flyer)

Michigan State Convention

June 7-9
(see attached flyers for details)

NEED TO FIND A MEETING?

Scan the QR Code at
right, or go to *the AA meetings listing at:*
www.grandrapidsaa.org/meetings

KENT COUNTY CENTRAL OFFICE: WE'RE HERE TO SERVE YOU!

GROUP REPRESENTATION AT A CENTRAL/INTERGROUP OFFICE

www.aa.org

Central/intergroup offices are essentially A.A. service entities, "directly responsible to those they serve," as described in Tradition Nine. Local group representatives reflect the group's conscience in the service center operations. In most communities, a central/intergroup office committee or steering committee is set up to handle the administrative activities of the service office. The steering committee holds regularly scheduled meetings and deals with general policy and plans. Periodically, the steering committee reports to group representatives on central/intergroup office problems and accomplishments. It is extremely important to keep a two-way flow of information going between the central/intergroup office and groups.

KCCO gives thanks to the many local groups and individuals who have supported, and continue to support, the existence and work of this AA Intergroup. We encourage AA members in Area 34 (primarily District 7 and its outlying areas) of Alcoholics Anonymous to attend our monthly business meetings, which are held on the third Thursday of each month at 6:00pm, and provide input as to your needs and how we may possibly help to meet them. A Zoom attendance option is available. Contact the KCCO to obtain sign-in details.



Check out the new
Area 34 website at
area34aa.org

CELEBRATING
MOMS
&
MOTHER FIGURES
IN OUR LIVES



A sober Memorial Day means acknowledging the holiday's significance

Memorial Day, in case you've forgotten, is a day set aside to remember and honor the sacrifices of military personnel who died in the performance of their military duties. You don't necessarily have to attend a parade or buy a veteran breakfast (although you can, should you so desire), but sobriety may change how you perceive the holiday, according to Paul Fuhr, writing for After Party Magazine: "When it comes right down to it, I never once considered how other people might be spending their Memorial Days: visiting cemeteries to place wreaths and American flags at graves. Instead, I was staring down a full day's worth of drinking and trying to do the math on whether I'd need to make a beer run later in the afternoon. That was the extent of my weekend ... now, as a sober person, I'm actually able to remember what I'm supposed to be remembering."

<https://cornerstoneofrecovery.com/five-reasons-why-a-sober-memorial-day-is-more-fun/>

5 Things You've Got To Try This May

<https://thesoberschool.com/5-things-to-try-this-may/>

It's May – the start of a bright, shiny new month! With summer just around the corner, now is the perfect time to turn over a new leaf. Personally, I think an alcohol-free lifestyle is pretty cool at any time of year, but waking up without a hangover is extra special when the mornings are light and sunny.

If you're trying to get back on track and you want to avoid becoming overwhelmed, make sure you keep things manageable by just focusing on this month. Concentrate on your goals for May and don't start thinking further ahead, or worrying about forever. The f-word is not allowed! Now is not the time to wonder what you'll do at Christmas or New Year or any other event that's a long way into the future. Just focus on the here and now.

Figuring out how to make sobriety stick is often a case of experimenting with different tools and strategies – and sometimes it's the little things that make all the difference. So with that in mind, here are 5 things to try this month that will support your sobriety and help you feel great!

1

Drink hot water and lemon first thing

When you're thirsty and dehydrated, all sorts of things go wrong. You're more likely to feel tired, eat too much sugar and crave booze. So whilst it's tempting to start the day with a giant coffee, you will feel better if you rehydrate first (you can have the coffee after!)

Remember to keep drinking lots of water throughout the day.

2

Play the movie to the end

When a craving strikes it's all too easy to get caught up in the moment. Next time, imagine your drinking as a story. You're at the start of the movie right now and you get to decide the storyline. If you choose to drink, how's the movie going to end? Spend five minutes thinking it all through.

What will really happen if you have 'just one' drink? How will you feel in the morning?
Will it be worth it?

3

Keep a victory box

Eat a tub of ice cream (this is the most important step) then wash out the tub. Get some post-it notes and a pen. Every day, for the next month, write down one thing you're proud of. It doesn't matter how big or small it is. When we're trying to do something that challenges us, we tend to remember our failings and forget the things we have done well. Reading through your post-it notes will give you a boost the next time you're feeling down.

4

Track your progress

What gets measured gets improved on. There are lots of sobriety apps out there to help you keep track. Some not only tell you how long it's been since your last drink, but also works out how much money you've saved and how many calories. Very motivating!

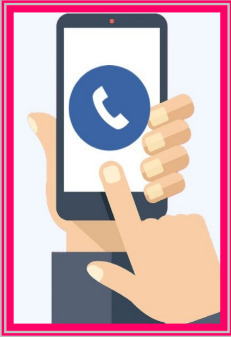
5

Put mistakes into perspective

Success is not about doing something perfectly and without failure. It's about having the courage to do it in the first place. If we only ever did things that we were sure we wouldn't fail at, then we wouldn't get very far. Try and see a slip for what it really is: a lesson learnt, a bump in the road.

It's a chance to review what's working and what's not – and then move on.

24 Hour Hotline: 616-913-9149 - We're here to help



We can show you how taking some simple steps can help loosen the grip that alcohol has on your life. The first step is to reach out and ask for help. This can be done by attending an AA meeting. If you are unsure or have questions, call the 24 hour hotline. Making that call will put you in touch with an AA member that can answer your questions and point you in the right direction.

Help us continue to carry the message to those suffering from the disease of alcoholism.

Volunteer for our 24-hour AA Hotline. A one-month commitment of 4 hours per week is needed. Morning and afternoon shifts are available.

Do you know that you can help service our Hotline REMOTELY?

If you can help, please do not hesitate to call our office at 616-913-9216, and speak with Steve, our Office Manager.



Meetings here, Meetings there, Meetings EVERYWHERE!

*You can access and download **MEETING GUIDE** using the **QR Code** on page one of this newsletter. To add new local group meeting locations and schedules, or to update existing meeting information, please contact Steve at the Kent County Central Office. In addition, new local groups will need to contact the Registrar in their appropriate district to officially list the group with the General Service Office in New York, and to be assigned a group number.*



Back to Basics Beginners Meeting

A 4-week crash course into the 12 Steps

Wednesdays @ 6:45 p.m.

Alano Club South, Unity Room

256 Celia St., SW, Grand Rapids

If you are a newcomer, or simply someone looking for a focused refresher on the 12 Steps of AA, this meeting may be just for you! This local group meeting is classified as "open" (available to anyone), English language, and is wheelchair accessible.

What is "Meeting Spotlight"?

*Is your group looking to increase participation? Looking to get the word out of the availability of its meeting? **KCCO can help!***

*If you would like your group featured in "**Meeting Spotlight**", please submit your group's meeting details and any information you would like us to share, to: newsletter@grandrapidsaa.org.*

A Little of This - A Little of That

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! - The Kent County Central Office will be selling literature at the state convention in June. We are in need of volunteers to work our literature table. Please share this invitation to serve with the members of your groups. Those interested in serving in this way can contact Steve at the KCCO. Thank you!

PLEASE COMPLETE THE WEB SURVEY! - Be sure to get the word out to your group that District 7 is in the midst of developing a new website. The district Web Committee is requesting group members to complete their survey in order to hear from our local groups about what they would like to see featured/included in the makeup of the site. It's four simple questions, and **YOUR INPUT** is essential! Group members can access the survey online at: www.grandrapidsaa.org. Thank you!

Additionally, District 7 now has a general email address that groups can utilize to communicate with district committee chairs, share concerns, and conduct other business with the district. The **new email address is: district7area34web@gmail.com**. Messages will be forwarded to the appropriate officer or committee chair for review and follow-up with the sender.

REQUIREMENTS FOR HOSTING DISTRICT MEETINGS - *If your group would like to host a District 7 meeting in 2025, you can submit your request at our next District 7 business meeting, scheduled for Saturday, June 1.* Facility details: room availability from 8:30am-1:00pm; seating, table space, and parking for up to 60 people; handicap accessibility and restroom facilities; ample supply of coffee, cups, and condiments. Groups should also provide greeters, and a sharing of group history. A \$115 stipend is available from District 7 upon request. Thank you!



What's Your Story?

We'd love to hear it! It just might be what another alcoholic needs to jump on the recovery bandwagon, or what encourages another to stay the recovery course or to more fully engage in it. We all have a story. Will you share yours? *Stories can be submitted to our Newsletter Editor through email at newsletter@grandrapidsaa.org.*

Susie's Story

Is it ironic or serendipitous that my first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous was a Kent County Central Committee Open Talk? My mother brought me when I was maybe 17 years old. She said it would help her, which I found strange since I don't recall ever seeing her drink. She was fearful that if she suggested I had a problem that I would not go. At that time I would have been shocked to even learn she knew of my drinking, let alone that it might be a problem. I agreed to go and the speaker made quite the impression on me. I loved the "Rock and Roll" lifestyle he described during his drinking days. I got rather bored when he spoke of his recovery. Talk about missing "the point". I am grateful that I had an introduction to 12-step meetings. A couple more years of drinking and I would get re-introduced. I entered rehab and the overriding message I heard was to go to AA. After a period of recovery, I think most alcoholics realize that there are some that never get that introduction. They never get a chance to know there is a different way. And that is absolutely heartbreaking.

It is often suggested that newcomers attend speaker meetings. At a speaker meeting one can just be still and take in the message. There is no contemplating what one must say when the topic comes around to their turn. Just sit and listen. Listen to the new language, the new ideas, the very foreign concepts of serenity, accountability, acceptance, service. The list goes on. We talk about changing everything, and it is so much to take in, in the beginning. To be an observer for an hour is a relief.

If we stick around long enough, we will be asked to be the speaker! Some seem to be more than enthused to grab the microphone, get on the stage, and share. Others absolutely cringe at the idea. I was horrified when I was asked to speak for the first time. I'm not sure if it was because I was the second born daughter who never had the spotlight growing up. Or was it just that I was painfully shy? I remember my panic at my first discussion group when I realized eventually we would get around to me. At the discussion meeting the topic was fear. I remember my share and me saying: "My name is Susie and I am an alcoholic, and my biggest fear is that I am what I just said I was." The room was silent as I cried. I had a tremendous amount of fear and not thinking that I could talk for an hour about myself, standing on a small podium with a microphone. I am grateful for my original old school sponsor (Dori T., she sponsored so many) that told me that was my duty. That when AA asked of me, I needed to say yes. Looking back, it was quite the transformation to go from hearing, "Keep coming back!" after every share (which we all know is code for "We hear your pain.", or, "Boy, are you screwed up!", to, "We'd like you to give a much longer version of what you share in meetings."

A fellow traveler on the road of recovery has likened speaking to doing an inventory. Like an inventory, it seems to benefit the one doing it the most, and the hope is that you have gone from a mess, to carrying the message. Always with the disclaimer, "to the best of your ability". If nothing e, SOMEONE needs to talk so others have something to listen to. Hope to see you at 7PM on Fridays at 1020 College.

THANK YOU!!

TO ALL OF THE GROUPS WHO HAVE DONATED
RECENTLY TO THE KENT COUNTY CENTRAL OFFICE

No First Drink
Coopersville AA
Avery Street
Breton Road Early Birds
Search For Serenity
Holy Cross (Saturday AM)

North Kent (Friday AM)
Gratitude In Action
AA On The Hill
AA In The Country
Attitude Adjustment



And all the individual donations that came in via PayPal!

What is an A.A. Group Inventory?

Many groups periodically hold a "group inventory meeting" to evaluate how well they are fulfilling their primary purpose: to help alcoholics recover through A.A.'s suggested Twelve Steps of recovery.

Some groups take inventory by examining our Twelve Traditions, one at a time, to determine how well they are living up to these principles.

The following questions, compiled from A.A. shared experience, may be useful in arriving at an informed group conscience. Groups will probably wish to add questions of their own:

1. What is the basic purpose of our group?
2. What more can our group do to carry the message?
3. Is our group attracting alcoholics from different backgrounds? Are we seeing a good cross-section of our community, including those with special needs?
4. Do new members stick with us, or does the turnover seem excessive? If so, why? What can we as a group do to retain members?
5. Do we emphasize the importance of sponsorship? How effectively? How can we do it better?
6. Are we careful to preserve the anonymity of our group members and other A.A.s outside the meeting rooms? Do we also leave what they share at meetings, behind?
7. Does our group emphasize to all members the value of keeping up with the kitchen, set-up, clean-up and other housekeeping chores that are essential for our Twelfth Step efforts?
8. Are all members given the opportunity to speak at meetings and to participate in other group activities?
9. Mindful that holding office is a great responsibility not to be viewed as the outcome of a popularity contest, are we choosing our officers with care?
10. Are we doing all we can to provide an attractive and accessible meeting place?
11. Does our group do its fair share toward participating in the purpose of A.A.—as it relates to our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service?
12. What has our group done lately to bring the A.A. message to the attention of professionals in the community—the physicians, clergy, court officials, educators, and others who are often the first to see alcoholics in need of help?
13. How is our group fulfilling its responsibility to the Seventh Tradition?

<https://www.aacle.org/aa-group-struggling-survive/>

We welcome your suggestions!

**If you have an idea for our newsletter,
or would like to request specific information
be published, please let us know!
Contact our Newsletter Editor, Toni M., at:
newsletter@grandrapidsaa.org.**

12 x 12 x 12

A.A.'s Twelve Steps are principles for personal recovery. The Twelve Traditions ensure the Unity of the Fellowship. Written by co-founder Bill W. in 1962, the Twelve Concepts for World Service provide a group of related principles to help ensure that various elements of A.A.'s service structure remain responsive and responsible to those they serve.

STEP FIVE

*"Admitted to God, to ourselves,
and to another human being,
the exact nature of our wrongs."*

TRADITION FIVE

*"Each group has but one primary purpose—
to carry its message to the alcoholic
who still suffers."*

CONCEPT FIVE

*"Throughout our structure, a traditional
"Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that
minority opinion will be heard,
and personal grievances receive
careful consideration."*

Read More...

**Essays on the 12 Steps
can be read in the book,
"Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions",
available for purchase at the
Kent County Central Office.**

**To read the Long Version of the
12 Traditions and 12 Concepts,
go to the Area 34 website at:
www.area34aa.org**

KCCO NEWSLETTER MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Kent County Central Office newsletter
is to serve Kent County and the surrounding
A.A. community in four ways:

1. To carry the A.A. message
2. To inform our readers.
3. To provide a forum for discussion of A.A. principles
4. To provide service work opportunities for A.A. members.

If you would like our newsletter sent to you through email, please
send an email request to: newsletter@grandrapidsaa.org.

PLEASE NOTE:

Inclusion of articles and announcements in *Happy! Joyous! Free!* does not constitute A.A. or KCCO endorsement. Rather, members of the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous are encouraged to share their experience, strength and hope through this humble publication. Opinions expressed are those of the writer unless otherwise noted. The Kent County Central Office makes these announcements solely as a service to the reader, not as an endorsement.

FRIDAY NIGHT SPEAKER MEETING

MAY 2024

LOCATION: THE NORTH ALANO CLUB
1020 College Ave, NE, Grand Rapids, MI (Lower Level Balcony)
Phone 616-456-5709

Friday, May 3, 2024, 7:00 pm
Speaker: Jessica S.
Home Group: Cease To Struggle East

Friday, May 10, 2024, 7:00 pm
Speaker Meeting Cancelled
ALANO Club Comedy Show

Friday, May 17, 2024, 7:00 pm
Speaker: Jen L.
Home Group: Women's Only (MAC)

Friday, May 24, 2024, 7:00 pm
Speaker: Robin B.
Home Group: Women's Only (MAC)

Friday, May 31, 2024, 7:00 pm
Speaker: Brian S.
Home Group: We Became Friends

Sponsored by Kent County Central Committee
4920 Plainfield NE, Suite 19, Grand Rapids, MI 49525
For any information call: 616-913-9216

AREA 34 ASSEMBLY

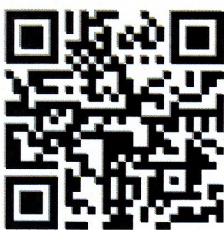


Sunday, **MAY** 19, 2024 @10:30

DISTRICT 12 is HOSTING

Delegate Post Conference Report

Potluch Lunch around noon please bring a dish to share



Google Maps

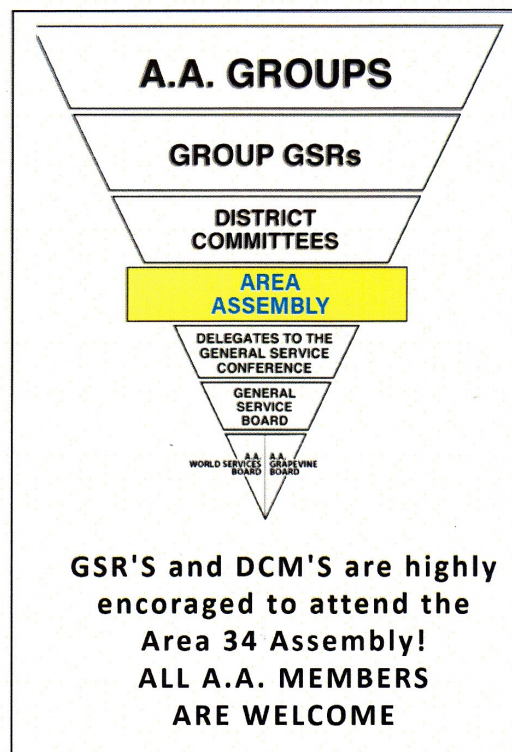
Assembly location:
**OTSEGO
COUNTY LIBRARY
700 S. Otsego Ave
Gaylord, MI 49735**

Area 34 Assembly
offers virtual
attendance
ID: 521-659-0401

ZOOM



No password is needed



VISIT OUR WEBSITE



area34aa.org

A.A. MEMBERS!! REMEMBER TO REGISTER for
the MICHIGAN STATE CONVENTION COMBINED
w/EAST CENTRAL REGIONAL CONFERENCE

June 7-9th in Grand Rapids!!
A.A. member volunteers are NEEDED!

*Planning Comittee meets at 9am
before the Aera Assembly*

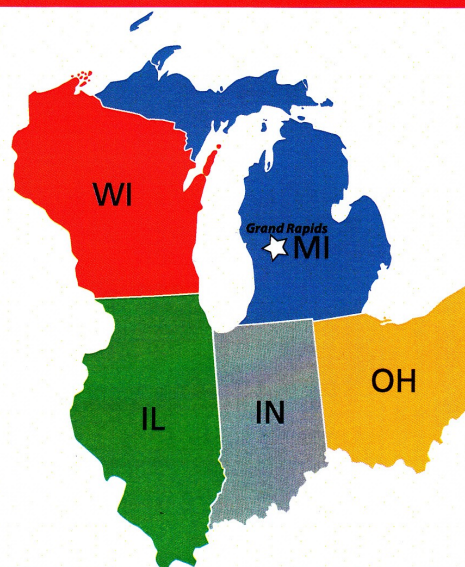
71st Michigan State Convention

combined with the

ECR Conference

June 7th-9th, 2024

Calvin University
3201 Burton S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49546



**CONNECTING WITH
LOVE**



Keynote Speakers:

Friday: **Rich H.**, Hebron, IL

Saturday: **Madonna V.**, Auburn Hills, MI

Saturday Al-Anon - **Maureen H.**, Dyer, IN

Sunday: **Barefoot Scott S.**, Hersey, MI

CARRYING THE A.A. MESSAGE OF RECOVERY

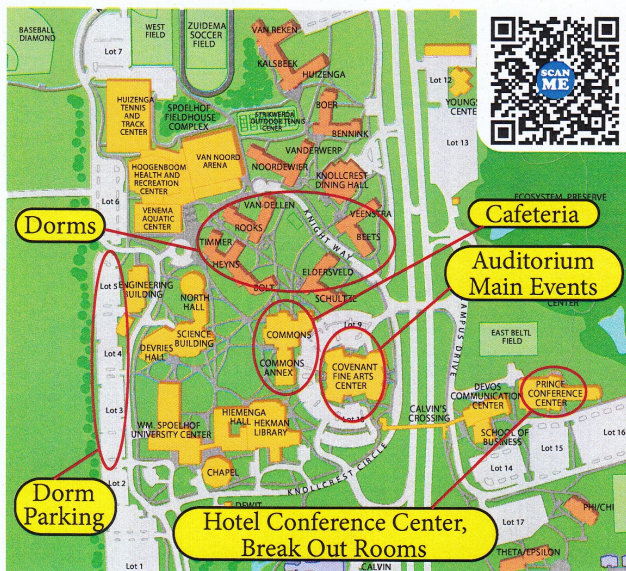
What makes an A.A. convention click for its participants?

It's probably not style or form that matters so much as the spirit and feeling behind it. As one member puts it, the best A.A. convention is "*just a darned good A.A. meeting blown up big.*" Just watch enthusiastic members at any A.A. convention and you'll get what he means. The atmosphere alone is worth the trip. Here you'll find fellowship, laughter, warmth, and understanding — "*heaped up, pressed down, and running over.*"

Mg-04 A.A. Guidelines, Conferences, Conventions, and Roundups

Please visit area34aa.org for more information as it becomes available.

Co-Chair Contacts: **Linda B** 269.329.3159 ♦ linbow421@gmail.com | **Brian S.** 616.366.5827 ♦ digi@wmis.net



Register here, or online at: area34aa.org Look for the 2024 State/ECR Button

Registration Early: \$30 per person (before 5/1/24), after 5/1, \$35

Total Registration \$ _____

#1 Name _____ Email _____ Phone _____ Area _____ Home Group _____

#2 Name _____ Email _____ Phone _____ Area _____ Home Group _____

Dorm Lodging #1 ☐ 6/7 ☐ 6/8 ☐ Check if sharing with Registrant #2 ☐ Need a Roommate? _____ Roommate gender preference _____

Choose one: ☐ Shared + Shared Bathroom \$30/night ☐ Private Room + Shared Bathroom \$45/night
☐ Shared + Private Bathroom \$40/night ☐ Private Room + Private Bathroom \$70/night
☐ Check for Mobility Accessible Room

For shared occupancy, list roommate if registering separately or a roommate will be assigned by committee:

Dorm Lodging #2 ☐ 6/7 ☐ 6/8 ☐ Need a Roommate? _____ Roommate gender preference _____ Roommate's Name: _____

Choose one: ☐ Shared + Shared Bathroom \$30/night ☐ Private Room + Shared Bathroom \$45/night
☐ Shared + Private Bathroom \$40/night ☐ Private Room + Private Bathroom \$70/night
☐ Check for Mobility Accessible Room

Total Dorm Lodging \$ _____

Meals 5-meal package-\$80 x _____ Sat. dinner only-\$18 x _____ Ice cream social-\$12 x _____ **Total Meals** \$ _____

Extra Contributions _____ **Extra Contributions** \$ _____

If group contribution, provide group name

Grand Total \$ _____

To Reserve a room on line: **HOTEL ONLY**

Guests will need to go to princecc.com
 At the bottom of the home page select Reserve A Room
 Below the banner click on RATE OPTION
 Type in the code: **DIGI**
 This will take you to the block dates and rates. Select from the room types available and click on the picture and then click **BOOK IT!**

If you encounter a problem, please contact, **Jim Nyhoff**
Hotel Operations Supervisor at 616-526-0107 or
 at jln3@calvin.edu and he will assist you as soon as possible.

Dorm lodging can be reserved until 5/24/24.

Make Checks out to:

2024 Michigan State Convention
Send Registration and Checks to:
 2024 Michigan State Convention
 PO Box 319
 Plainwell, MI 49080

Register/Dorms/Meals On-Line
<https://tinyurl.com/vptsx77j>
 or use the QR code



I am responsible, when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there, and for that I am responsible...

Area 34

Treatment Committee Virtual Scheduled Meetings



Bridging the Gap



Join us on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday at 5:00 pm. as we discuss **Bridging the Gap Program** that helps inform us how to connect Alcoholics who are just coming out of treatment, correctional, or other institutions, with a Temporary Contact to help introduce them to the **A.A. Program**. All district and group committee chairs are encouraged to attend and collaborate on your experiences and interest in reaching out to the alcoholics that still suffer.

2nd Tuesday 5:00 – 6:00pm

Join Zoom Meeting
Meeting ID: 521-659-0401



4th Tuesday 5:00 – 6:00pm

Join Zoom Meeting
Meeting ID: 521-659-0401



area34aa.org

treatment@area34aa.org

bridgingthegap@area34aa.org

I am responsible... I am responsible, when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there, and for that I am responsible...

I am responsible... I am responsible, when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there, and for that I am responsible...