

April 2020 Newsletter
Special Pandemic Edition

IDAA Responds to Coronavirus Pandemic

Special Communication: Meetings On Line for IDAA Members

by Dave L., Quincy, IL

In our current climate of social distancing and sheltering in place for many of our members, especially those with existing health issues and those over 65 (some say 60, but we all know these are arbitrary cutoff numbers), many of our members have become isolated, lonely, and anxious with the uncertainty of our future. Indeed many of us in recovery had resorted to that status during our drinking and found in recovery that meetings helped keep us connected—only to having those meeting rooms shuttered in the current lockdown.

The good news: Meetings are happening on line. In spite of our current short-term circumstances, we can stay in touch with our IDAA friends and other recovering folks. Two options are available to any and all IDAA members:

- 1) **Cyber meetings**—email based, shares are open to all participants on the list and any can respond anytime 24/7. Leads are often posted on weekends for the following week. These include Cyberdocs, md2, and Cyberalanon. To join, go to IDAA.ORG; on left under Member Services, click on [Email Recovery Meetings](#) and follow directions.
- 2) NEW THIS PAST MONTH: **online realtime meetings** on a ZOOM platform, that allow members to see and hear each other during a scheduled AA/AlAnon meeting. While these feel like FTF (face to face) meetings, they do have the limitations of physical contact or multiple concurrent conversations. There are several ways to join a Zoom meeting once you receive an invitation. All IDAA members whose email addresses are part of the list on IDAA Cyber meetings are receiving invitations to Zoom meetings. You can download the Zoom APP, just click on the link that is part of the invitation, or call in on any phone (no video connection).

Current IDAA Zoom meetings are (all EDT U.S. and Canada):

AA

Monday 3:00 pm

Wednesday 8:00 pm

Friday 3:30 pm

Saturday 7:00 pm

IDAA Cyber Al-Anon Saturday 3:00 PM

What About IDAA 2020 in Spokane?



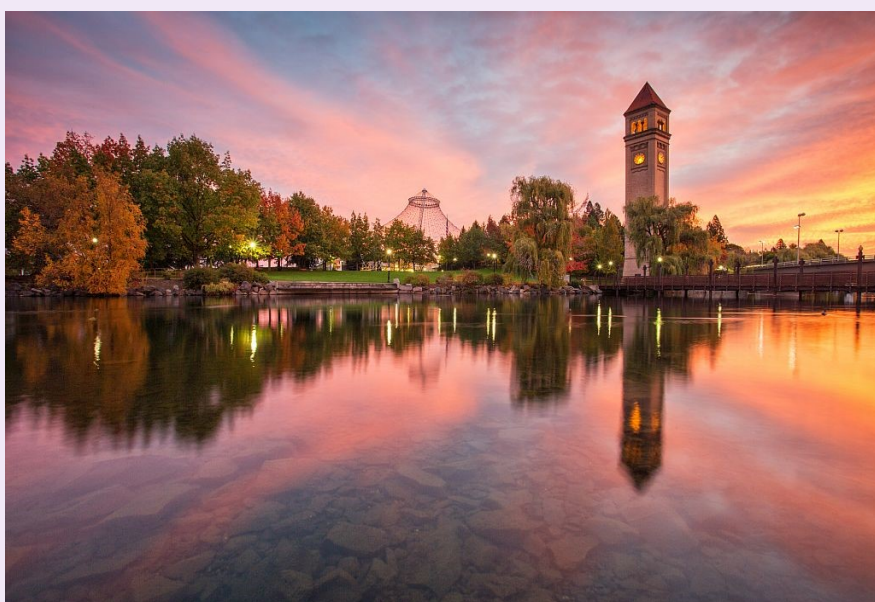
We know everyone is wondering (worrying?) about what will happen with the IDAA Annual Meeting in August, 2020. We wish we had a crystal ball so we could foresee what will happen with the pandemic before that date.

But right now we need people who think they will come or might come if the rate of transmission dies down as warmer weather arrives and travel restrictions are relaxed, to go ahead and register and especially to make hotel reservations. All this would be refunded if the meeting has to be cancelled, If you are ambivalent or doubtful, register and reserve. ***This will help IDAA to avoid massive penalties if the meeting cannot safely go forward.***

Your Steering Committee will make a decision based on available data, putting the health and safety of our members and families first, and you will be informed right away.

To register, go to idea.org and click on the meeting web site, or go to :

<http://www.cvent.com/d/9yqzcy>



British Doctors and Dentists 2020 Meeting Cancelled

The BDDG Convention for 2020, planned for September-October, 2020, has been cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

BDDG is considering an online Video Conference as a substitute, and we hope to host the 2021 Convention in the same location in Exeter.

Coronavirus Pandemic Forces Cancellation of 2020 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous

The AA International Convention, scheduled for July 2-5, 2020 in Detroit, has sadly been cancelled. The Chair of the General Service Board of A.A., Michele Grinberg, made the announcement on March 28, 2020 in a thoughtful and poignant letter which can be read at aa.org. She said in part, "This is not a decision that is taken lightly. However, because of our numerous concerns related to the health and safety of our attendees, especially if 50,000 of us were to gather in Detroit in early July, we are confident it is the correct decision at this time. It has become clear that proceeding with a Convention of this magnitude in Michigan at that time is an unacceptable safety risk because of the uncertainty of the disease spread and containment. These are unprecedented times, impacting travel possibilities and requiring restrictions on large mass gatherings. For all of us, the health and well-being of our community comes first."

IDAA is not part of Alcoholics Anonymous, but we were founded by A.A. members and have always maintained close contact with A.A. and endeavored to follow its principles in our affairs. We share with A.A. around the world its grief over the loss of the group celebration of 85 years of helping alcoholics (and many others) to find the solution. Many members of IDAA attend the A.A. International Conventions every 5 years and were looking forward to the Detroit gathering. However we understand and fully support the decision to put our common welfare first (Tradition One). Each of us will need to celebrate while maintaining social distancing.

Other Conferences Cancelled Due to CoVid-19

The annual conference of the **American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)**, scheduled for April 4-6, 2020 in Denver, was cancelled. ASAM hopes to offer some of its presentations and courses as a virtual conference. IDAA is well-represented at ASAM and IDAA members are active on many of its committees, especially the Physician Health Committee.

The National Organization of Alternative Programs (NOAP)

had scheduled its annual conference March 16-19, 2020 in Albuquerque, NM, but had to cancel due to the pandemic. NOAP is the organization that represents many monitoring and advocacy programs for healthcare professionals, including nurses, dentists, pharmacists, counselors, etc.

The Federation of State Physician Health Programs (FSPHP),

which was supposed to take place 4/30-5/3/2020 in San Diego, was cancelled. IDAA had planned an exhibit there, and a workshop on IDAA's programs for children, with Jerry Moe and Penny Ziegler, was being offered. Hopefully we can do this at the FSPHP meeting next year in Minneapolis.

How Are IDAA Members Managing?

Quite a bit of feedback is already available from those who have been participating in Zoom IDAA meetings, Facebook Live meetings and other online platforms. Most people are positive, and many are attending and participating in a mixture of online meetings including their local AA, IDAA, meetings organized by their state PHPs and meetings located on aa.org or local inter-group web sites. Of course, it's not the same as a face-to-face meeting, but for many of us, it's the best we can do right now and it's cool to see other people's faces and hear their voices.

Some concerns about Zoom and privacy have been raised. Although Zoom denies that it is selling users' personal data to advertisers and others, a careful reading of its privacy policies makes it clear that, by using their platform, you are giving Zoom permission to do so. It also allows the host of the meeting to track what attendees are doing during the meeting via the video feed. Privacy experts recommend that attendees turn off the video and audio feeds when not speaking. Other platforms are available through Google, Facebook, etc. but all share privacy concerns for some. There is useful info in this HuffPost article:

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/zoom-hacks-work-meetings-virtual-happy-hours_l_5e7ba807c5b6cb9dc1991ef4?](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/zoom-hacks-work-meetings-virtual-happy-hours_l_5e7ba807c5b6cb9dc1991ef4?utm_campaign=share_email&ncid=other_email_o63gt2jcad4)

[utm_campaign=share_email&ncid=other_email_o63gt2jcad4](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/zoom-hacks-work-meetings-virtual-happy-hours_l_5e7ba807c5b6cb9dc1991ef4?utm_campaign=share_email&ncid=other_email_o63gt2jcad4)

But we all know how important it is to keep in touch with others in recovery and keep using the tools of the program during these challenging times. And IDAA leadership wants to express our gratitude to our members and the other dedicated healthcare professionals who are caring for the victims of CoVid-19. **You are the heros!** To all, hang in there.

