

## **CONVENTION COORDINATOR'S ASSEMBLY AND CONVENTION NOTES**

### **May 13, 2022**

The **Spring Conventions and Assemblies** are hosted by various Districts from around the New York North Area. The location of each Spring Convention and Assembly is usually within the Host Districts geographic area. In addition to the AWSC and Assembly business meetings, the Spring Convention and holds panels, workshops, speakers and fun activities for those members of AI-Anon, AA, and Alateen who are not participating in the Assembly Meeting although everyone is welcome to attend the Assembly meeting. The Spring Convention location usually rotates between Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, Rochester, and the Area North of Albany. This is also where many of our NYN groups are located and where many of our larger hotels and conference centers are also located as well.

The **New York North Fall Assembly, including the Election Assemblies** that are held on the third year of each panel's term, are always held in Syracuse and are usually, but not exclusively, hosted by the Districts from the Syracuse area (Districts 3,15,18,21 & 28). Districts from the Albany Area, Binghamton area, Rochester Area and Buffalo area have also hosted Fall Assemblies as well. Syracuse is relatively in the center of the NYN Area. All AI-Anon and Alateen members are welcome to attend the Fall Assembly. While the main function of the Fall Assembly is the business meeting, there are some activities such as an icebreaker event and meetings or workshops on Friday evening as well as a Banquet meal featuring a speaker or speakers on Saturday evening and the Alateen Interest Meeting and Spirituality Speaker Panel on Sunday Morning of the Fall Assembly. From 2007 through 2022, Syracuse area Districts have hosted or co-hosted Fall Assemblies 15 times, Rochester districts have hosted or co-hosted twice, and the Districts in the Albany area have also hosted or co-hosted twice as well as the Districts from the Binghamton Area.

The last in person Fall Assembly that we held was in 2019 and had 99 people registered and we sold 71 banquets. In 2017 the last Election Assembly held at a hotel, we had 102 people registered and sold 77 banquets. The number of banquets and the number of sleeping rooms booked will impact the amount of the contract that the Fall Assembly has to pay to the hotel. For the 2017 Election Assembly, we needed to have had at least 50 people registered in order to pay the \$900.00 meeting room bill for the weekend from the hotel. The banquets do not factor into that figure because they are priced by the Committee to pay for themselves. Other costs for putting on the convention such as the AV bill, the PO Box, Hospitality, supplies, etc can usually be covered through donations or by registrations over the minimum needed to pay the bill. We do expect attendance to be down this year due to COVID, so we should plan and budget appropriately for that.

The Fall 2023 proposal that we received from the Embassy Suites would require us to book 80 rooms at \$139.00 per night, 40 on Friday night and 40 on Saturday night, with one room being comp'd for every 25 booked. The block of rooms will be held until August 4, 2021 after which any unreserved rooms will be released (as of June 7, 2021). Meeting Room rental rates for Friday night would be \$1000.00 for the larger room we need for programming, and \$300.00 for the smaller room we would need for Registration, Literature and Raffles. The charge for the Hospitality Room for Friday would be \$350.00. The hospitality room charge for Saturday would be \$350.00 and the Assembly Meeting Room charge would be \$1000.00. The charge for the room for Registration, Literature and Raffles would be \$350.00 for Saturday. We would not be charged a meeting room fee for our banquet meal. For Sunday morning, the room for Alateen Interest Meeting would be \$200 and there was no charge for the room for the Spiritual Panel. The dates of September 15, 16, and 17, 2023 were available as of 6/7/21. The total meeting space rental cost for the weekend would be \$3000.00, as of 6/7/21. These rates are considerably higher than at the previous location of our Fall Assemblies, which has permanently closed.

The 2021 Fall Assembly Committee had discussed "thinking outside the box" for options for hosting the Fall Assembly. We agreed that we should plan for at least 50 people, perhaps more. Our options include holding a one day only Assembly event in person, perhaps having the Assembly only on Saturday and Sunday, or having a full Assembly on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. We considered all our options, all possible dates, and the considerations of what each option would cost. These are some of our current options:

**Dwyer Hall at Immaculate Conception Church in Fayetteville, NY** – we can hold a one-day event at Dwyer Hall at Immaculate Conception Church in Fayetteville – possibly with a catered meal if we wanted to. There is seating in rounds for 100+ plus as well as head tables, AV set up is available and there is a hospitality area with available coffee makers. Breakout rooms are available for panels or Thought Force committee meetings.

**Christ the King Retreat House, Syracuse, NY** – for the entire weekend. \$109.00 per person per night in sleeping rooms including meals and a meeting room for 100 in conference-styled seating (rows of tables and chairs).

**The NSEA Building in North Syracuse** for a one-day event –note there is limited space and seating capacity is less than 100 conference style. A kitchen and area for food is available.

Other local church halls or venues may be available for one day events as well.

## **Here are some questions that we need to answer if we are having an in person or hybrid Fall Assembly or Spring Convention and Assembly:**

- 1) How many people do we expect to attend the Fall Assembly or the Spring Convention and Assembly in person?
- 2) How many registrations do we need to collect in order to pay the hotel bill?
- 3) How many people will be staying at the hotel?
- 4) How many rooms or room nights do we need to book with the hotel?
- 5) What is the minimum number of banquet meals that we have to reserve?
- 6) Does the hotel require a deposit? If so, how much? (We have \$1,000.00 in seed monies)
- 7) Are the meeting rooms/banquet hall able to be divided as well as be completely open?
- 8) Will there be space for hospitality, registration, literature and raffles?
- 9) Do they have AV services available? i.e. digital projector, screen, microphones and stands, and capability for simultaneous Zoom meeting and connections.

## **The most important question we need to have answered as soon as possible is**

### **"How many members will be attending the Assembly in person?"**

The answer to this will factor into every other decision that we make. Realistically, if we have at least 70 or more members attending in person and paying the registration fee, then we have a shot at pulling off an in-person Assembly at a hotel even if we have to reduce the number of meeting rooms that we will need.

Once we know if there will be enough members attending in person to cover our costs, then we can move forward with our already established plans for the Assembly and we need to answer even more questions.

Due to COVID 19 restrictions, we may also not be able to bring any non-pre-packaged food and into the hotel from outside, which would affect the hospitality room. We should still be able to have Al-Anon literature sales, and raffle baskets and items, provided that any food items contained within are pre-packaged. Realistically, we could hold the AWSC and the Assembly as well as the banquet and our Friday workshops and all of our Saturday and Sunday speakers in the one banquet hall room. That would cut down our meeting room costs for the weekend.

## **GOING FORWARD, THESE ARE OUR CURRENT OPTIONS FOR HOLDING OUR SPRING CONVENTIONS AND FALL ASSEMBLIES:**

- 1) If conditions allow us, we can hold the event as scheduled at a local hotel, as we normally do, with workshops and business meetings.
- 2) We also have the option to hold the event as scheduled at a local hotel, as we normally do, with workshops and business meetings in addition to holding a partly virtual Convention or Assembly with meetings and panels over Zoom or conference call. This would be a HYBRID Convention and Assembly and would benefit members still cautious to attend the Assembly in person.
- 3) Our third option would be to include hold a one day only in person or hybrid Assembly event at a local church hall or other similar venue.
- 4) Our fourth option would be to hold a completely virtual Fall Assembly which would include both workshops and business meetings virtually. This was the option taken in 2021 for The Spring Convention and the Fall Assembly.

These are my thoughts and observations as we go forward in planning our future Conventions and Assemblies.

In Service to Al-Anon,  
Jim M.  
NYN Convention Coordinator  
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