

Our Primary Purpose

Stories, news and information from our fellowship in the National Capital Region

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And more!

Special points of interest:

- Find out about a Virtual Service Event hosted by District 54 & District 62
- A member shares on meditation
- Grapevine free access
- 6th Annual Unity & Service Conference

Some languish while others find flow

How online meetings have saved lives

If anyone knows how AA online helps the still suffering alcoholic it would be Rhonda (her name has been changed to protect her identity). Last March, in detox, she watched in disbelief as the world shut down around her.

“Bricks and mortar meetings had been the only thing that ever kept me sober for any period of time, so I was really worried about my chances of finally succeeding if I couldn’t physically get into the rooms.”

Fortunately, AA friends were already letting her know the fellowship was quickly pivoting to virtual meetings, and she was able to formulate a plan B.

Rhonda recently celebrated a year of continuous sobriety and has started working with her first sponsee. She’s got perspective about getting honest with herself and the sacrifices necessary

to break free of addiction.

Choosing not to languish

Like many, Rhonda has heard the term ‘languishing.’ It’s become part of our Covid-19 vocabulary – a condition some are battling during this unprecedented time of uncertainty.

Languishing is not necessarily foreign to any of us. We become so numb to despair we don’t even realize how indifferent we are to our own indifference. We fail to notice the dulling of delight, or the dwindling of drive to embrace opportunities for joy and love. Sound familiar?

While Rhonda’s goal was to get and stay sober, she now realizes she had been languishing long before the pandemic arrived.

Help at your fingertips

She was a morning drinker, needing alcohol, first thing, to steady herself for the day. After leaving detox she went looking for an early AA meeting. She found one in the Philippines.

“No question, that meeting saved my life.”

(Continued on page 5)



Heading toward the paperless society!

See QR codes inside!

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preceding publication date

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Ottawa General Service Districts and Committees

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Archives – Sue B archives@ottawaaa.org

*District 58 is no longer meeting. Please contact District 54 or District 62.

Editorial: Languishing, it's a choice

Becoming powerless over alcohol is not a choice. On the other hand, allowing yourself to languish in your addiction, to wallow in your victimhood and not make any effort to ask for help ...this is a choice.

The condition known as "languishing" is getting a fair bit of attention as we round the corner into a year and a half of pandemic affected living. The central concept about languishing – which by the way is impacting many people who have never been, or will ever become, alcoholics – is that you become numb to your own numbness...you become indifferent to your own indifference.

Translation for us alcoholics: you become powerless over your own powerlessness.

We never just woke up one day as alcoholics. It was a very slow-motion train wreck; it took years for all those wheels to come off the track. But we were programmed for it by circumstance. We grew up with an alcoholic parent, or we were abused in some way and never got the chance to heal.

So, we drank to escape. And escape we did.

The pandemic has been a great time for many of us to go on hiding. We had the perfect excuse for not allowing anyone "in" to see how we were really doing. We didn't want to get sick, to get

the virus. But the sad truth is we already had the virus...a virus of the mind...the "ism."

The longer we kept the door locked, and didn't let anyone in... literally or metaphorically speaking...the longer it would take to really give our head a shake, and shout into the mirror:

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON WITH ME???

“The longer we kept the door locked...the longer it would take to really give our head a shake.”

Unfortunately, there is no simple remedy for languishing. In the same way that it took years for us to become truly addicted...it took months, if not years, for us to become truly numb to our numbness.

Fortunately, for those of us reading this editorial, we DO have a remedy. It's called the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. It's the 12 Steps. It's having a sponsor.

Chances are the greater percentage of those reading this page are not truly languishing. But we probably know someone who IS.

And yes, our job is to carry the message, not the suffering alcoholic. And yes, we're not supposed to **tell** anyone what to do...BUT...

Sometimes people need a little WAKE-UP call. They need to be told to, "GET UP" off the couch, pull back the curtain, unlock the door...and...

INVITE YOUR SPONSOR IN FOR A CUP OF TEA (or a meet-up on your neighborhood park bench)...just keep your distance and make sure to wear a mask. Well ok, you can take off the mask, as long as you keep your distance.

Jeff F



A Member Shares:

What meditation does for me



You are walking down the street, you see a friend, you approach each other. She wears an odd expression -- something is wrong. She says, "Oh my God, you should be ashamed of yourself. I can't believe you would do such a thing."

You have no idea what she is talking about. "What? What have I done?" you protest.

"Seriously? You don't know? You're worse than I thought." She shakes her head in dismay and walks away.

You were enjoying your walk, but now you feel terrible. Your breath is short, your limbs heavy, your face burns with shame. Passers-by stare at you frozen on the sidewalk. They wonder what is wrong with you.

In the language of mindfulness meditation you have become "identified" with your thoughts. You feel ashamed, you think you deserve it, this is who you are -- who you have always been. Not so fast. Even if you've done something wrong, does it mean you're worthless? Have you

never done anything good in your life? Will you never do good again?

Last month I attended a one-day online mindfulness retreat with roughly 75 other novices and veterans. A teacher walked us through 5 hours of meditation -- which simply means paying attention, on purpose, to whatever is happening in the present moment, without judgment. Mindfulness meditation teaches us

"It is certainly
the most
important
dimension
to my
recovery."

that our minds have, well, minds of their own. Thoughts come and go unbidden, humans are wired this way, and no single thought is a verdict on our character nor an imperative to action. Learning to observe our thoughts and accept them as just thoughts leads to wiser choices. We can never free ourselves from thought. But we learn to respond, rather than react.

While I flirted with meditation before recovery, it was only in recovery that I began in earnest. I do it daily-ish. Some days just 5 minutes, some days 20. Some days first thing in the morning, some days last thing at

night. Some days in my car, in a parking lot, before going into a store. It is certainly the most important dimension to my "recovery", and has taken me well beyond my substance abuse to deeper and older issues. I feel like a new man, and can't imagine my life without it.

For those interested in learning more about mindfulness meditation, there are apps available with great introductions, especially for the skeptic! They feature guided meditations from numerous leading western practitioners, and their content libraries grow weekly. Most come with a free trial -- what are you waiting for?

David F.

The Hand of AA in Action: Carrying the message through service

The Hand of A.A. in Action virtual service day is almost upon us! Inspired from the quote in A.A.'s Legacy of Service by Bill W. "Our Twelfth Step — carrying the message — is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action." This day promises to be an informative and inspiring tour of our third legacy: Service. The key feature of the day is that our Area 83 Delegate, Kimberley M will join us to share her experience and the results of what happened at this year's General Service Conference.

Kimberley's enthusiasm and excitement for A.A. is sure to be a treat. If you want to find out about any changes to our literature, this is where you will find them! Other sessions will include talks from our Service community, to share their love for service and how their efforts touch the still suffering alcoholic. We will also be joined by Carrie B, from the New Horizons Group in Oregon who will share on Service – the Home Group and Beyond. Also, we are sure you will be inspired as we hear from Billy N, a former Class B Trustee from the Alpharetta Unity Group in Georgia. This is a day not to be missed! Please join us on

Saturday, June 12th & support your A.A. Service groups. Invite others! Sponsors bring your Sponsees!

Let's remember: Service is one-third of our triangle!



(For more information see flyer on page 6)

How online meetings have saved lives...

(continued from front page)

For more than nine months, Rhonda started her day online, at 6 a.m., in a time zone most of us will never find. She went almost directly from there to a morning meeting in Ottawa. That was followed with a local noon-hour gathering, and yet another in the evening.

"I no longer attend that many meetings, but at the time I just did what I felt I needed to do to stay focused and not drink. Luckily AA online was available at almost any time of day."

Finding flow

Rhonda's fight with addiction cost her a career as a first responder. It was a job she loved, one which had given her a clear sense of purpose. But the mother of two has found a new purpose, and a much deeper sense of who she is.

"My husband and I just celebrated 12 years of marriage, my first ever anniversary sober. We're now more solid than we've ever been before."

Experts say that 'finding flow' helps deal with languishing. The key is to get passionate about a project in your life. For Rhonda it has been recovery and getting online has made it all possible.



Please submit your stories of experience, strength and hope to Our Primary Purpose at: newsletter@ottawaaa.org. Thank you for your service!

Districts 54 and 62 Present

The Hand of A.A. in Action

Carrying the Message Through Service

Join us for this virtual day about Service

Featuring:

Area 83 Delegate, Kimberley M.

find out what happened at this year's
General Service Conference !



- △ Hear your friends in fellowship share their love for service
- △ Learn how service helps keep you sober
- △ Support your Ottawa Service Committees



Welcome our Guests !

Billy N

Alpharetta Unity Group,
Georgia

Carrie B

New Horizons,
Bend, Oregon

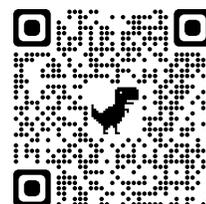
Zoom – ID # 896 8692 0240 Passcode - 1642021

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89686920240?pwd=OXQ3eG94VkZiTIRLTUVnSEhzY2Jwdz09>

Grapevine and La Vina celebrate Founders Day with free access from May 26 to June 10, 2021

On June 10, 1935, Dr. Bob had his last drink and that day marks the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous. Since many meetings are still closed and groups have limited capacity to celebrate our founding, **Grapevine and La Vina will help mark this important date by giving everyone free access to our websites for two weeks.**

You will be able to read and listen to stories from current and past issues, access our sobriety calculator, read the daily quote, learn how you can contribute your story, and find ways to serve others using Grapevine and La Vina magazines.



www.aagrapevine.org/Free-Access-2021



Virtual



ASL Interpreted For The Deaf

6th Annual Unity & Service Conference

"Applying the 12 Traditions & 12 Concepts of AA in All of Our Affairs"

July 9 - 11, 2021 (all times PDT)



Spanish Translation



Friday, July 9

5:45 pm - Welcome! Serenity Prayer & Kickoff
(10-Minute Tradition or Concept Vignette Before Each Main Speaker)

6:00 pm - "Loving Our Three Legacies"
Sister Judith Ann Kumar, Class A Trustee

7:30 pm - "Our Primary Aim"
Tim C., Hayward CA

9:00 pm - Close with Declaration of Unity

Saturday, July 10

8:45 am - Welcome! Serenity Prayer & Kickoff
(10-Minute Tradition or Concept Vignette Before Each Main Speaker)

9:00 am - "My Favorite Traditions"
Jimmy D., Dallas TX

10:30 am - Service Panels
Young People, Bridging The Gap, Corrections (M&I), Grapevine

12:00 pm - Break

12:30 pm - "Why Stay? Overcoming Racial Barriers"
Kesho S., Grinnell IA

2:00 pm - "Three Legacies, Family Style"
Craig, Marissa and Stephen, Sandy Hook CT

This 2 Hour and 15-Minute Session Includes a 15-Minute Break at 3 pm Before Concluding at 4:15 pm

4:30 pm - "Anonymity, Our Spiritual Foundation"
Steve L., Nashville TN

6:00 pm - Close with Responsibility Statement

Sunday, July 11

8:45 am - Welcome! Serenity Prayer & Kickoff
(10-Minute Tradition or Concept Vignette Before Each Main Speaker)

9:00 am - "The 12 Concepts"
Ashley J., The Beacon Group, Boston

10:30 am - Service Panels
PW/CPC, Intergroup/Hotline, General Service, Sponsorship

12:00 pm - Break

12:30 pm - "Never Too Young For General Service"
Kate H., Fair Oaks CA

2:00 pm - Ask It Basket with Speakers
Sister Judith Ann, Tim, Jimmy, Kesho, Steve, Ashley, Katie, Craig, Marissa, Stephen

3:00 pm - Close with Declaration of Unity

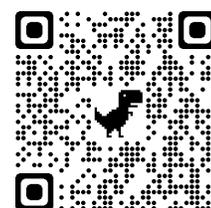
Online Event! Space is Limited..... Pre-Register Today!



unityandserviceconference.org
925.222.5639

An Alcoholics Anonymous event with Al-Anon participation

Hello AA Family! Just two months left until the 2021 Unity and Service Conference! This Traditions and Concepts focused, live Zoom event will be July 9-11, 2021. Please go to <https://unityandserviceconference.org/> to register! Check out the amazing line up of speakers and topics! We're looking forward to seeing you there!



Please submit your stories of experience, strength and hope to Our Primary Purpose at: newsletter@ottawaaa.org. Thank you for your service!

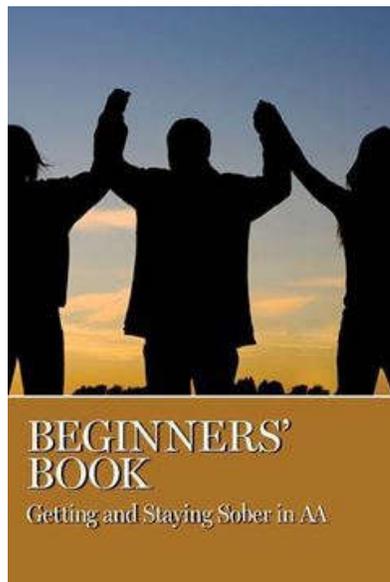
Grapevine – Beginners Book: Getting and Staying Sober In AA

\$17.00

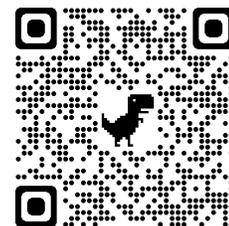
From Grapevine, the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous, find inspiration in stories of getting and staying sober. In this collection of more than 40 touching and encouraging essays, AA members share openly about what helped them get sober and handle their new lives of recovery.



<https://ottawaaa.org/shop/>



What is a QR (quick response) code? The QR code shown on the right (www.ottawaaa.org) provides easy access to the web address. Simply scan this QR code with your smartphone or tablet and then tap the notification that appears to open the associated link.



5TH DIMENSION YOUNG PEOPLES MEETING – ONLINE INTERGROUP OF AA

Online Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous was in existence before AA members who had only attended in-person meetings tried online meetings for the first time when temporary closures began in March of 2020.

The 5th Dimension Group reached out to us to let us know about their Young People's meeting that runs 7 days a week at 9:30 PM Eastern so we're passing the information on to you!

<https://zoom.us/j/687118144>

Meeting ID: 687-118-144

(no passcode)

The full listing, and a wealth of listings for other online meetings, can be found at:

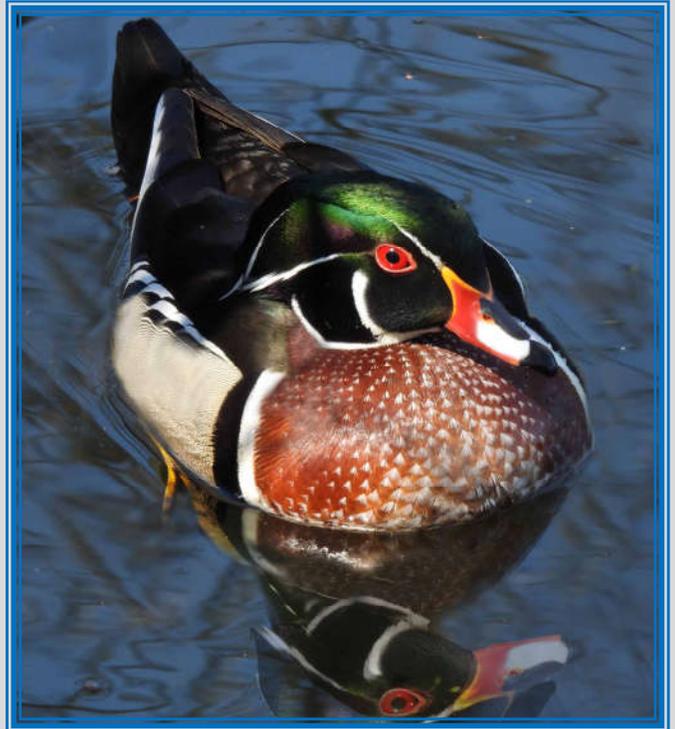
<https://aa-intergroup.org/oiaa/meetings/>

IMPORTANT NOTICE: District 58 is no longer meeting. Please contact District 54 or District 62. (See page 2)

Please submit your stories of experience, strength and hope to Our Primary Purpose at: newsletter@ottawaaa.org. Thank you for your service!

The OPP Creative Corner

Covid-19 is giving us gifts. We have more time to reflect and to create. Our new "Creative Corner" is a place where we can share what AA members are doing with extra time on their hands during the pandemic. ***Send us your poetry, or your paintings, or your photographs.*** You can reach us at: newsletter@ottawaaa.org



Photos by Yvonne P.



SERVICE CALENDAR

Online meeting logistics are shown for committees that have provided it.

No matter how much sobriety you have, you can help and be part of the greater whole. All AA members are welcome to attend any of the following committees:

OTTAWA INTERGROUP MONTHLY MEETING..... Second Wednesday (7:00 pm)

(ZOOM Meeting ID 824 3878 6359 Passcode OAIG2020)

DISTRICT 54 MEETING..... First Thursday (6:30 pm)

(ZOOM Meeting ID 834 9953 9650 Passcode 141892)

DISTRICT 58 MEETING* Discontinued. Please contact District 54 or District 62.

DISTRICT 62 MEETING..... Second Monday (7:30 pm)

(ZOOM Meeting ID 638 562 068 Passcode 016224)

CORRECTIONS FACILITIES AND TREATMENT..... Fourth Tuesday (6:30 pm)

(Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue-Room 108-in-person meetings suspended)

PUBLIC INFORMATION/ COOPERATION WITH PROFESSIONALS..... Third Monday (6:30 pm)

(ZOOM Meeting ID 815 4385 6025 Passcode PICPC)

OTTAWA ARCHIVES..... Third Wednesday (7:00 pm)

(Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue-Room 108 (in-person meetings suspended))

Is your AA Group's meeting information correct on ottawaaa.org? Please send all updates as well as temporary closures to Ottawa Intergroup at info@ottawaaa.org.

Do you have a question for the Intergroup board? Please email us with your questions and you can also request an invitation to meet with us at our monthly virtual board meeting. Send your email to chair@ottawaaa.org.

If your group needs insurance, please contact Ottawa Intergroup at info@ottawaaa.org to discuss.

"Our Primary Purpose" publishes articles reflecting the full diversity of experience and opinion found within the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. In determining content, the newsletter coordinator relies on the principles of the Twelve Traditions. "Our Primary Purpose" values the shared experience of individual AA members working the AA program and applying the principles of the Twelve Steps. It neither seeks to gloss over difficult issues, nor to present such issues in a harmful or contentious manner. "Our Primary Purpose" tries to embody the widest possible view of the AA Fellowship.

The newsletter coordinator of "Our Primary Purpose" reserves the right to accept or reject material for publication, based on the AA traditions. Note: this policy is consistent with that of the AA Grapevine.

Articles are not intended to be statements of AA policy, nor does publication of any article constitute endorsement by either Alcoholics Anonymous or Ottawa Area Intergroup. Submissions are always welcome!