

Our Primary Purpose

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

Changes ahead for the Big Book

AA recognizes the need for a refresh

Pleasing 2 million recovering alcoholics over changes to their beloved Big Book...well, many would call that a pretty tall order.

But change is indeed coming to the BB: in the form of a 4th edition “plain language” translation; and a 5th edition with updated stories to reflect a wider, more inclusive global fellowship.

Concerns about the Big Book have, for years now, been trickling down the inverted pyramid. From home groups, to districts, to areas, critics have said the language is too hard for many to understand, and that shifting societal values have rendered content obsolete, indeed offensive to some.

In April, at the 2021 General Service Conference (GSC), decisions were made to update what is often referred to as the AA bible.

A polarizing issue

AAs from in and around Ottawa, recently got a chance to learn what

changes to the Big Book might look like. Kimberley M, the Area 83 Delegate, shared a variety of GSC advisory actions during our annual mid-June, Service Day event.

Not surprisingly, 75 percent of the questions Kimberley took following her presentation were focused on the BB.

“When it comes to the Big Book there are clearly two camps: those who love it and don’t want to see it change at all, and those who feel it’s both difficult to understand and relate to, those who don’t see themselves represented in its pages.”

Slowly but surely

Change does come slowly to AA; it’s been 20 years since the latest edition of the BB was released. Much has happened since. The Me Too revolution has brought unprecedented focus to gender parity. An emboldened LGBTQ2+ movement is challenging

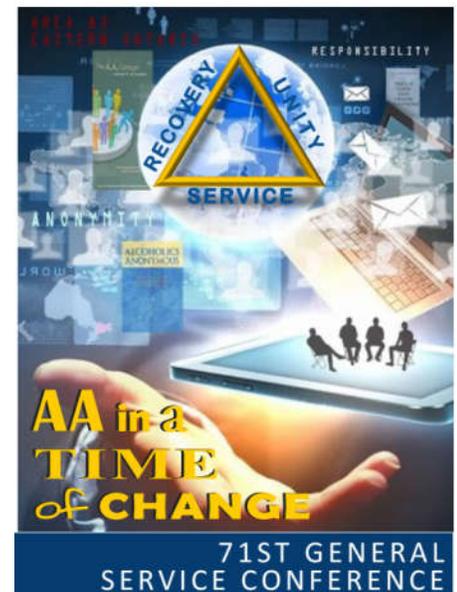
the way we think about sexuality. The rise of secularism fuels an ongoing debate about the role of religion in mainstream society, and historical injustices against our Indigenous peoples continue to haunt us.

With a chapter titled “To wives” it’s not hard to see how the BB has become a target for liberally minded alcoholics. And so, the 5th Edition will include a whole new set of stories at the back. The hope being they will help a much broader AA community see itself reflected in the sharing.

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- Virtual Service Event Wrap-up
- AA Grapevine Preamble changes
- 6th Annual Unity & Service Conference
- Southeast Woman to Woman Conference



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 preceding publication date

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Ottawa General Service Districts and Committees

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 District 62 – Ottawa West – Trevor F district62@ottawaaa.org
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 Archives – Sue B archives@ottawaaa.org

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

Editorial: Bill Would be Pleased

Bill W was no saint. As the story goes, the co-founder of AA asked for a shot of whiskey on his deathbed. But should that take anything away from what he accomplished? the legacy he left? the millions of lives he's touched through the work of Alcoholics Anonymous?

Bill wasn't perfect. None of us are. Nor is the Big Book.

Would Bill feel threatened by the fact that his Big Book is being re-written? Chances are he would be first line to receive a copy of the new, plain language "translation" commissioned by delegates to the recent General Service Conference.

What will a translated 4th edition look like? Or a new 5th edition? No one can say how much of the sexist and Christian-based text will ultimately be revised. No doubt whatever makes it into print will be criticized.

But Bill will be forever smiling down on those of us who are trying to get and stay sober, no matter what version of the 'book' we are reading.

Bill always knew that the Big Book would one day become outdated. He often predicted that while the 12-Step program would stand the test of time, the challenge would be continuing to

communicate the message in a way that might resonate for the suffering drunk of today.

The genius of Bill was that he was able to stitch together a tent that could always be made bigger and better...a tent that we could ALL take shelter under...today, tomorrow, and a decade from now.

The original Big Book will always be with us. Just like the Bible or Huckleberry Finn, great pieces of literature live on in perpetuity. What will change is the way we interpret them.

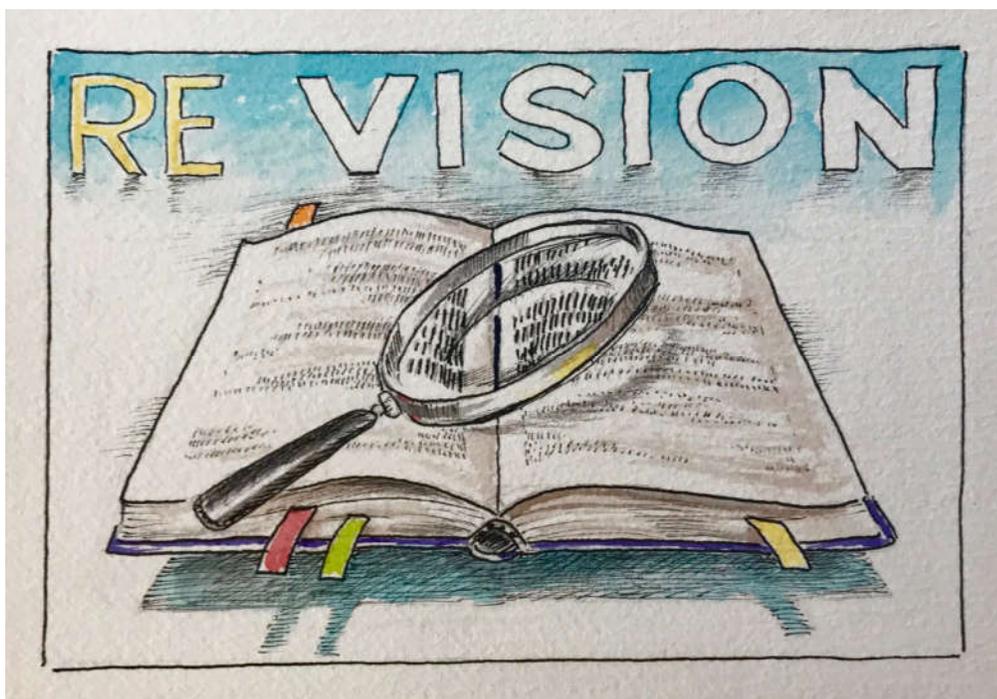
Should we stop reading Peter Pan because it portrays Native people in a stereotypical manner, unbecoming of an enlightened postmillennial audience?

The Big Book was, and will always be, a tool for us to use. Some tools will fit better in our hands than others.

Change will always come slowly to an organization as big and flat as AA. Maybe we should just be happy with the fact that change is indeed happening. Change is good. Change is inevitable.

The Big Book, like AA, must continue to change or the whole movement will eventually fade away.

Jeff F



The Big Book, like AA, must continue to change or the whole movement will eventually fade away.

Illustration by Ron M.

Virtual Founders' Day was held June 12 & 13, 2021
Recordings available: <https://www.walkthetalkrecordings.com>

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

The Hand of AA in Action Event Wrap-up

It is with the utmost gratitude that I wish to thank those of you who joined us to celebrate the spirit of Service during the Hand of A.A. in Action event held on June 12th, 2021. It was a wonderful day of sharing how we carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous through service.

When I was first informed that part of my role as District 54's Alternate District Committee Member was to work with the other Districts to host an event about service, I was instantly excited. In early sobriety, I was told of the importance of service, it was clearly demonstrated to me by what others did, I saw the enthusiasm and dedication and was inspired to learn all I could. These were my thoughts when thinking about the planning of the day, so I reached out to those who share their enthusiasm in Alcoholics Anonymous and who have inspired me.

The dedication and passion for being of service was evident in the sharing from Jo Anne D, Nicky S, Jane S, Jennifer C, Sue B, and Harry B. It was a delight to hear our guests Carrie B and Billy N share their insights, and of course, the highlight of the day was the opportunity to hear the report from our Area 83 Delegate, Kimberley M who packed

as much information as she could possibly pack into the 90 minutes she was allotted for reporting and answering questions about the 100 + agenda items covered at this year's General Service Conference.

I am truly appreciative of all of the support that I received from the committee members, Kerri D, Kevin O and Trevor F as well as all of the fabulous volunteers that so freely gave their time to help make a successful day. Thank you, we are all so grateful for your service. The feedback received has been most encouraging – people want to learn more about service, and how they too can work to enhance all three sides of the A.A. triangle.

Karen A



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

Conversation Café: a brainstorming activity at the Hand of AA in Action Service event day answering the question:

If I were 10 times **BOLDER...**

I would attract and engage more & younger members in service by...

- Stop using acronyms (i.e. Committee groups and positions); new members might not understand them
- Try to connect with chat rooms and zoom meetings aimed at younger people
- Speak to young people in depth about what they need and would like to see (Labyrinth and Ottawa South meetings are good groups for younger members)
- Volunteer to bring younger people to meetings, befriend them; invite children or friends to open meetings
- In this social media world, it might be a good to open up the organization to promotion a bit
- The GSRs are messengers; it is their responsibility to make sure younger members know about service opportunities available to them
- Ask sponsees to chair meetings, bring them to service meetings; make them understand that as a young member, they can reach younger members better than older members can
- Make accommodations for sobriety requirements to involve ready young members to service positions
- Explore setting up venues or meetings for younger members
- Explain that coming to a meeting, making coffee, and greeting is service; it is a good way to progressively engage new members in service
- Greet newcomers, make sure everyone feels included, notice people who are alone and befriend them.



Memorandum from G.S.O staff, Literature Assignment

Re: Literature Assignment Activity Update

Literature Items and the 2021 General Service Conference

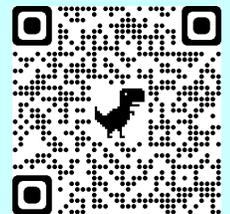
As you may know the 2021 Conference Committee on Literature had many items on its agenda. Many items forwarded as recommendations became Advisory Actions while the committee also had over 20 considerations! All of the committee's activity is too numerous to list in this update. And while a summary review overlooks so many details, please note that policy matters, text changes and pamphlet updates were addressed. Additionally, as you may know, Advisory Actions were passed to: develop a Fifth Edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous; a Fourth Edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous, in Spanish, and to develop a draft version of the Fourth Edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous, translated into plain and simple language. The next step in these and other actions stemming from Conference will be at the end of July when the trustees' Literature Committee meets.

A.A. Literature Carrying the Message in Virtual Settings

An approach shared rather early in the pandemic, and adopted in various parts of the service structure, is from Area 08. GSO's Publishing Department reviewed and has supported the use of glideapps for access to A.A. literature in virtual meeting settings. To explore this local resource, I am providing you with links to a couple of posts from the Technology in AA online community. A description of a glideapp in order to utilize AA literature in online settings is available. As you may know, a 'glideapp' functions like a 'URL' and can provide a direct way to access literature:

THE LINK FOR ENGLISH: <https://area8aalinks2aalit.glideapp.io/>

In general, the TIAA online community might be a good place to explore ideas for carrying A.A.'s message using literature items: <https://tiaa-forum.org/>



Changes ahead for the Big Book

AA recognizes the need for a refresh (continued from front page)

A so-called "translation" of the current edition will attempt to replace some of the antiquated language, making it both more accessible to a wider range of literacy, as well as being more relatable to those blocked by what some consider a sexist tone and underlying Christian principles.

Bill ahead of his time

Kimberley witnessed hours of engaging discussion and debate during the GSC, and when asked what stood out most during the week-long virtual conference, it was the thoughts and words of AA founder Bill W.

"It's really quite remarkable how forward-thinking he was. We listened to some audio of Bill speaking way back in 1960. He said, 'nothing matters more to AA's future than the manner in which we use the colossus of modern communication.' Those words ring so true as we contemplate changes to what is arguably the most important piece of our recovery literature."

AAGRAPEVINE, Inc.

Dear Conference Members:

Several people have asked when the revised Preamble will be seen in print. In keeping with the final advisory action of the 71st General Service Conference, the A.A. Preamble revision replacing the words "men and women" with "people" will appear in the July issue of Grapevine, and its translation will be in the July/August issue of La Viña. Both of these issues will be mailed, and posted online, on June 15, 2021. After June 15, as new Grapevine, La Viña and A.A.W.S. literature or reprints go to press, and as web pages are updated, the language will change wherever the A.A. Preamble appears.

The June issue of Grapevine was on press when the Conference requested the change, so this is the first opportunity to make the adjustment in the magazines.

We've also received a number of inquiries about whether this negatively impacts the editorial independence of Grapevine. Please remember that the Grapevine Board, Publisher and Editors discussed this topic for an entire year over a series of board meetings. Ultimately it was agreed that Grapevine has the right of decision and foundational editorial independence. We felt that such a change would affect the groups as a whole and in keeping with Tradition 4, we sought the input from those it might affect by sending the discussion to the General Service Conference.

The topic was actively discussed in groups across the United States and Canada for two years over both the 70th and 71st General Service conference panels. As a result of those conversations the Delegates of the General Service Conference passed a series of votes, in a sequence of events that culminated with the final advisory action requesting:

"The Preamble revision replacing the words "men and women" with the word "people" be presented to the General Service Board for approval as the new revised A.A. Preamble.

Having been accepted by the General Service Board and forwarded to Grapevine for fulfillment, the Publisher and editorial staff at A.A. Grapevine went to work to carry out the will of the Conference with love and service.

I hope you are all having a wonderful experience reporting out the results of the 71st General Service Conference and thank each of you so very much for your dedicated service.

General Service Trustee

A.A. Grapevine Board Chair







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)

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 (H&J), 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
PWPC, Intergroup/Hotline, General Service, Sponsorship

12:00 pm - Break

12:30 pm - "Never Too Young For General Service"
Katie 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

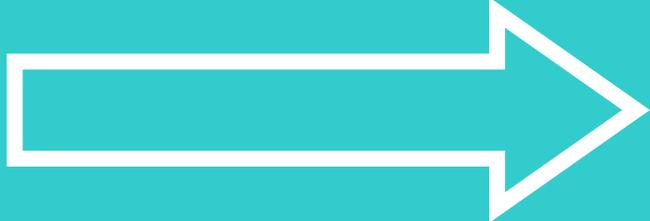
Hello AA Family! Just two months left until the 2021 Unity and Service Conference! This Traditions and Concepts focused, live Zoom event will be July 9-11, 2021. Please go to <https://unityandserviceconference.org/> to register! Check out the amazing line up of speakers and topics! We're looking forward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



AREA 83

Assembly Information





The AA Fall Assembly will be held virtually October 22-24, 2021.

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



August 20 - August 21, 2021

Richmond, Virginia

25th Annual Southeast Woman to Woman Conference

“Secrets Women Don't Share”

A Conference for sober Alcoholic women with Al-Anon participation



This is a Virtual Event

Speakers

Workshops

Old Timers Panel

Marathon Meetings

Registration is free but required at www.sewomantowoman.org

For more information, contact:

Robin S., Registration Chair
804-687-8584, richmond.sew2w2020@gmail.com

Julie H., Co-Chair
804-901-1055, SEW2WJulie@yahoo.com

Flo D., Chair
804-715-7073, flod930@gmail.com

Shirley P., Hospitality Chair
252-292-9823, shirleybp01@aol.com

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



Beu F

From the AA Archives...

Remember When Group History

- IN THE BEGINNING -

Our home group, *Remember When*, celebrated over 42 years on July 19, 2019 as David T., formerly of District Archives, informs us that records indicate our Group's first information sheet dates back to July 19, 1977 when Larry S. was GSR and Kevin B. was the alternate GSR. Tom Q., *Remember When's* current longest active member going on 40 years as a member of our Group, recalls Jim H., John S., Ted B. and Dave R. as the original members. Jim C., another current active long-time member of our Group adds Gus to this list of founding members. *Remember When* hosts an open speaker meeting at 8 o'clock every Monday night at 85 Leacock Drive, Kanata, as it always has for over 40 years - give or take a few hundred feet...

Tom Q. explains that, in its beginning, our Fellowship would meet in the basement of a bungalow now converted into one of two 2-storey houses located on the perimeter of the current Christ Risen Lutheran Church property and that the main floor of this bungalow would accommodate the Church services. Following zoning adjustments, this 2-storey house is now adjacent to but no longer part of the Church property. In 1980-1981, they built the present-day Christ Risen Lutheran Church building and *Remember When* immediately started holding its meetings at the new location - and has done so ever since.

Our veteran member was also GSR for our

Group around 24 years ago back when it was registered with New York under its original name, "The Kanata Group". That was possibly the last time the GSR position was filled before 2016. David T. informs us that New York only has record of our Group under the name "The Kanata Group" up until 2000, after which recorded activity only resumed in 2016 under the current name "Remember When".

- THOSE ATTENDING -

Our Group has a very small "core" group and attendance to meetings fluctuates greatly - and randomly, it would seem - with an average of 18 attendees per week. Long-time members say this has been a trend since the Group's inception in the late 70's but Jim C. recalls that the Group counted significantly more members in its early days. Recently, however, we are happy to see more and more people getting involved at the service level and we have been witnessing many new faces taking on different service responsibilities over the past year (sometimes we don't wait very long to get people involved...).

Our room is populated with people from all over the age spectrum and we are very grateful that we often have the opportunity to welcome first-timers. We quickly encourage them to attend many other meetings as soon as possible by giving them a Welcome Package, a meeting list and offering to either meet them at the next possible meeting or facilitate access to that meeting if need be. If they

are not on the talkative side, this is often the very best we can do and the rest, of course, we must accept is beyond our control.

The overall atmosphere at *Remember When* is, to say the least, very casual and laid-back. In fact, at times it seems as though we have adopted "We are not a glum lot" has our 13th Tradition. Although there may sometimes be ground to question whether we should be having so much fun during the course of a meeting, the fact remains that the quality and atmosphere of our meetings dependably range from the very lighthearted to the movingly intense and, shockingly, at times even crosses into sanity-adjacent territory. We have the opportunity to hear the rich message of experience, strength and hope of a wide variety of speakers from myriad backgrounds who are often more than well-versed in our Program of action.

- BUSINESS -

The "business" or "administrative" side of *Remember When* is also very informal. Our Group seems to love to jokingly take Tradition 9's "We ought not be organized" out of context to justify its lack of rigor in this department. Nonetheless, our very short periodical and spontaneous business meetings are very effective and all matters are dealt with efficiently--eventually...

- THE EXTENDED HAND OF AA -

Finally, in addition to trying the best we can to support the Fellowship within our walls, we are also very grateful to be able to have the opportunity to put on meetings at The Ottawa Withdrawal Management Centre and at Newgate 180, two treatment facilities where we enjoy having the opportunity to have regular commitments. Thanks to our "keen, intellectual, alcoholic minds" as Joe & Charlie affectionately put it, it now seems a well-established tradition that our Group conscience - or rather, *disconscience* - always insists on bringing *more* members than room capacity allows to the latter location ;). This is mostly due to the fact that *Remember When* never seems to shy away from implicating other groups to fulfill (and sometimes overfill) its commitments.



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!