

Our Primary Purpose

www.ottawaaa.org

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



Inside this issue:

Making conscious contact

Editorial

Reasons to love the Concepts

From the AA Archives

Big Book 5th edition submissions

New publication: Fun in Sobriety

Pearls of Wisdom



Did you know... The “Twelve Concepts for World Service” are an interpretation of A.A.’s world service structure. They reveal the evolution by which it has arrived in its present form, and they detail the experience and reasoning on which our operation stands today. These Concepts therefore aim to record the “why” of our service structure in such a fashion that the highly valuable experience of the past, and the lessons we have drawn from that experience, can never be forgotten or lost.

An audio version of the Twelve Concepts for World Service is available for streaming on aa.org found by clicking Videos and Audio at the very bottom of the page. If you have never taken the time to read the concepts before, now you can listen to them instead!

(This excerpt was taken from The Twelve Concepts for World Service page 1)

Go to: https://aa.org/pages/en_US/videos-and-audios and search for Concepts.

Important: Intergroup Service Positions Vacant

The Ottawa Area Intergroup Board positions of Secretary and 12th Step Coordinator are still vacant. This is a great opportunity to do service! You will be given support.

Send inquiries to info@ottawaaa.org

Making conscious contact

A common sense approach to Step Three

When I was new in AA I struggled with Step Three. I was willing to turn "my will and my life" over to a higher power but was unsure how to do it. The idea of turning something that I could not hold in my hands over to a presence I could not see seemed impossible. I could say I was doing it, but what did that mean?

I believed in a higher power and had no objection to calling it God. I was brought up in a Christian family. Even as a child, I could not walk in the woods, see a sunset or gaze up at the Milky Way in the sky and not sense something greater than myself at work in the universe.

So, belief was not a problem when I arrived at AA. But faith was. How would a higher power help me, and why would I be worthy of it? The one thing I had was willingness. I wanted to stop drinking. But I approached the steps the same way I did everything else in life – as though success was up to me and how hard I was willing to work. I threw myself into the process but

was filled with anxiety that sobriety would not last. When I confessed this to my sponsor at lunch one day, he looked across the table and said simply, "Why don't you just do the steps and see what happens?" It was a light bulb moment. I understood in a flash that it was my job to do the steps, as sincerely and honestly as I could.

But it was not my job to make them work. That was the work of AA, the miracle that I saw in the rooms and that no one could explain, no matter how many times we read or heard *How It Works*. The need to drink could go away – and stay away – and from what I could tell it was a mysterious alchemy that involved three basic things: (1) Honestly wanting sobriety; (2) Attending meetings regularly, and (3) Doing the steps.

I asked my sponsor how he approached Step Three and he said he had made it a practice from his earliest days to try and "make conscious contact" with a higher power by setting aside a few quiet moments each day and asking for help to live another sober day.

I liked the simplicity of that. I was already in the practice of starting my day with a quiet time in which I would go to a corner first thing each morning, light a candle, read a few paragraphs from writings that inspired me, and say prayer for family and whatever else was on my mind each day.

What changed after the talk with my sponsor was an attempt to incorporate the Step Three into my daily

routine. Instead of telling myself, "I am not going to drink today," as I had done for years and failed (holding onto the problem, in effect, instead of turning it over), I turned the first three steps of AA into a personal prayer.

"I admit that I am powerless over alcohol, that it made my life unmanageable," I would say. "I accept that a power greater than myself can restore me. And I make a decision this day to turn my life and my will over to your care and protection."

Then, holding out my hands in the candlelight, I would close by saying, "Would you please direct my life and my will this day?"

That was it. I can't say for certain this is why I was able to stop drinking or have lived a happier and more contented life since. But, coupled with going to meetings and trying to practice the 12 Steps as a way of life, I think it might be. I do know that I have no plan to change my daily routine.

Dave B.

See page 8 for CFT
Committee service
opportunity!

Editorial: Real friendship takes work

Who is a real friend?

We make friends in AA very easily because there's an instant connection through our common desire to get and stay sober.

The good thing about these friendships – born out of the fellowship – is that we learn to have realistic expectations. We are quite happy just to have someone to share our journey with. We simply hope that they can relate to our experience, prompting them to reciprocate and share their own story with us.

Friendships outside of recovery are a whole different ball of wax. And sometimes that wax turns into gluey quicksand.

Often the challenge comes from the fact that our friends "from before," don't really understand what it is we are trying to do by getting sober. They knew us as the party person, the risk taker, the spontaneous boundary-buster, who would stop at nothing to get a laugh or try something crazy.

Little did they know, we were doing those things to compensate for the pain and suffering that we were hiding inside. Not to mention, we were "black-out" drunk half the time, and couldn't even remember what we did, or what we said...let alone who we offended.

The sad truth is that many of the so-called friends we had when we were drinking were not really friends at all. They were "players." They played along, to get along. Many were

doing the same thing as us...compensating.

Real and deeper friendship is forged from more than just common interests. Real friends, like the ones we have in AA, care enough to look us in the eye and tell us what they see. Quite often, it ain't pretty! It takes courage to do this, and it ultimately tests the metal of the relationship, and our sobriety.

What we learn, and what our "friends-from-before-we-got-sober" need to learn, is that true friendship has its difficult moments...just like the other intimate relationships in our lives, the ones we share with life partners, parents and children.

If we can't tell a friend how we're really feeling about them, then maybe it's time for a gut check. Is this friendship, or just someone to spend idle time with?

We're done idling. It's time to put our foot on the gas pedal and move forward.

Your REAL friends will agree.

Jeff F.



Ottawa Intergroup Office

211 Bronson Avenue, Suite 108
Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 6H5
Office temporarily closed
Curbside pickup Saturday 2-4pm
Telephone: (613) 237-6000
Email: info@ottawaaa.org

Stay tune next month for news about the gradual re-opening of the office and the request for Volunteers to assist in the office.

AAGRAPEVINE, Inc.

60 Reasons to Love the Concepts

A past delegate from New Jersey celebrates the 60th Anniversary of our Twelve Concepts for World Service

By: Jeff B., New Jersey

1. You and your group are responsible for AA
2. The trustees of the General Service Board (GSB) and our two service corporations (AAWS Inc. and the AA Grapevine Inc.) provide services that the groups can't perform themselves
3. The General Service Conference connects your group, through your delegate, to the GSO staff and GSB trustees
4. They show that AA can manage its affairs with chosen representatives
5. The group conscience of the area is expressed through their elected delegate
6. The charter of the Conference makes the GSB accountable to the groups
7. The Conference charter allows the Conference to reorganize the General Service Board, if necessary
8. These principles enabled a successful transition from the cofounders Bill W. and Dr. Bob to our Fellowship
9. Trusted servants in AA can make their own decisions
10. Trusted servants can decide for themselves what matters they can handle themselves and which ones they will consult with you and your group
11. The Conference and GSB charters define the responsibilities of the Conference and the GSB and their relation to one another
12. While each area delegate understands and represents their area's group conscience, they represent AA as a whole and can vote accordingly
13. Every trusted servant is allowed a vote depending on their service position
14. AA service operates on the corporate, or "participating" model of doing business
15. No group of individuals at each service level has authority over other groups at that service level
16. Our spiritual ideal is that no member or class of trusted servants should be considered second class
17. After any vote, we ask those who did not prevail for their "minority" opinion
18. The minority is our chief protection against the uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority
19. We are protected from the tyranny of the majority as well as the tyranny of the minority
20. Our society protects the rights and opinions of the minority so that we can remain free and democratic
21. The rights of decision, participation and appeal are granted to all service entities and trusted servants
22. Our spiritual objectives can be achieved through effective business operations
23. The Conference delegates significant authority to the General Service Board so that they can act freely and effectively to implement the advisory actions from the Conference
24. The Conference charter, which guides the Conference and the Board can be easily amended except for paragraph 12 which state the Warranties
25. The General Service Board has the legal authority to fully manage and conduct our world affairs
26. The Conference relies on the spiritual force of tradition and the power of the purse for its effectiveness
27. The spiritual, practical power of the Conference will nearly always be superior to the legal power of the Board when a disagreement arises
28. The Board should consult with the Conference whenever possible before taking any major actions to avoid problems, disagreements and controversy
29. The General Service Board focuses on the larger, more serious questions of policy, finance, group relations, public relations and leadership
30. The Board has custodial oversight rather than direct control over our two service corporations, Alcoholic Anonymous World Services Inc. (AAWS) and the Grapevine Inc.
31. The Board exercises its authority over the service corporations by electing the directors for these entities with Conference approval
32. To avoid the concentration of too much money or power, the working capital and executive authority is divided between our two service corporations
33. A leader in AA is a person who can put policies and plans into place that make the rest of us want to back and help them
34. An AA leader can accept criticism and determine what information is valid and requires action
35. Good AA leadership originates plans to improve the Fellowship, never passes the buck and has the ability to compromise
36. Vision is an important characteristic of an AA leader and allows for developing plans for the immediate and distant future
37. Harmonious and effective functioning of our service entities is guaranteed by how these entities are related
38. Every service entity has one individual who has the ultimate responsibility and, therefore, the ultimate authority
39. The group conscience is the ultimate authority and you, as a trusted servant, are the delegated authority
40. Currently, 11 of the 13 trustee committees do the work of the Conference
41. The success of the GSB relies on capable trustees and their associated GSO staff, non-trustee directors and executives, all working in harmony
42. The GSB no longer owns the stock of the two service corporations but, instead, appoints trustees as members of these entities who elect the nine directors of each corporation annually
43. Merging our two service corporations would result in too much concentration of money and executive authority
44. Paid staff workers are essential to our functioning and they should be fairly compensated and allowed to fully participate
45. The six Warranties, which form Concept 12, are considered so important that, like the Steps and Traditions, they can only be changed by vote of 3/4 of the groups in the world
46. The Conference should have just enough money and authority to function
47. Our protection against too much wealth is a healthy reluctance to create unneeded services while our protections against too much authority are rotation, participation and the charters of the various entities
48. The groups need the right information and education to determine whether money should be provided for a given service
49. Prudent fiscal policy can be seen by the maintenance of a reserve fund which ideally will contain up to a year's worth of operating expenses
50. Selling books for more than they cost, in Bill W.'s view, is not spiritually bad and the solvency of our world services rests on the contributions and sacrifice of those buying our books
51. Our world servants, both as individuals and groups, should be entitled to voting rights in proportion to their responsibilities
52. No Conference action can overturn the rights of its trusted servants to participate
53. The concept of participation is the practical means by which we guard against absolute authority in our service structure
54. Each decision should be, time permitting, extensively debated
55. Wherever possible a vote should be done using substantial unanimity
56. There will be no punishment for one's beliefs or principles
57. We should not enter into public controversy, even to defend ourselves
58. The harmony, security and future effectiveness of AA will depend on a non-aggressive attitude in our public relations
59. The Conference and all the entities in our service structure should try to act in the spirit of mutual love and respect
60. The freedom to serve is the freedom by which we live.



From the AA Archives....

Live and Let Live Group History

Founded: May 17, 1981

Moving to Ottawa from Washington DC, Keith P., missed the many gay and lesbian meetings he had attended while living in Washington. Along with Karen M., she and Keith founded the first AA meeting aimed at members of the gay and lesbian community in Ottawa.

The first meeting of Live and Let Live was on May 17, 1981, the Sunday of Victoria Day weekend, at the now defunct GO (Gays of Ottawa) Centre. The meeting slowly grew by word of mouth and notices at the GO Centre.

In September 1981, Dianne R. a member of the Live and Let Live group, and Secretary of the Ottawa Intergroup, requested Live and Let Live be added to the Ottawa meeting directory. After some resistance, the group was supported by an Old-timer at Intergroup who pointed out that if GSO could list gay meetings, why couldn't Ottawa. A compromise was reached and Live and Let Live was added to the meeting directory, not as a gay/lesbian meeting, but rather as located at Gays of Ottawa.

In those early days the meeting was met with hostility. There are stories of 'spies' attending the meeting to see who was there and of members of the group being ostracised because of their attendance at the meeting. Live and Let Live volunteered to host meetings at the 1982 Alkathon and were scheduled at 3 a.m. As late as the 2007 Alkathon, the group faced challenges; when a member of the group was asked to speak at 7 p.m. more than a couple of attendees left the meeting.

From those early days with only a few members

Live and Let Live grew to a core membership of about 20 regular members and scores of occasional drop-ins. The AIDS Crisis galvanized and decimated the gay community in Ottawa. Live and Let Live was not spared the tragedy of AIDS in the late 80s and 90s. Despite this, Live and Let Live managed to continue and was known for hosting well attended Christmas parties with upwards of 60 people. One memorable Christmas Party in the mid-90s was a dress-up affair with over 150 members and friends.

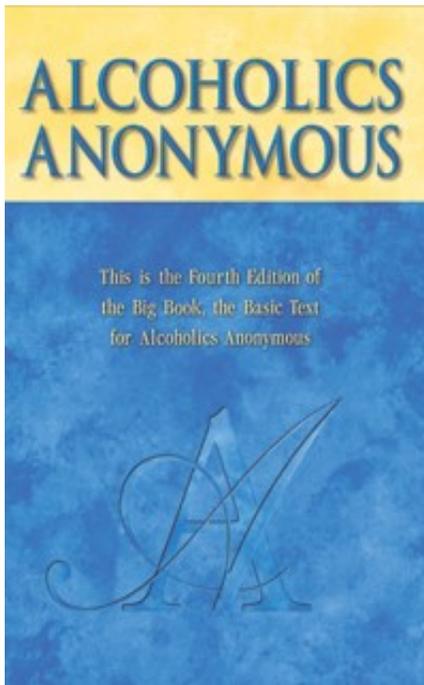
Over the years, the meeting relocated many times, moving from the GO Centre to the Sandy Hill Community Centre, back to the GO Centre, to St. Joseph's Parish Hall, and finally to St. Paul's Eastern United Church. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Live and Let Live, like many other groups, pivoted to an online meeting. At the time of this writing, Live and Let Live no longer has a physical home, as St. Paul's Eastern United Church has closed.



Send your group history to archives@ottawaaa.org

Send your updated group/meeting information to: info@ottawaaa.org

Fifth Edition of the Book *Alcoholics Anonymous: Story Solicitation*



We are delighted to invite A.A. members to contribute your stories of recovery to the Fifth Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

In response to the 2021 General Service Conference Advisory Action requesting development of a Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Trustees' Literature Committee is seeking a wide range of A.A. experience, strength and hope from the Fellowship.

It is the Literature Committee's shared hope that any new stories from our current membership will help future alcoholics to identify and find recovery in the pages of a Fifth edition.

For more details and to submit your recovery story, go to: <https://www.aa.org/submit-bigbook-english-5th-form>

If you have any questions, please write to 5BBStory@aa.org.

Deadline for submissions: October 31, 2022

Thank you for participating in this process!



Fun in Sobriety

How AA members learn to live sober and enjoy life to its fullest

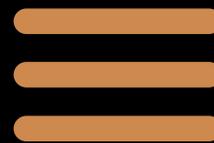
AA GRAPEVINE

The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous

Fun in Sobriety features 50-plus inspiring stories by members of Alcoholics Anonymous about the many ways they've learned to have a good time after putting down the drink. Chapters include travel, outdoor activities, arts & hobbies, social entertainment, fun-filled AA activities, and sober events. The stories were previously published in Grapevine, the International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous. Full of passion and humor, this book shows how, by working the program and developing a sober network, life can begin to take on new, exciting adventures. Available in English.

Pearls of Wisdom

From my Sponsor



This column features simple pearls of wisdom which have been imparted to me and others over the years by our respective Sponsors. These statements are in no particular order in our recovery or of importance:

That's your ego talking, not God.

Feeling that we're God. That the world revolves around us.

Thank God for the good times you did have.

Read acceptance in B.B.

When we're ourselves...

The person that we are needs healing.

Only God knows.

Feeling powerless – no control.

She has H.P.

Expectations too high.

Greatest barrier is lack of confidence.

We're afraid that we are not good enough.

It gets better.

Write a letter.



Please submit your Pearls of Wisdom to: newsletter@ottawaaa.org
Thank you for your service!

District 87-06

A NEW FREEDOM

46th

Annual West Island Spring Roundup

Saturday 7:00pm & Sunday 10:00am
May 28th – 29th 2022



Pre-Registration and at the Door Registration Saturday 5:30
\$30.00 Sunday Lunch included
(Chicken, Vegetarian or Vegan)

Saturday Night – Music, Dancing and Sweet Table
Out of Town Speakers
Bring your Sponsor

Sarto Desnoyers Community Centre
1335 Lakeshore Drive
Dorval, Quebec H9S 2E5

Registration and Information e-mail:
wispringroundup@hotmail.ca
Volunteers needed

The CFT Committee

The Committee is looking for a volunteer with two years of sobriety to be our Treasurer. The election will take place on Zoom at our Committee meeting, June 28, 2022.

Everyone is always welcome to join our meeting. We meet the **fourth Tuesday of every month at 6:30pm** on Zoom.

CFT Committee
cft@ottawaaa.org
Zoom id 815 5183 4935
Pass code 521429

JULY 8 - 10, 2022

UNITY & SERVICE

An A.A. Conference Focused on Applying the 12 Traditions & 12 Concepts in All Our Affairs

ATTEND IN PERSON - \$45 REGISTRATION
OR ONLINE - \$35 SUGGESTED REGISTRATION

THE HILTON - CONCORD, CA
SPECIAL HOTEL ROOM RATES

FRIDAY NIGHT MEET & GREET NACHO BAR
SATURDAY NIGHT SPEAKER BANQUET
SUNDAY CONCEPTS BREAKFAST
ADDITIONAL FEE FOR MEAL OPTION EVENTS



SPACE IS LIMITED!
REGISTER TODAY
SCAN CODE OR VISIT:

WWW.UNITYANDSERVICECONFERENCE.ORG

info@unityandserviceconference.org
(925) 222-5639



SPEAKERS

LINDA CHEZEM
CLASS A TRUSTEE, GSB CHAIR

JIMMY D.
AA MEMBER RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES
Dallas, TX

CHUCK & BETH H.
3 LEGACIES IN RELATIONSHIPS
Destin, FL

REILLY K.
12 CONCEPTS
Winston, OR

KAREN C.
SPONSORSHIP
Oakland, CA

ANDREW S.
Marin, CA

WITH AL-ANON PARTICIPATION

More speakers to be announced...

The Search for Serenity Group in Orleans has voted to separate the live and online meetings.

The live meeting will stay at its present location of Grace Presbyterian Church on old tenth line road. However beginning May 04, 2022 the starting time for the live meeting will be changed to 7:00PM from the current 8:00PM

The online meeting will continue with current 8:00PM starting time and at the same online coordinates but the name will be changed to "The Search for Serenity Online Group".
Meeting ID: 935428471
Email for password: searchforserenity41@gmail.com

Ottawa Intergroup Office

211 Bronson Avenue, Suite 108
Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 6H5
Office temporarily closed.
Curbside pickup Saturday 2-4pm
Telephone: (613) 237-6000
Email: info@ottawaaa.org

Newsletter Coordinator
newsletter@ottawaaa.org
Article submission deadline is
the 20th day of the month
preceding publication date

Ottawa Area Intergroup

Chair – Mary K.
Vice-Chair – John D.
Secretary – vacant
Treasurer – Tim W.
Website – Carolyn O.
Telephone Answering– Eric S.
Literature – Al L.
12-Step Coordinator- vacant
Spring Conference – Dick G.
Eastern Ontario Conference– Derek R.
Newsletter – Dawn-Marie M.

chair@ottawaaa.org
vice@ottawaaa.org
secretary@ottawaaa.org
treasurer@ottawaaa.org
webmaster@ottawaaa.org
tas@ottawaaa.org
literature@ottawaaa.org
12step@ottawaaa.org
spring@ottawaaa.org
eoc@ottawaaa.org
newsletter@ottawaaa.org

Ottawa General Service Districts and Committees

District 54 – Ottawa East – Kevin O. district54@ottawaaa.org
District 62 – Ottawa West – Trevor F. district62@ottawaaa.org
Cooperation with Professionals - Jo D. cpc@ottawaaa.org
Public Information/Media Contact - Jo D. pi@ottawaaa.org
Corrections Facilities & Treatment - Elaine H. cft@ottawaaa.org
Archives – Sue L. archives@ottawaaa.org

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)

([Zoom Meeting ID 815 5183 4935 Passcode 521429](#))

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!