

# Our Primary Purpose

www.ottawaaa.org

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



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## Meaningful change takes time

### Recent GSC continues to push AA boundaries

How do we make AA better? How does AA continue to be relevant for future generations? It's questions like these that get discussed at our annual General Service Conference (GSC), in New York...most recently held, in person, April 23 – 30.

"It was truly inspiring to be once again, face to face, with grateful recovering alcoholics from across Canada and the United States," said Kimberley M, Area 83 Delegate, and the voice for members of the fellowship from Ottawa Area Intergroup, and many other districts in Eastern Ontario.

"A meaningful future for AA depends upon frank and open dialogue about current issues. Those discussions and debates flow much more freely when delegates are all in the same room."

In conversation with *Our Primary Purpose*, Kimberley highlighted some of the key agenda items that will continue to influence and shape the way AA helps all of us get and stay sober.

**An updated Big Book**

At last year's virtual GSC it was

decided that the Big Book needed a refresh. And while the wheels turn slowly on projects of this magnitude, there's progress to report.

By this time next year, delegates should be reading a draft of a newly translated "plain and simple" language version of the BB.

"When you consider that much of the original text is over 80 years old, there's been a growing movement to translate the language into words that will resonate clearly for today's membership," said Kimberley.

**The next edition**

A 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the Big Book is also now in the works. This new edition will preserve the integrity of the first 164 pages, honoring Bill W's founding publication. The fundamental changes will be to the preface, stories, and appendices.

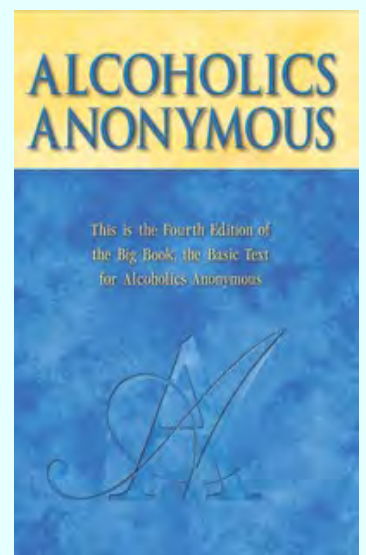
Many of you have no doubt already heard that ALL members of AA have been invited to submit their personal stories of recovery. The deadline for submissions is October 31. You can find out more about story guidelines

at aa.org.

By next year, GSC delegates and AA trustees will begin the process of determining which of these new stories to include in the 5<sup>th</sup> edition, in efforts to better reflect current recovery experiences.

**Embracing AA principles**

For some time, AAs have been talking about more support from the General Service Office to help everyone from newcomers to old-timers get the most out of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts.



# \*\*\*Important call to action

## Service: Ottawa Area Intergroup needs you!

### Secretary

Take minutes  
Maintain group rep lists  
The Intergroup meeting  
cannot run properly  
without a secretary.



### 12th Step Coordinator

A Step12 call can save a life. It's a lifeline to the still suffering alcoholic. The Coordinator maintains and updates the 12 Step list of volunteers.

**You are needed!**

If you are interested in filling either of these positions, please contact [chair@ottawaaa.org](mailto:chair@ottawaaa.org) & attend the next Intergroup Membership meeting the second Wednesday of the month on Zoom. Please visit: <https://ottawaaa.org/ottawa-intergroup> for the Zoom Meeting ID and password.

Ottawa Area Intergroup of  
Alcoholics Anonymous 

### I am responsible...

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.

And for that:

**I Am Responsible.**



# Practicing Tradition 6 in All My Affairs

**Tradition Six** – *An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.*

The twelfth step of our program teaches me that I should "practice these principles in all my affairs," meaning the 12 Steps and our 12 Traditions, as well as what I believe to be the foundation of our program: service. Practicing Tradition Six is one way I can carry the message to others and be of service.

When I started out in recovery, I wasn't sure what Tradition Six meant. I knew it had something to do with not getting involved with outside enterprises, but I wasn't sure what that suggested in my daily life. I've since come to understand that it means being mindful of how I spend my time, energy, and money.

I know that I need to be careful not to get too involved in things that could take away from my recovery. I should be cautious not to get entangled in something that could become a distraction or a financial burden. And I need to be careful not to use the A.A. name to endorse anything that is not in keeping with our primary purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Every alcoholic deserves the chance to recover, and I want to do what I can to help make that possible.

Like you and others in this program, I'm just an alcoholic with a daily reprieve. And I'm susceptible to the temptations of money, power, and prestige when I'm not keeping spiritually fit. But I'm reminded through working my program that these are fleeting things. They do not last. And they certainly do not define who I am.

A.A. has taught me that I am defined by my actions. And so, I must be mindful of how I conduct myself in all my affairs, both in and outside the rooms. Now, I endeavor to act with integrity and humility, and I never use the A.A. name for personal gain. Practicing Tradition Six is a way for me to stay focused on my recovery and helping others. It's a way for me to be of service to others and the program. And it's a way for me to stay connected to what is really important in my life.

By following Tradition Six, I am helping to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous will always be there for those who need us. And that is something that I am proud to be a part of.

Stephan P.

## Corrections Facilities & Treatment (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](mailto:cft@ottawaaa.org)

Zoom id 815 5183 4935

Pass code 521429

# Editorial: sober second thought(s)

One thing we're learning...albeit slowly...as we trudge this happy road to destiny, is that most situations are rarely ALL black or ALL white. Most of the time they're grey...and even then...there are often 50 shades of "in between."

Which brings us back to the recent General Service Conference (GSC), and ongoing efforts to keep AA moving forward; doing its best to serve most suffering alcoholics, most of the time. Remember, we can't keep everyone happy, all the time...we learned that the hard way during the hey-day of our addiction...that's a sure recipe for codependency and a lack of serenity.

The Big Book will always be a lightning rod for robust discussion and debate: some seeing it as a sacred tome, never to be questioned, let alone edited...others hungering for simpler/modern language that speaks to a wider, more diverse membership.

Here's where sober second thought comes in...or, as in the case of the GSC...many-sober- second-thoughts.

Delegates to last year's virtual GSC voted to refresh the BB in two ways. First would come a plain language translation of the current 4<sup>th</sup> edition...one that communicates in a style that millennials (today's soon to be 40-year-olds) can relate to. Second, a 5<sup>th</sup> edition, containing new "stories" that would more adequately reflect the current reality of today's recovery experience.

For those of you holding your breath, expecting to see either one of these yet un-finished versions

anytime soon...please go ahead and exhale. Your hair is going to be a fair bit greyer, or your bald spot a chunk bigger, before these books come rolling off the presses.

## **AND THAT'S OK.**

What we are all learning, the longer we stay sober, is that good and lasting change does not happen overnight.

With any luck, delegates to NEXT year's GSC will hopefully be getting a sneak peek at the first draft of the plain language BB. No doubt it will get picked apart and put back together again for at least another year after that. So, don't expect to see a translated 4<sup>th</sup> edition until sometime in 2024.

As for the 5<sup>th</sup> edition, some of you may well have another grandchild before it arrives. You'll be lucky to see this present wrapped and under the tree by Christmas 2026.

Lest we forget how many times we had to relapse before finding meaningful sobriety, OR how long it took us to get a sponsor, OR complete the 12 Steps, OR volunteer to do some real service work for the still suffering alcoholic.

You get the point. It can, and usually does, take time for all those sober second thoughts to bear fruit. But when they do, the fruit is always good and juicy.

Jeff F.

# Kyiv Women's AA Group—Ukraine

The creation of the Kyiv Women's group in Ukraine was a natural no-brainer that just kind of happened. When I lived in Kyiv from 1998 to 2001, I attended a Ukrainian/Russian AA Discussion meeting. Each person spoke one language or the other, and both was okay too. One Sunday there were some new women there. When it was their turn, one after another, three in a row, said "I've read the Step chapters in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Now what do I do?"

Because the discussions tended to focus on the problem with no discussion of the solution, I suggested that we read each step out loud the way we do in Canada. The men all said dismissively "No, no; you can read the step at home," which of course they probably don't. After hearing these women say, "Now what do we do?" I said "Any woman--and that's women only guys--who wants to do the steps, can come to my place next Sunday. We'll do the steps."

So that's how it started with four of us on a Sunday afternoon in my apartment. I served some sandwiches. (I didn't know until years later that when they were new, these women were hungry and didn't have money for food.) Now they joke that they had to restrain themselves from grabbing. I didn't have a clue, because they were always dressed beautifully on the street. They may have had only one nice outfit, but that's what they saved to go out in. So they always looked lovely and well put together.

When I lived in Kyiv, we had a regular Saturday morning. English-speaking AA meeting downtown. We had just obtained a very convenient central location in an outbuilding of a church. So eventually, I got that regular meeting space in the same place for the Women's Discussion and then other women started to come, and so it grew. They called it the Nadeeya (hope) Group. Regular AA followed suit and started to meet in the same place. It became a sort of AA Central.

Meetings seem to have a life of their



own; they thrive or wither of their own accord, most often of neglect. Over the years, there have been various soap operas with this group, like when the men kicked the Women's Discussion out of their space for another "regular" meeting. I was not there when that happened, but when I visited, I did tell the men a thing or two, particularly since the women had been there first. But the deed was done.

The lack of a central meeting space affected attendance, of course. But by October, 2013, the women found another central place, and a whole bunch of the women who had not been going showed up. Apparently, the church eventually took back the

little building where all the regular AA meetings were held, so even the regular meetings had to look for new space.

What happened as these women got sober was quite remarkable. One woman did manual labour, the only job she could get, renovating apartments. After a few years, she started a construction company that got very busy. She explains it very simply: "I'm honest, so people hear about my work." She has a beautiful manor house in the country, unheard of in Kyiv which is full of apartments. Her son and his family live with her, and they are employed as well. All this from a woman whose husband threw her out with her 13-year-old son, so that she was living with her son in one room with a mattress on the floor. I didn't know that when she was

attending meetings in my apartment, looking lovely and sober.

Another woman now has a beautiful organic cafe in downtown Kyiv. Yet another is a professor at the university. The women have all the usual problems, especially what I call the success syndrome. AA has helped them get a life, so they have successful businesses and many activities, and then they "don't have time" to go to AA meetings, which I find very scary.

(Continued p.7)

# From the AA Archives....

## New Day Group Founded: June 8, 2008

In the spring of 2008, Karl B. and Harry B. both came to the conclusion that there was a need for a morning meeting in the West end of Ottawa. So, on June 8, 2008, the first meeting of the New Day Group was held at 7:30am in the Fireplace Room of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church. About twenty alcoholics attended the first meeting, but the group settled into an attendance of about ten people for the first few months.

Initially the group met on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, but as attendance increased, meetings on Tuesday and Thursday were added. And in 2013 it became a seven-day a week, 365 days a year meeting.

It is a closed discussion format, except the fourth Thursday of each month when it becomes an open speaker meeting to celebrate birthdays. The main purpose of the meetings is to read and discuss AA literature. So, on Mondays the Group reads and discusses the 12 and 12; Tuesdays, Daily Reflections and As Bill Sees It; Wednesday they listen to Joe & Charlie; Thursday is a chosen topic; Friday they read and discuss the Big Book; Saturday is for Living Sober; and Sunday a story is chosen from the Grapevine.

Generally, about twenty-five are in attendance, but often we will have over thirty alcoholics in the room, and sometimes up to forty. Members are active in AA service at the District and Intergroup, in the jails and treatment facilities, and we always have volunteers at AA assemblies, conferences, and Alkathons. We make regular financial contributions to four levels of service. There are always newcomers in attendance and many celebrate their first year with us. Many members attend the New Day meeting 5 to 7 times a week.



This meeting currently meets in-person and online.

Send your group history to [archives@ottawaaa.org](mailto:archives@ottawaaa.org)

Send your updated group/meeting information to: [info@ottawaaa.org](mailto:info@ottawaaa.org)

## The OPP Creative Corner

Our “Creative Corner” is a place where we can share what AA members are doing in their spare time to be creative. **Send us your poetry, your paintings or your photographs.** You can reach us at: [newsletter@ottawaaa.org](mailto:newsletter@ottawaaa.org)



Photos by  
Yvonne P.



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## **Recent GSC continues to push AA boundaries**

(continued from front page)

As always, there's been much debate about whether so-called "study guides" are even necessary. And if so, what should they look like?

The GSC has decided to go to the membership with three alternatives. Option 1: no need for study guides. Option 2: use the current AA Grapevine platform. Option 3: create an GSC-approved study guide, one that would ultimately be available online.

### **Supporting virtual meetings**

Without question, the biggest silver lining to come out of the pandemic has been the "virtual" meeting. By now most of us have attended meetings from the comfort of our living room or kitchen. And there's every indication these online gatherings are here to STAY!

The question, going forward, is how best to support this new arm of the fellowship. Should we be using the current service structure, or develop one in parallel?

"At next year's GSC there will no doubt be a more concrete discussion about the most practical direction to take with online AA. In the meantime, members will get ample opportunity to voice their opinions on this and any other topics of concern. Bring it up at your business meeting. Talk to your GSR or your DCM. Get engaged, and have a voice for change," said Kimberley.

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## **Kyiv Women's AA Group—Ukraine (continued)**

And so it was with one very successful business woman to whom I sent a 15-year congratulatory email recently. She had a friend let me know that she had been drinking after her 10-year celebration, so was actually five years sober now. How fortunate that she had made it back to meetings and sobriety---not everyone does after a relapse. I have attended too many AA funerals of young people who "didn't have time" to go to meetings. Nevertheless, it was good to see that group of women and celebrate a couple of 14-year and one 15-year AA anniversary. And thank goodness, the really busy one managed to get back to meetings. Good to know that AA is alive and well in Kyiv, Ukraine.

NS/ 2014/published July, 2015 AA Grapevine

(This meeting is not currently active because all but one of the women has left Kyiv since the Russian invasion.)

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Please be advised that the Wednesday evening Search for Serenity (ONLINE) meeting has been shut down as of May 18, 2022

## **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](mailto:info@ottawaaa.org)



# 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:



They look at you and move on.  
You're not the center of the world.  
God is center. Look to Him.  
God will change your attitude.  
Ask Him to remove self-centeredness. Act as if He had.  
You don't have it in you. Let Him give it to you.  
Mind your own business.  
We're all different.  
Try to make someone else happy.  
Don't put them on a pedestal.

If comparing, you'll always come up short.  
Let it happen. It will unfold exactly as it should.  
Be grateful for what you do have.  
Don't make it a competition. Takes joy away.

**Please submit your Pearls of Wisdom to: [newsletter@ottawaaa.org](mailto:newsletter@ottawaaa.org)  
Thank you for your service!**

# JULY 8 - 10, 2022

# UNITY & SERVICE

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

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## 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...

Presented by  
the Love & Service Group of A.A.

## 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.

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 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](http://ottawaaa.org)?** Please send all updates as well as temporary closures to Ottawa Intergroup at [info@ottawaaa.org](mailto: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](mailto:chair@ottawaaa.org).

**If your group needs insurance,** please contact Ottawa Intergroup at [info@ottawaaa.org](mailto: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!*