

# Our Primary Purpose



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

[www.ottawaaa.org](http://www.ottawaaa.org)



## Principles Before Personalities Take the office, then leave the office

*We are but trusted servants, we do not govern.* That's what our AA Traditions tell us, but sometimes our ego gets in the way. We begin to think that we are the "chosen," that no one else has the skills to take on a particular role. The opposite also applies. When someone does step down from an office, and we are asked to step up, we could see it as a privilege to be of service.

Ottawa Area Intergroup will be holding elections this fall for various Board positions including Treasurer, Webmaster, and Literature coordinator. Also up for elections is 2023 Spring & Fall Conference Chairpersons/Vice-Chairpersons. The positions of Secretary & 12th Step coordinator remain vacant.

Check [Ottawaaa.org](http://Ottawaaa.org) for role descriptions. Or email: [info@ottawaaa.org](mailto:info@ottawaaa.org) with your questions.

Tom pulled up a chair and joined the business meeting. He had made this his Home Group about six months ago...about a year into his sobriety.

He hadn't really shopped around too much, having only attended one or two other meetings on zoom. One thing he had noticed was that the same two people were always chairing or co-chairing. The same, tall, bearded funny guy was always doing the chips. Certain AA readings seemed to be owned by certain members.

Tom had found a sponsor, and was busy doing Step work, so the concept of "service" was still new to him. But he did want to get more involved; he understood that by helping others he would stay sober.

The business meeting didn't really seem to have much of an agenda. In fact, there were only two or three members attending. Tom finally mustered the courage to say something.

"Hi everyone, Tom alcoholic. I'm still fairly new here, and I wanted to get more involved. Was hoping I might be able to do some service. I would be happy to greet, or chair, do set-

up or make coffee."

There was a moment of silence... then...

"Tom, nice of you to offer. But we've got everything covered right now. At this group we let people do what they feel comfortable doing for as long as they want. So, when someone gives up their duties, then you'll get a chance to take on that responsibility."

Tom didn't really know what to say. It sounded like there was an inner circle, and he was being politely told to wait his turn. Tom talked to his sponsor about it, and decided it was time to check out some other meetings.

(Continued on page 3)

*The following are two fictional accounts of how the "Principle of Rotation" and "placing principles before personalities" can either be a lost opportunity or an opportunity seized.*

**Thanks, we've got that covered**

It was with some trepidation that





## Principles Before Personalities

*Tradition Two: For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.*

## The Principle of Rotation

Traditionally, rotation ensures that group tasks, like nearly everything else in A.A., are passed around for all to share. Many groups have alternates to each trusted servant who can step into the service position if needed.

To step out of an A.A. office you love can be hard. If you have been doing a good job, if you honestly don't see anyone else around willing, qualified, or with the time to do it, and if your friends agree, it's especially tough. But it can be a real step forward in growth – a step into humility that is, for some people, the spiritual essence of anonymity.

Among other things, anonymity in the Fellowship means that we forgo personal prestige for any A.A. work we do to help alcoholics. And, in the spirit of Tradition Twelve, it ever reminds us “to place principles before personalities.

Many outgoing service position holders find it rewarding to take time to share their experience with the incoming person. Rotation helps to bring us spiritual rewards far more enduring than any fame. With no A.A. “status” at stake, we needn't compete for titles or praise – we have complete freedom to serve as we are needed.

The A.A. Group—where it all begins (pamphlet p. 28)

In Stock

## Rotation

**Did You Know...**that the principle of consistent rotation of responsibility is followed in virtually all A.A. service positions? Positions in the local group are usually rotated semi-annually or annually. Delegates to the General Service Conference traditionally serve no longer than two years and alcoholic trustees of the General Service Board are limited to a four-year term.

(This excerpt is taken from M-24 AA Fact File found at [aa.org](http://aa.org))

**Intergroup vacant positions or coming up for election: Secretary, Treasurer, Webmaster, Literature & 12th Step Coordinators! Also, Spring & Fall 2023 Conference Chairs & Vice-Chairs**

**What can you do to keep AA strong?**

*Easy does it*

*First things first*

*One day at a*

*time!*

# Principle of Rotation – continued

## So glad you’ve joined us

Sally was always very shy and retiring. It was alcohol that helped her to meet people. She could become the life of the party if she had enough liquid courage.

The party finally ended, and rather abruptly. Sally started needing “courage” to get to work. She was fired when a number of customers told her boss they could smell her breath from across the room.

Stunned by her own misfortune, Sally confided in a neighbour who she knew had overcome a drinking problem. The neighbour took her to a meeting the next day.

Still shaking, Sally somehow summoned the strength to make her way up to the front of the room and accept a white chip.

After the meeting, she was surrounded by three or four women who all offered phone numbers and a willing ear over coffee. Sally realized, instinctively, that there was an authenticity here that she had never really witnessed before. It just flooded over her.

It was a daily meeting, and Sally was back the next day, and the day after. The meeting was sustaining her and giving her hope.

On day four of her journey, Sally happened to arrive a little earlier than before. Without being asked, she started to set up chairs. And a few minutes later she noticed that one of the women who had rallied to her side on day one was standing at the door greeting people as they arrived.

“Is it ok if I help you greet today,” asked Sally.

“That would be absolutely wonderful,” said Peggy. “That smile on your face is getting bigger every day, and I can’t think of anyone who could be more qualified to welcome fellow members, especially any newcomers. You’re already leading by example.”

Sally went to her first business meeting a week later. Two years have passed and she’s now an Intergroup Rep, and regularly chairs her home group.

Jeff F.



**Our Primary Purpose needs your submissions of creative writing, photography and/or poetry. If you have any suggestions for topics for upcoming issues we’d like those as well. Please send submissions to : [newsletter@ottawaaa.org](mailto:newsletter@ottawaaa.org)**

# From the AA Archives....

## Ottawa AA Archives Long-Time Member Interviews

The Ottawa AA Archives is very interested in our long-time members and we would love to hear from you...we need your voice!!!!

We provide oral history interviews with members who have 30 or more years of sobriety. The questions asked allows the interviewee to talk about what it was like, what happened, and what it is like now; just like a Speaker at an Open Speaker Meeting,

Before the pandemic, we usually went to the home of the member being interviewed to ask our questions and upon their permission, they were recorded. Since the pandemic, we have been interviewing our members virtually, using Zoom. We are still recording them with their permission, and it has worked out very well.

On the AA Oral History Release Form that the member signs, giving us permission to record them, it states "Once the recording is complete, it will become the property of the Ottawa AA Archives. The Ottawa AA Archives will protect the anonymity of the interviewee (and any other A.A. members mentioned on the recording) against misuse at the pub-

lic level." Our long-time members may be rest assured that only an AA member will ever listen to the recording after they have been given permission to do so from the Archives Committee. Plus, the recording never leaves the Repository.

We have been busy the last two years interviewing our long-time members. Fortunately, Andrew F, the District 62 Archives Liaison, has helped out immensely with this. Andrew has done a wonderful job, and has thoroughly enjoyed meeting, and interviewing our long-timers who agreed to be interviewed!

Should you have 30 years or more of continuous sobriety, or know of someone who may be interested, please contact us at: [archives@ottawaaa.org](mailto:archives@ottawaaa.org). We would love to hear from you!!



# Intergroup needs you! The following positions are vacant or coming up for election:

## **Secretary**

The secretary is responsible for keeping accurate records of facts, minutes of all Meetings (& sending them out), and recording names of all represented groups and members (voting and non-voting) attending the meetings.

## **Treasurer**

The treasurer is responsible for maintaining accurate and complete books and records for Intergroup activities and preparing financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

## **Literature Coordinator**

The literature coordinator is responsible for maintaining literature inventory and making literature available to members (curbside pickup).

## **Website / Email Coordinator (Webmaster)**

The website/email coordinator is primarily responsible for development and maintenance of the Ottawa Area Intergroup website.

## **12-Step Coordinator**

The 12-step coordinator is responsible for engaging members and providing training for members willing and able to carry out Intergroup 12-step calls.

## **Spring & Fall Conference 2023**

### **Chairs & Vice-Chairs**

Responsible for planning Conferences and forming committees of member volunteers.

**Some positions require attendance at a monthly Board meeting and a monthly Intergroup meeting. Currently, those meetings are on Zoom. Support will be given for all positions. This is a great way to “give back” and “carry the message”. Learn more about how the Program works, make new connections and work on some skills!**

**For more information email: [info@ottawaaa.org](mailto:info@ottawaaa.org)**

**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.**



Alcoholics  
Anonymous®  
[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

## General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous

475 Riverside Drive, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10115 / Telephone: (212) 870-3400



**Please direct all communications to:**  
P.O. Box 459  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163  
Fax: (212) 870-3003

### **STORY SOLICITATION FOR A.A. MEMBERS WHO GOT SOBER LATER IN LIFE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: September 23, 2022**

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In response to a committee consideration from the Cooperation with the Professional Community-Treatment/Accessibilities Committee of the 72<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference that the pamphlet "A.A. for the Older Alcoholic" include sharing from a broader and more diverse representation of A.A. experiences, the trustees' committee on Treatment/Accessibilities has reopened a call for recovery stories to add to the pamphlet.

A.A. member experience being requested includes the following:

- Finding recovery at the age of 60 and over
- Mental health and diverse abilities
- Attending online meetings
- Diverse ethnicities, cultures and languages (including immigrant experiences)
- LGBTQ+ communities
- Diverse spiritual pathways

Please include your complete name, address, and email/phone information on the first page of your manuscript. A copy of your manuscript should be retained for your files. The anonymity of all submitters will be observed whether your story is selected for publication or not.

Instructions for submitting your story:

**Deadline:** Please submit on or before September 23, 2022.

**Email:** [access@aa.org](mailto:access@aa.org)

**Subject Line:** A.A. for the Older Alcoholic.

**Postal Mail:** Attn: Access Assignment, General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.



# Pearls of Wisdom

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

Sobriety is a journey, not a destination.

If God seems far away, who moved?

Identify, don't compare.

Don't quit before the miracle happens.

You are not alone.

Change is a process, not an event.

The price for serenity and sanity is self-sacrifice.

Bring the body and the mind will follow.

Anger is but one letter away from danger.

Fear is the darkroom where negatives are developed.

Bend your knees before you bend your elbow.

The first step in overcoming mistakes is to ADMIT them.



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

The history of A.A. began in the United States, spread to Canada, and then went worldwide. A.A. presence now exists in more than 180 countries.

## A.A.'s Beginning

A.A. began in 1935 in Akron, Ohio, as the outcome of a meeting between Bill W., a New York stockbroker, and Dr. Bob S., an Akron surgeon. Both had been hopeless alcoholics.

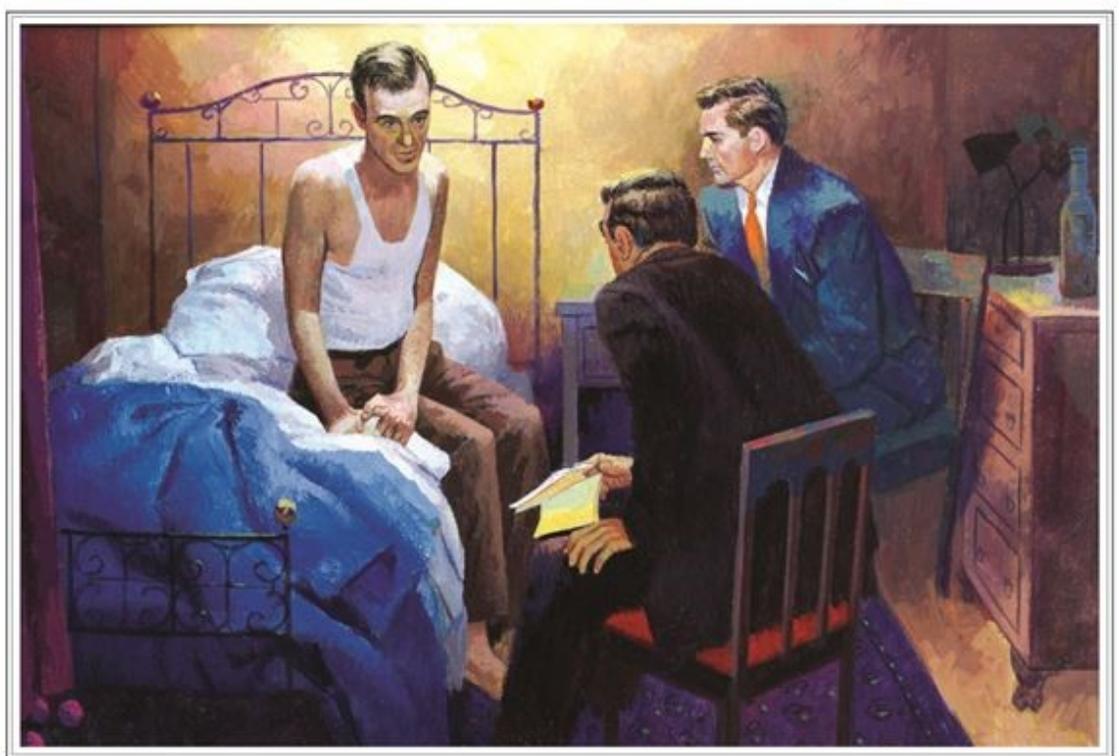
Before their meeting, Bill and Dr. Bob had each been in contact with the Oxford Group. This mostly nonalcoholic fellowship emphasized universal spiritual values in daily living. The Episcopal clergyman, Dr. Samuel Shoemaker, led the Oxford Groups in the U.S. at that time.

Under this spiritual influence, and with the help of an old-time friend, Ebby T., Bill had gotten sober. Bill maintained his recovery by working with other alcoholics. Yet, before meeting Dr. Bob, none of these other alcoholics had actually recovered.

At the same time, Dr. Bob's Oxford Group membership in Akron had not helped him enough to achieve sobriety. When Dr. Bob and Bill finally met, the effect on the doctor was immediate. This time, he found himself face-to-face with a fellow sufferer who was succeeding.

Bill emphasized that alcoholism was a malady of mind, emotions, and body. Bill learned this important fact from Dr. William D. Silkworth of Towns Hospital in New York. Bill had often been a patient of Dr. Silkworth. Though a physician, Dr. Bob had not known alcoholism to be a disease. Responding to Bill's convincing ideas, Dr. Bob soon got sober, never to drink again. This sparked the founding of A.A.

Both men immediately set to work with alcoholics at Akron's City Hospital. One patient quickly achieved complete sobriety. These three men made up the nucleus of the first A.A. group (though the name Alcoholics Anonymous was not yet used.)



"The Man on the Bed": This oil painting was created by Robert M. for the AA Grapevine and was reproduced as the center spread in the December, 1955 issue.

## 2022 FINAL REPORT

ANONYMITY-PROTECTED DIGITAL EDITION



## “A.A. Comes of Age 2.0: Unified in Love and Service”

The 72nd Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

<https://area83aa.org/resources/delegates-page>



Cornwall & Area—District 50

## 73rd Annual AA Conference

with Al-Anon participation

# Be United

**November 11th & 12th, 2022**

Registration Fee: \$15, Banquet Ticket: \$55 (includes registration fee)

### Friday, November 11<sup>th</sup>

Registration	5:00pm
AA Speaker Meeting	6:30pm
Al-Anon speaker Meeting	6:30pm
AA Speaker Meeting	8:00pm

### Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup>

Registration	8:30am
Norma z., King City, ON	1:00pm
Al-Anon Main Speaker	3:00pm
Banquet	6:00pm
Butch M., Barrie, ON	7:00pm

See Cornwallaa.com to download flyers

### **Ramada Inn Conference Centre**

805 Brookdale Ave, Cornwall, ON  
613-933-8000

Ask for Conference special room rates of \$130 +Tax  
(Deadline to book: October 7, 2022)

For AA info call Claude P. at 613-362-7513 or email us at [cornwallaaconference@yahoo.com](mailto:cornwallaaconference@yahoo.com)

For Al-Anon info call 613-937-4880

Any Reserved Tickets must be picked up at Registration by 11am Sat, Nov 12th, 2022

### Advanced Tickets Mail-in Registration

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ #Tickets: \_\_\_\_\_

Cheques payable to "Cornwall AA Conference"

Mail cheque and registration form to: Claude Pilon - 1380 Lochiel, Cornwall, ON K6H 6N2

Note: Pre Paid Advanced Tickets will be held at the Registration Desk for pick-up during registration.

## **2025 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION VANCOUVER, BC JULY 3-6, 2025 90 Years – Language of the Heart**

As many of you may know, planning is already underway for the 2025 International Convention that will be held July 3-6, 2025, in Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

Given the impact and uncertainty of the Covid-19 virus, it is vital that we obtain feedback from the Fellowship as it relates to domestic and international travel, attendance at large events, and thoughts regarding an in-person event with a partial, limited virtual component, and incorporate the feedback in our planning. We anticipate that the following survey will be one of several dispatched during the planning process so that we may remain current with the thoughts of the Fellowship.

Kindly take a few minutes and answer the questions below. Your responses are of great value in helping us to better plan for the International Convention. (All responses are anonymous.)

***Please respond by October 31, 2022.***

Thank you for your participation. Follow us on <https://www.aa.org/international-convention>

### **We hope to see you in 2025!**



## 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  
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 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](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!*