

Our Primary Purpose

www.ottawaaa.org

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

**Elections at the Intergroup
meeting December 14th on Zoom**

Ottawa Area Intergroup of
Alcoholics Anonymous 

Secretary: takes
minutes; records groups
in attendance at Inter-
group monthly meeting.

Treasurer: maintains books;
prepares financial statements.

12Step Coordinator: maintains
the 12 Step list.

Literature Coordinator:
makes literature available;
maintains inventory.

Website/Email Coordinator: maintains
the Ottawa Area Intergroup website.

Spring & Eastern Ontario 2023 Conferences

Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons: Put a team of
volunteers together and plan conferences.

Support will be given for all positions.

For more information email: info@ottawaaa.org

**Intergroup service
positions**



Oasis

Invites you to join us for our annual

Gratitude Night

December 12th

8pm to 9pm Gratitude meeting

9PM to 10 pm Fellowship and potluck

Rideau Park United Church
2203 Alta Vista Dr.

Please join us and share your message of Gratitude.
Contributions to the potluck table are welcome.

Masking is recommended but optional

Hope to see you there!

So long Jeff, and thanks for the sobriety!

In his seminal work "Leadership in AA: Ever a Vital Need," our beloved co-founder Bill W. wrote of those in our fellowship "whose dedication, stability, vision, and special skills make them capable of dealing with every possible service assignment."

In today's AA, this spirit of service and dedication is alive and well in the form of Jeff F.. As editor of Our Primary Purpose (2019-2022) and then special writer for our Ottawa-area fellowship's newsletter, Jeff has worked tirelessly to inform, educate and inspire.

Jeff's professional journalistic background allowed him to shape stories that spoke deeply to members of our community, especially during the pandemic. He embraced sobriety as his primary objective and sought to share stories of recovery steeped in experience, strength and hope. His work has profoundly touched many and continues to be a beacon of hope for those in our fellowship seeking solace from the storms of alcoholism.

Here are some words from those whom he has touched in our Fellowship:

I want thank you for your dedication to AA service and for the amazing articles you have written for OPP during the past few years. During the pandemic you spoke about sobriety during this difficult period of our lives, with such insights and clarity. You kept reminding us that AA give us the tools to deal with life in a positive and healthy manner, regardless of what life brings. I would like to express my deep appreciation for you brilliant and gifted writing, and for sharing your experience, strength and hope.

Mary K.
Ottawa Area
Intergroup Chair

Brilliant, creative, kind, and talented. I had the pleasure of working with Jeff on raising the profile of Eastern Ontario Conference in 2019. His articles brought life back to a event that had become sadly weary. He understood how to use words to do this and how to build momentum. I will always be indebted to your and your service.

Peggy F.

I've always enjoyed Jeff's friendship and camaraderie. When he became the editor I discovered his truly creative side. He used a lot of illustrations to help flesh out his editorials. I loved how he'd bat an idea to me, and we'd ripen a concept together and follow through. Later when I was doing publicity for a conference, we often collaborated on message and format. Great creator, great sober friend!

Ron M.

Continued on next page

So long, and thanks (continued)

Jeff and I served on Intergroup's Executive Board together for a couple of years when I was Literature Coordinator. I greatly appreciated Jeff's calm patience in all our discussions, always asking, "how does this serve the still suffering alcoholic". Jeff brought his journalistic training, his writing talent and his insights from living a sober life to some of the best editorials this newsletter has ever printed. He and his camera attended AA events to document how AA volunteers worked to carry the message. I also greatly appreciate Jeff's balanced journalistic stance in his writings. As AA groups espousing a secular approach to working the AA program developed in Ottawa, Jeff gave the groups a voice in the newsletter at the same time as honouring the traditional, religious approach of the older groups. He writes respectfully of everyone. You're such a wonderful example of carrying the message through service.

Thanks Jeff,
Doris Mc.

I thoroughly enjoyed working with Jeff and collaborating in a very small way with visual layouts and graphics to accompany the wonderful editorials and headline stories he wrote during his tenure as newsletter editor. The ongoing content he submitted as a contributor after his term was over was as rich and inspirational as ever. I remember him telling me that his vision was to put the "news" in newsletter and I'm grateful for witnessing his vision come to life!

Carolyn O.

Jeff has been a model of service for me as we have collaborated on the OPP these last 2 years. I saw him as instrumental in lifting spirits during the pandemic, giving hope & challenging us all through his writing. He has always been committed to helping the next suffering alcoholic. Jeff, I will miss the positive energy you brought to our briefings. You have left big shoes to fill! As you embrace the spirit of rotation, I am confident you have inspired the next writer(s) for OPP to step up and do this kind of service.

Thank you & all the best,

Dawn-Marie M.

We are forever grateful for Jeff's contributions to our fellowship and his devotion to sobriety. A shining example of 'you have to give it away to keep it', we wish him a safe and happy journey as he moves on to his next chapter.

For those who wish to thank Jeff personally for his contributions, you can forward emails to: newsletter@ottawaaa.org (which we will pass along) or catch him at his home group, Wakefield AA Awakenings, which meets on Tuesdays at 7pm.

So long, and thanks for all the sobriety, Jeff! See you in the rooms!

Yours in Fellowship,
The Ottawa AA Intergroup Team & Fellowship

Editorial: To serve is to learn

How editing a newsletter helped me stay sober

I can still remember, four years ago, when I was asked to serve as editor of *Our Primary Purpose*. Right away, I could think of all the reasons why I couldn't, or why I didn't have the time, or that I wasn't sober long enough.

Just like the notion of quitting drinking, and admitting we are powerless over alcohol, it's always easy to make a case for not taking action today. Let's wait until tomorrow. But then tomorrow never comes.

Now, after 48 issues of the newsletter – 24 as editor and 24 as writer/editorialist – it's my privilege to reflect upon this experience; how it has helped to keep me sober and inspired me to become a better version of myself. If there's one thing I've discovered, more than anything else, it's how blessed we are to have a program like Alcoholics Anonymous to join and to serve.

A witness to history

Overnight, in March 2020, our world changed. Offices, stores and restaurants were suddenly off limits. Doors were shuttered to the church basements and community centers where we typically gathered for our meetings. We started discussing the war effort required to save each other from infection, hospitalization, or death. Words like "zoom" took on new meaning as we learned of the pandemic and COVID-19. AA responded with incredible deftness, as our fellowship pivoted from in-person to virtual meetings. Our local Intergroup website immediately informed members about the status of their daily or weekly home groups. And many of us, who were no more than casual computer users, had to all of a sudden take a crash course in how to navigate the ID numbers, and passwords required to access an online forum.

But we DID it, quickly showing how resilient we were! We proved to ourselves that staying sober was still our number one priority, even if we had to make extra efforts to acquire new skills.

The silver lining

More than anything, we began to realize, in the comfort of our living rooms and pajamas, how fortunate we were to have this ongoing human connection to each other. While close friends and loved ones were feeling isolated, and cut off from their normal lives, we were still able to share our experience, strength and hope with fellow AAs.

As days turned into weeks, and weeks into months, our gratitude deepened. We saw the still suffering alcoholic, who hadn't even attended a face-to-face meeting, put down the drink. We witnessed them finding and working with sponsors they had never met in person. We saw our program of AA reaching the infirmed and others who had never had the chance to get sober.

As newsletter editor, I had a front row seat to perhaps the biggest and most profound transition our program had ever witnessed. The "Traditions" were taking on new meaning right before our eyes. I had the opportunity to interview AAs who were attending meetings all over the world. I spoke to people who had moved to other continents and who were now able to have reunions with their old home groups online, back in Ottawa.

Serving is learning

I will always remember how happy people were to set aside time and let me ask questions about how they got and stayed sober. Over and over again, you told me about learning to love yourself, and that if you really wanted something you had to "give it away."

You, the readers of this newsletter and members of Ottawa Area Intergroup, taught me that if I wanted to stay sober, I needed to help others find sobriety...I needed to give my sobriety away. I have served, and I have learned. And I love you all for having given me this space and these words to share.

Jeff F.



ALKATHON 2022

An Alcoholics Anonymous Event with Al-Anon Participation
Hosted by the Alkathon Committee

WE ARE BACK!



DECEMBER 24th & 25th
DEC. 31st-JANUARY 1st

Fellowship

Dance
New Years Eve

Meetings

Food,
Coffee

BRONSON CENTRE

211 Bronson Ave., Ottawa, ON

7th
Tradition

Submit your group to host a meeting by December 3rd



alkathon@ottawaaa.org
<https://ottawaaa.org/alkathon>

See reverse for details

ALKATHON

<https://ottawaaa.org/alkathon>

The basic purpose of the Alkathon is to provide a safe and sober environment for the new and still suffering alcoholic over Christmas and New Years

The Alkathon will be held at the Bronson Centre, from Noon until 7:00 AM, on December 24th to December 25th, and December 31st to January 1st

HOW CAN YOUR GROUP HELP?

HOST A MEETING

Meetings bind us together and share our message of hope. There are a total of 36 group sponsored AA meetings at this years Alkathon. If your group would like to chair one, please contact us with **(1)** the name of your group, **(2)** the type of meeting (Speaker or Discussion) and **(3)** the holiday (Christmas or New Years) you would like to be considered for. A lottery will be held after our **December 3rd** meeting to finalize the schedule. **Fill out the online form or email us.**

FOOD DONATIONS

We appreciate food donations. If possible, please let us know in advance if you are bringing any big ticket items, such as hams, turkeys (no stuffing), mashed potatoes, cooked vegetables, salads and sandwiches. Desserts are always welcome. Food may be delivered from 9 AM onwards Christmas and New Years Eve.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Your financial assistance ensures our expenses are covered. All excess funds are dispersed to Intergroup and Districts after the event. Group and individual contributions are accepted. Cheques made out to **Ottawa Area Alkathon** may be mailed to or dropped off at the Intergroup office, or you may contact us to make alternate arrangements.

Mailing address:

Ottawa Area Alkathon c/o Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue, Room 108, Ottawa, ON K1R 6H5

VOLUNTEER! VOLUNTEER! VOLUNTEER!

What makes Alkathon amazing is not the venue, not the food, but the people! 12-Step volunteers, coffee-makers, clean up crew, kitchen and serving help, security, and greeters are part and parcel of what makes our annual event a spiritual experience for so many. So please round up some volunteers at your home group - gather names, email and phone numbers, and note desired volunteer positions. **Fill out the online form on the website or email us your list.**

CONTACT US

Visit <https://ottawaaa.org/alkathon> to use our online form to volunteer or register your group for the meeting lottery. Alternately, or to make a contribution, contact Andrew B at alkathon@ottawaaa.org

JOIN OUR COMMITTEE!

Upcoming Alkathon Committee meetings will be held in Room 108 at the Bronson Centre. Contact the committee for dates and times.

All AA and AI-Anon members are welcome. We appreciate your support!

OTTAWA AREA
INTERGROUP

Another Turning Point

**2023 SPRING CONFERENCE
& 2023 EASTERN ONTARIO
CONFERENCE VACANT
POSITIONS**

Ottawa Area Intergroup of
Alcoholics Anonymous 

**Intergroup is looking for Chairs
& Vice-Chairs for both of these
2023 Conferences.**

service

Intergroup Elections at the December 14, 2022 Intergroup meeting on Zoom

Candidates should have: experience in service positions at the group, Intergroup and/or District levels; working knowledge of applying the Traditions and Concepts; minimum 2 years sobriety; background in bringing together teams and working with teams on organizing projects or events; service sponsor

Responsibilities include: overall planning, organization, information management; coordination. (For further details go to the AA Ottawa Conference Guidelines at:

https://ottawaaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FINAL_SPRING_FALL_CONFERENCE_GUIDELINES.pdf

**For more information email: info@ottawaaa.org
or peggyf1353@gmail.com**

OPP Creative Corner

The Creative Corner was created during the pandemic as people had more time to reflect and be creative. It's a place where AA members can share their talents and creativity. Send your poetry, your paintings or your photographs to newsletter@ottawaaa.org.



Artwork by Anna D.

From the AA Archives....

History of the Ottawa Alkathon Founded: Late 1960's

The Alkathon was started by two members (Toby Craig and Jack W) during the late '60s. At the time, they invited the destitute and homeless alcoholics to a Christmas Dinner held on Christmas Eve at St. Giles Church, corner of Bank St. & First Ave. It was an unparalleled gesture to serve a first-class dinner to the street people of Ottawa afflicted with Alcoholism. It was a two-hour affair followed by an A.A. meeting. Some of these hardened street people didn't show, as they did not want to pay the price - attending an A.A. meeting. It was nonetheless successful and repeated the following year with an increased attendance. This Christmas Dinner on Christmas Eve had grown and grown to what has become known as the Alkathon today.



After that it went to a stand-alone Committee comprised of members from local Groups with the focus being placed on AA meetings and fellowship; the food was secondary. New Years Eve was also now included. This lasted for a few years; however, the Alkathon Committees started having the event catered which was quite expensive.

In the late 1980's, early 1990's, the Alternate District Committee Members (Alt/DCM's) from Districts 48, 54, 58, 62 & 66 became responsible for the Alkathon Committee due to the fact that they have committee experience. The Alt/DCM's brought information back to their District's regarding the happenings of the Alkathon Committee and how it was coming along. Contributions came from Districts and Groups and any surpluses were disbursed back to Districts.

For quite a number of years now, the Alkathon has returned to a stand-alone committee and has been that way ever since. Traditionally, Districts 54, 58 and 62 (Districts 48 and 66 now have their own event) and Intergroup in Ottawa provide "seed money" to get the Alkathon off the ground. Again, traditionally, the Alkathon Committee would return the seed money and any surpluses back to the Districts and Intergroup if it was available. More times than not, the Ottawa Fellowship has been extremely good to its Alkathon and the seed money, plus surplus, has been returned. Liaisons from each of the three Districts are asked to attend Alkathon Committee meetings to bring the information back to their Districts. Many of these Liaisons also become active members on the Alkathon Committee helping out where needed!

In 2014, the Alkathon held a group inventory which was facilitated by a District Committee Member (DCM) to take a look at how they were doing and if they were adequately serving the fellowship and carrying the AA message. Out of that inventory, it was realized that the focus needed to be placed back on the AA meetings and fellowship; the food was secondary. A mission statement was then developed which reads: "The Basic purpose of the Alkathon is to provide a safe and sober environment for the new and still suffering alcoholic over Christmas and New Year."

In 2018, the Alkathon held another group inventory which was facilitated by another DCM. A few weeks later the Alkathon Committee met with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Intergroup and there was a proposal to take the Alkathon under the umbrella of Intergroup. The joint meeting was quite lengthy and there was ample discussion and a vote was taken whether to remain a stand-alone committee or not. Results were twenty in favour for remaining as a stand-alone committee, with 1 abstention.

The 2019 – 2020 Alkathon was one like no other. It was quite unique and one for the history books for sure! In December 2018, the first case of COVID-19, also known as the coronavirus pandemic, was recognized in China. By March of 2019, the world had basically shut down due to the spread of this disease.

The 2019 - 2020 Alkathon was held virtually on Zoom as we were in the midst of the Covid-19 Virus Pandemic. Both December 24th and December 31st had the days starting at 2:00 pm with different Groups putting on meetings. From 8 – 9 pm, Speaker meetings were held. The days wrapped up with Fellowship being held from 10:30 – 11 pm. Both days saw good attendance, with the Speaker meetings being very well attended.

In December 2021, the pandemic was still happening, albeit not quite as restrictive. Indoor attendance was now allowed, but only up to 25 people. A virtual Alkathon did not take place for 2021 – 2022.

This is Ottawa's Alkathon and the fellowship takes good care of it. The main goal of the Alkathon has always been for the alcoholic who is suffering. This is not always the new comer. Christmas and New Years can be a very difficult time of year for many and the Alkathon provides hope, love and acceptance to all.



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:

Once a pickle, always a pickle!

Wherever you go, there you are.

Don't drink, read the Big Book, and go to meetings.

Stay sober for yourself.

Look for similarities rather than differences.

When all else fails, follow directions.

Respect the anonymity of others.

Count your blessings.

Share your pain.

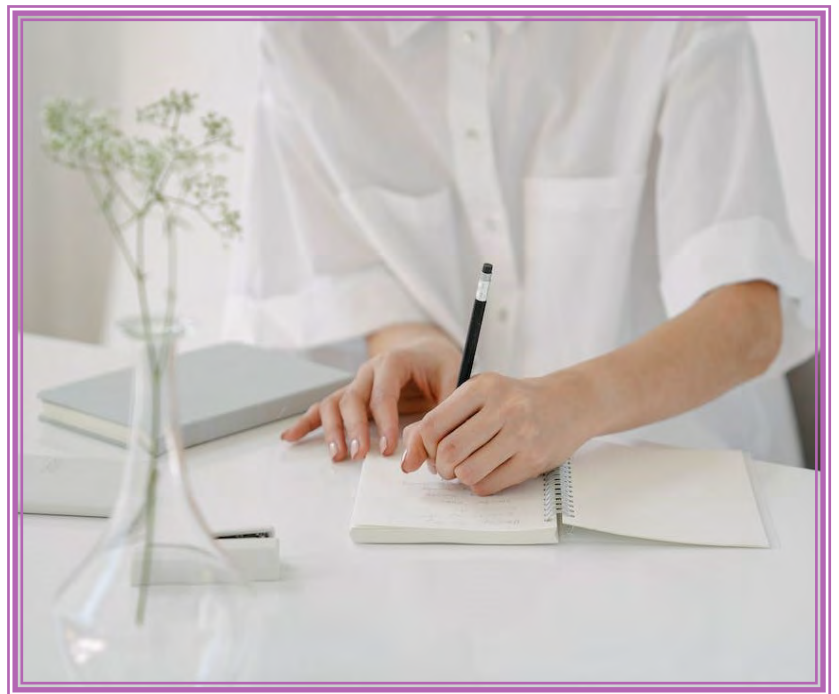
Let go of old ideas.

Try to replace guilt with gratitude.

What goes around , comes around.

To keep it, you have to give it away.

The price for serenity and sanity is self-sacrifice.



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



34th International Men's Conference 2023 Washington DC

"Keeping the Legacy ALIVE 2023 and BEYOND"

www.IAAMC-DC23.org

When: April 21-23, 2023

Where: The Doubletree by Hilton Crystal City

300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington VA, 22202

<https://book.passkey.com/go/AAMensConference>

Make room reservations **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** due to **limited rooms availability** at \$149.00 per night. **For Room Reservations:** Call (703) 416-4100. Use **Promo Code:** IAA and mention IAA to receive conference rate of **\$149.00** (plus tax per night) visit our webpage: www.IAAMC-DC23.org

for more information contact:

Chair	Lee M.	(202) 441-0111	Chair.IAAMCDC23@gmail.com
Co-chair	Willie S.	(301) 257-3320	Co-chair.IAAMCDC23@gmail.com
Treasurer	Stan C.	(301) 598-5953	Treasurer.IAAMCDC23@gmail.com

Conference Registration Options

Reserve Banquet AS SOON AS POSSIBLE Due to Limited Seating	Price	Quantity	Amount
General registration and banquet <i>(Circle your meat choice: Salmon, chicken or sliced pork tenderloin, vegetarian)</i>	\$ 120.00	_____	_____
Registration Only	\$ 50.00	_____	_____
Tour of Washington, DC by Motor Coach	\$ 39.00	_____	_____
Ball Cap	\$ 17.00	_____	_____
Tee-shirt (sizes Large to 5X): State size: _____ (sizes run small)	\$ 23.00	_____	_____
Donate to the 34 th IAAMC 2023			_____
	Total		_____

please visit our website for details and updates @ www.IAAMC-DC23.org

Mail Registration to: IAAMC-DC23, PO Box 12226, Silver Spring, MD 20906-1548

Make check or money order payable to: IAAMC-DC23 or register online using our webpage: www.IAAMC-DC23.org

Name: _____	Phone: _____
Address: _____	City, State, Zip: _____
Email: _____	Home Group: _____
Meal Preference: _____	Amount Enclosed: _____

Badges Required for ALL Sessions

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 – vacant
Eastern Ontario Conference– vacant
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.
District 62 – Ottawa West – Trevor F.
Cooperation with Professionals - Jo D.
Public Information/Media Contact - Jo D.
Corrections Facilities & Treatment - Elaine H.
Archives – Sue L.

district54@ottawaaa.org
district62@ottawaaa.org
cpc@ottawaaa.org
pi@ottawaaa.org
cft@ottawaaa.org
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!