

# Our Primary Purpose

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

Ottawa Area Intergroup of  
Alcoholics Anonymous 

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

You stand  
at the  
turning  
point

Trust **People** feelings  
Acceptance  
Higher Power  
Spirit



Intergroup's 12-Step Coordinator  
position is still vacant. For more  
information contact: [ottawaaa.org](http://ottawaaa.org)

## How the Chips Came to Ottawa

AA in Ottawa hasn't always had the chip system to use as one of its many tools. Ghislaine L., a dedicated and enthusiastic member of AA with more than forty-four years of sobriety, remembers how the chips came to Ottawa.

"I was born and lived in Ottawa all my life, and in 1974 I decided to transfer to Montreal to work for the same firm I was with in Ottawa. I used this transfer as an excuse to leave all my drinking friends behind. I was indeed very sick when I made that decision."

"I spent fourteen months living in Montreal. It was the worst part of my life because I drank the most, I got sick the most, I was hospitalized three times and I eventually I left my job. I lived in total despair. I attended a few AA meetings but was still drinking. Eventually I had a moment – June 22nd, 1975 – when I was sitting on the floor of my apartment, crying, and I thought 'I need help'. It was also at that very moment that I felt something like a miracle or a spiritual awakening, and I was led to empty the contents of my bottles and stopped taking my pills. A day and a half later, I was very ill and used the last of my money to take a taxi to the Montreal Intergroup office where I met a little woman named Terry (also called "Terry the terror") who was answering the phones that day. She gave me her phone number and told me to call her any time, day or night, as long as I was sober. I did contact her and through Terry I was hospitalized due to the DTs and convulsions. Terry then took me to Maple Leaf Farm in Vermont (a detox/recovery program) where I remained for three weeks. I then returned to Montreal to stay a few weeks, before returning to Ottawa. That was the best part of my life because it was the beginning of my journey to sobriety."

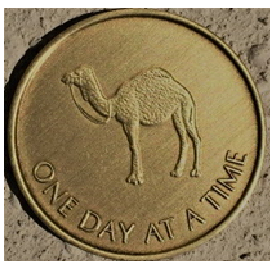
"Terry had taken me to a meeting in Montreal and had given me a desire chip. In Montreal at that time, the sponsor gave the chips to his or her Sponsee and you received a medallion after two years rather than one."

"In Ottawa, I joined the Centennial Group, which became my home group for about 15 years. There was no chip system in Ottawa at that time but when I had been sober for three months, Terry called and told me to come back to Montreal so she could give me my three-month chip."

"As the months went on, Terry would call and I would go to Montreal, bring my chips back to Ottawa and show them to my Sponsor and some other members of the Centennial group. They were so impressed with this chip system that they decided to adopt it for our group."

"I was very grateful I was able to do that because the chips were so important to me. They kept me alive and they motivated me not to drink. That was the first thing that those chips did for me – they gave me hope. I remember that Terry looked at me very intently when she gave me that first chip and told me I would make it – she gave me hope."

Submitted by: Andrew, Ottawa AA Archives Chair



# My Pet Story

## by Dave G.

It was a long road getting here and certainly one I'm not inclined to veer off of anytime soon. And if you asked *her*, *she'd pretty much agree. This is a road we both relish, enjoy and cling hard to.* So what's this story going to be all about? Dogs. To be more precise – my dog.

*Her name is Maggie and she's an adult 75-lbs. coonhound. Maggie remains rich with energy, motivation and a motor that just won't stop.*

But I think if you really dug for the truth, Maggie would tell you her motor's main charge comes from . . . me.

Fortunate me.

That's because if it weren't for a very direct and abrupt change in my life, I would have lost the one I hold dearest; my best friend.

I found her on an early March afternoon nearly four years ago at an animal rescue near Kemptville. One pile of fur later, Maggie came home.

The carpet cleaner got a healthy workout those first few weeks as Maggie came to slowly learn that the bedroom wall was not a fire hydrant, and the living room carpet was not a quiet parcel of grass.

Fun.

Real fun.

But through it all that connection that only pet owners know, reared up and claimed a big chunk of me.

Partners for life.

But then? My other partner took over. Oh sure, he'd been hiding well enough the past two years. I'd see him pop up every now and again, but he didn't stick around long.

Until he did. And did he ever.

My struggle with alcohol had been a work in progress through my mid-40s until my early 50s. The disease took me to my first treatment-centre experience. After an eight-month sabbatical from booze, I cautiously, gradually started sneaking drinks again. First it was once every three weeks, then once a week, followed by . . . well, you know where this is going.

I chose that moment to move away from my partner's house and take Maggie with me to a new apartment.

Fresh start. I had free rein to do as I pleased now. Drink away.

And somewhere in all this, I'd completely neglected to consider that my little (and best) friend was going to be a casualty of all the mayhem.

The first few weeks of living here were cloaked in darkness. I simply don't remember much. I eventually ended up in hospital and while there, after nearly 12 hours passed, I reached out, pleading to a friend from my men's group to pick up my keys and rescue Maggie. Thankfully, my prayer was answered. But the next day I received a call on my cell while still in emergency: "We're taking her away from you."

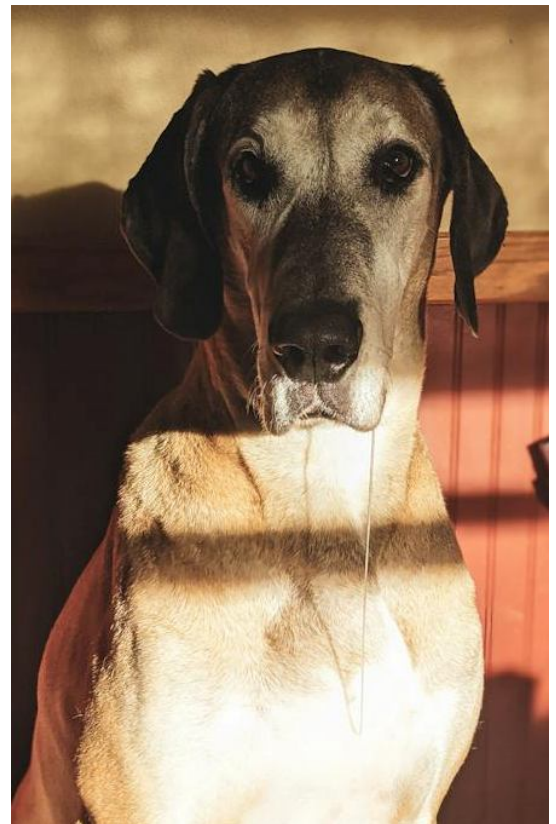
Crushed and humiliated, I figured the only way to fix this was (you got it) take this whole thing seriously. I entered detox for a week, did service and followed up with program meetings 2-3 times a day.

A Sponsor and Step-work later, I've been able to get my life back and – as important – get my best friend back as well.

Well, I might work in a quick edit. As I sit here in my living room with the afternoon sun streaming in and see that face gazing steadily at me from the couch on the other side of the room, I know another thing to be true.

I do this, and I did this for you Maggie.

My blessing.





## From the AA Archives: Vanier Early Birds – History of the Group

The Assumption Church Hall at 317 Cody Avenue in Vanier hosts a quintet of groups who together have exclusive use of this facility. One of these member groups, the Vanier Early Birds Group, kicks off each day with a closed discussion meeting at 8 AM. According to recollections of some who were there from the beginning and a review of minutes of early business meetings, the first meeting of the Vanier Early Birds was held on Saturday, March 20, 1993.

Meetings of the Vanier Early Birds have always taken place in the same basement hall of the Assumption Church since the inception of the group. The space had been rented from the Church by Eddy B. with help from a member of the church's Board of Directors, a Mr. Johnson, not an AA member, who was sympathetic to Eddy's proposal of creating a location in Vanier that could be used to hold AA meetings at lunchtime. It fell in line with the Church's outreach to people needing assistance in the community.

Because the entire hall had never been used for a long time except as a storage area for old and dis-used church furniture and fixtures, it had to be completely cleaned out, fixed up and painted to make it safe for meetings. A large crew of volunteers including John W., Terry B. and others worked hard at the initial clean up. Initially, the smaller back room still housed the last of the stored church items that remained for several years, with only the main hall in use. One of the remarkable main hall furnishings for many early years was a 12 foot long wooden church pew!

In the beginning, there was no early meeting, only lunch and evenings hosted by the Vanier Happy Nooners and the East End Group. The Vanier Early Birds Group evolved as a spin-off of the Happy Nooners because some people began to arrive



quite early to share a coffee before going on with their mornings, in some cases even leaving before the actual meeting started at noon. Some others would rush back in just in time to attend the noon meeting before carrying on with their day.

Eddy B. and others saw a need for a regular meeting much earlier. One day an ad hoc AA discussion meeting was agreed upon to be held around 10:00 A.M. just because there was nothing else interesting to talk about. Out of that sprang the suggestion of having a really early meeting. A number of possible iterations were considered, including 5 days a week, or starting at 7 A.M. but the 8 A.M. solution caught on right away and that is still the meeting time today.

The Vanier Early Birds remains the only meeting in the Eastern area of the Capital to offer a daily meeting so early. In fact, up until 2007, it was the only daily morning meeting in the Capital, and it was only much later when another groups in the western part of the city moved from 3 days a week to daily. In 2004 a motion was made to move the Early Birds meetings to 7 A.M., to enable members who had to leave the meeting early every day to arrive at work before 9 a.m., but that motion was defeated.

Continued on page 5

# From AA Archives: Vanier Early Birds

## (continued)

Today, the meeting is habitually a closed discussion format. After basic program readings including How it Works, the 12 Steps and the 12 Traditions, followed by a brief announcement period including circulation of baskets for the 7th Tradition, it breaks up into 4 discussion groups – Daily

Reflections, As Bill Sees It, Steps 1, 2 & 3, and Living Sober. Many members still active today claim that the back room “Beginners” Step discussion meeting has some kind of magic that helps people open up and share about their problems of implementing the program in their lives and really helps them stay sober. The most frequent request is for discussion of Step 1.

Later, 2 additional groups were added – As Bill Sees It and a Traditions meeting that was attempted for a short time, later replaced by a Big Book Study as recommended by Patrick B. This has since evolved into a discussion of Steps 4 through 12 from the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. In 2008, the Steps 4 through 12 table changed to discussion of Living Sober.

Beginning with December 1994, an open speaker meeting was held on the last Friday of every month, but that was discontinued by group conscience decision in February 2005.

Starting in 1998, members celebrating at the Vanier Early Birds got the right to pick the date and choose the meeting format. This provided the opportunity to have an open meeting where family members could come to participate in the celebration. In a surprising move, and to em-

phasize inclusiveness in the group, Vanier Early Birds invited anyone who could not celebrate elsewhere to celebrate at Cody as if they were a member of Early Birds.

Vanier Early Birds has regular monthly business meetings. Initially, business meetings were held Fridays, then on Thursdays, but today are on the last Sunday of the month at 7:00 A.M., right before the regular meeting. The group and shares its 7th Tradition surplus as suggested in the GSO Guidelines to Intergroup, GSO NY, District 54, and Area 83. Election of officers mirrors the same service timetable as the Area 83/ District 54 schedule, and rotation of officers is encouraged. Members of Early Birds have consistently been active in providing representatives in general service to Intergroup, the District 54 monthly table, twice yearly Area Assemblies in Kingston, and speakers for various 12th Step commitments at the Ottawa Withdrawal Management Centre (formerly Bruyère Detox), Newgate 180 in Merrickville, Alwood Treatment facility in Carleton Place and the Ottawa Carleton Regional Detention Centre, and for many years took a month per year to host the McNabb Sunday meeting for Intergroup.

Vanier Early Bird will celebrate its 25 years of providing recovery meetings on Saturday, March 24, 2018.

Robert W.

Jan.28, 2018

# >>>ANNOUNCEMENTS<<<

Chris M. 14 years February 2

Arie C. 39 years on February 14

Julia H. 24 years February 21

Lorne B. 34 years on February 26

Paul D. 4 years March 2

Louise D. with 22 years on March 2

Al L. 32 years on March 2

Lynne K. 50 years March 10

Rebecca T. 3 years on March 14

Sandra R. 25 Years March 14

Frank V. 20 years on March 15

Lewis C. 6 years on March 28

Florence K. 28 years on March 29

Jeff U. 18 years March 10

Russ M. 16 years February 18

Sara M. 16 years February 19

Ron C. March 6 16 years

Mike J. March 31 40 years

**Sobriety Anniversaries are published here!**

**Please send them to: [newsletter@ottawaaa.org](mailto:newsletter@ottawaaa.org)**

**Starting Tuesday, April 2, 2024, the Beacon Hill group meeting will start @ 7pm.**

**If you would like to contribute a recovery related story to Our Primary Purpose, email to: [newsletter@ottawaaa.org](mailto:newsletter@ottawaaa.org) by the 15th of the month.**

**Thank you, Our Primary Purpose Editor**

# Area 83 report, General Service-Related Items:

- **SAVE THE DATE:** Exciting opportunity (free of charge)!! The 2024 Eastern Canada Regional Forum will be hosted by Area 83, IN OTTAWA!! on August 23-25, 2024 in the Delta Hotels by Marriott. This will be an In-Person Event. See flyer attached. I invite you to please post it in your meeting space!

- See links on Area 83 website on Regional Forums!

**1. SAVE THE DATE:** March 17, 2024 Eastern Canada Delegates' Orientation. Online Event. The purpose of this event is to prepare Delegates for the General Service Conference (GSC). *All members of A.A. are welcome to attend! Translation will be available.*

**2. The Pre-Conference Agenda Sharing session-** will take place on April 6, 2024 of the Assembly weekend. We will discuss Agenda items for the 74<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference. The full list of Agenda items with background information should be coming out in about 7-10 days. Area 83 will be preparing summaries for the Agenda items, and we hope that you will look them over. Look for PCAS logo on the Home page of [Area83aa.org](http://Area83aa.org).

Please talk about these items with members of your group. The PCAS sessions are where we can participate in discussion and hear varied opinions of Area 83. These discussions are very helpful to the delegate in his deliberations at the Conference. FYI: Our delegate is sitting on the Literature Committee and Archives Committee.

**3. The GSR Workshops** that meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 8 pm. Upcoming topic will include:

- **March 19th, Preparing to attend the Spring Assembly weekend**
- **Area 83 Website and other useful tools**  
*These sessions are open to anyone interested in General Service.*

4. Quarterly Report from G.S.O. came out on January 31, 2024. You can quickly access this and other communications from GSO via the Meeting Guide App.

**5.** If anyone knows about online or in-person meetings available in other languages, I would be grateful to hear about them. It would be good to create a list of these meetings in other languages for our friends who would be more comfortable receiving the program in a language other than English. Please let me know ([Alt.delegate@area83aa.org](mailto:Alt.delegate@area83aa.org))

Bridge to Hope AA Meeting 希望之橋嗜酒者互誠協會

Wednesdays and Saturdays:

8pm Pacific Daylight Time (March to November) **11 pm EST**  
7pm Pacific Standard Time (November to March) **10 pm EST**  
Zoom ID: 289 612 772  
Passcode: unity



Dear Members of Area 83 Eastern Ontario International

For those of you who are planning to attend your first Assembly on the 5-7 April 2024 in Kingston or online, welcome as we roll out our Spring 2024 Assembly.

All the details can be found on our Area 83 Website by clicking [here](#). Please pre-register for the weekend, especially if you are attending in person and book your Banquet and Lunch tickets now as we have to have final numbers by 22 March 2024.

The weekend will start with the Traditional Open Speaker starting at 8pm. The meeting will be hosted by District 36's Kingston Young People's Group, which is located at The Spire, 82 Sydenham Street, Kingston. Mel C, Delegate Panel 63 will be the speaker. It is a 15-minute walk from the Holiday Inn Waterfront, which is serving as our Assembly Hotel (for reservation details at a preferred rate, click "Book a Room" on Area 83 [Website](#)). The Kingston and the Islands District Committee member has let us know that there is abundant parking on the side streets as well.

Saturday we will have our Pre-Conference Agenda Sharing Day at the campus of St. Lawrence College (100 Portsmouth Ave, Kingston, ON) starting at 8:45am sharp, so please be at registration by 8:15am. Please use the Portsmouth entrance as it will make it much easier to find the meeting rooms for those attending in person. It is about a 10-minute drive from the Hotel and there is plenty of free parking available. The Pre-Conference Agenda Sharing Committee has done a fabulous job putting together an interesting agenda for the day (see the Agenda on the Area 83 [Website](#)). We will finish the day with a wonderful banquet and special Saturday evening speaker, Robert L, Trustee at Large for Canada, which James O'D our Area 83 Delegate has arranged.

Sunday will be the Area Business Meeting, which will be held at the St Lawrence College. This is a wonderful time to get caught up on all the great things that are going on in each District and with the Area Sub-Committee Chairs and Area Officers. We will also have some important new business to discuss. Background material on these recommendations has been provided to each of the District Committee Members to share with the General Service Representatives and group members.

I would like to finish by encouraging you to consider attending the 2024 Spring Assembly, Kingston 5-7 April 2024. If you are attending in person, please make your hotel arrangements soon and order your banquet and lunch tickets as there are a limited number and we need to have final numbers by 22 March 2024. If you are attending online, you will find the links to all the sessions on the Agenda, which can be found on the Area 83 [Website](#).

Yours in Love and Service

Bill C  
Chairperson, Panel 73  
Area 83, Eastern Ontario International

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# **Alcoholics Anonymous**

## **ST. PATRICK'S DAY ROUND-UP**

**Saturday, March 16, 2024**  
**RENFREW-PONTIAC DISTRICT 70**

**FREEDOM FROM BONDAGE**

**The Renfrew Armouries**  
**115 Veterans Memorial Boulevard**  
**Renfrew, ON**



**Registration opens @ 10:30 AM**  
**7th Tradition**  
**Light Lunch Provided**



**First Speaker @ 11:30 AM/Closing Speaker @ 4:00 PM**

**AA and Al-Anon Panels All Afternoon**

**POT LUCK DINNER @ 5:00 PM**

**FREE PARKING**

**Wheelchair Accessible**

Pre-Register  
to Win!  
Free Hotel Room!  
+ \$100 The Keg  
Gift Card!\*

# ORC 2024

ONTARIO REGIONAL  
CONFERENCE of  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
with AL-ANON/ALATEEN

MARCH 15 - 17 2024  
**A NEW FREEDOM**

SHERATON CENTRE TORONTO HOTEL

John A, Heartland, TX  
Ruth L, Montreal, QC  
Katie P, Austin, TX  
Steve L, Nashville, TN

**Family Panel:**

Amanda B & Angie B

**Al-Anon Main Speaker:**  
Catherine K, Dallas, TX

Registration: \$55 | Banquet: \$105 | Special Hotel Rate: \$215/night

**To register please visit: [www.aaorc.ca](http://www.aaorc.ca)**

\*Each ticket purchased by Feb 1, 2024 will be entered into a random draw, with one winner selected on Feb 9, 2024.  
The winner will receive a \$100 The Keg Gift Card and be given a free hotel room for Mar 15 and 16.







**DISTRICT 66, GOLDEN TRIANGLE**  
**40<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ROUNDUP**

**Saturday, April 13, 2024**  
**Lombardy Agricultural Hall**  
**6 Kellys Rd., Lombardy, ON**

**HOW FREE DO YOU**  
**Want to BE?**

**Doors open at 11:30 a.m.**  
**Round-up starts at 12:15 p.m.**  
**AA and Al-Anon Panels**  
**Presentations, 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition**  
**Sobriety Countdown, Guest Speaker**  
**Potluck Dinner**

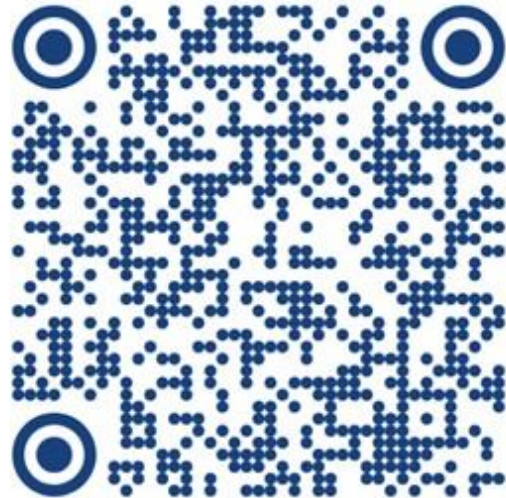
**Questions? E-mail:**

[roundupchair@lanarkleedsaa.org](mailto:roundupchair@lanarkleedsaa.org)



# Eastern Canada Regional Forum

**August 23-25, 2024**  
**Delta Hotels by Marriott**  
**Ottawa, Ontario**



Please join us for a weekend full of AA  
information and fellowship with Trusted  
Servants and GSO Staff!

Interested in Volunteering? Please email  
[ecrf2024@area83aa.org](mailto:ecrf2024@area83aa.org)

More information available on the Area 83 website at the QR  
code above or at <https://www.aa.org/regional-and-local-forums>



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

Newsletter Editor  
[newsletter@ottawaaa.org](mailto:newsletter@ottawaaa.org)  
Article submission deadline is  
the 15th day of the month  
preceding publication date

## Ottawa Area Intergroup

Chair – John D.  
Vice-Chair – Jeff L.  
Secretary – Dick G.  
Treasurer – Stephan P.  
Website – Paul D.  
Telephone Answering Service – Steve R.  
Literature – Walter H.  
12-Step Coordinator– Steve R.  
Spring Conference – vacant  
Eastern Ontario Conference– Kevin O.  
Newsletter – George H.

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[vice@ottawaaa.org](mailto:vice@ottawaaa.org)  
[secretary@ottawaaa.org](mailto:secretary@ottawaaa.org)  
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[spring@ottawaaa.org](mailto:spring@ottawaaa.org)  
[eoc@ottawaaa.org](mailto:eoc@ottawaaa.org)  
[newsletter@ottawaaa.org](mailto:newsletter@ottawaaa.org)

## Ottawa General Service Districts and Committees

District 54 – Ottawa East –	<a href="mailto:district54@ottawaaa.org">district54@ottawaaa.org</a>
District 62 – Ottawa West – Jamie B.	<a href="mailto:district62@ottawaaa.org">district62@ottawaaa.org</a>
Cooperation with Professionals - Chris M.	<a href="mailto:cpc@ottawaaa.org">cpc@ottawaaa.org</a>
Public Information/Media Contact - Chris M.	<a href="mailto:pi@ottawaaa.org">pi@ottawaaa.org</a>
Corrections Facilities & Treatment - Elaine H.	<a href="mailto:cft@ottawaaa.org">cft@ottawaaa.org</a>
Archives – Andrew F.	<a href="mailto:archives@ottawaaa.org">archives@ottawaaa.org</a>

# 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](#))

**DISTRICT 54 MEETING**..... First Thursday (6:30 pm)  
([ZOOM Meeting ID 834 9953 9650 Passcode 141892](#))

**DISTRICT 58 MEETING**..... First Monday (7:00 pm)  
(Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue-Room 213-in-person meetings suspended)

**DISTRICT 62 MEETING**..... Second Monday (7:30 pm)  
([ZOOM Meeting ID 638 562 068 Passcode 016224](#))

**CORRECTIONS FACILITIES AND TREATMENT**..... Fourth Tuesday (6:30 pm)  
(Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue-Room 108-in-person meeting suspended)  
([ZOOM Meeting ID 815 5183 4935 Passcode 512429](#))

**PUBLIC INFORMATION/ COOPERATION WITH PROFESSIONALS** Third Thursday (7pm)  
([ZOOM Meeting ID 815 4385 6025 Passcode PICPC](#))

**OTTAWA ARCHIVES**..... Third Wednesday (6:30pm)  
Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue-Room 108 in-person meeting

**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 question and you can also request an invitation to meet with us at our monthly 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 editor 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. Seeking neither 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 editor 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.