

OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE

STORIES, NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM OUR FELLOWSHIP IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

SPRING CONFERENCE 2019 is coming up on April 13th



I SURRENDER

Ottawa Intergroup office hours are from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Monday-Friday (subject to volunteer availability).

In addition, our Office Administrator will sell books if there are no volunteers in the office when she is there from 9:00AM - 3:30PM Mondays and Wednesdays and Thursday's from 4:00PM - 8:00PM.

Our Literature coordinator will also be at the Intergroup office for literature purchases on Saturday afternoons from 1:00PM to 4:00PM

Online Credit Card Pay & Pick-Up Service Groups and individuals can now order literature, wallet cards, chips medallions and other merchandise from Intergroup See Page 6

When purchasing literature, chips or medallions, in person please remember to bring a credit card or a cheque payable to "Ottawa Area Intergroup of AA", cash not accepted.

OTTAWA INTERGROUP OFFICE

211 Bronson Avenue, Suite 108

Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 6H5

Open for Literature Sales

Mon - Fri 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

(Subject to volunteer availability—

Call in advance)



GENERAL INFORMATION

Telephone: 613.237.6000

10 am - 10 pm, 7 days a week

Email: info@ottawaaa.org

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

newsletter@ottawaaa.org

Article submission deadline is

last day of previous month

for following month

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OTTAWA AREA INTERGROUP

- Chair (Sandy K) ▶ chair@ottawaaa.org
Vice-Chair (Harry B) ▶ vice@ottawaaa.org
Secretary (Anne D) ▶ secretary@ottawaaa.org
Treasurer (Sandy M) ▶ treasurer@ottawaaa.org
Website and Email (Carolyn O) ▶ info@ottawaaa.org
Telephone Answering (Al L) ▶ tas@ottawaaa.org
Newsletter (Jeff F) ▶ newsletter@ottawaaa.org
Literature (Doris M) ▶ literature@ottawaaa.org
12Step Coordinator (Kerri D) ▶ 12step@ottawaaa.org
Spring Conference (Duane S) ▶ spring@ottawaaa.org
Fall Conference(Peggy F) ▶ fall@ottawaaa.org

OTTAWA GENERAL SERVICE DISTRICTS AND COMMITTEES

- District 54 - Ottawa East () ▶ district54@ottawaaa.org District 58
District 58 - Ottawa Centre () ▶ district58@ottawaaa.org
District 62 - Ottawa West (Frank V) ▶ district62@ottawaaa.org
Cooperation with Professionals () ▶ cpc@ottawaaa.org
Public Information / Media Contact () ▶ pi@ottawaaa.org
Corrections Facilities and Treatment () ▶ cft@ottawaaa.org
Archives () ▶ archives@ottawaaa.org

Taking stock - Looking ahead

As the calendar ushers in 2019, we pause to reflect on what it means to be at yet another new starting point...for the day ahead, the month, the season or the entire year.

Whether or not we choose to make any so-called New Year's resolutions our AA fellowship offers us an on-going opportunity to take stock of where we are, where we're headed and what we need to do to get there.

For many of us starting points have been difficult to arrive at. We weren't really looking for them because that might have inferred we had a particular journey in mind, and by extension, a goal or a finish line to strive for.

When it came to our drinking, our addictive behaviour, we had become all too familiar with the daily treadmill of life. And despite the seemingly endless loop we were in, it was comfortable and predictable. We had made sense of the insanity.

But then, somehow, we finally found ourselves at a time and place where the pain and suffering were simply too much to bear, the consequences of our actions too hard to ignore. It was at that moment that a tiny crack of light began to appear, and relief came to us in the form of surrender. We had reached our bottom, and it was time to start over again.

We have all arrived at the starting point for this new and sober life in our own unique way, on our own terms and on our own timetable. For many

of us, there have been more than one starting point in this battle to find recovery.

And now, as many (AAs and non AAs) indulge in the annual fantasy of mostly unattainable goals and objectives, commonly known as "resolutions"...getting to the gym three or four times a week, setting aside those tasty desserts, or paying off credit card debt on a regular basis...we can step back and appreciate how our AA program of recovery gives us a different kind of recipe for fulfillment.

Our AA 12-step program offers us a whole different framework; a whole different take on the true meaning of our lives and the direction we are headed in.

As we contemplate what 2019 has in store for us, we can rest assured that striving for progress, not perfection, is the only realistic way forward. If we break it down into manageable, 24-hour, bite-sized chapters, then we will end up writing a very reasonable and authentic story.

If we can remember to put the needs of others ahead of our own. If we can offer help to others without any expectation of a favour in return. If we can be grateful for all that life has given us. If we can learn to accept the fact that we are exactly where we are meant to be on this journey.

If we can strive for any of these goals, we will find ourselves walking a more spiritual path.

And, all those New Year's resolutions will come to pass in their own natural way.

Happy New Year,
Jeff F
Editor



Submit Your Story for Upcoming Issues

Send a story of your Experience, Strength & Hope (about 600-800 words) to newsletter@ottawaaa.org

Ready Player One?

On the morning of January 24th, six years ago, I found myself descending into the depths of the Our Lady of Assumption Church in Vanier. I was hungover, terrified, and ashamed. I didn't know I was about to trigger a slow, progressive, and profound spiritual change the likes of which I had thought laughable. I was on the precipice of an adventure.

For the twenty-five preceding years, I had been railing against my disease, always with a vow to "do something" about my drinking. I vowed to drink less; I vowed to drink less often; I vowed to change my drinking friends; I vowed to change the types of alcohol I drank; I vowed abstinence when the consequences were bad enough. Nothing worked and I grew more and more resentful at the world. I became deformed; a wounded, selfish creature. Above all though, I developed a great obsession: I had to be stronger than alcohol if was going to control it. As I would find out, that approach could not have been more wrong.

Let me use an analogy: let's say I play a video game and an enemy keeps killing me. No matter how much loot I get, no matter how much armour I get, no matter how good at fighting I get, no matter what strategy I employ, he kills me. Over, and over, and over again, he kills me. Every single time, hundreds of times, he kills me, yet I keep going back to him on the map. At what point do I realize defeating this enemy is not obligatory to progress in the game, that it is in fact preventing my progress and I could just run past him and avoid the fight altogether? Therein lies the epiphany I had that cold morning six years ago. Not only was my strategy of fighting alcohol wrong, it was the exact opposite of what I needed to do. The key was not engaging it in a fight; I never won those fights. The key was... wait for it ... good old surrender.

As it turned out, surrender wasn't what I thought it was either. When I was actively drinking, surrender was shameful. It meant I was weak. It meant I had failed to solve this drinking problem. It meant I wasn't as smart as I thought I was. Once I was in AA, however, surrender simply meant I could stop fighting, which was drastically different and good because I was exhausted, badly injured, and barely standing.

Once I accepted I didn't need to fight that enemy, things began to change. I could now focus enough to grasp the concept that not drinking was for twenty-four hours at a time, not a minute more, which is much easier than a lifetime. I could start listening to steps one, two, and three. I could keep coming back. And I did. I got a sponsor, I went through the twelve steps as honestly as I could, and I began to grow. Every year, I grew a little bit more, until one day I realized I was a peer in society, not rich and powerful by any means, but a normal citizen nonetheless, instead of a pretender more intent on indulging his misdirected instincts than anything else.

It can work for anyone. It happened to me and I have seen it happen to countless others. It all starts with surrender---an admission of powerlessness over alcohol. *C'est tout*. Leave that enemy on the map and see what the rest of the game is like.

Gilles B.



From the Literature Coordinator

AA Materials on YouTube ... A YouTube channel has just been launched for A.A. World Services Inc (A.A.W.S) and the A.A. General Service Office (G.S.O.). The new channel can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/c/AlcoholicsAnonymousWorldServicesInc>



New Pamphlets ... Two new pamphlets have been recently published by AA and **will be** available at the Intergroup office:

P-86 The "God" Word -- Agnostic and Atheist Members in A.A.

A.A. is not a religious organization. Alcoholics Anonymous has only one requirement for membership, and that is the desire to stop drinking. There is room in A.A. for people of all shades of belief and non-belief.

As A.A. co-founder Bill W. wrote in 1965: "We have atheists and agnostics. We have people of nearly every race, culture and religion. In A.A. we are supposed to be bound together in the kinship of a common suffering. Consequently, the full individual liberty to practice any creed or principle or therapy whatever should be a first



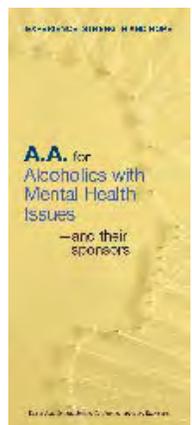
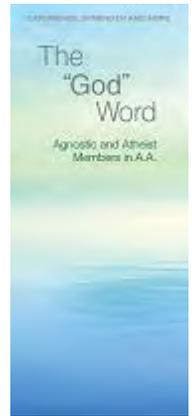
New Poster Available at the Intergroup office ... If your group would like a copy of the 11" x 17" poster M-77, *Anonymity in the Digital Age*, we **will** have copies for sale at the Intergroup office. See our online bookstore, at <https://ottawaaa.org/e-store>

consideration for us all. Let us not, therefore, pressure anyone with our individual or even our collective views. Let us instead accord each other the respect and love that is due to every human being as he tries to make his way toward the light. Let us always try to be inclusive rather than exclusive; let us remember that each alcoholic among us is a member of A.A., so long as he or she declares. Whatever you **do, please don't let someone else's religious beliefs** prevent you from finding the solution that is available to you through Alcoholics Anonymous."

P-87 AA for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues -- and their sponsors

This pamphlet relates the experiences of 12 women and men — all of whom are alcoholics coping with serious mental health issues — who have found sobriety and a new way of life in Alcoholics Anonymous. These stories represent their experience, strength and hope.

Also included in this pamphlet are the perspectives of five A.A. members with long-term sobriety who have worked closely as sponsors with alcoholics who have mental health issues, helping them to gain and maintain sobriety in A.A. And at the end of this pamphlet is an Afterword, based on solid A.A. and medical experience, aimed at helping A.A. members find the right balance regarding prescribed medication and minimizing the risk of relapse.



Online Credit Card Pay & Pick-Up Service

Groups and individuals can now order literature, wallet cards, chips, medallions and other merchandise online from Ottawa Intergroup.

To access the form, go to www.ottawaaa.org and click on the link 'Intergroup Services' and from there click on the link 'Literature'. From there you will find the link for the order form. When your order is complete you will receive an email confirmation and receipt for your purchase and someone from the office will contact you when your order is ready for pick-up.

Please note that all credit card purchases will be processed through the online store.

If you have any questions please use the [contact form](#) to email the Office Administrator. For technical questions about the actual form, please include the Webmaster on the contact form distribution.

Ottawa Area Intergroup of
Alcoholics Anonymous 

Announcements and Events

The following is a list of recent announcements and upcoming events in Ottawa area and beyond. Click on the link for further details. If you have questions, or wish to submit an announcement or event, please contact info@ottawaaa.org.

[Online Credit Card Pay & Pick-Up Service](#)

Groups and individuals can order literature, wallet cards, chips medallions and other merchandise from Intergroup. [Click here](#) to access our online order form.

You will receive an email confirmation and receipt for your purchase and someone from the office will contact you when your order is ready for pick-up.

If you have any questions please use the [contact form](#) to email the Literature Coordinator and the Office Administrator.

For technical questions about the actual form, please include the Webmaster on the contact form distribution.

Scent Free



Scented products can cause allergic reactions and respiratory distress.

Please be respectful of others and refrain from wearing scent products in the meetings and in the Intergroup office.

SPRING CONFERENCE 2019



ROCKETED INTO A FOURTH DIMENSION ~

Welcome to the 2019 Ottawa Spring Conference, an annual tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous in the National Capital Region for 40 years! Please visit us at: <https://ottawaaa.org/spring/>

Our one day event will be held April 13, 2019 at the Hellenic Meeting & Reception Centre. It includes a series of speakers, 2 panels, topic discussions, a banquet, hospitality suite, a dance and, of course, the fellowship of other A.A. members in our community and beyond.

Our event is hosted by the Ottawa Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous with the gracious support of A.A. groups and members across our region. We would like to extend a heartfelt welcome to out-of-town guests and invite you to contact us if you have questions about our event, our city or our local fellowship.

Ottawa AA Telephone Answering

You can see the available shifts below:

<https://interactive.ottawaaa.org/tas/>

If you can take a open shift please email tas@ottawaaa.org

Telephone Answering Service



TELEPHONES: Our answering service operates from 10:00 am until 10:00 pm daily. Shifts are 3 hours and after 4:00 PM and weekends may be covered from home, Monday-Friday daytime hours are best covered in the office. [TAS Schedule](#) To volunteer for a shift, or to join the 12-Step call list, please email the TAS Coordinator.

New Year's Resolutions: What they were like, what happened, and what they are like now

By Lucy W, Ottawa

What they were like: Pre-sobriety New Year's resolutions were fairly clear, logical and even admirable. They were most often aimed at giving up drinking and thereby losing weight, getting in better physical shape, saving more money, and proving that I did not have a drinking problem. Looking back, I see that their "primary purpose" was to make me look better so that others would think better of me so that I could then feel better about me. The fuel for these objectives was a mixture of self will, self discipline and self-centered ambition. This brief description of resolutions past renders the "ism" (I Self and Me) of alcohol-ism readily apparent.

There was no consideration of making myself fit to serve others. Such other-centered thinking and living had not yet entered my consciousness in any authentic or lasting way. Putting others first, according to my formula at that time, meant: less for me and more for them. As such, "others" always came second. "Selfishness-self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles" (BB, p. 62). As a younger person, the "troubles" were not yet overwhelming, so I could occasionally keep resolutions for months or even a year. However, as the disease progressed, my ability to maintain resolutions regressed.

What happened: It was New Year's, 1998. Once more, I was attempting to give up alcohol for the year; once more, on my own. This time, I stayed dry until January 4th, after which I drank daily until January 23rd. Daily also, I considered discrete and "accidental" methods of leaving this world. Each morning, waking up hung over, in self-imposed isolation, unable to climb out of the bitter morass of self-pity" (BB, p. 8) and haunted by the Four Horsemen (terror, bewilderment,

frustration and despair) (BB, p. 151), I did wish for the end. The depth, duration and utter hopelessness of this bottom were all needed to force me to – for the first time – ask for help. My "human resources, as marshaled by the will, were not sufficient. They failed utterly" (BB, p. 45). I called the AA hotline.

What they are like now: Step Ten suggests that we continue to take personal inventory. Through inventory, I become aware of something that needs to change. Next, I need to – through prayer and meditation (Step 11) - become honest about whether I am *completely willing* to let this behavior (or defect) go; that is, if I am truly ready to *be changed*. If the answer is no, I go back to the last line of Step Six in the Big Book: "If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing" (p. 76). It's important to get honest with myself and my Higher Power about whether I am ready to let go of the old behavior. If not, I can pray persistently for the willingness to let it go, and practice patience until it comes.

Once I am sincere about a resolution (Step 6), my first action toward its realization is daily prayer (Step 7). As with my powerlessness over alcohol, I am powerless to fundamentally change my inner nature. Perhaps I can "self-will" change in my outer behaviors for a day or week or two, but I have come to believe, as Emmet Fox (1934) wrote, that for lasting change, i.e., change in character, prayer is essential. I am praying to the same Power beyond me that is helping me not drink one day at a time. I have faith that if that Power – whatever It is - could remove the obsession for alcohol, then surely it can remove any other habits that are not serving myself and others. A person might then wonder, "Am I to do nothing but pray?" In response, to that, I'll quote my sponsor, who often said, "You do the foot work and leave the results up to your Higher Power." Another relevant response to this query, which I've heard in meetings, is that God

will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, but God will *not* do for us what we *can* do for ourselves. As such, after prayer, I need to cooperate with my Higher Power. For example, if I have identified gluttony (or simply, unhealthy eating habits) as something I want to change in the New Year, then in addition to prayer, my responsibility might be to replace all the cookies, candies and chocolate bars in the house with yogurt and fruit to satisfy my post-dinner sugar craving. That is the kind of “footwork” of which I am capable.

Lastly, I try to treat resolutions the same as my alcoholism: one day at a time. The unrealistic, all-or-nothing, grandiose, ego-based, perfectionist approach to resolutions has been replaced by the ideal of “progress, not perfection.” I will trust that so long as I remain humble and persistent in asking for help, my Higher Power will determine how, when and to what extent the “defect” or habit is changed. My primary role is to *let go*, as best I can, to allow time and space for this Greater Power to work in my life.

Fox, E. (1934). *The Sermon on the Mount: The Key to Success in Life*. New York: HarperCollins.

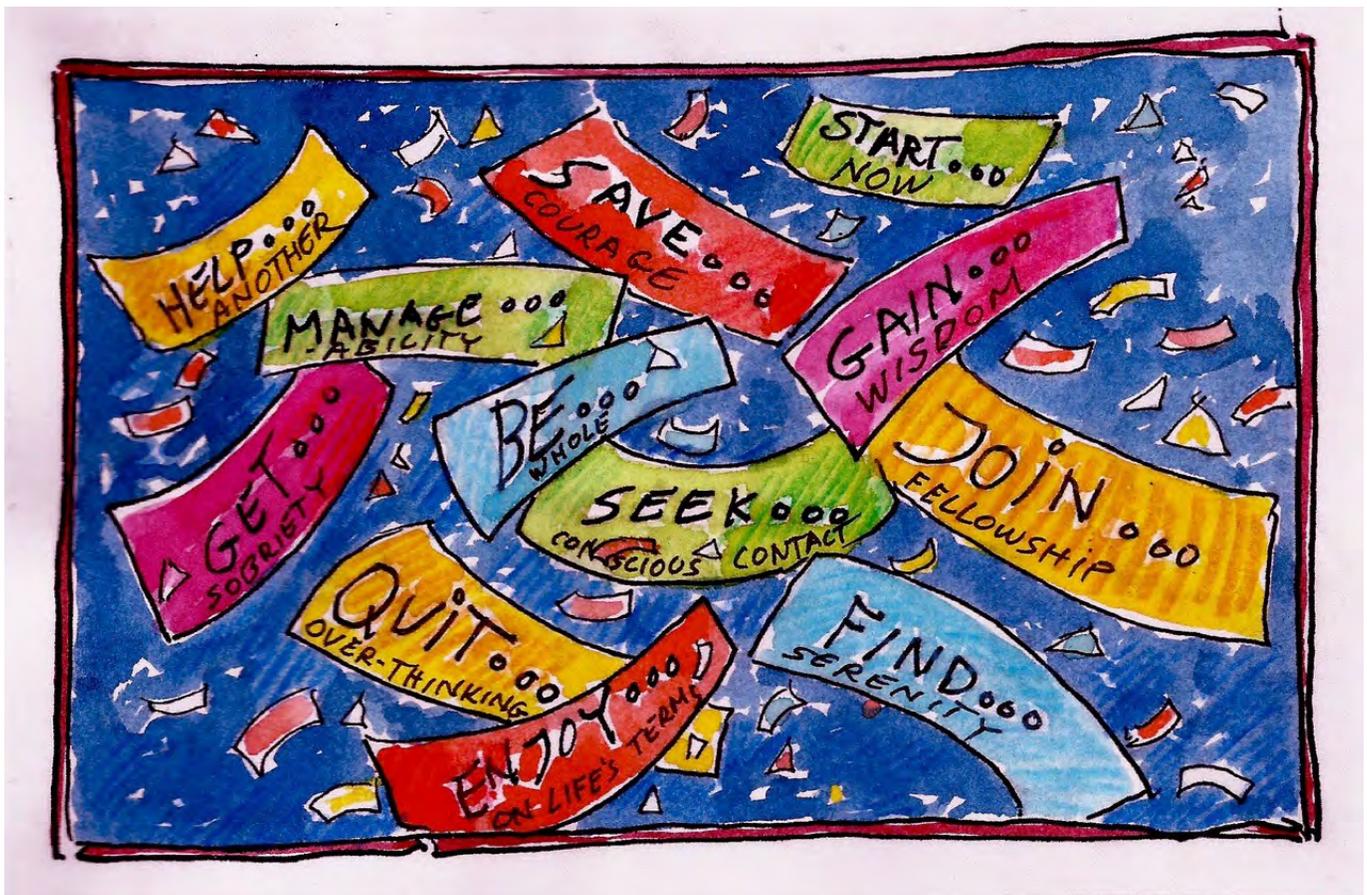


Illustration by Ron M

spring.ottawaaa.org

**An Alcoholics Anonymous
Event with Al-Anon
Participation**

*40th
Annual*

OTTAWA SPRING CONFERENCE

***ROCKETED
INTO A
FOURTH
DIMENSION
OF EXISTENCE***

Big Book, page 25

HELLENIC MEETING & RECEPTION CENTRE

APRIL 13, 2019

A FOURTH DIMENSION

40th ANNUAL OTTAWA SPRING CONFERENCE

An Alcoholics Anonymous Event with Al-Anon Participation

April 13, 2019 | Hellenic Meeting & Reception Centre

1315 Prince of Wales Drive, Ottawa, ON K2C 1N2

Our conference features speakers, panels, meditation, a banquet, sobriety countdown and a dance.

Doors open at 8:00 am. For general information, online registration, schedule, and to volunteer, visit spring.ottawaaa.org, or contact Duane S. at spring@ottawaaa.org or (613) 223-8026

GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS | HOSPITALITY SUITE | VOLUNTEERS

Group contributions may be given to Committee members, mailed or dropped off at the Intergroup Office at the address listed in the payment section below. Your group may also help us carry the message by purchasing a block of advance tickets to distribute to newcomers and members in need at your meeting(s). Dependent on generous donations of sandwiches, desserts and vegetable, fruit and cheese platters, the **Hospitality Suite** will be open from 10:00 a.m. onward while supplies last. Sign up to **Volunteer** by filling out our online form at spring.ottawaaa.org

TICKET PRICES: \$10 GENERAL ADMISSION OR \$55 WITH BANQUET

Advance general admission tickets include access to all events except for the banquet. General admission is **\$15** at the door. Banquet tickets include registration, banquet and access to all events.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Cash: General admission tickets can be purchased from Committee members or your Intergroup or General Service Rep. Cash payment for the banquet must be arranged--please email spring@ottawaaa.org.

Credit Card: Credit card payments are accepted online for both General Admission and Banquet. Submit your orders by visiting us at spring.ottawaaa.org *A convenience fee will apply.*

Cheque: Banquet registration and payment can be made using this form accompanied by a cheque. Mail completed forms with cheque(s), postmarked no later than April 3, 2019, to:

Ottawa Area Intergroup - Spring Conference, 211 Bronson Ave., Suite 108, Ottawa, ON K1R 6H5

Forms and cheques may also be submitted in person to Committee members or at the Intergroup office. Please call before going to the office to ensure someone will be there when you arrive.

Contact Name _____ Make cheques payable to:
Ottawa Area Intergroup - Spring Conference

Email Address _____ Phone Number _____

	Delegate Full Name (Badges only first name, last initial)	Phone Number	Affiliation (AA/Al-Anon, Homegroup, City)	Special*
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

8 places per table. You may reserve up to one table per form.
Collect badges at registration desk upon arrival.

* Indicate vegetarian meal or other dietary / accessibility requirements

\$55.00 (incl. tax) x (# of delegates) = \$

HELP OTHERS ATTEND OUR EVENT

Your donation will go towards purchasing registration tickets for those new or in need in our fellowship. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Donation = \$

SERVICE CALENDAR

No matter how much sobriety you have, find out how you can help and be a 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)
(Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue - Mac Hall)
- DISTRICT 54 MEETING First Thursday (7:30 pm)
(Overbrook Community Centre, 33 Quill Street)
- DISTRICT 58 MEETING Second Monday (7:00 pm)
(Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue - Room 106)
- DISTRICT 62 MEETING Second Monday (7:30 pm)
(All Saints Church, 347 Richmond Road - rear entrance)
- CORRECTIONS FACILITIES AND TREATMENT Fourth Tuesday (6:30 pm)
(Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue - Intergroup Office)
- PUBLIC INFORMATION Third Monday (6:30 pm)
(Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue - Room 108)
- COOPERATION WITH PROFESSIONALS Third Monday (6:30 pm)
(Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue - Room 108)
- OTTAWA ARCHIVES Third Wednesday (7:00 pm)
(Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue - Room 108)
- ALKATHON COMMITTEE (TBD)
(Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue - Intergroup Office)

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 board? Heard a rumour you have a question about? You can 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**.

If your group needs insurance, please contact Ottawa Intergroup at **info@ottawaaa.org** to discuss.

EDITOR'S STATEMENT

"Our Primary Purpose" publishes articles that reflect 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. (We note that 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.