



Alcoholics Anonymous
Sarnia/Lambton District 14
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THE UPDATE

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THE BEGINNINGS OF A.A. IN CANADA

On January 13, 1943, two friends of alcoholics, the Reverends George Little and Percy Price, along with six alcoholics - met at the Little Denmark Restaurant in Toronto. Something special happened that day. A second meeting was held the following week at the same location. On Thursday, January 28, the first meeting was held at the Metropolitan United Church House. Six people attended. In a matter of just two weeks attendance had tripled. On February 25, Dorothy, the first woman in A.A. in Canada, attended the meeting at the Metropolitan United Church.

When the good news was reported to the New York office, Bill W. was delighted that A.A. "is now established in Canada."

Bill W. said in 1951 of Canada, "No finer A.A. exists...When U.S. travellers return from Canada, they report how much more they brought away from Canada than they took in."

Whit H. From Sarnia, Ont was the third delegate elected in Ontario to attend the G.S.C. Whit attended the St. Louis International Convention in 1955 where A.A. "Came of Age"

Whit's first act at the 1956 General Service Conference was to make a presentation to the admissions committee asking that a second delegate for Ontario be approved due to the enormous distances to be covered and the large A.A. population. The request was granted.



To the left, is a letter from Nell Wing, to Whit and Helen Hillmer. Nell was Bill W.'s secretary and the original archivist for A.A. Nell would empty Bill's garbage can at night, index and save priceless A.A. history...just in case.

As mentioned previously in this issue, Whit Hillmer was an early A.A. from Lambton County.

After some hard work by a few members, an archive newsletter was designed in 1981 which developed into the Archives - Markings Newsletter.

Whit worked with Nell quite a bit in developing archives, much correspondence exists (at archives) in regards to Whit and his contributions to archives and A.A.

Imagine if Bill W. and Dr. Bob could see us now? A member's lifeline during a crisis is just a button away...

How am I supposed to stay sober during this? There are no stories of experience, strength, and hope during a plague! I've checked the Big Book. What do we do now?

I'm writing this while on lockdown due to COVID-19. I had big plans coming up: It's my brother's birthday, two concerts lined up, and friends visiting! All this was hijacked by a lousy microscopic virus. Not fair.

OK, so "one day at a time." Instead of dwelling in the past (I wish I'd celebrated earlier with my brother), or projecting (What if I get sick...or my husband or brother or neighbor? What if...what if...), why not stay where my feet are? The sun is shining right now; it's early spring, and things are blooming, birds are singing. I'm perfectly healthy and I'm following all the latest health alerts to stay that way. Not bad. Just for today, I'm content. I have time to pray today for those in trouble with COVID—or alcoholism.

So how do I pray during such a colossal planetary crisis? I've had several friends who've lost a parent in the last three weeks. I've even been to Shiva—on my computer! It's really overwhelming. Where's the Higher Power in all of this? I have prayed to a Higher Power through the deaths of both of my parents and even during the 80 mph winds of Hurricane Sandy. I stayed sober through it all. So, I guess I'll turn the planet over to my Higher Power. I'm not in charge today—and I'm not alone—and that's comforting.

Our literature says alcoholics even stayed sober during a World War, while cut off from sober friends and family. Sobriety, apparently, isn't just limited to church basements. A month ago, I had never heard of virtual AA meetings. Now it's my connection to my AA groups, sponsees and friends. I've been reaching out in our "virtual meetingland" almost every day now. Imagine if Bill W. and Dr. Bob could see this! Reaching out the hand of AA looks so different now. Luckily for us, change is not a bad thing.

It's now been 85 years, and AA has gotten us through many difficult things. Today, as we share our experience, strength, and hope on our phones and computers, there's laughter, relief, jokes, smiles, even toilet-paper memes. Our sharing helps lighten the dark places in our lives. It helps bring me closer to my fellows.

I'm an introvert and relish a great deal of alone time. I am wonderfully blessed (spoiled) to have a sober husband of whom I'm still quite fond after 35 years together. We attend our virtual AA meetings; we laugh and pray together and encourage each other.

Many of us have access to each other and to the Fellowship, literally at the push of a button. But not everyone has this blessing. If you don't have AA literature at home, you can easily find it on the Internet: aa.org and aagrapevine.org can help you.

Every day, pandemic or not, I need to fill my mind with positive sober messages and hope as an antidote to the 24/7 news cycle. Some days it's not easy, but this too shall pass; we will be face to face again, hopefully, soon. I am hoping to not take your hugs for granted ever again.

We need each other for sobriety; Bill and Dr. Bob found this out 85 years ago, as two drunks who got together and said, I won't drink, just for today.

Taken from A.A. Grapevine July/2020

A Letter from the G.S.O. – Our Seventh Tradition

June 19, 2020

Dear A.A. friends,

We in A.A. – here at G.S.O., along with the rest of the world – continue to experience an unprecedented situation. Without question, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our Fellowship, including our organized service structure, is facing enormous challenges, locally and globally.

For many of us, the most prominent example is that, for the first time in the 85-year history of our Fellowship, we are navigating the lack of face-to-face meetings. While we have found creative ways to allow for the vital interaction between one alcoholic and another, and welcoming newcomers daily, it is clear that the health crisis has other far-reaching consequences.

As we all adapt to the present reality of digital meetings, the question now is, "How do we responsibly practice self-support, our Seventh Tradition?" As we can no longer pass a physical basket, we are working to find ways to support the Fellowship at all levels, from our groups to Intergrups and Central Offices, from our Districts and Areas to the General Service Office itself.

The reality is that even though meetings, Twelfth Step services and operations have shifted to a virtual environment, expenses continue to accumulate during this crisis, which underscores the importance of practicing the Seventh Tradition. Through this crisis, however, we have witnessed the many ways in which the entire A.A. Fellowship has come together to provide ongoing support. Among them:

- * Many home groups are still paying rent even though their meetings cannot convene. They are also providing online meetings on platforms that may have associated costs.
- * Intergroup/Central Offices are still stocking needed literature and fielding Twelfth Step calls, redirecting A.A. members and those looking for recovery to online meetings.
- * Area-level committees are working to keep channels open between the Fellowship and the delegates and board members that make up our General Service Conference, as well as to do public information, corrections and other service.
- * G.S.O. in New York is continuing to support all levels of service.

Literature still needs to be published and distributed, calls need to be answered, online platforms still need to be updated, and support operations sustained.

In an effort to keep the membership informed during this challenging time we would like to share a brief three-minute video update from Leslie Backus, the Class A (non-alcoholic) treasurer of our General Service Board.

<https://vimeo.com/430834698>

Please feel free to pass this information along to members and groups in your Area to watch on their own time or to play before their online meetings.

We are so grateful for your time and attention, your dedicated service and – always – your generous support.

Yours sincerely, in fellowship,

Important Considerations Before Reopening Physical Meetings...

Many Members are excited by the prospect of meeting in-person again. Specific guidelines have been and will continue to be set by government agencies. Also, the facilities in which we meet may also have their own guidelines. Groups are urged to consult and follow these guidelines to protect our members, our fellowship as a whole, and others with whom we come in contact.

Other Important Considerations...

Our Traditions

"Each group is autonomous," we often note when making group decisions. The second part of the 4th Tradition is just as important: "except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole." Tradition 1 tells us "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity." **These traditions remind us that we must ensure that our group decisions do not negatively impact our fellow members or A.A. as a whole, and that we as individuals act in ways that ensure our common welfare.** Traditions 1 and 4 are important now more than ever. We have to consider the health and well-being of both A.A. members and nonmembers, as well as protect the positive reputation and goodwill of A.A. in the community.

Questions to Consider

1. Does your group have a complete email/phone list to communicate with group members?
2. How will your group ensure the maximum number of people permitted in your meeting space?
3. How will your group ensure the appropriate social distance?
4. How will your group ensure face masks are worn?
5. Will your group require members to have temperature checks, for instance, at home, before the meeting?
6. How will your group sanitize contact surfaces before and after each meeting?
7. What if someone in your group needs to be tested for COVID 19? Will you keep a record of each attendee at each meeting so they may be informed while results are awaited? At what point may this list be destroyed?
8. What if contact tracing is necessary? How will your group help local health officials do contact tracing?
9. If passing a physical basket is impossible, how will your group collect Seventh-Tradition contributions? Has an electronic account been set up?
10. How will physical materials (Step and Tradition shades, meeting binders, literature, meeting and phone lists, anniversary coins, etc.) be handled? What about the set-up and breakdown of a meeting? Can physical meeting materials be replaced with virtual ones?
11. Will your group eliminate the distribution of coffee and food?

Taken in part from NYC Intergroup

"This Newsletter is a member-to-member publication and the viewpoints expressed herein do not represent those of AA as a whole."

Share your story! We are looking for short stories, poems and articles of interest from members.

Is your group holding a special event? Have an announcement for our A.A. community? Please send to newsletter@asarnialambton.com

Early Bird Prayer

Dear Higher Power, so far today I've done all right. I haven't gossiped, lost my temper, been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or overindulgent. I'm very thankful for the kind of day you have given me. But in a few minutes, Higher Power, I'm going to get out of bed, and from then on I'm going to need a lot more help! Amen.

John H. Council Buffs, Iowa April 2016

Online Meeting Survey Results

Online AA meetings existed before the pandemic, but made a debut in Sarnia-Lambton just a couple short months ago. As you know, these meetings began as a necessity and I feel have made an impact locally. What I wanted to find out was how our community would like to see them or if they see them being a part of their local community moving forward.

Below are the results of the survey which will help myself and anyone interested in keeping or starting an online meeting.

Question #1

Have you had the opportunity to participate in an online Zoom meeting during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Yes – 95%

No – 5%

Question #2

Do you support the continuation of online AA meetings in our district once 'in-person' meetings resume?

Yes – 95%

No – 5%

Question #3

Would you continue attending online AA meetings once 'in-person' AA meetings resume.

Yes – 74.36%

No – 2.56%

Maybe – 23.08%

Question #4

Some areas have actual 'Online AA Groups'. Would you support having an actual online AA group in our district?

Yes – 90%

No – 5%

Not Applicable – 5%

Question #5

If Sarnia-Lambton had an online AA group, would you consider being a member of this group?

Yes, I would consider being a member – 45%

No, I would not consider being a member, but I would still be interested in attending online meetings – 50%

No, I would not be a member nor would I attend any online AA meetings – 5%

Question #6

The Seventh Traditions states: "Every AA group ought to be self-supporting, declining outside contributions". While contributions cover each group's rent and other expenses, the Seventh Tradition is essential at every level of AA service.

Would you contribute financially to an online AA group?

Yes - I would contribute, including utilizing online payment methods (paypal online, digital basket, email money transfer) – 74.36%

Yes - I would contribute, but I would prefer to mail a cheque or give cash in person – 17.95%

No - I would not contribute the Seventh Tradition to this type of AA meeting/Group – 5.13%

Not Applicable – 2.56%

Question #7

Please indicate which types of online AA meetings you would be most interested in attending or participating in.

I would participate/attend any type of meeting including: Closed, Open Speaker, Service meetings etc – 75%

I would only participate in or attend Open Speaker Meetings – 10%

I would only participate in or attend Closed Meetings – 15%

I would only participate in Service Meetings online – 2.5%

I currently participate in Online meetings due to necessity but will not participate in them once in-person meetings resume – 0%

I do not participate in Online meetings at all – 5%

Question #8

We had a few instances where our meetings were interrupted by individuals who were not members of AA. Security enhancements and continuous improvements have been made and are in place. Do you feel comfortable with the safety and security of online Zoom meetings?

Yes - I have little concern attending online meetings – 84.62%

Yes - I attend online meetings but feel perhaps more could be done to enhance security – 12.82%

No - I dont believe adequate safety measure are in place – 0%

I do not attend online meetings for this reason – 0%

I do not attend online meetings for any reason – 2.56%

Question #9 (results add up to more than 100% due to participant being able to select multiple responses, I have indicated the number of responses for each question)

Many people have come forward and stated that these online meetings have been a HUGE benefit to them during the current isolation.

Do you believe the online Zoom meetings locally have helped you with your sobriety and/or overall well-being over the last couple of months?

Please select the response that you most identify with. Select any that apply to you.

Yes! These meetings have helped me tremendously. - 65% (26 responses)

Yes, The online AA meetings have been helpful in my program/recovery – 42.50% (17 responses)

I am happy the meetings have been here but wont attend them once things return to 'normal' – 0% (no recorded responses)

I can do with or without these meetings now and in the future – 5% (2 responses recorded)

I dislike these meetings and will be happy to see them gone – 0% (no recorded responses)

I have never attended an online meeting, but would be interested in the future – 0% (no recorded responses)

I have never attended an online meeting – 5% (2 responses)

I struggle with the use of computers/tablets/smartphones and this is the reason I have not attended an online meeting – 0% (no recorded responses)

I do not own a computer therefore have not or will not be attending a meeting online – 0% (no recorded responses)

Other (please specify) – 7.50% (3 responses)

Announcements

Please note: There are many announcements and cancellations that have been received over the last couple of months. Effort has been made to include announcements and cancellations that have been submitted/received but in no way is this a complete list.

Fall Assembly WOGS - CANCELLED Nov 6,7 & 8 2020

Regional Forum CANCELLED November 13-15, 2020 Ottawa ON

C.E.R.A.A.S.A. CANCELLED Feb 26-28, 2021

(Canadian Eastern Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly)



In a year of firsts for Alcoholics Anonymous, another first is on its way: a virtual International Convention experience, arriving online July 1 at www.aa.org.

<https://2020convention.aa.org>

Celebrating Our Big Book

Special Summer Offer – Alcoholics Anonymous in every format and language July 1 – September 30, 2020

With the gradual re-opening of groups and service offices, we are hoping there will be renewed interest in our literature, not only to help fund the Twelfth Step work we all do, but also to get our literature into the hands of those who may need it.

In efforts to ensure that our Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, our primary lifesaving text, reaches its widest audience in these troubled times, we are announcing:

A Big Book Special Summer Offer

Order Alcoholics Anonymous in any format, any language at 10% off list price. Please contact literature@asarnialambton.com to order your big book.

Literature/Medallions

Please contact Jeff C. at literature@asarnialambton.com to order your A.A. literature. Literature sales help drive revenue for A.A. and its programs. As you can imagine, literature sales have been very low. A.A. depends on sales of literature. Please consider stocking up and being ready for when your group re-opens. Your purchases are needed NOW more than Ever!

Sarnia-Lambton ODAAT Campout – CANCELLED

Sarnia-Lambton Three Legacies – Roundup – an in-person event is still planned for November 2020. In the event that the in-person event is unable to happen, a version of the event will be held via Zoom. The roundup committee is busy planning your roundup in whatever format it may occur. The committee is still looking for volunteers. Please visit <https://www.asarnialambton.com/online-zoom-meetings/> to attend the next roundup committee meeting. Next scheduled meeting is July 7, 2020 @ 6PM. Please join the meeting via Zoom.

New Grapevine Product! The Grapevine Daily Quote Book

With a beautiful new cover. Now available in English, French, and Spanish!

Start each day with an inspiring quote from the pages of Grapevine. The quotes—contributed by AA members, with many written by our co-founders—were selected by the Grapevine staff. Makes a great gift for a sober friend. To learn more or to order, visit: store.aagrapevine.org



Lest we forget those who have passed on before us. Their message is still strong within the meetings, and within all of us.

July Birthdays

Jeff T.	St. George's Group	July 1, 1995
Tom N.	The Hub Group	July 7, 2015
Tom H.	Theford Group	July 7, 2019
Steve H.	Murphy Road Group	July 13, 2015
Trish B-L.	High Noon Group	July 14, 2018
Al T.	Freedom Group	July 15, 1988
Tim C.	Wednesday Night Group	July 15, 2000
Wayne S.	Theford Group	July 17, 1990
Monica V.	Young People In A.A.	July 19, 2016
Graham R.	St. George's Group	July 19, 2007
Tammy F.	Murphy Road Group	July 20, 2006
Bruce D.	Lambton Central	July 26, 2005
Kyle A.	Beginners Reflections	July 28, 2007
Eric H.	High Noon Group	July 28, 1988

*This is an unofficial list. Reasonable effort has been made to ensure accuracy. If you notice a change needs to be made, please see your GSR or contact **newsletter@aaarnialambton.com***



August Birthdays

Doug W.	New Beginnings Group	August 1, 2008
Teressa K.	Murphy Road Group	August 2, 2010
Phil G.	Freedom Group	August 5, 1996
Ken R.	St. George's Group	August 6, 1964
Brian S.	Murphy Road Group	August 6, 2001
Natasha K.	Murphy Road Group	August 8, 2016
Greg L.	Theford Group	August 8, 1998
Dan J.	High Noon Group	August 8, 1979
Rick T.	Lambton Central	August 9, 2010
Bob H.	Bridgeview Group	August 9, 1979
Al.	Theford Group	August 11, 1981
Dianne L.	Forest Lakeside	August 15, 1992
Jake G.	Young People in A.A.	August 16, 2018
Casey R.	Beginners Reflections	August 16, 2003
Carly D.	Theford Group	August 17, 1997
Florence K.	Tuesday Shiftworkers	August 18, 1985
Dan A.	Murphy Road Group	August 21, 2015
Carolyn T.	Theford Group	August 24, 1989
Phil L.	Murphy Road Group	August 24, 1984
Mark W.	Wednesday Night Group	August 28, 2012
Jon V.	Forest Lakeside	August 30, 2015
Chad V.	The Hub Group	August 30, 2018
Tom A.	Murphy Road Group	August 30, 2017