

BETTER TIMES

Produced for A.A. members, by A.A. members in the GTA



TRADITION EIGHT

Alcoholics Anonymous will never have a professional class.

We have gained some understanding of the ancient words,
"Freely ye have received, freely give."

We have discovered that at the point of professionalism,
money and spirituality do not mix. Almost no recovery from
alcoholism has ever been brought about by the world's best
professionals, whether medical or religious.

We do not decry professionalism in other fields, but we
accept the sober fact that it does not work for us.

Every time we have tried to professionalize our
Twelfth Step, the result has been exactly the same:
our single purpose has always been defeated.

**December 1952
Tradition Eight
BILL W.**

ALCOHOLICS
ANONYMOUS

FOURTH
EDITION

A.A.
World Services Inc.

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Alcoholics Anonymous

AUGUST 2021



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MEDALLIONS

NAME	YEARS	DRY DATE	GROUP	CELEBRATION
Susan O.	25	Aug 2 1996	Erin Mills	Aug 2
Peter C.	5	Aug 4 2016	Erin Mills	Aug 9
Carolyn B.	20	Aug 19 2001	Sunnyside	Aug 19
Susan T.	35	Aug 17 1985	Lighthouse	Aug 20
Matilda O.	10	Aug 24 2011	Sisters in Sobriety	Aug 25
Denise T.	5	Aug 29 2016	Erin Mills	Aug 30



SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

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[Phone Greeters](#)

[Bilingual Member Resource](#)

[2022 Virtual ORC Chair](#)

[IT Sub-Committee Members](#)

[Self-Support Chair](#)

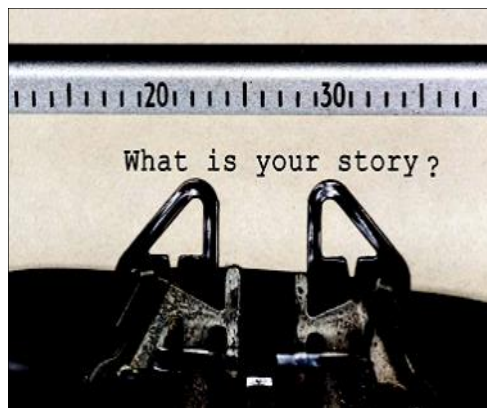
[Finance Committee Member](#)

[2021 Winter Season Virtual Alkathon](#)



MEETING CHANGES

This pandemic has brought about incredible changes and quickly; please don't forget that our website and meeting list updates are dependant on your letting us know here: <https://www.aatoronto.org/update-or-change-a-meeting/>



Opinions expressed in *BETTER TIMES* are those of the authors and don't necessarily reflect those of the GTA A.A. Intergroup. The Editor reserves the right to edit for length, content and grammar in accordance with layout and quality purposes. Submit group news, medallions, other event notices to:

communications@aatoronto.org

Letters or articles to the Editor (200-500 words) for *BETTER TIMES* at bettertimes@aatoronto.org

SEARCHING THE A.A. LANGUAGE OF RECOVERY

A.A. has been my sober shelter for a few decades. In time I learned a language of recovery, both spoken and written, that helped me with the process of getting and staying sober. The spoken language came first through osmosis in meetings. These are the simple but powerful words like "One day at a time" and "You can always drink tomorrow". This all made sense!

And there was the written language, the approved text. Parts of this are poetically beautiful and clear, full of gems! But the reading level was not easy, and most of it required repeated reading. Having a sponsor as an interpreter was a great help. And some parts remain horrifically dated, no matter how often you read them.

Over time I also started missing acute topics like LGBTQ2S+, gender, racial, and religious equality. These are all missing in the monotone of the 1930's. More and more I had to apply my first sponsor's advice "take what you can use and leave the rest." And more and more I wondered about the "attraction" in Tradition 11. Do we still attract the young and diverse alcoholic newcomer?

In my opinion there are many reasons why whole sections of the Big Book and 12 & 12 need to be rewritten. But here is one you probably did not think of...the younger generation, the digital natives who grew up with a smart phone, use mainly or exclusively electronic means to get information. They will look for help in common phrases like "help with alcoholism" or "how do I stop drinking". When you use these key search words, A.A. shows up way down the list, sometimes many pages down! The reason is that we mostly loaded the 1930's texts on all our websites. This is what is crawled by the giant search engines of the World Wide Web.

When I search "still suffering alcoholic", bingo, A.A. is near the top. But nobody outside A.A. knows that term no matter how often we put it in official correspondence. Try "rapacious creditor." Play around yourself and see! Our official texts have become so disconnected from how the younger generation speaks and queries that they may not find us anymore.

Isn't it time for major change before we lose even more attraction?

Bart B.

PLAIN AND SIMPLE LANGUAGE BIG BOOK

Take a look at this [list showing the history](#) of General Service Conference, Advisory Actions regarding changes to the first 164 pages as well as actions pertaining to simplified, easy-to-read literature.

In 1993 there was an Advisory Action stating that the "Conference Literature Committee discussed a request for a simplified version of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous and determined that there is not sufficient expressed need."

In 2016, there was an agenda item to "Consider developing a plain language version of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous." This did not result in an Advisory Action.

But finally, this year at the 71st General Service Conference, it was decided that....

"A draft version of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* (Fourth Edition), was requested to be translated into plain and simple language and be developed in a way that is **accessible and relatable to as wide of an audience as possible** and that a progress report or draft be brought back to the 2022 Conference Committee on Literature."

In preparation for the 2020 General Service Conference, a subcommittee was formed entitled;

Researching Issues, Possible Tools and Access to the Book (2020-21 RIPTAB) The findings from this committee were shared in a video presentation which was made available to the Fellowship through the delegates.

This video presentation was emailed to members in Area 83 in January and March of 2021 and can be viewed [HERE](#) if you have not seen it yet.

(<https://vimeopro.com/user112910871/big-book-riptab/video/500617913>)

Article from [Area 83 Delegates Newsletter June 2021](#)

(<http://area83aa.org/docs/delegate/panel71/20210701%20Delegate's%20Newsletter%20Summerv4.pdf>)

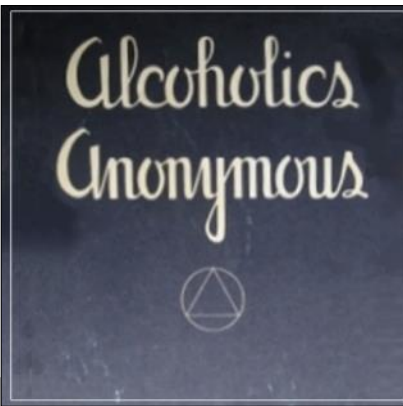
WORD search

Embracing the Eighth Tradition

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centres may employ special workers.

F D M F G V N Z M D A N S B O N K W S L
G N I K R O W D R A H G N R L N F U E T
B E R U S A E M S T N A T S I S S A E E
F P T J H D M B Y R E F C A V I C R T F
Y P T S K L G J A Q E F L S Q U M Y T B
T H E O P K D T J T M K C M G C S L I X
F W Z L S W P P D E L I A S S A V T M K
B S V I B S J N M I O E N T C A N O M I
T A S T N A V R E S E T Q U E Y L H O T
Z A C A I N T X I A R M H V N R Q G C B
E Z I L A N O I S S E F O R P J A S C C
U X M L J N R T P Q N T L S X D U C J D
S Y E E W H O Z A S A R L P V R Y S R E
Y L T J D B A I E N O T C T Z O S S T P
L E A Q N I E A T N R H P A E H C N Y A
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E I U C O G U A C O E C D I C J M U Q U
R T D I A I N Y L T L T I Y F S X F A D
F L E T W Y S H Y I O U N R C P M A U I
J L L A S Y X S F O B I F O R F Z H X S
M U J M J U R W E N A R R H C U Q M I P
L F P O E F O P L F O P P U T Z H P H E
X I B L S I O I M X O J A P U I N V E L
M V G P P W F E G R J R C P Z P A E Q L
X I Q I D D H L A I E E P O L M U F M E
G C U D F S K T E V L U Q N E T A R I D
P F U Q D S I N J L E E T K O Z H G D K
A D Z C Q O C H O T Z M R R J N L T J Q
G F R K N R V H O V E R P A I D E A F Y
E N D O R T N E M Y O L P M E V R T I O

ASSAILED
ASSISTANT
CARETAKERS
CHEAP
COMMITTEES
CONTENTION
CORPORATION
DIPLOMATIC
DISPELLED
EDUCATE
EMPLOYMENT
FAITHFUL
FREELY
FULLTIME
HARDWORKING
HOSPITABLE
HOTLY
HURRICANE
IRATE
MEASURE
MEDICAL
NONPROFESSIONAL
NOTION
OVERPAID
PROFESSIONALIZE
RELIGIOUS
SERVANTS
ULTRACONSERVATIVE
UNJUST
VIRTUE



In Aug. 1937 Bill and Lois stopped attending Oxford Group meetings and the New York A.A. 's separated from the Oxford Group. This was the beginning of A.A. separating itself from outside affiliation and set the groundwork for what would later become Tradition 6. The Akron group remained affiliated with the Oxford Group for two more years.

In Aug. 1938 the Alcoholic Foundation was created as a charitable trust with a board of 5 Trustees (3 non-alcoholics and 2 alcoholics). The trust indenture document specified that non-alcoholic board Trustees were to make up a majority. The terms "Class A" and "Class B" Trustees were used to distinguish between non-alcoholics and alcoholic board members. Class A Trustees were Willard Richardson (who proposed the Foundation), Frank Amos (Secretary & Treasurer) and attorney John Wood (a friend of Frank Amos). One of the challenges facing Wood in preparing the original Trust Agreement document was legal-ly defining the difference between an alcoholic and non-alcoholic. Class B Trustees were Dr. Bob and New York member Bill R. who was the first Chairman of the Board (the actual title used at the time up until 1955, was President). Bill R. whose Big Book story is "A Business Man's Recovery" returned to drinking and had to resign in February 1939. An advisory committee to the board was also established consisting of A. Leroy Chipman, Bill W., Albert L. Scott and Hank P.

On Aug. 2, 1939 Dr. Bob and Sister Ignatia start work at St. Thomas Hospital in Akron. It was the first religious institution to open its doors to A.A. and later had a full wing dedicated to alcoholism treatment. The New York group had a similar arrangement with the Knickerbocker Hospital in New York City.

On Aug. 16, Sister Ignatia who was in charge of admissions arranged for the first A.A. admission, Walter B., at the request of Dr. Bob. Walter was a notorious alcoholic and regular consumer of over the counter opiates. Sister Ignatia labeled his problem acute gastritis and put him in the flower room. Dr. Bob & Sister Ignatia treat 5,000 cases in the next 10 years.

In Aug. 1942 the A.A. Office in New York granted distribution rights for the Big Book to Dr. George Little who formally transferred these rights to the Toronto A.A. Club on Sept. 22, 1944.

In Aug. 1945 the Grapevine carried Bill W. 's first Traditions essay titled "Modesty One Plank for Good Public Relations." It began a 5-year campaign for the Traditions and General Service Conference. In the prior month's Grapevine there was an article about the Washingtonians. Bill used this article to begin his essay commentaries.

On Aug. 26, 1936 Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group experienced a public relations disaster. A New York World Telegram article by William H. Birnie quoted Buchman as saying, "I thank heaven for a man like Adolph Hitler, who built a front-line of defense against the anti-Christ of Communism." Although taken out of context, it plagued Buchman's reputation for years and marked the beginning of the decline of the Oxford Group. Over time Bill was criticized by the New York Oxford Group members for working only with alcoholics. In Akron, T. Henry and Clarence Williams were also criticized by Oxford Group members who did not support their efforts with alcoholics. The Oxford Group was out to save the world and sought out famous public figures to join their ranks for the publicity it would generate. Bill simply was out to save alcoholics.

On Aug. 2-4, 1968 the 11th International Conference of Young People in A.A. (ICYPAA) was held at the Royal York in Toronto.

On Aug. 6, 1981 the 1st meeting of the Archives Committee was organized by the Ontario Provincial Committee, the four areas in Ontario and Toronto Intergroup. In 1991 Toronto Intergroup becomes the sole sponsor of the Archives Committee.

On Aug. 18-21, 1988 the 1st Canadian National A.A. Convention was held in Halifax in an attempt to make it a regular 5 year Canadian event. It did not work out too well. Two 7th Traditions were requested in order to make it pay for itself.

GROUPS THAT STARTED IN AUGUST:

August 1965 [Alderwood Discussion Meeting](#)
 August 10, 1958 [Lawrence Plaza Group](#)
 August 15, 1982 [Eglinton Park Group](#)

**OLD GTA MEETING BOOKS ARE NEEDED
 FOR THE GTA ARCHIVES** TO DONATE A.A./GTA
 ARCHIVAL ITEMS TO THE GTA ARCHIVES PLEASE
 CONTACT THE GTA ARCHIVIST EDDY G. at 416-536-7536.

IS A.A. FUNDAMENTALISM ANOTHER “ISM”?

Conference speakers will say, “I have alcoholism, not alcohol-wasm.” This is a catchy way of reminding us that while they have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body, they are not cured from addiction and some of us continue to wrestle with addictive tendencies.

We can find difficulty in balance with anything from exercise, sweets, work, romantic entanglement, coffee, or screen-time. “More is better” is not an A.A. slogan, but some of us believe it; we call this thinking our ongoing “isms”. So, it is fair game to take my own inventory: I want to be enthusiastic about my A.A. - not a zealot. How do I know if I have crossed the line from being positive to being preachy?

Fundamentalism is defined online as strict adherence to any set of basic ideas or principles, a movement characterized by literal interpretation of (religious) text.

I am strict about my sobriety. Still, I don’t want to be a fundamentalist about A.A. vs. other approaches to alcohol-use disorder. I don’t want to be a fundamentalist inside A.A., warning others of certain peril if they don’t follow the [As Joe Sees It](#) A.A. path; or worse, disparaging other groups or approaches to A.A.

When I’m driving and I call everyone driving faster than me, “reckless,” and everyone slower than me, “unfit for a driver’s license,” this is me being narcissistic. The way this self-centered tendency plays out in my judgement of others in A.A. is this: calling anything more casual than my approach as “watered down,” and anything stricter than my approach as “cultish”. All I know is what works for me. And what works has changed for me before; and it may change again.

My experience is my only currency, I have no expertise. I do not live my own life perfectly, so what do I know about how to run your life? There is a humility to A.A. from “[A Vision For You](#)”: “We realize we know only a little...” From [Living Sober](#) (p. 2),“

There is no prescribed A.A. ‘right’ way or ‘wrong’ way.

Each of us uses what is best for himself or herself- without closing the door on other kinds of help that we might find helpful at another time.

And each of us tries to respect others' rights to do things differently.”

This topic is not me pointing my finger at anyone; I am sharing my process for looking in the mirror, for taking my own inventory of how I’m doing my A.A.

Attraction, rather than promotion, right? Fun with sobriety is always attractive, fundamentalism, not so much.

Joe C., [Beyond Belief Agnostics & Freethinkers Group](#)

TURNING ON

It took me one month to turn my camera on, and another just to share for the first time. Unsure of using my voice, I hit that unmute button and opened up. After all - I was just in my living room.

Flooded with welcoming messages, a few deeply lodged bricks lifted off my shoulders. Four months in, I’m working on my fourth step with a sponsor and even chairing a weekly meeting. Opening up for me was the answer. Letting people in, the solution. So from the comfort of my own home, within those safe walls, I shifted my perspective. I let God in.

While I look to the day where I can meet my fellow’s face-to-face, get a gauge on everyone’s height, experience the ease of talking in person, I’m thankful for Zoom and the rooms. Day by day, I’m coming back to me. One unmute button at a time.

Britt S., [Morning Discussion Group](#)

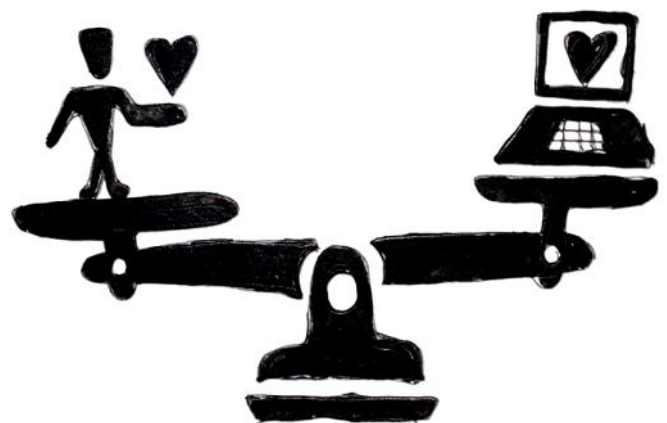


Illustration by Zack R. [Friendly Group](#)

THE MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

Some of you long-time members understand that volunteering in this program greatly improves one's chances of remaining sober over time. And this has never been truer than during the COVID-19 lockdown. I don't know what my life would have looked like without the privilege of donating a couple of half days a week to this program. I also know that others who volunteer feel the same.

COVID was hard on all of us. The isolation, the inability to touch (I'm a hugger), using computers to do almost everything. Although convenient, it doesn't replace human interaction.

Volunteering allowed me to hear what others were going through. Sometimes their stories were much worse than mine. This made me feel grateful for what I have. More importantly, it kept me sober.

As we move into phase 3, let us make sure to protect others and ourselves from another lockdown by observing the rules as set out in the rooms of A.A. I for one want to see you all again soon.

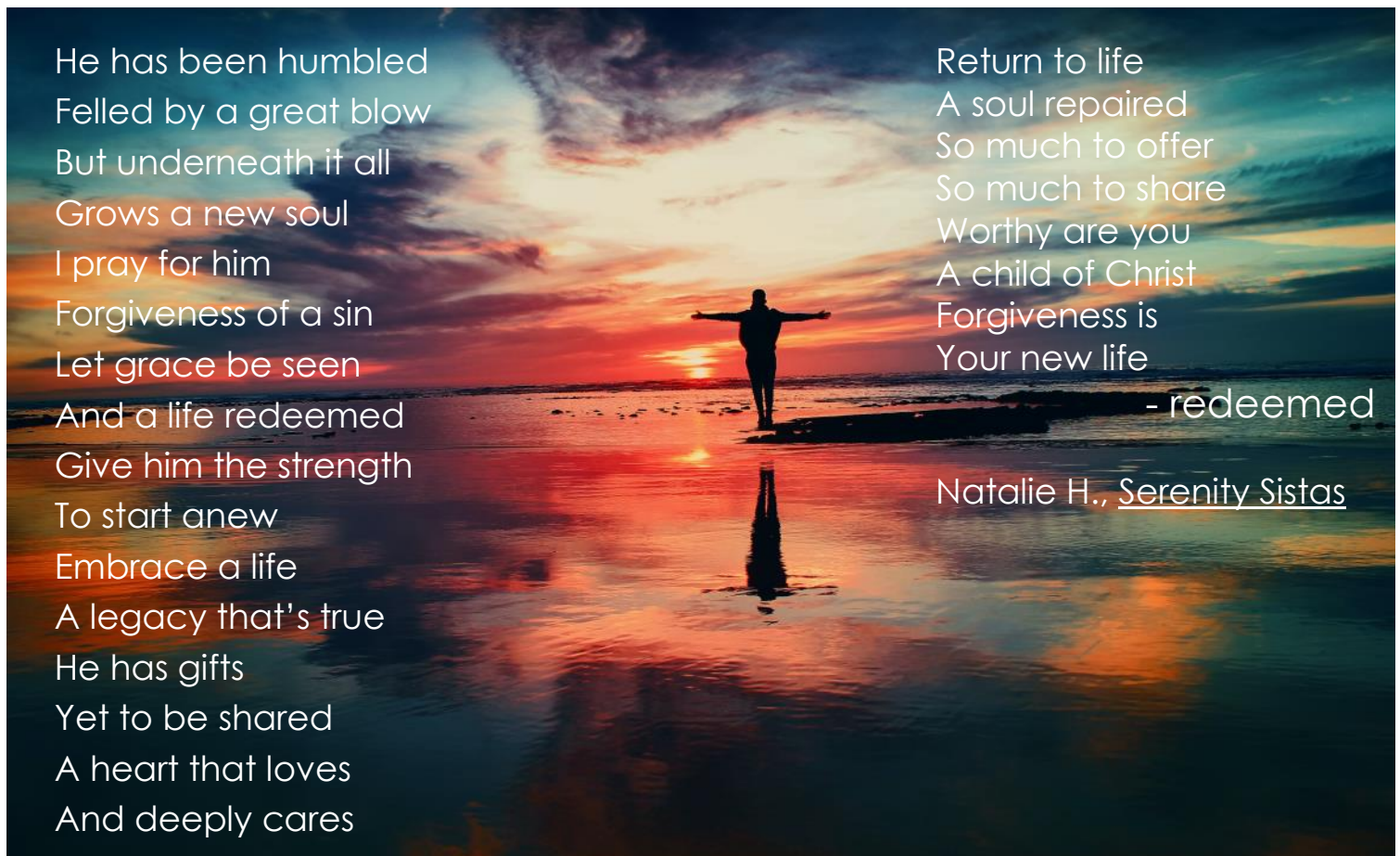
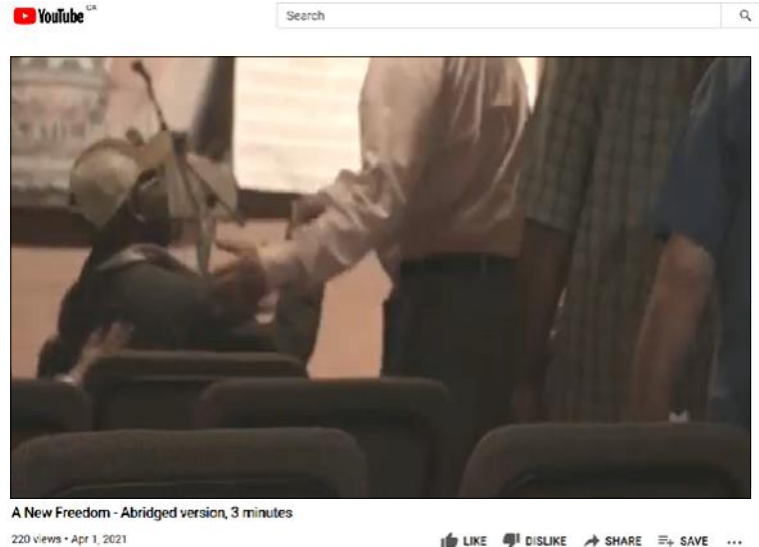
Lise R., [Royal York Group](#)

A.A. WORLD SERVICES HAS A YOUTUBE CHANNEL Have you looked at the A.A. World Services YouTube channel yet?

There are currently 18 videos in 3 languages. Each of the PSA's (Public Service Announcements) have been Conference approved. The last video is called *A New Freedom*.

Watch here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWjshnqygil>



GROUP SPOTLIGHT: MORNING DISCUSSION GROUP

Early one morning in the winter of 1990-91, a man climbed slowly out of the St. George subway station and went straight up into the O.I.S.E. building. He had just quit drinking and was looking for a caretaking job. What he found was a tiny group of people -- the infamous "3 guys and a gal" - in the mezzanine beside the cafeteria. They were reading the [Daily Reflections](#).

What happened next, in a nutshell, went something like this:

The informal gathering grew steadily in attendance, with new meetings and different texts being added (the Big Book, The 12 & 12, Came to Believe, etc.) Once this "O.I.S.E. group" had grown to meet every single day (c. 2005) the group began to rent a room, and in 2012 finally became a registered group called [Morning Discussion Group](#) (MDG). At the onset of COVID-19, MDG had grown to 14 meetings per week, including a daily [Early Morning Discussion](#) (EMD) meeting and two weekday evenings. The texts which are read have periodically changed, and a weekend open meeting was added twice a month to celebrate members' birthdays.

But that all ended in March 2019. MDG adapted yet again to return to its original once-a-day, closed meeting format, with two open meetings, while somehow creating even more service opportunities (15 positions at last count), particularly for newcomers. I recently spoke with several members and regular attendees.

Why is MDG attractive to newcomers looking to join a home group? "Why not? Gives 'em a good reason to get up early, get active and do service."

MDG is known to be both flexible and welcoming, even when it comes to service positions. One newer member with such a responsibility weighed in saying "they took a chance on me. I only had 6 months of sobriety at the time. Service is actively encouraged and you don't have to be a group member to take part."

A long-time attendee added that "as a non-member I've felt most welcome doing service, and really like that we are invited to the business meeting." Another summed it up perfectly like this: "What better place to go, especially for newcomers? A perfect smorgasbord of conference-approved A.A. literature every single day. The words of wisdom and guidance of these seasoned members so freely given have been priceless for me."

Having recently served as Registrar, I can attest to the attraction of this group. Its membership and attendance were ballooning long before the pandemic, but exploded once the meetings went online. Its active membership numbers in the hundreds today. Despite the fact that so many of these people have never even met, they operate with astonishing patience, love and tolerance of one another to maintain such a valuable meeting and group.

As for that man back in '90-'91, he got that job and has long since retired. But he is still there, and still a so-

ber MDG member - sharing his experiences, gaining strength and gleaning wisdom and hope through their online meetings every single day, one day at a time.

By David P., with Martha K., Barb M., Karl W., Jim R. and Charlie M. (Screaming Eagle) of the [Morning Discussion Group](#)



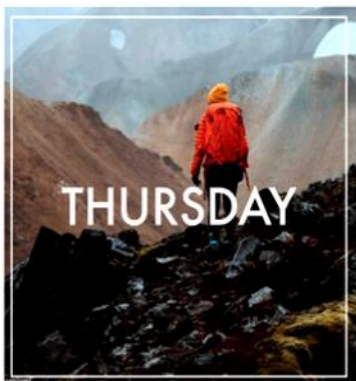
DAILY REFLECTIONS



THE 12 & 12



CAME TO BELIEVE



THE BIG BOOK



LIVING SOBER



THE 12 & 12



1, 2, 3 THE FIRST 3 STEPS