

BETTER TIMES

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



7th TRADITION

**SELF-SUPPORT
Where
Money
&
Spirituality
Mix**

**Alcoholics
Anonymous**

JULY 2021



GREATER TORONTO AREA
INTERGROUP

202-234 Eglinton Avenue East
Toronto, ON M4P 1K5
416-487-5591

www.aatoronto.org

SERVICE COMMITTEES

ACCESSIBILITY

accessibility@aatoronto.org

ARCHIVES

archives@aatoronto.org

COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

cpc@aatoronto.org

CORRECTIONAL

corrections@aatoronto.org

FINANCE

finance@aatoronto.org

INFORMATION A.A. DAY

infoaaday@aatoronto.org

ONTARIO REGIONAL CONFERENCE (ORC)

orc@aatoronto.org

OPERATING

oc.chair@aatoronto.org

PUBLIC INFORMATION (PI)

pi@aatoronto.org

TREATMENT

treatment@aatoronto.org

TWELFTH STEP

12step@aatoronto.org

WINTER SEASON OPEN HOUSE

wsch@aatoronto.org

COMMUNICATIONS

communications@aatoronto.org

Carla T. Chair
Marvyn W. Op. Comm. Liaison
Elizabeth H. Secretary
David C. Webmaster
Aaron M. Alt. Webmaster
Dave R. Writer/Reporter
David R. Assistant Editor
Mary M. Editor

bettertimes@aatoronto.org

MEDALLIONS

NAME	YEARS	DRY DATE	GROUP	CELEBRATION
Lynn E.	10	Apr 11 2011	Fifth Tradition	July 3
Vadim S.	1	Jun 19 2020	Bayview	July 4
David C.	5	Jun 25 2016	Erin Mills	July 5
Amanda M.	1	Jul 7 2020	Rexdale United	July 7
Nat S.	15	Jun 16 2006	Bloordale	July 11
Bryan P.	1	Jul 8 2020	Erin Mills	July 12
Rodger R.	25	Jul 8 1996	Back to Basics	July 12
David T.	50	Jul 20 1971	Welcome	July 25
Maley L.	15	Jul 25 2006	Erin Mills	July 26
Stephen A.	40	Jul 21 1981	Back to Basics	July 26
Roger B.	10	Jul 16 2011	East York	July 27



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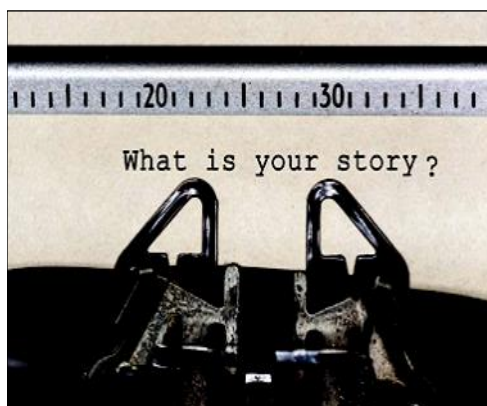
AAGRAPEVINE LA VIÑA

The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous

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communications@aatoronto.org

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

Memo To:

General Service Conference From Josh Eggleston, A.A. Grapevine Board Chair
Re: Preamble Revision Date May 28, 2021

Dear Conference Members:

Several people have asked when the revised Preamble will be seen in print. In keeping with the final advisory action of the 71st General Service Conference, the A.A. Preamble revision replacing the words "men and women" with "people" will appear in the July issue of Grapevine, and its translation will be in the July/August issue of La Viña. Both of these issues will be mailed, and posted online, on June 15, 2021. After June 15, as new Grapevine, La Viña and A.A.W.S. literature or reprints go to press, and as web pages are updated, the language will change wherever the A.A. Preamble appears.

The June issue of Grapevine was on press when the Conference requested the change, so this is the first opportunity to make the adjustment in the magazines.

We've also received a number of inquiries about whether this negatively impacts the editorial independence of Grapevine. Please remember that the Grapevine Board, Publisher and Editors discussed this topic for an entire year over a series of board meetings. Ultimately it was agreed that Grapevine has the right of decision and foundational editorial independence. We felt that such a change would affect the groups as a whole and in keeping with Tradition 4, we sought the input from those it might affect by sending the discussion to the General Service Conference.

The topic was actively discussed in groups across the United States and Canada for two years over both the 70th and 71st General Service conference panels. As a result of those conversations the Delegates of the General Service Conference passed a series of votes, in a sequence of events that culminated with the final advisory action requesting:

"The Preamble revision replacing the words 'men and women' with the word 'people' be presented to the General Service Board for approval as the new revised A.A. Preamble."

Having been accepted by the General Service Board and forwarded to Grapevine for fulfillment, the Publisher and editorial staff at A.A. Grapevine went to work to carry out the will of the Conference with love and service.

I hope you are all having a wonderful experience reporting out the results of the 71st General Service Conference and thank each of you so very much for your dedicated service.

Josh Eggleston General Service Trustee A.A. Grapevine Board Chair

A.A. PREAMBLE 2021

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of **people** who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

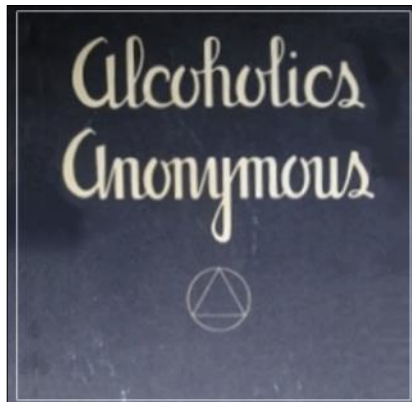
The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

WORD search

Embracing the SEVENTH TRADITION

Every A.A. group ought to be fully
self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

S	R	A	P	N	G	S	E	C	N	A	N	I	F	P	S	H	A	D	V	Tradition
F	R	E	E	J	L	J	D	U	G	I	G	L	Y	M	J	V	O	O	W	Seven
L	A	I	T	N	E	S	S	E	N	W	L	F	L	G	U	X	X	H	E	Declining
F	D	N	N	L	N	J	P	B	D	V	D	L	W	L	Z	M	N	S	F	Supporting
U	X	M	O	Q	D	E	C	L	I	N	I	N	G	B	D	X	O	A	O	Alcoholics
I	H	M	I	N	I	C	F	E	L	L	O	W	S	H	I	P	S	F	T	Money
O	C	X	P	N	Y	B	T	W	U	M	A	E	Y	N	R	E	T	U	Q	Free
V	L	X	I	R	C	M	X	B	K	J	E	Q	T	U	C	C	R	L	L	Outside
M	J	E	Y	M	S	Q	O	M	X	G	T	Y	P	N	D	Q	E	L	F	Sober
T	R	O	U	B	L	E	S	U	C	L	G	H	E	S	U	N	A	Y	I	Expenses
W	H	U	W	D	V	V	L	G	S	L	B	U	M	N	P	B	S	W	G	Collective
U	D	T	R	E	V	I	D	F	E	S	L	X	Q	B	O	A	U	X	J	Fellowship
N	V	V	T	U	H	T	O	M	S	F	E	Z	I	C	Z	M	R	Q	Z	Poverty
N	M	W	M	H	Y	C	R	U	N	U	W	S	W	O	V	U	E	P	P	Essential
G	O	W	U	T	L	E	W	I	T	I	P	M	N	R	Q	B	R	R	Z	Service
C	H	V	S	F	C	L	E	F	T	S	E	P	V	E	V	T	I	S	K	Primary
U	H	F	S	I	E	L	U	W	P	O	I	J	O	D	P	M	L	J	D	Fully
O	P	M	V	G	R	O	Z	H	K	I	P	D	E	R	A	X	X	X	W	Troubles
A	O	R	S	J	R	C	M	Z	P	M	W	E	E	R	T	A	E	M	F	Influences
F	E	O	S	C	I	L	O	H	O	C	L	A	Y	L	X	I	T	G	Z	Paid
S	C	O	N	T	R	I	B	U	T	I	O	N	S	Z	J	K	N	Z	K	Divert
O	N	L	G	E	C	N	E	D	N	E	P	E	D	N	I	E	P	G	R	Contributions
C	R	I	O	Y	P	K	F	O	H	A	X	M	P	I	V	H	U	M	P	Anonymous
R	L	E	N	O	I	T	I	D	A	R	T	U	I	E	B	N	O	V	A	Treasurer
N	W	M	B	D	S	Z	O	Y	N	X	O	M	S	O	A	K	W	D	I	Donations
C	T	P	Y	O	L	G	Q	S	P	R	D	M	O	Z	O	M	T	I	D	Finances
G	K	F	M	E	S	W	G	T	G	S	N	O	I	T	A	N	O	D	V	Purpose
A	P	X	L	Z	M	R	U	Z	W	I	I	X	U	V	R	J	D	G	T	Independence
B	K	M	D	Y	R	N	Y	W	G	E	R	K	R	C	F	T	S	K	O	Group



1. In July 1934 Ebby T. was approached by his friends Cebra G. and Shep C. in Manchester, VT. They had done considerable drinking with Ebby but were now abstaining from drinking. They informed Ebby of the Oxford Group in VT but Ebby was not quite ready yet to stop drinking.
2. In July 1934, Bill W. met Dr. Silkworth when admitted for the 2nd time to Towns Hospital (again paid by Lois's brother-in-law Dr. Leonard Strong). Dr. Silkworth explained the obsession and the allergy of alcoholism to Bill. Bill started drinking again almost immediately upon discharge. He was unemployable, \$50,000.00 in debt, suicidal and drinking around the clock.
3. On July 4, 1935 attorney Bill D. (man on the bed) leaves St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, Ohio sober and becomes AA No. 3 (Big Book story Alcoholics Anonymous Number Three). Sister Ignatia and Dr. Scuden secretly treat Bill D. prior to his meeting Dr. Bob and Bill W. Bill D. was hospitalized 8 times in 1935 for his drinking. It took 5 days before he would say that he could not control his drinking. Bill D. was Ohio's Panel 1 Delegate to the 1st General Service Conference in 1951 and he spoke at the ORC in Toronto in 1953. Bill D. died September 17, 1954 with 19 years of sobriety.
4. Bill W. invited Messrs. Richardson, Chipman and Scott, of the Rockefeller Foundation to his home on 182 Clinton St. New York on July 15, 1938 for meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. This was the first documented use of the name of the Fellowship.
5. On July 27, 1938 Dr. Silkworth wrote a letter of support for use in fundraising for the book. It was later incorporated into the First Edition Big Book April 1939 into the chapter "The Doctor's Opinion" together with extracts from a paper later published in the Lancet medical journal in July 1939. The Doctor's Opinion started on page 1 and the basic text ended at page 174. Dr. Silkworth's name was not added to the "The Doctor's Opinion" until publication of the second edition in 1955.
6. In the July 1962 Grapevine, Editor Jack M. creates the cartoon strip Victor E. and it appears for the first time in the Grapevine. Today, Victor E. is an A.A. icon.
7. In July 1982 non-alcoholic Milton Maxwell becomes trustee emeritus on account of illness. Non alcoholic Gordon Patrick from Toronto becomes the 1st Canadian Chairman of the Board at GSO.
8. July 5th to 7th 1985 the 50th Anniversary and 8th International Convention was held in Montreal with about 44,000 in attendance. The theme was "50 Years With Gratitude". Ruth Hock Crecelius was given the 5 millionth copy of the Big Book. Ruth was Bill W.'s 1st Secretary and typed the manuscript of the Big Book as Bill dictated.

As part of the festivities surrounding A.A.'s 50th Anniversary, Stepping Stones, Bill and Lois's home since 1941, was declared a New York State Historic site. In Montreal's Olympic Park Stadium, the flags of 53 nations represented at the Convention were paraded as a band played their national tunes. They represented nearly half the 114 countries where A.A. was to be found. The House of Seagram, the largest distiller of alcohol beverages, paid an unusual but good-natured tribute to A.A. For the duration of the International Convention, the three flags at their Montreal headquarters were lowered to half-staff.

9. July 2nd to 4th 1993 the celebration of the 50th commencement of A.A. in Canada was held at the Metropolitan Toronto Convention Centre with about 6,000 in attendance. On Wednesday, January 13, 1943 at 6:00 pm the first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous in Canada took place at the Little Denmark Restaurant on 720 Bay Street (on the west side) between Gerrard and College Streets in Toronto. Present at the meeting were two non-alcoholics, Reverends George Little and Percy Price and six alcoholics; Tom E., Bruce M., Sam McC., Bus McT., Dorothy C. and Weems C.

10. June 30th to July 3rd, 2005, the 70th Anniversary and 12th International Convention was held in Toronto with over 44,000 in attendance, the first city to host the International Convention twice. The theme was "I Am Responsible" repeating the theme of the 1965 Convention held in Toronto. The Convention commemorated the 50th anniversary of Bill W. turning over the operation of the Fellowship to the Conference in 1955 in St. Louis.

TO DONATE AA/GTA ARCHIVAL ITEMS TO THE GTA ARCHIVES PLEASE CONTACT THE GTA ARCHIVIST EDDY G. at 416-536-7536.

OLD GTA MEETING BOOKS ARE NEEDED FOR THE GTA ARCHIVES

STEP SEVEN IS A CONCLUSION

Step Seven Prayer: "My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding." Amen.

There was true humility and deep surrender by asking God to "take all of me," both the "good" and the "bad." This was an admission that I could not trust myself to differentiate between the two. I almost drank after five months sobriety before going into the 12-step process with my sponsor. He wisely pointed out the obvious fact that my mind lied to me - It was not to be trusted! I needed a higher power (God) to see the truth about myself. What an ego-shattering revelation! Yet, it was necessary to give up on myself and trust God to take over my recovery. Someone said: "Self cannot rid self of self with self. "

I had asked God to remove the "bondage of self" in Step Three with only a scant idea of what that was, but Steps Four and Five provided a better view of my defects of character and shortcomings. (By the bye, Bill W. stated that these words were to be used simultaneously or in the same context - please note that Step Seven on page 58 uses the word "shortcomings" rather than "defects of character" as in the prayer above).

It is important to notice that the Seventh Step prayer concludes with the word "Amen" meaning "So be it" or indicating a conclusion. However, there is no "Amen" following the Third Step Prayer, or following Steps Four, Five and Six! Why?

I think because Step Seven finally concludes the process, e.g.: In Step Three we asked to be relieved of the bondage of self, but we did not know what that was till we did Steps Four and Five. But now in Step Seven we know more precisely what we are asking God to remove from us as we go out to do his bidding. The process has been concluded, however, more will be revealed. **Bob S.**, Richmond, IN



19 MONTHS OF SOBRIETY DOES NOT A PHYSICIAN OR COUNSELLOR MAKE

Alcoholic David, this is the Moniker I wear at the beginning of every A.A. meeting. It's my way of defining who I am to those who haven't yet had the pleasure of meeting me. Just a way of reminding me of who and what I am and let it be known that I am just David, an alcoholic. One who with hard work, and the guidance and support of friends, some family, sponsors and doctors, my fellowship and those I owe the most to, my counsellors, has managed to thus far remain sober these past 19 months.

I have cursed then prayed, begged and pleaded and probably just like you and the many like-afflicted souls who meet in damp and dark church basements, parks and online, have found a degree of calm and balance in this, my new life.

Is it a reward for a new leaf turned and from a degree of struggle? Or perhaps a gift from somewhere or some unseen benefactor, someone or thing looking out for and guiding me on this new path. At this point I no longer care to ask, I simply accept that the fact that I am still here, still breathing, finding focus and balance is enough for me to accept, if not surrender with grace and gratitude these truths as I understand them to be.

It is exactly this appearance of some understanding and calm that brings me to an epiphany or revelation. This being that my apparent success in such a short time has led others whom I care deeply for to seek me out and ask that I diagnose and prescribe a cure, antidote or vaccine for that same sickness that infects them as it does me. Now let me assure you if I had any such skill or potion I would gladly administer it. But the problem you see is that I am neither a physician or sponsor nor councillor and I do not possess the knowledge or skill required for such a feat.

As I told you in the beginning I am an alcoholic, my name is David and the best and right thing I can do to help those who seek guidance is to give them a number to call, get them a cab, or perhaps call their dad to come help, and while waiting I can hold their hand. You see if I don't enforce my boundaries and dive right in we will both surely drown then neither one of us wins. So all that ask if you're going to call please do it early and not after last call.

It seems sobriety while a gift that comes from hard work and the ability to hear and digest not just listen also comes with some strings attached: things like honesty, accountability, the courage of your convictions, identifying and removing defects of character and yes even faith. Ego, for me, is still a defect requiring attention while not attention-seeking. It should also carry with it the understanding that you should never practice healing others without a license, and remember that which has often been said "Cura te Ipsum". -Heal Thyself- **David R.**

INSIDIOUS

A fleeting whim, mere glimpse
of a now dreaded past
simple snatch of song
sudden on the radio
is all it takes at times to think --
wouldn't it be nice to have a drink?

Teeth grind, body tenses
spine a sudden coiled spring
gonna do the Cobra Dance
snap at any living soul
who dares to enter this domain --
squirrels on acid in the brain.

Were there a bottle today, as always used to be
at the very bendable dependable elbow beside me
I'd gnaw it open
guzzle all contents down with gravity's ease
chew on the shards
slurp pile till it's sere, Sahara Desert arid dry --
but there is not
moment is gone
and the song is over.

Cunning, baffling and powerful
how it works on printed page
venomous volumes spoken while we surmise
disease does push ups in parking lots
fills our head with lies --
but when I'm safe and on my own
in conference with my Creator
serenity then sanity soon descend
I know that I am never alone. David P. [Birds of a Feather](#)



ZOOM BABY

July 5th 2020 is my dry date ... of course it had to be after a long weekend. One last hurrah as I said to myself so many times before. This pandemic is a blessing in disguise. It was 15 months ago I sat confidently in my one-bedroom loft in the west-end Lakeshore area of Toronto and said ... there is no better time to use than now. No one will bother me, no knock on the door, no disturbances. Those words actually came from my mouth!

Two months later I'd be down on my knees in that very same apartment begging a God of my understanding saying ... please give me some sort of strength to get rid of this nasty disease once and for all. Easier said than done! Yet this time it was the truth! For it had been the first time in my life I actually meant it!

Being lucky enough to have been given some strength from something bigger than me was a blessing and still is! This time I had a plan. This time I would do everything opposite from what I had ever tried before to finally get rid of this nasty enemy. This time I will do it the twelve step A.A. way for the first time in my life, and do it to the best of my ability!

How would I do the twelve steps in the middle of COVID though? I'd have to use another familiar enemy of mine, technology, and also use this to my advantage. I would turn on my computer, enter a meeting and see all these smiling faces. To be honest, at first I found these smiling faces really annoying!

As time progressed and the more I joined these meetings, I realized I wanted to be one of these smiling faces. I just wasn't there yet. I was intrigued to know how to get there. So, I kept coming back.

I thank my higher power, for Zoom was the answer that was brought to me. No more pretending to go to a meeting. No more left but me, my higher power and this device I had despised for so many years.

Along my path there have been many lumps in the road. It hasn't been easy and I work hard on myself on a daily basis. Loneliness can be terrible especially during these times. I constantly remind myself by saying "these smiling faces are only a couple of buttons away," a phone call away, a couple of deep breaths away. Today I am almost one year sober. Today I am the best version of me that I can be, FOR ME!

For today I am dependable, I am reliable, I am accountable and I am unstoppable when I am who I truly say I am ... I am the best ME today!

I am a "Zoom baby".

Pino L. [Morning Discussion Group](#)

GROUP SPOTLIGHT: North Toronto

The [North Toronto Group](#) started in 1946. After meeting in private homes throughout the Toronto area, the North Toronto Group first opened their doors to members of A.A. at St. George's United Church on Duplex Avenue. A decision was made that a larger venue was necessary to support the growing fellowship. Since these early times and partly due to renovations of the original venue, the group moved to Glenview Presbyterian Church at 1 Glenview Avenue in 2019.

Like many groups, the transition continues today online. The North Toronto Group meets Tuesdays for a speaker and open discussion meeting. On Fridays we meet for A.A. step meetings and Sundays for a closed meeting and afternoon of general A.A. recovery discussion.

I know from first-hand experience that the North Toronto Group is very welcoming to the newcomer and offers a great meeting option for all, regardless of sobriety dates. I attended the online meetings 3 times over the past month or so. They offer the recovering alcoholic a safe place of fellowship and sharing of collective experiences of strength and hope, as they have for decades.

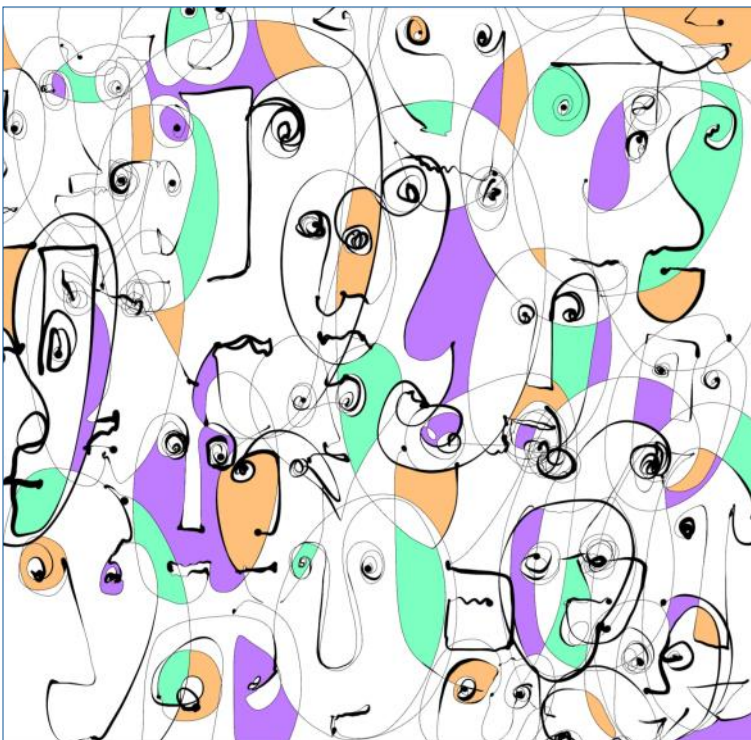
Always lively with many long-time members sharing their stories of hope and recovery while encouraging all to share their thoughts and feelings on recovery and how A.A. has helped them along the way.

Some of the meeting topics recently discussed are the importance of meetings, freedom through sobriety and the well known slogan, "First things first."

The approach of this group is to keep everyone engaged in the discussion and shares of the group. Individuals are called upon to share if they feel they want to and no pressure if you prefer to listen.

Collectively, there are hundreds of years of sobriety in the room and thoughtful discussion is always found here with long time members offering service and support. As stated on their web page "As it has been for 70 years, the A.A. steps, the fellowship and service have produced contented sobriety, true friendship and a profound sense of gratitude". This vision has sustained the group for decades and in October of this year they will celebrate 75 years of history. There is a very detailed overview of North Toronto's history as well as general information on their web page at northtorontoaa.org. To participate in their meetings, you can ask to be added to their distribution list and receive meeting information at aanorthtoronto@gmail.com

Patrick W., [Restoring Life](#)



Artwork and with permission by Cobey A. [Anchor of Hope Group](#)

TO GO OR NOT TO GO - TO LIVE MEETINGS

Have I struggled with online meetings? Sure, I sometimes find myself scrolling through people's windows like a peeping Tom, or Mary in this case, rather than listening to the words that helped set me straight more than once. Why is that? What is it about the veil of anonymity that makes me think it's ok to behave voyeuristically when I would not dare walk and stare at people in a real life meeting? How weird would it be to stop and stare at individuals one-by-one but think it's ok online. Get me to a an in-person meeting please and fast! I won't saunter in. I'll be first in line to make sure I get a seat for the show, I mean meeting, no more voyeurism. I want the semblance of normalcy that physicality brings. Behaving myself in front of my peers, wait, am I just putting on an act? I thought the jig was up once I came to A.A. and admitted all my innermost demons? More work, it never stops, thank GOD! Mary M. [Erin Mills Group](#)