

First Things First

Newsletter of the Western Maryland Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous

Intergroup provides A.A. pamphlets to Massie unit

Allegheny and Garrett County A.A. groups that provide contributions to Western Maryland Intergroup made it possible to purchase literature recently for the Joseph S. Massie unit in Cumberland, which provides treatment for alcoholism and substance abuse.

Intergroup bought 25 copies each of 14 pamphlets, all approved by A.A.'s General Service Conference.

Pamphlets included in the bundle were:



Would you like to learn more about Conference-approved A.A. pamphlets? Check out this Pamphlet Study on Zoom!

ID: 826 9431 0797
PW: 124145

- “The A.A. Member — Medications and Other Drugs”
- “Problems Other Than Alcohol”
- “A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues”
- “Women in A.A.”
- Young People in A.A.”
- “Access to A.A.”

- “Many Paths to Spirituality”
- “Black in A.A.”
- “A Brief Guide to A.A.”
- “LGBTQ Alcoholics in A.A.”
- “Questions & Answers on Sponsorship”
- “Do You Think You’re Different?”
- “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.”
- “This is A.A.”

Intergroup provides A.A. literature periodically to regional treatment centers, jails, and professionals to let the community know about A.A.'s 12-Step program of recovery.

Mark your calendar!

Annual Gratitude Breakfast coming soon

When: Saturday, May 3, 2025

Where: Cumberland County Club

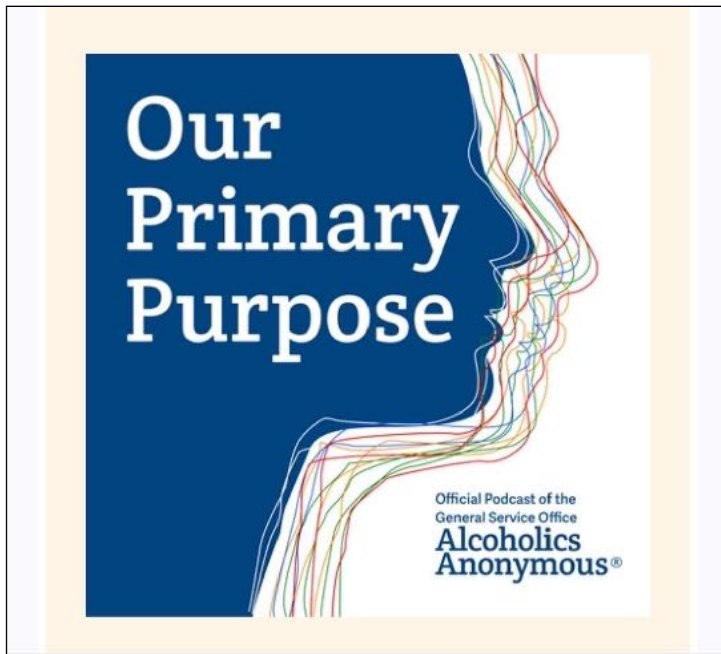
Cost: \$20

A.A. Speaker: Sheila U.

Doors open 8 a.m.

*See an Intergroup representative for tickets.





New podcast gives info on A.A. services

A.A.'s General Service Office (GSO) launched an official new podcast earlier this year to help members of the Fellowship understand how GSO supports carrying the message of recovery to those who need it most.

“Season 1” wrapped up on March 4, with a 25-minute episode about the General Service Conference — the annual gathering of delegates from across the U.S. and Canada to discuss and decide on issues affecting A.A.

Issues on the agenda for the upcoming Conference April 27-May 3 include:

- Review progress report on the 5th edition of the Big Book.
- Consider request to update the book, *Living Sober*.
- Discuss *Plain Language Big Book: A Tool for Reading Alcoholics Anonymous* review process.
- Review progress report on Military Outreach Project.

There are dozens of other agenda items.

Other podcast episodes, which are 20 to 30 minutes long, deal with topics such as bringing A.A. into prisons, the principle of anonymity and A.A.'s public information policy, an audio tour of the General Service Office in New York City, and the impact of the new *Plain Language Big Book*, and other A.A. literature.

Find GSO's “Our Primary Purpose” podcast at <https://www.aa.org/gso-podcast>.

A.A. RESOURCES

box

459

General Service Office
Newsletter

aa.org/box-459

A.A. Grapevine PODCAST



www.aagrapevine.org/podcast

Meeting Guide App



aa.org/meeting-guide-app

A.A. on YouTube



[YouTube.com/
@alcoholicsanonymousworldse1](https://www.youtube.com/@alcoholicsanonymousworldse1)

A.A. World Services
Literature



onlineliterature.aa.org

We offered a free meal and A.A. fellowship.... You took us up on it!

More than 50 A.A. members from Allegany and Garrett counties attended two “meals on us” over the winter, offered by Western Maryland Intergroup to foster fellowship and help get us through the cold, dark days without taking a drink.

Two events took place — one in January at the Asian Buffet and Grill in Lavale, and a second in February at China Wok in Oakland.

Those who participated said they would join us again if another event is offered.

Part of Intergroup’s purpose is to encourage opportunities for A.A. fellowship in the region, offering educational activities and fun events for alcoholics already in recovery — and to attract those still sick and suffering.

An open mic night is being planned for later this spring or summer.

We need more ideas for what you’d like to do! Join us on the third Friday of every month for our meeting.

The next meeting is at 6 p.m. April 18 at Emmanuel Episcopal Church, 16 Washington St., Cumberland.



Western Maryland A.A. at the Chinese Buffet

Jan. 23
Asian Buffet and Grill,
Lavale

36 attendees

Feb. 20
China Wok,
Oakland

18 attendees

Thank you for joining us! Let’s do it again soon.

“ You say...I know I must get along without liquor, but how can I? Have you a sufficient substitute? Yes, there is a substitute and it is vastly more than that. It is a fellowship in Alcoholics Anonymous. There you will find release from care, boredom and worry. Your imagination will be fired. Life will mean something at last. The most satisfactory years of your existence lie ahead. Thus we find the fellowship, and so will you.”

—Alcoholics Anonymous, page 152

Did you ever wonder...

‘What do A.A. Traditions have to do with my sobriety?’

Kristin B., Frostburg

Ugh, another Traditions meeting.

That’s what I used to think, sometimes trying to slip out of the room, head lowered, eyes on the floor, before anybody noticed me. Oh, I’ve almost made it....is that my sponsor on her way up the stairs? Crap.

Like that.

Traditions seemed remote, like something someone else should worry about. I had enough on my plate, trying to stay sober, to figure out who I was, to adjust to a new way of life that didn’t involve getting smashed every night.

At meetings, I wanted to hear about how you had recovered. I wanted to learn about the Steps and talk about *Living Sober*. But most of all, I wanted to talk about ME and all the reasons life was hard, especially without alcohol to smooth the edges.

I know I’m not the only one.

More than 30 years into a life of recovery, I finally really get it that my sobriety doesn’t just depend upon my willingness to attend a meeting or join an A.A. group (sometimes a struggle, even today!) My sobriety and my life depend upon the A.A. meeting itself — upon the fact that I know I can walk into a room anywhere in the world and find a motley assortment of alcoholics who might disagree about politics or religion or ‘insert-controversial-topic-of-the-day here,’ but who all agree that A.A.’s 12-Step program of recovery is a viable solution for alcoholism.

We know because it worked for us. As the Big Book says, “It works — it really does.”

So we set aside whatever differences we have and focus on the task at hand: Staying sober and helping other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

That’s the Traditions at work. And they’ve worked for more than 80 years to keep A.A. alive.

Tradition 1: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.



You’ve heard it before, or something like it: The Steps get the individual sober; the Traditions keep the groups functional and focused, spiritual and whole.

What a task! It’s truly astonishing that it has worked so well for so long, isn’t it? And thank God it has. *Thank God.*

Learning more about the Traditions over the past few years has enhanced my sobriety so much. I have found many opportunities — some of them online — to study with trusted servants who are experienced in A.A. recovery and service and willingly pass their knowledge along. The Monday Night Service Workshop (flyer on page 7) has been a good one so far, and it continues until the middle of June.

I’m grateful that I finally was graced with enough open-mindedness and willingness to connect the ‘boring, remote’ Traditions to my own sobriety and life. It’s opened up a world of opportunities to be of service, and it’s made me much more devoted to doing whatever I can to help make sure A.A. is here for the next guy who needs it.

What happened at the meeting?

Western Maryland Intergroup, Jan. 17, 2025, meeting minutes

Attendance

Farren, Scott, Mary Jo, Kristin B., Les, Dan, Wendell, Jim, Lora, Matt, Jason

Call to Order at 6:07 p.m.

Adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Traditions — Wendell

December 2024 minutes approved as read.

Treasurer: Farren

Starting balance: \$3693.47

Expenses:

Hotline Jan -\$36.78

Rent -\$9.00

Donations:

Sunday Step Group: \$30.00

Sunday Serenity Group: \$50.00

Lake Group: \$57.50

Frostburg Sick and Tire: \$25.00

Ending Balance: \$3819.19

Savings Acct: \$23.02

Reserve fund: \$2192.72

Approved Treasurer's report.

Institutions/Literature Chair: Les (Cody)

- Lora takes meetings to ACDC for the women.
- Cody takes meetings into GCDC on Thursday.
- Les takes meetings to Massie on Wednesday and Saturday.
- Kristin B. received a list from Les of pamphlets that Massie would like to have. She will order them from A.A. World Services.
- Approved \$300 for 20 *Daily Reflections* books - Dan had not met with Tim about getting *Daily Reflections* for jails yet.

Activities Chair: Mary Jo

- Excited about dinner plans for January in Cumberland and February in Garrett County.
- Mary Jo will bring back receipts for reimbursement.

Newsletter Chair: Kristin B.

- No newsletter was printed for January. Unanimously approved a motion to make the newsletter a quarterly printing.

Website/Where & When Chair: Wendell

- Hits on the site are down ~20%
- 121 visitors 195 site sessions 401 page views

- Winter 2025 Where and Whens were printed and distributed. Date typo.

Community Engagement Chair:

- Matt was unanimously voted as the new committee chair.
- Tasked with generating a list of pamphlets the committee would like to order- previous ad hoc committee was approved to spend \$600 on pamphlets and new "informational business cards."

Hotline Chair: Dan

- A ton of calls were missed in December due to one of the answering members not having service. Chair will be working on finding a way to solve this issue.
- Bylaws blurb about position duties were completed and submitted via email.

Old Business

- Reviewed the bylaws and discussed changes to be made to update them. (Farren had not worked on them again before January meeting.)
- Rent for Cumberland needs to be paid for four months. Write out check to Fort Cumberland Group and they will deposit it into their checking account and submit the donation
- Voted that Farren will keep the treasury and Kristin B. Will take secretarial position due to scheduling conflicts
- Les will be removed from the bank accounts and Dan B. will be added as new vice chair. Les gave the P.O. Box key to Dan.
- April Health Fair in Garrett County will still be occurring but is currently tabled until next meeting.

New Business

- A new in-house screen printing opportunity is available for Intergroup. Voted to make an order for the Gratitude Breakfast. Kristin will work on getting details submitted to Jason to make a design. Intergroup unanimously approved that they will cover the cost of materials to make the t-shirts.
- A new email address for the hotline needs to be established so that Dan's personal email can be removed. Also discussed setting up automatic payments from our checking account.
- Discussion and planning of the Gratitude Breakfast
 - Wendell will ask a couple from AA/Al-Anon if they would be interested but is unsure about needing to cover the cost of a flight
 - Les agreed to MC the event again.
 - Farren will call Pam at the Cumberland Country Club to decide a date.
 - Motion approved to purchase printable tickets.

Officers, 2025

Chair: Cody B.

Vice Chair: Dan B.

Secretary: Kristin B.

Treasurer: Farren S.

What happened at the meeting?

Western Maryland Intergroup, Feb. 21, 2025, meeting minutes

Attendance

Farren, Les, Brian, Wendell, Jim, Dan

Call to Order at 6:02 p.m.

Adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Traditions - Dan

January 2025 minutes approved as corrected (numbers were added to website report).

Treasurer: Farren

Starting balance: +\$3819.19

Expenses:

Hotline: Feb -\$36.78

Intergroup Rent (4 months in Cumberland) -40.00

Massie *Grapevine* Renewal -36.00

Daily Reflection Books for Jails -63.60

Ending Balance: +3642.81

Savings Acct: \$23.02

Reserve fund: \$2192.72

Approved Treasurer's report.

Dan will get to banks to change the name. First United called to let us know our account was inactive but would put a note on the account that we use it as Reserve and not close it. We need to update the address at each bank to our newest PO box

Institutions/Literature Chair: Les (Cody)

- Lora takes meetings to ACDC for the women.
- Cody takes meetings into GCDC on Thursday.
- Les takes meetings to Massie on Wednesday and Saturday.
- Got pamphlets for Massie
- Got reflection books for the jails-given to Cody.

Activities Chair: Mary Jo

- Chair not in attendance.
- Reimbursed Fred for the Garrett County dinner.
- 18 people at Garrett County buffet dinner. Very enjoyable. People will attend again if presented.
- 35-36 at Lavale buffet dinner.
- Discussion about open mic night. Brian will need a date and will provide equipment.

Newsletter Chair: Kristin B.

- Chair not in attendance. No newsletter was printed for Feb.

Website/Where & When Chair: Wendell

- Jan 117 visitors, 187 site sessions, 375 page views
- Down a bit but higher views than Jan

Community Engagement Chair: Matt

- Chair not in attendance

- Attended the state CPC monthly meeting and will review the resources
- Tasked with generating a list of pamphlets the committee would like to order- previous ad hoc committee was approved to spend \$600 on pamphlets and new "informational business cards"
- Matt has a list of pamphlets he would like.

Hotline Chair: Dan

- 11 calls all answered; 1 12th step call.
- Got with members about letting the chair know if they will be out of town so that their number can be removed from the list.
- Discussion about BLAST - gives everyone a call, an additional \$10 a month.

Old Business

- Bylaws
- Motion made and unanimously approved for April Health Fair in Garrett College. April 5, \$50 for a table. \$20 for pamphlets.
- T-shirt printings for breakfast
- Hotline email will get switched soon - hold off on credit card until Farren gets her act together
- Gratitude Breakfast for May
 - Wendell will ask a couple from AA/Al-Anon if they would be interested but is unsure about needing to cover the cost of a flight
 - Les agreed to MC the event again
 - Farren will call Pam at the Cumberland Country Club to decide a date.
 - Motion approved to purchase printable tickets

New Business

- Discussion of promotion of the hotline phone number - announce at meetings, put signs up, etc.
- Breakfast:
 - Ticket price \$20
 - Give free tickets to halfway houses
 - Agenda - keep the same
 - AA speaker in the works
 - Alanon speaker potential in the works
 - book raffle 10 books and 2 big books - motion made
 - Les and Dan will talk with Tim about getting books. Motion made about funding food events monthly at Massie - tabled for later if we can make it an AA event - possibly combine it with the open mic night

Fred and Dan took Back to Basics 4 week class to Jacob's ladder facility - Proposing to do the same for Massie - possibly better fit to do with the Allegany House? - tabled

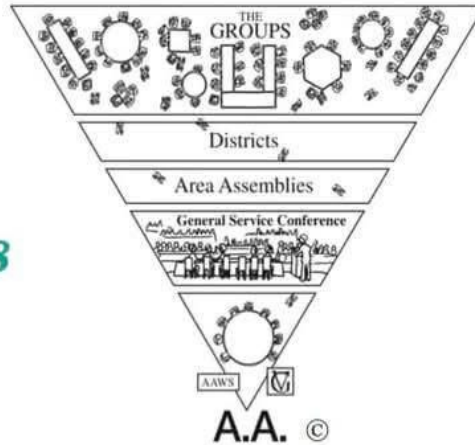
Next meeting: 6 p.m., March 21, 2025 at the Fort Cumberland Group in Cumberland

MONDAY NIGHT SERVICE WORKSHOP

with Billy N. & Friends

~ 5:30 P.M. PT / 6:30 P.M. MT / 7:30 P.M. CT / 8:30 P.M. ET ~

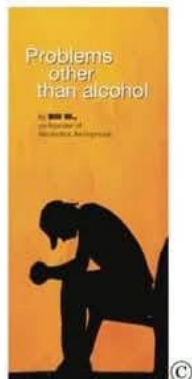
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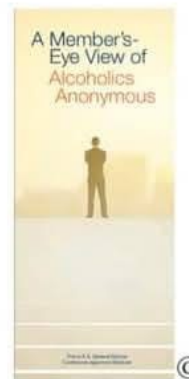
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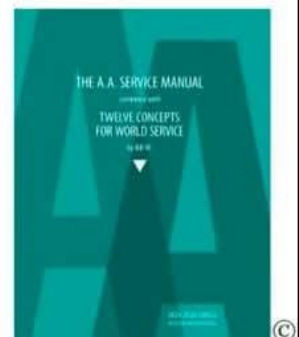
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SCHEDULE:

- 2/17 Conference Charter 📖
- 2/24 Tradition One & Concept I
- 3/3 General Service Board Chair Scott H. 🗣️
- 3/10 Tradition Two & Concept II
- 3/24 Tradition Three & Concept III
- 3/31 The A.A. Group Pamphlet 📄
- 4/7 Tradition Four & Concept IV
- 4/14 Tradition Five & Concept V
- 4/21 Tradition Six & Concept VI
- 4/28 Members Eye View Pamphlet 📄
- 5/5 Tradition Seven & Concept VII
- 5/12 Tradition Eight & Concept VIII
- 5/19 Tradition Nine & Concept IX
- 5/26 Problems Other Than Alcohol 📄
- 6/2 Tradition Ten & Concept X
- 6/9 Tradition Eleven & Concept XI
- 6/16 Tradition Twelve & Concept XII



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The places we meet...



Allegany and Garrett counties are home to more than 30 meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous.

To the left is the 'Serenity Prayer' banner that hangs in the Oakland Liberty Club, 125 E. Liberty St, Oakland.. The Garrett County club hosts A.A. meetings seven days a week.

At bottom left are three framed pictures that are displayed at the front table at the HOW group (**H**onest, **O**pen-minded, **W**illing), which meets Tuesdays at 11 a.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church, 328 N. Centre St., Cumberland. It's an open Big Book study.



For a complete list of A.A. meetings in Allegany and Garrett counties, see Western Maryland Intergroup's Where and When at westernmarylandaa.org.

Take a look at the rest of the website while you're there. As Les W.. says: "Use it because your money pays for it!"

Plain Language Big Book selling well

The first printing of the *Plain Language Big Book: A Tool for Reading Alcoholics Anonymous* — 70,000 copies — sold out in just 17 days, according to a February report from Area 29 Maryland General Service Delegate Terry P.

A second printing of 100,000 copies is selling quickly, as well. Around 40,000 remained in inventory at the end of the month.

The new book, which is not meant to replace the original *Alcoholics Anonymous* text, is a tool to help readers understand the Big Book, which was first published in 1939. It is designed so that the A.A.

Twelve Step program of recovery from alcoholism may be easily understood by all people who have a desire to stop drinking.

The Plain Language Big Book is now available at A.A.'s Online Literature store, onlineliterature.aa.org/Plain-Language-Big-Book. Copies are \$11 each.



Step 3 Word Search

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

- | | | | |
|-----------|------------|---------|-----------|
| decision | run riot | footing | key |
| turn over | director | reborn | faith |
| will | triumphant | bondage | openness |
| lives | arch | victory | surrender |

Step Three — Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.



“Every man and woman who has joined A.A. and intends to stick has, without realizing it, made a beginning on Step Three.”

—*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 35

Get involved in Intergroup!

Help Western Maryland Intergroup carry the A.A. message by becoming your home group's Intergroup representative! There are lots of ways to get involved:

- If you have at least a year of sobriety, we need your help taking A.A. meetings into the Joseph S. Massie unit at the Finan Center. Intergroup brings a speaker into Massie twice a week — on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. If you would like to speak at Massie contact Les W., at 240-727-1921.
- We need volunteers for our hotline. During set hours, you would answer 12th-Step calls from your own phone and direct callers to local resources.
- Write an article for the newsletter! Submissions are welcome.
- Share your anniversary date with us so we can include it in the newsletter. Follow the prompts at westernmarylandaa.org
- Help us plan and host workshops and activities for local A.A. groups.



Intergroup meets at 6 p.m. the third Friday of each month. Our next meeting is Friday, April 18, at Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Find more information at westernmarylandaa.org.

January/February 2025 Group contributions — Thank you!

Lake Group	\$57.50
Sick and Tire	\$25.00
Sunday Step Group	\$30.00
Sunday Serenity	\$50.00

First Things First is published periodically by the Western Maryland Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous.

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Submissions are welcome!
If you have an idea or a story, send us an e-mail.



The views expressed in *First Things First* represent those of individuals and do not imply endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous.