# First Things First

Newsletter of the Western Maryland Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous

# Zoom meetings available 24/7

If you have a computer or smart phone, it's easy to join a growing number of virtual meetings and connect with A.A. members all over the world.

Some "marathon" Zoom meetings are active around the clock.

The 319 A.A. Group started a Zoom meeting on March 19 — 3/19 —of 2020, when COVID struck. They've been going 24/7 ever since. Around 120 people attended one recent meeting in June, with a topic of "Surrender to Win."

"When tragedy locked down the world, we found a place online where we could continue to share our experience, strength, and hope," a note at 319aagroup.org says.

Around Allegany and Garrett counties,, most Zoom meetings petered out after COVID, as it became possible to meet in person again.

But across the country — and around the world — the number of virtual meetings is growing fast.

A.A.'s General Service Office in New York City reported this spring that there were 1,168 online groups listed in December 2022 — almost twice as many as eight months prior when there were 595.

How to integrate online meetings and other technology into A.A.'s existing model was the focus of the 27th World Service Meeting in October 2022. Seventy-nine delegates from 49 countries attended "Carrying the Message of A.A. in the Digital Age," which took place online.

Amanda S., chair of the General Service Board of A.A. in Great Britain, attended her first

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### **Marathon meetings**

The following are a few Zoom meetings that are 24/7, with a new topic starting every hour on the hour.

—319 A.A. Marathon Coed: ID 874 8843 9072; PW 267482

Launched on 3/19/2020 to keep A.A. meetings available during the COVID pandemic. Go to 319aagroup.org for more information.



#### -24-Hour Marathon

**Coed (based in New Zealand):** ID 292 371 2604; PW none "Join from anywhere on Planet Earth."

- **—Women's 24-Hour Marathon:** ID 928 9414 8568; PW Billw
- **—aahomegroup.org**: Offers a 24/7 open meeting. Launch from the website.
- —A schedule of regular A.A. Zoom meetings is available at <a href="https://aa-intergroup.org/meetings">https://aa-intergroup.org/meetings</a>

Zoom A.A. meeting hesitantly, and with speculation.

"But rather like when I entered A.A. 18 years ago, the gift of desperation got me to my first online meeting," she said at the World Service Meeting. "I had to be willing to give it a try because I couldn't get to my face-to-face meeting and there was nothing else.

"What I discovered was a new world opening up to me—the meeting was amazing. Not only was I able to connect with my home group members...but we began to get visitors from all over the world. Parents who could not make the meeting because of childcare issues were suddenly able to do so. My friend Benny, in his 80s and 55 years sober, who was too unwell to travel to a meeting, was also able to attend."

Some delegates voiced concerns about virtual meetings, as well. Online groups lack the "spiritual impact of talking with each other after the meeting that is typical in physical meetings," some said; others worry about privacy,, confidentiality, and an erosion of service activity.

A September National A.A. Technology Workshop (NAATW) at Shenandoah University in Winchester,

Va., will address issues around bringing A.A. into a technological age. Go to naatworg for more information.

See the entire Final Report from the 27<sup>th</sup> World Service Conference at

https://

"Solving, Sharing, and Scaling Solutions"

September 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup>

Shenandoah University
Winchester, VA
today to:

- Submit a presentation
- Sign up to volunteer
- Find special hotel rates
- Learn more!

\$70 In-person
\$45 Online

National AA Technology Workshop

**Hybrid format** 

2023

www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/ f-150\_en\_2022.pdf

## Western Maryland Intergroup hosting events



### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SEPT. 9, 2023

**Western Maryland Intergroup presents** 

### A.A. Basics: A Workshop

Feeling lost when you hear talk in meetings about getting a sponsor? Or a home group? Or a service position? Maybe you know about those things but would like to deepen your knowledge about why we do the things we do in A.A.





### Come learn more about the Fellowship with us!

(We'll have food! We'll have pamphlets!)

\*Stay tuned: Time and place TBD

# It's picnic and camping season!

### Help local and regional groups celebrate summer

### NEW HOPE BBQ August 5, 2023 Constitution Park Pavilion 6

The Annual BBQ for New Hope group is Saturday, August 5, 2023. Set up and fellowship start at 11 am. The meeting is at 12 pm with food afterward. Drinks and BBQ meats are provided by the group. Please bring a side dish or dessert.

















# Tradition 7: Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions



Find the Traditions
Checklist at <a href="https://">https://</a>
<a href="https://">https://</a>
<a href="https://">www.aagrapevine.org/</a>
<a href="https://sites/default/files/2020-01/">https://sites/default/files/2020-01/</a>
<a href="https://governments.com/">GV-Traditions-</a>
<a href="https://checklist-2018.pdf">Checklist-2018.pdf</a>

### From Traditions Checklist

1. Honestly, now, do I do all I can to help A.A. (my group, my central office, my General Service Office) remain self-supporting? Could I put a little more into the basket on behalf of the new person who can't afford it yet? How generous was I when drunk in a barroom?

"I typically put \$1 into the basket at any given meeting, figuring that I'm paying for the cup of coffee (or three) that I'm drinking and some small percentage toward the rent and other group expenses. I've done this pretty consistently since I was a newcomer in

### SELF-SUPPORT

The Seventh Tradition states that Alcoholics Anonymous is self-supporting through our own contributions. The contributions help to cover the group's expenses. But the Seventh Tradition is more than simply paying for rent and other group expenses. It is both a privilege and a responsibility of individual groups and members to ensure that our organization, at every level, remains forever self-supporting and free of outside influences that might divert us from our primary purpose.

The monetary amount of each contribution is secondary to the spiritual connection that joins us in unity with A.A. groups around the world.

Service Material from the General Service Office

Does your group have a Self-Support card? Find one at <a href="https://onlineliterature.aa.org/Self-Support-Card">https://onlineliterature.aa.org/Self-Support-Card</a>

1992. It occurs to me that I haven't considered inflation over the years when it comes to my A.A. contributions. Strange, since I've had to adjust for inflation

in every other arena of life! I can do more, especially considering the needs of Intergroup, Maryland General Service, and the General Service Office in New York, who do so much to help carry the message to sick and suffering alcoholics."

-Kristin B.

### **Get into Service**

Most A.A. home groups offer members an opportunity to become involved through various service positions, such as secretary, treasurer, chairperson, Literature representative, coffee-maker, clean-up helper, greeter, General Service rep, and Intergroup representative, to name a few. First Things First highlights a different service position each month.

Service position: **Treasurer** 



The group treasurer is one of the most responsible positions in any A.A. group. The money the treasurer oversees serves a spiritual purpose, and he or she should be well-grounded in the 12 Traditions. Most groups request a treasurer's report at monthly or regularly scheduled business meetings, so that members can stay informed about the group's financial health and make group conscience decisions about how money should be spent.

Find out more at https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/F-96\_en\_0122.pdf

https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/F-3\_selfsupport\_0422.pdf



# Thanks for your support!



In June, the following groups contributed to Western Maryland Intergroup:

## New Hope Group (Cumberland): \$200.00

Western Maryland Intergroup is made up of representatives from Alcoholics Anonymous

groups in the area and strives to help those groups carry the message to still-suffering alcoholics. We do this by:

- —Creating and distributing Where & When meeting lists;
- —Creating and distributing a monthly newsletter;
- —Answering a hotline (844-568-3422);
- —Hosting workshops and activities, as well as the annual Gratitude Breakfast;
- —Providing A.A. literature to local treatment and detention centers;
- —Cooperating with the professional community to increase awareness and understanding of Alcoholics Anonymous;
- —Providing a P.O. Box for correspondence (P.O. Box 403, Cumberland, MD, 21501-0403).

Every A.A. group in the area can elect a representative to Intergroup. We attend monthly meetings, contribute ideas and skills, and help to form the collective group conscience for A.A. in the area.

Meetings are at 6 p.m. the third Friday of each month. **The next meeting is July 21, at The Oakland Liberty Club**, 125 E. Liberty St., Oakland, Md.





Online registration is open for the 51st annual Maryland State Convention. <a href="https://www.marylandaa.org/state-convention-3/shop">https://www.marylandaa.org/state-convention-3/shop</a>

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

P.O. Box 403, Cumberland, MD 21501-0403

Website: https://westernmarylandaa.org

Email: westernmarylandaa@gmail.com

**24-hour Hotline**: 844-568-3422, or 844-LOVE4AA

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.

## What happened at the meeting?

### Western Maryland Intergroup, June 16, 2023 meeting minutes

#### **Attendance**

Call to Order at 6.11 pm Adjourned at pm Serenity Prayer Traditions

May 19, 2023 minutes approved.

#### **Treasurer**

Starting balance

	3468.06
May paper statement fee	-1.00
July hotline	-36.78
Rent collected & donated to LC	8.00
New Hope donation	200.00
Ending balance	3630.00

#### Institutions

Found the booklet to order the literature for Massie. Thanks to Tim on the Hill for providing the books.

#### **Activities**

Kenny wants to have breakfast and a bike ride then late lunch. 12 miles ride. Afternoon lunch between 3 4pm. After lunch, there's a meeting. A motion was made to make Kenny chair of the bike ride.

Talk about new activities to do like bowling. Have an event called the AA Basics: Home Group, Sponsorship, Service. Announce the heck out of it. We each bring two people to the event. Event will take place September 9, 2023. Order 25 copies of each pamphlet. Motion was passed to order the pamphlets.

Before the event, the group will create a document that guides people to observe the event and make sure we meet certain objectives. Like a 10th step for the event.

#### Website

Wendell and Erin met to discuss the website. They have some SOPs. Lora's been sending information. Present information about moving from Wix to GoDaddy. When the google sheet is updated, then the app for where and when handouts is updated.

Proposal is to buy the domain name from Wix for a year. Then reconsider moving to GoDaddy next year.

Where and When is created in special software. If someone else wanted to do it, they would have to buy the software, which is \$239.00. Tabled the discussion about moving the responsibility for the Where and When from Kristin to the web team.

#### **CPC**

Went to the police station in McHenry. Said he could bring Where and When handouts. Not sure if they have Where and When handouts in the jail. Lee said they only need them when they get out. Asked about case managers. Gave a stack of where and when handouts to a federal prison, who gave them to the case managers.

Dan brought up buying pamphlets with Fort Recovery. GS was clear that it was against traditions to buy pamphlets.

Kenny brought up a meeting issue. The group supported him.

### Where & When handouts

Wendell - added to the google sheet from Preston County and in Davis. There are a number of meetings in Keyser. Add the month/year of the date print, so they won't be out of date.

### Hotline

Going fine. NY does have the correct number. If you look up the group, the hotline comes up. Got seven calls. One was missed. Don't leave a voicemail doesn't get a call back.

### **Old Business**

Farren sent JC a certified letter. But has had no response. Do we reach out to him in a different way? Everyone said to leave it alone. Revisit in two months if no response.

Kenny went to Smitty's and saw the posters.

Our next meeting will be July 21, 2023.

# How many steps to the front door of Dr. Bob's home? Visitors welcome every day except Christmas



Dr. Bob and his wife, Anne, lived at 855 Ardmore Ave., in Akron, Ohio, for 34 years, from 1916, when they married, to their deaths in 1949 (Anne) and 1950 (Dr. Bob).

If you visit A.A. cofounder Dr. Bob's house at 855 Ardmore Ave., in Akron, Ohio, a guide will more than likely point out one fascinating fact.

There are exactly 12 steps that lead from the sidewalk to the front door. Take steps 1, 2, and 3, and you'll find a brief platform where you can pause (and maybe say the Third Step Prayer?) before you move on to steps 4, 5, 6, and 7. Another platform leaves a moment for a pause (and maybe the Seventh Step Prayer?) before the final ascent — steps 8 through 12.

A coincidence? Fate? A wink and a nod from a Higher Power?

One thing is certain. It wasn't Dr. Bob's way of tipping his cap to A.A. He lived — and drank — in the house for many years before the fateful

day in 1935 when he met Bill W. and the two created the 12 Steps and the A.A. program of recovery. The steps leading up to the house haven't ever been modified, a guide said during a tour one recent Saturday.

The home, filled with original and period furniture and historical A.A. memorabilia, is open for tours from noon to 3 p.m. every day except Christmas. Visitors, many of them A.A. members from around the world, are greeted warmly with, "Welcome Home!"

"It was in this house and surrounding neighborhood where the miracle of recovery began for many hundreds of men and women; individuals who went on to spread this welcome message of recovery around the

world," reads a description of the home at drbobshome.org. "Many visitors have spoken of a feeling of oneness with the spirit of AA as soon as they climbed the front steps and crossed the threshold. It is our hope and belief that you will, too."



Dr. Bob's hand-written outline for his story in the Big Book is displayed at his home.

### Founders Day at Dr. Bob's Home

Takes place each year in June, when around 10,000 visitors come from around the world to celebrate the beginning of A.A. Next year's event is June 7-9, 2024.



Other historic A.A. sites are scattered around Akron, including the Mayflower Hotel (now low-income housing), where Bill made the fateful phone call to find an alcoholic to help), and Seiberling Gatehouse, where

Bill and Dr. Bob first met – one alcoholic helping another.

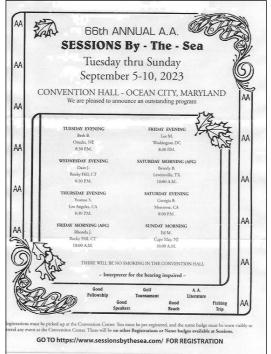
Go to drbobshome.org, and akronaa.org



## July/August anniversaries

- —Diana D., Mustard Seed, 7/1/1994
- -Mike O., HOW, 7/1/2007
- —Nathan F., Keyser, 7/1/2017
- -Mike D., 7/15/2002
- —Dan C., Mustard Seed, 7/22/1990
- —Bev G., Frostburg, 7/23/2015
- —Gary G., Frostburg, 7/23/2015
- —Lawry E., Frostburg Friday Night, 7/29/1992
- —Bob R., New Hope, 8/9/1992
- —Christopher Z., Sunday Night Step, 8/16/1987
- —Farren S., Sunday Night Step, 8/9/2012
- —Fred M., Lake Group, 8/19/2012
- —Shane C., Ridgeley Renegades, 8/22/2008
- —Ted B., Frostburg, 8/23/2017
- -Mary Ann G., Sunday Serenity, 8/28/1983

To include your anniversary in *First Things First*, email westernmarylandaa@gmail.com, or enter your information on the website, www.westernmarylandaa.org.



### Meeting notes

—The Grantsville Into Action Group is has moved to its Monday meeting to Sunday at 6 p.m.



—The New Hope group has moved back to St. Patrick Catholic Church, 201 N. Centre St., Cumberland. Meetings are at 8 p.m. Wednesdays and 12 noon on Saturdays.

—Smitty's Tire meetings are now the Sick and Tire group on Tuesdays at 7 p.m., and the Meet and Taters group on Fridays at 7 p.m.

—The Up the Crick meeting is at 6:30 p.m. Thursdays at Lonaconing Town Hall in the Iron Furnace Park. The group is currently reading from *Living Sober*.