

MAINSTAY

Carrying the message



The 12 Steps

1. *We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.*
2. *Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*
3. *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.*
4. *Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*
5. *Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*
6. *Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*
7. *Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.*
8. *Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*
9. *Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*
10. *Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*
11. *Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.*
12. *Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

Mainstay is the magazine of Alcoholics Anonymous in New Zealand. It's our 'meeting in print' reflecting a broad spectrum of current AA experience in recovery, unity, and service.

Mainstay only publishes letters and articles relating to AA and alcoholism and publication does not imply endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous or Mainstay. Mainstay aims to be self-supporting and is not affiliated to any outside groups or interests and does not accept paid advertising. There is no payment for contributions and they cannot be returned.

Anonymity will be protected, but contributions and correspondents are asked to include their first name, locality and a contact telephone number or email/physical address (not for publication).

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CONTENTS

Editorial	2
Readers feedback	3
Sharing	4
Special feature	14
Mainstay - our stories, our AA	17
Service in the fellowship	18
Politics in AA	21
Book review	23
Items of interest	24
Archivist role	30
Northern Area Assembly	31
Subscriptions	32

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AA Preamble

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women 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 AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation 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.

Responsibility declaration

I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that I am responsible.

Editorial

Elsewhere in this issue, and on our AANZ website (aa.org.nz) you will see our AA Board has an advert for an archivist to be appointed. Check it out and let your home groups know – we have people with many skills and maybe a historian or archivist are among our fellowship.

You may own items of vital and historical interest to the NZ fellowship: books, notes, letters, photos for example, and the Archivist Committee (archivist@aa.org.nz) would love to know what you have and if you are willing to donate them to AA.

Did you have a family member who was an early AA NZ member? Did they leave you items? Did a sponsor give you an item? I have an old 12+12 that has slightly different wording to the current one – this was given to me by Frances F, who was an early Christchurch member. Her ashes were interred at QMH, Hanmer Springs.

Sadly, over many years, as members died, families have thrown out items that we need for our collective memory – not realising they are precious to us: I have a box of odds and ends for my family to courier to GSO when I die. However, we don't have to wait until death for that to happen! Check your cartons of old stuff ... maybe some can be photographed for an electronic copy now and or send the original. We have forms to be used when gifting such an item.

Also, maybe you can send a few pics to Mainstay for our use for others to see – or else send to GSO with “Archives” in the subject line.

We are still interested in your homegroups experience during the Covid-19 lockdown. What happened to your donations? My homegroup's donations increased! We continued to pay our rent, set aside Area donations, and increased our 7th tradition to GSO. Please send us your experience during the time. What happened to newcomers? Oldtimers?

Traditionally, all over the world, November is ‘traditions and gratitude month’: how does your group celebrate it? I know we have our gratitude month out of step with the world, but let's keep Traditions Month alive and well and share with others what you did.

Looking forward to hearing from you for our next edition - especially on the special topics of sobriety and travel or staying sober over the holidays.

Warm regards in our fellowship,
Heather H. Editor

Reader's feedback

Want to comment on Mainstay, in Mainstay? Please send your thoughts to feedbackmainstay@aa.org.nz

COVID-19 and meetings

Invercargill Sunday night

At the beginning of Lockdown, I was already home in self isolation due to close contact with a positive case. Therefore, as the group secretary, I already had a head start on the Zoom process. I had an account and had attended a couple meetings. When the announcement was made, we were moving into Level 4, I contacted several regular attendees of the group and arranged a Group Conscious meeting on Zoom. This also served as a test run to familiarize everyone with Zoom and establish a format for our online meeting.

With a unanimous vote to go online, we contacted the GSO to update our details online. The first week or two, we mainly had locals with a few visitors, but once lockdown was in full effect we were about half and half locals and visitors (from NZ and around the world.) I had the personal opportunity to grow in fellowship with several A.A.'s from around the world, including the North Island, Australia, America, and more.

With so many visitors, we had lots of great sharing, in addition to our locals. We did see a few newer (and older) members drop off during the Lockdown, but we had a few newcomers from around the country pop into our meeting occasionally. I saw many more newcomers in meetings in North America, which was great to see them go to any length to get sober! Although we had no issue ourselves with 'Zoom bombers', I did attend a few meetings with these issues. To combat this, we had several security protocols in place (waiting room activated at beginning of meeting, several 'spotters' as co-host, disable screenshare, etc.)

Our group had gone to online banking just a few months before lockdown, so this made maintaining our 7th Tradition much easier. We saw our attendance increase slightly due to visitors, and our contributions remained about the same, allowing us to send more funds to Intergroup and GSO.

Overall, we believe the Lockdown went well for our group. We saw several individuals have trouble adapting the Zoom, and some even forgoing meetings during the lockdown due to the new format. I am reminded of

what my sponsor asked me when I first asked him to sponsor me, “Are you willing to go to any lengths to stay sober?” I took a few weeks to adjust to seeing my face while sharing, but in the end, I heard the same message on my computer as I do in the rooms. I am grateful we were able to find a way to continue sharing the message and joining in fellowship during such unprecedented times.

Cheers, Brendan S

Invercargill Sunday Night Group

Came to Believe, Wellington

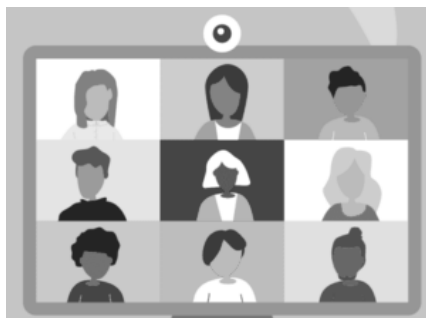
As with many other groups, the Came to Believe meeting transitioned to an online format in late March 2020 in response to Alert Level Four to address COVID-19. Our online meeting format enabled the group to continue fulfilling Tradition Five – carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers, and in many cases our group was supporting current members struggling with the impact of COVID-19 on their lives. On average, we had between 9 and fourteen attendees, with some members dialling in from the US and other parts of New Zealand. After a few previous weeks undertaking a hybrid online and face-to-face format to ease the transition back, the meeting fully returned to the original face-to-face

format at 11am on Sunday mornings in Trades Hall, Vivian Street, Wellington from 7 June 2020. Since the return to the fully face-to-face format, we have experienced a full house of attendees and with great enthusiasm – we’re very happy to see their faces in person!

My contribution is very brief as I only zoomed in on the meetings I usually go to (three a week). I didn’t want to get ‘addicted’ to meetings as I did have other things to do during the lockdown. It was comfortable to know that I could pop into a meeting at any time of the day or night if needed but tried to stay with my usual routine as much as possible. Kept in regular touch with AA friends via phone and email.

Cheers, V.

My group chose not to publicise our online meeting but to keep it for regulars only. This meant we did not get any newcomers but we as a group stayed strong and our format didn’t change – we have a strong focus on the message not the mess and Tradition 5. Heather



12th Step Letters

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now.

*Mainstay editorial policy is to accept and publish letters from members of AA who wish to share their experience, strength, and hope. The Editor reserves the right to edit submissions. Mainstay does not publish anything unrelated to AA or that violates the principles of AA. Sensitivity and discretion will be used to maintain the integrity of the original correspondence. Please submit your sharing in word-processed or email format, or **legible hand writing**. Digitally submitted sharing should be in Word .doc/.docx format or rich text only please. We accept graphics and photos in most standard formats (please use a high resolution for clarity).*

Dear Mainstay ...

China recovery

My name is Timikara I'm an alcoholic, my sobriety 12 January 2011, homegroup Guangzhou China,

we have 5 meetings a week 4 (English) and 1 Chinese meeting (Chinese spoken). My Sponsor is Alec

P, My Grand sponsor Sagan R, and my y service sponsor is Roger S, current Chair

AOSM. I am the first China delegate to AOSM.

I mention my service position because my service to AA has served me well, my growth has been at the pain of surrender, an acceptance of every situation that I can walk through battered and

sometimes bludgeoned into Gods quality work, that's how it has been for me.

Sobriety in China I found difficult and challenging, the simple things I took for granted in NZ are mostly difficult in China. Yet there I go.

I was 9 months 2011 my first trip China on invitation from friend, she said come over bro check out business, so away I went, with just a few AA tools I mostly stayed with her family, I got to experience China from inside of a Chinese family, and so I saw a Chinese father constantly engaged with his kids,

smiling happy man. A wife a mom strong spirited, expert hand in the kitchen. I enjoyed the extended family gatherings they were huge we celebrated all the festivals together, enjoy food, games, talks

and special family time, I became a regular and for some reason they accepted me as part of their family, attending weddings, funeral ceremonies, kids 100-day birthdays, Winter festivals, Chinese New year. It's been so amazing, that I have never experienced a family.

I travelled further into China on my own and that was an experience, flip side, I was newcomer, and did I play up? Absolutely, I found myself wandering streets late at night, looking for dangerous areas

of China, sure enough with little effort I found it, there were occasions I picked up my fists to fight

my way out, I did run down dark alleyways - attracted to mayhem. There were great moments of

The Great Wall of China, Tiananmen square, Shanghai shopping, beautiful country trips.

I became a regular traveller to China and visited other parts of Asia, finally one day I decided to live in China full time. And so I did.

AA China was ground zero, myself and handful of fellows opened more meetings, started collecting tradition 7, organised literature into China, upgraded our website and

started 12 step work.

Newcomers started to come and we put them into service asap, over time, we had 4 meetings, some local AAs didn't attend, yet they too started to show up, our homegroup grew to 12 members.

One of my service role positions is help AA business folk get to our meetings, we would meet wherever possible then head off to a meeting. I really enjoyed the talking to fellows before meeting

and having a meal afterwards before sending them on their way.

The AA Chinese group hold meetings once a month in the mental hospital. I enjoy this part of the month, and I get to experience Chinese

way of dealing with our disease, and it sure reminds me of old mental asylum experiences. I get to meet more fellows on the trudge, and I witness their quality of service. Sometimes I think, God shows me the way by other's examples.

Early 2019, I stayed in hotel in Wellington NZ, I had some business and personal affairs to attend to. I woke up very disturbed and I googled a meeting and walked to



the Trade Union Hall, Came to Believe meeting and I met Heather H, she welcomed me in, more members showed and we had a great meeting. I told her I lived in Guangzhou and she said the next AOSM will be in Hong Kong

and that I should attend as an observer, sure I said not knowing what was about to unfold. We went for lovely meal afterward and I carried on with my life.

Somehow, I became the first China delegate to sit on AOSM, my Guangzhou home group supported

this move and I attended the AOSM 2019, Hong Kong. I prepared as much as I could and tried to

contribute positively to the purpose of Asia Oceania recovery.

It's now June 2020, I am in NZ during the COVID lock down. I have two new sponsees, I attend local meetings, I am of service every day, I love calling my sponsor on a regular basis, all is fine.

Thank you.

Tim

China /New Zealand

The Practice of Gratitude

I remember the time my first sponsor, Gwen, shared her experience about practicing gratitude. I was in my early days of sobriety and was filled with resentment, fear, and self-pity. It seemed like everyone was against me. I told her I was being unfairly criticized at work. My landlord was not going to pay for repairs to my apartment. My car was making funny noises. My boyfriend's eyes were roaming. I was a mess.

Gwen said that when we finished our phone call, I should get on my knees and tell God everything I was grateful for. I told her that would be hypocritical because I had nothing to be grateful for. She said, "Are you grateful to be

sober?" I reluctantly said, "Yes." Well, she said, that's a start. And, indeed, it was. I started my list – sobriety, the AA program, meetings, loving people who were helping me stay sober. The list grew and, as I shifted my thoughts to all the positive things I had in my life, a miracle happened – my attitude changed.

I had heard long-timers share that they couldn't think their way into right actions. But, they could "act their way" into right thinking.



My actions that day – making a gratitude list – turned my thinking around. After taking that action, my feelings changed as well.

It has been a fact for me that what I am thinking is what determines my feelings – either for bad or for good. If I start mentally judging my friends, family members or fellow alcoholics, I start feeling agitated and superior. If I interrupt my thoughts and replace them with positive ones, I feel at peace and at one with others.

Specifically, what I do when dealing with someone I perceive to be exceedingly difficult or just plain “wrong,” is to stop my negative thoughts. I force myself to list 10 positive things about the person.

(In tough cases, I sometimes start the list with, “good posture.”)

Believe me, I don’t approach this exercise with great enthusiasm. I only do it because it works.

Along with this promise to myself to avoid condemning someone by making a list of the good things about them, I also tell all those I confide in that it’s my intention to avoid saying anything negative about the particular person. In other words, I metaphorically paint myself into a corner pointing me to principles before personalities.

If I have resentments for more than 24 hours, my sponsor’s advice is to write a 10th step inventory. That way, I am not denying my own feelings. It hasn’t ever worked for me to bury my anger or resentments. However, through the inventory, I am priming myself – becoming willing – to begin the list of 10 good things about the person.

Over many years, my relationships with family, friends, and fellow workers have been transformed by this practice. It’s just one of the

tools I’ve learned in AA that fills me with gratitude to be part of a fellowship where I’m inspired to rise above my character defects. Of course, I am not immune to fear, self-pity, dishonesty, resentment, and self-seeking.

Today, when I am not thinking right, I

have a riptide of experience pulling me toward the AA principles. I know enough to talk to another alcoholic at once when I’m troubled. I trust today that if I’m feeling bad about someone or something, it’s not permanent. I can take direction from my sponsor or other AAs. Through the steps, I can discover my part in the disturbance. I have been told to ask myself, “How did I place myself in a position to be hurt?” Or, “Was I afraid of



not getting something I wanted or afraid someone was going to take something I had?" These questions divert me from self-righteousness and judgment.

When I was new, I had no idea what I liked or disliked. My only focus had been to chase the high I could get from drinking. At 75 years old, with over four decades of continuous sobriety, I have no problem writing gratitude lists. I am even moved to spontaneous gratitude for expected and unexpected gifts. In my sobriety I discovered the love of nature, hiking, open water ocean swimming, reading – every day I am doing one or more of those things. I feel love for my friends and family. I have been isolating alone for three months due to the Co-Vid 19 pandemic, and I do not feel alone. I feel the presence of a loving higher power. I enjoy and learn from AA meetings—all electronic at the moment. I am enriched by the people I sponsor and by the woman who sponsors me.

I believe this to be the best time of my life – at an age I never dreamed I would reach. I don't know if it's God who has given me so much bounty—but I thank him anyway.

*Judy S.
Redondo Beach*

A Strange Encounter

I had lived in Minnesota for about a year with my partner of a decade having travelled from Australia for work just prior to 9/11. We lived in a tiny prairie town of a few hundred people where people commonly said "You bet" and spoke politely and extensively and in great detail about snowfall and the weather. Women baked pies for neighbours and men hunted deer. People left their cars and houses unlocked. It was as though time had stood still.



One afternoon at a supermarket we were about to leave when I spied a white figure hovering to my right. And there stood what could only be described as a Cowboy all dressed in white. His whiteness glowed like a halo. His belt, spurs and the trim on his hat

were all golden.

He looked me in the eyes and said, "You don't sound like you are from these parts" To which I replied cheerily "No we are from Australia". His demeanour brightened and he exclaimed "Oh I love that place~ that Olivia Newton John -well she's just wonderful" Since I had been a fan of Olivia since childhood, I heartily agreed with him.

I said to him "You look very dressed

up – a special occasion?”

To which he replied “Yes, I have just been to an AA meeting. It was my birthday”

Now, I had not been drinking that day, nor was I hungover and I was not holding any alcohol and there had been no mention of it in our brief conversation. However, I had been silently wrestling with my alcoholism and depression for the past year or so after a few years of abstinence. It was a quiet agony that few people could see. So, when he mentioned AA you could have knocked me over with a feather.

I recovered enough to say, “Oh Happy birthday ~ that’s wonderful -my Dad goes to AA actually” He said “Thank you. Well that’s a very good thing. It’s a truly wonderful organisation.” After more small talk we said our goodbyes and he strode off, gold spurs jangling.

I was very shaken by this encounter and the first thing I said to my partner was “I need a drink” We went to a bottle store and got some wine. I drank heavily for about three weeks and after one particularly heavy drinking session involving hunters and Alien conspiracy theories, I hit a rock bottom and called the AA lifeline.

I had reached a breaking point and was very fortunate that there

was a voice at the end of the phone and a meeting house just around the corner from me. After 14 years of trying to control my drinking I knew I was beaten and walked into AA where a group of older men and one woman helped to keep me sober. I listened and tried to understand the malady of alcoholism.

This was in 2002. Everything good in my life I owe to AA and the people in it from my physical health to my ability to do the things

I love and the relationships I maintain. It has set me free from an affliction which otherwise robs people of their potential and ultimately destroys their lives.

Later I remembered the White Cowboy of Morris, Minnesota and thought he was like an angel sent to remind me that I could travel in a different direction if I wished to change.

*Anonymous,
Wellington.*



Perseverance

In the past I have had a history of feeling resentful and full of self-pity when it came to my Mum.

Following a fifth step I had begun praying for her every day. The results of prayer truly are amazing. Our relationship has become warmer and more loving.

Mum came to stay with my husband and I for a week recently and we had a fantastic time together.

On the last day I was to take her to the airport, and everything went wrong.

During the week of her visit I had schooled myself to avoid any housework and to try and create a relaxed environment so mum could enjoy her holiday. (I can be very uptight about stuff like housework and being busy).

On the morning of her last day I couldn't help myself. I decided that if I was quick it wouldn't hurt to run the vacuum quickly around the house and wipe over the bathroom and toilet.

When it came time to take Mum to the airport, we were late, and she missed her flight. The next available flight was several hours later and several dollars more expense for her.

I felt terrible and very responsible. Mum was kind and assured me it

wasn't my fault.

I dropped Mum at a mall for an hour as I had an appointment. When I picked her up, she said she had decided to just go back to the airport and wait there for the next few hours till her flight. I convinced her to come back to our house for a cuppa first. Again, I apologised for getting her to the airport late and she said "yes, well you were doing your housework."

Ouch I felt the sting of being blamed.

I said "Yes, I shouldn't have done that". But inside I felt angry. The old resentment was knocking at the door.

Isn't it funny how I was happy to blame myself but the minute I felt that Mum was blaming me too I immediately started to blame her! The old

double standard.

Inside I could feel myself retreating inside. I didn't want to interact with her, I just wanted to drop her at the airport and run.

When we got back home Mum tried to find out if her insurance would cover the cost and I went to my bedroom to pray and have a wee cry. I want a mother who loves me so much she would give me the benefit of the doubt and never blame me.

**KEEP
IT
SIMPLE**

Eventually, I realised I needed to stick with loving her no matter how I felt inside. To act as if I loved her. I needed to take an interest in her sorting out the insurance and to try to help with that. When I took her back to the airport, I needed to park the car and go in with her and make sure she was checked in, settled and comfortable.

I realised that in the morning when I decided to do some housework, I was focused on myself. I had lost focus on her and that's when things went wrong. Selfishness and self-centeredness. That is the root of my problems.

But there is a solution. I was in a meeting recently and I heard the topic 'perseverance'. That was the answer. I needed to persevere to the end of her trip not just till the morning of her last day.

I am grateful to God for allowing me to see where I went wrong and what I can do better in the future with Gods help.

Constant surrender of my self-will so I can be available for others. Not easy for this Alcoholic.

I feel blessed to have found AA. I'm part of a fellowship of men and women who share. You constantly remind me that 'There is a solution'. Thank you.

Kate

AA saved my life and changed my life

At around 30 years old my drinking changed from weekends to a daily occurrence. This was brought on by the death of my mother and a bad work environment. It would appear I had no coping skills to deal with hard things in life and the bottle was an obvious choice for me to take away the stress. This seemed to work well for me until it didn't. Not realising alcoholism was progressive, the amount started to increase over the years. When the lightbulb did go off, I was gutted. I knew in the same second, I realised I was an alcoholic that the treatment or solution was abstinence.

I ignored that realisation for another 10 years.

How could I possibly let go of the one thing that made me happy. The thought made me sick. Until the drinking made me sicker. I'm still ashamed of some of the things that happened whilst drinking. No one died but they nearly did. I know I'm not supposed to regret the past or close the door on it but I don't open that door very often, but I also haven't forgotten. The newcomer keeps my memories alive. A little fear in this has helped keep me sober. But what's truly kept me sober on the road to happy destiny is Alcoholics Anonymous. From the first meeting in 1997 until the first meeting in 2006 that really stuck. I came into A.A. in 1997 to stop

drinking as I was pregnant. That worked quite well except it was only a temporary hold. So only during pregnancy was there some relief but really, I was just waiting to drink and that was a bit uncomfortable. I never stopped completely. I had one glass on a Friday night. And lived the whole week waiting for Friday.

There was heavy drinking on both sides of the family. Functional alcoholics. But I never made the connection until I was in recovery. I never had any warning or thoughts to take it easy through my 20's. Eventually, totally beaten and sick, I dragged myself back into AA. This happened because my dreams were dying and I felt my children deserved better. I dreamed of going to Wimbledon one day. But the graveyard seemed my likely destination, so I had to decide quite simply, did I want to live or die?

Coming into A.A. was very uncomfortable and I was literally forcing myself. But it was a good start and I felt hope. Once I really started to work the programme, do lots of meetings and read the big book, things started to change. Slowly, day by day, the world opened up and I walked into it. A bit nervously but it was magic. The chains fell away and I could start to stand up straight. And then when my head became really clear I saw how unwell I had been. The way drinking affects others. How selfish I was. I was really ready to listen and do what was suggested. Every

day now I am blessed to smell the roses. I thank all those who came before me and all those who made it possible to get sober. I thank God most of all for his protection and care. The love in the rooms is mighty. I still need to practice my programme and come to meetings. Life can still come at you as we have seen recently and create some challenging times. AA saved my life and changed my life. I can live without alcohol and I am happy and well. Yay for AA.

Anne P
Masterton

Tenth Step Prayer

I pray I may continue:

- To grow in understanding and effectiveness;
- To take daily spot check inventories of myself;
- To correct mistakes when I make them;
- To take responsibility for my actions;
- To be ever aware of my negative and self-defeating attitudes and behaviors;
- To keep my willfulness in check;
- To always remember I need Your help;
- To keep love and tolerance of others as my code; and
- To continue in daily prayer how I can best serve You,
My Higher Power.

Special feature - Traditions

Many are not aware of the Traditions except as they have been shortened for the banners...

Length of time in Alcoholics Anonymous of course does not guarantee knowledge of our Steps, or Traditions. Many are not aware of the Traditions except as they have been shortened for the banners - just as I was in my early days.

The Traditions were written as essays for the Grapevine magazine in 1945 and started as answers to letters about problems groups were having - they were then, just as they are today, "solutions to difficulties." However even then, Bill said, "it was only groups in dire trouble who took the Traditions seriously."

He also said that "trial, error, and experience, taught them that unless there is approximate conformity to AAs 12 Traditions, the group too can deteriorate and die."

My first service sponsor, (Elsie Te K) loved the 12 Concepts and in particular the warranties: and Warranty 5 says 'our experiences has shown that continuous and general education respecting our Traditions will be a reliable, preventative, and protection in the years to come.'

Our 12th concept has been called 'The A.A. Service Bill of Rights'. It

protects us from ourselves. It also helps me not to be so allergic to grown-up living, to know that unity is not when you agree with me, but that when we hear all our voices, we don't keep reinventing the wheel or making mistakes -- of course it's usually from my mistakes that I learn and grow.

Paradoxically, while there are no AA police, and because of our Traditions - the Traditions are unenforceable.

Although I've studied the Traditions over the years, I still always re-read the long form when we're discussing a particular Tradition - not just read the banner.

If you don't believe me, read Tradition 3 in the long form and see how different it is to the short one on the banner.

In summary, as has been said, our Traditions are the lighthouses that stop us wrecking the AA ship on the rocks of publicity, breaks, money, power, and prestige'.

- 1 to 5 are about the group and its principles and leadership;
- 6 and 7 are about economic independence;

- 8, 9 and 10 are about the organisation of AA as a whole,
- 11 and 12 are about the protection of the fellowship.

Worldwide, in November, the fellowship celebrates Traditions Month. When I arrived in AA, New Zealand also honoured the traditions in this way - I'd love to see us return to that and have all our groups studying our Traditions at every meeting, every November. That way we'll be informed and AA will be safe from mine, and your, opinions.

Marty M., the first woman in AA to stay sober in AA, said "AA is like a cafeteria - strictly self-serve - people could starve to death if they don't get the food and eat it."

AA is like a Cafeteria - strictly self-serve...



I believe there are members who are starving – starving while being surrounded by nourishing food and are not able to be happy joyous and free. NOTE Marty's story is in the Big Book, 'Women Suffer Too'.

Finally, AAs 12 Traditions are neither rules or laws – they are non-enforceable - and I follow them because for recovery I don't want to be just dry, I don't want to sit on the wobbly two-legged stool but the sturdy 3-legged one.

I cannot do whatever I please. I have to always think twice – and that's not something that comes easy for me. I am responsible, and therefore I have a duty to protect our service structure and to pass our message on in its original, pristine, condition, and for that I am responsible.

We are servants not senators - we serve AA as a whole as active guardians-kaitiaki of our fellowship's 36 principles. Servants, by definition, are humble and obedient to their master – for me that means I have to surrender to ALL our Steps, Traditions, and Concepts - not cherry-pick as I did in my early days. To know them all, not have opinions, and to be responsible to serve those who gave me any role – whether as literature person, tea maker, secretary, GSR, or member of my homegroups conscience at our business meetings.

I thank you for allowing me absolute privilege to serve and grow in this wonderful fellowship: Alcoholics Anonymous.

Heather H.

Wellington

Tradition One: long form. Each member of Alcoholics is but a small part of a great whole.

AA must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare must come first. But individual welfare follows close afterward. 12 Steps and 12 traditions, p189, AA world Services Inc.

The Traditions themselves are indeed a wonderful collection of not-so-common sense that, like the steps, work well when they are adhered to. Sadly, there will always be some members who interpret Tradition one as “personal recovery depends upon me getting my own way because my way is best, don’t you know!” Schisms are created and new meetings started (and sometimes fail) because of failure to treat Tradition one as the overarching principle that holds our fellowship together.

While the individual always has the right to think, talk, and act as he/she wishes, within the fellowship it is vital that his ‘wishes’ are in line with the welfare of the other members. All the other Traditions support this one concept from every possible angle, but the fact remains, unless the welfare of our fellow members is our first priority, we risk our fellowship falling into dissention and eventually disintegration. Where then can the suffering alcoholic turn for help and support?

Remember too that the ‘suffering alcoholic’ may be the old-timer sitting next to you in a meeting. Not all suffering is the result of our alcoholism and it well behoves us to reach out a hand of comfort and support to all who need it because our alcoholic personalities are often the least able to cope with the vagaries of life alone. Tradition one is the glue that holds us together though our common dilemma and it is in helping one another that we ourselves find depth and meaning in our own recovery from a seemingly hopeless condition.

Andrew A

Alkie in Feilding

*Have something to say on this or other key topics? Please send in your story the topic in the heading as; ‘Special feature - *topic*’.*

Topics for the special feature in future editions are listed below.

<i>Dec-Jan</i>	<i>Sober Travel/Holidays</i>
<i>Feb-Mar</i>	<i>Concepts</i>
<i>April/May</i>	<i>Steps</i>
<i>June/July</i>	<i>Sponsorship</i>
<i>Aug-Sep</i>	<i>Service & Me</i>
<i>Oct-Nov</i>	<i>Traditions</i>
<i>Dec-Jan</i>	<i>Trudging the Road</i>

Mainstay – our stories, our A.A.

The forced closure of physical A.A meetings has enabled us to participate in meetings all over the world, and while the 'language of the heart' can be felt across countries and continents, for many A.A.'s there's no place quite like home.

Sharing the stories of Alcoholics Anonymous in New Zealand is the main purpose of Mainstay magazine. It helps to carry the message and is used not only by loners, prisoners and housebound members but is given to newcomers at meetings so they can get to know us better. The hope is that it will always contain local stories and information relative to the entire Fellowship in New Zealand.

We need your stories!

Do you have a story which could be helpful to other alcoholics? Can you share your experience, strength and hope on working the A.A programme and applying the spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps in your life? Just as the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is diverse in our experience and opinions, we hope that Mainstay will be too.

You don't have to be a 'writer' to send in a story, members are encouraged to express their own experience in their own unique way (in a maximum of 1000 words). You can find out more about our editorial policy and anonymity on the website and can submit stories directly to: mainstay@aa.org.nz.

How can you help support Mainstay?

- *Write a letter to Mainstay on any A.A topic of your choice, or your story.*
- *Ask your sponsees and A.A friends to write a letter.*
- *Ask everyone in your group to write to Mainstay.*
- *Appoint a Mainstay Rep for your group who can coordinate stories.*
- *Use one of the letters in Mainstay as a topic for your next meeting.*
- *Subscribe to Mainstay – either yourself or your group.*

Want to try before you buy?

You can read the May/June edition for free online (<https://aa.org.nz/members/mainstay/>).

Service in the Fellowship

A call to service

“What you allow with your silence is what you accept”

Mainstay is an example where Toni and Heather work hard over many hours to produce this magazine in voluntary service. I think of the new website and our “Webmaster” Martin who is a Class A (non-alcoholic Board Member) who has tirelessly slaved away to develop our new website. His voluntary work has saved our organisation a lot of money and gave us a fantastic website just in time for the Covid crisis. There is no step 12 recovery motivation for Martin he serves us as a community service! I think of our Board Chair who during the Covid crisis had her business to run yet still put countless hours into her role co-ordinating the Board.

I am reminded of the quote from Winston Churchill “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few” In our field of endeavour to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic it seems “the many” are getting too relaxed about leaving the work to a “few”.

The reason I am raising this is throughout the A.A. structure from group level through to the Board there is a noticeable lack of members volunteering to do service. It is strange that as the membership grows to over 5,000 the members making themselves available for service is decreasing to the point of stretching resources. At group level I see increasing numbers at meetings but low numbers at the Group Conscience. At assembly level I see low numbers of GSRs attend compared to the number of groups active in the area.

As I write this, I hear the responses... this is not a new problem and I am sure it is not. I like an old saying which I used a lot when talking about workplace safety “what you allow with your silence is what you accept”. I think it is time for the challenge to go out to the membership that service is part of giving back and part of growth in sobriety. We are all of us busy but what I do note is that often the most effective people in service roles are busy people!

My challenge to you as you read this article is to;

- Look at what service you are doing.
- If you sponsor someone encourage them to do service.
- Speak up at meetings about the need for service and challenge the status quo.

Yours in service

Russell B

Delegates AA New Zealand

New Zealand AA structure has 9 delegates, 3 from each area: Northern, Central and Southern.

This trusted servant role is a three-year position - every year the third-year delegate rotates off and the new 1st year delegate rotates on. A simple way to describe a delegate's role is like that of a General Service Representative (GSR) who is the conduit between your home group and the area assembly: their primary purpose being to communicate between the 2 groups.

A Delegate does exactly the same between an Area Assembly and the New Zealand AA conference, which meets twice yearly. (Friday – Sunday, April and October). These dates are known for a year or 2 in advance which helps delegates schedule time off work as necessary. They also attend 3 area assemblies every year where they provide a written and oral report, as well as answering questions from GSRs. As servants of the area assembly, they also take the area's experience strength, hope, questions, and concerns to conference. The costs for attending the NZ AA Conference is met largely by the local Area through their *equalisation payments - the rest is made up by AANZ.

Our New Zealand Service Manual *Conference Delegate* states, *"The delegate attends the Conference as a voting member. They will report to Conference the deliberations, experiences, and viewpoints of their areas. The delegate will also report back to the Area Assembly activities that affect the unity, health, and growth of AA in New Zealand."* This two-way channel of information ensures AA New Zealand can carry the message (our primary purpose).

Qualifications (please also check your local assembly guidelines) usually include having been a GSR for a minimum of 2 years; usually has served several years of active participation in local and area activities. This usually means they will have 5 or 6 years of continuous sobriety and will have studied the Traditions and Concepts with a Service Sponsor i.e. someone who has been a delegate before and whom they can trust to discuss national issues. (See more in the Sponsorship pamphlet).

The USA Canada Service Manual also suggests these characteristics:

“A delegate should have been sober long enough to be responsible and informed, and have:

- *The ability to make and stake suggestions—and criticisms, too.*
- *Experience in chairing meetings.*
- *Knowledge of A.A. affairs, and of where to find the correct information when they do not know the answers.*
- *Thorough familiarity with the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts and how they apply to local problems.*
- *The ability to be open-minded, to sit down with A.A.s in the area and with other delegates to discuss and act on matters vital to A.A.”*

It also suggests,

“If you are thinking about standing for a term as delegate, ask yourself these questions:

- *How well did you do as a G.S.R.? As a committee member? Did you enjoy the responsibilities? Were you active?*
- *Have you discussed the possibility with your family and your employer? Will the time be available for the amount of work required?*
- *Are you familiar with this manual? With A.A. Comes of Age? And of course, with the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts?*
- *Have you talked with past delegates to get an idea of the time and effort required and the sort of work you will need to do?*

* equalisation each area pays exactly the same for their delegates to attend conference – whether they live in Invercargill, Northland, or in the city the Conference is being held. Areas pay GSO one third of their costs every assembly.

Politics in AA.

I've been thinking about Father Joe Martin and his saying; 'don't complain about the dark, light a candle' and, as a trusted servant of AA., I thought I should expand on my passionate rebuttal of the term "politics in AA" a few days ago.

From my early days I've often heard people putting down those in service as 'just wanting to be AA big shots, or wanting to be the bosses'. 99% of the time the people who said it did very little service, or if they did it was from a very uninformed place and with little or no knowledge of the Traditions (except as they hung on the walls), and certainly no knowledge of our Concepts and in particular, our 6 warranties. (One of my concerns esp' about Intergroups etc) One mistake some people make is assuming the words in our traditions and Concepts mean exactly the same as they do on the outside, or commercial world. This is why so much effort has to be put into translating our AA Literature - spiritual concepts are not easily translatable. Humility is a good example - I like what Bill wrote in the 12 and 12 about the term: see pages 48, 58, 72 – they were not my understanding of the word!

The only time I've seen what could have been called politicking in the fellowship was from a man who, from his very early recovery, had his eyes set on a particular role within Alcoholics Anonymous. Although it wasn't really politics per se, I spent much time and energy schmoozing within the NZ-wide fellowship, making sure he was well known by everybody, everywhere. It worked – he got the job, but I don't really think he was successful at it, nor, sadly, does he pass any service skills on.

Most people working in service, outside their home group, are full of gratitude and many devote hours and hours of work to their role – mostly unseen by much of the fellowship. These are our real leaders and trusted servants that Bill W writes about, and New Zealand has been blessed with many of them over the years and currently. See our NZ Service manual for Bills essay on Leadership in AA.

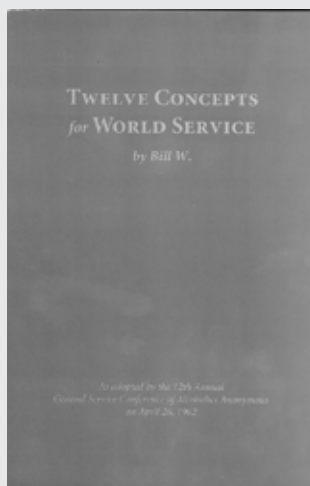
So, for me the word politicking is a derogative term is rather like the empty term, 'political correctness'. In AA, we use our Traditions and Concepts to explain why we should or shouldn't do something. It's

not about opinion, it's about what is right or wrong for our fellowship. Remember Bill also said 'the good is the enemy of the best.' Yes, it's often good to have a GSR (as an example), but unless we have someone who is well-versed in our 36 points of recovery - or of course, is prepared to learn them quickly, it's better to have no representative in a particular role.

At Conference I have seen people who have applied for a position but were turned down because their AA resume was very thin, or they were judged as being unable to carry a good message of Alcoholics Anonymous. This has happened even when there was only one nomination.

I recommend everyone who wants to be happy, joyous and free on the 3 sides of our AA triangle to have a copy of BM-32 which is '12 Concepts for World Service by Bill W'. This is the sort of book you need a hard copy of so you can make notes and highlight parts as you see them put into practice or not, as the case may be. :-). An easy way into the concepts is to read the 'illustrated guide' to AAs concepts and this is something you can download one copy free from GSO New York. I know I'm more than likely preaching to the converted here, however, once something is written down. We never know where it's going to end up. One final point, just because a person has eons in the fellowship, it doesn't always translate to being sober, and in particular having knowledge about the steps, traditions or concepts.

H. H. Wellington



Book review

Living sober

By Randal P.

For many, and most of us perhaps, the very action of going to our first meeting was possibly the most daunting prospect, and most courageous decision, we have ever contemplated. We admitted defeat, and to paraphrase The AA big book, "We finally admitted that alcohol had us licked"

Equally newcomers are presented with The AA banners, The 12 steps and the 12 Traditions, along with a series of seemingly simple quotes, Easy Does it, Think Think Think, First Things First.....these often confront the newcomer along with The Serenity Prayer.

These suggestions, bi-lines and ideas are not only strange, but the language is hardly "current" and speaks of an earlier age in what seems like formal, if not a foreign sounding language too.

How best to navigate this new territory, which is how to stay sober on a daily basis?

All too frequently the newcomer may ask him/herself when listening to the sharing of those who have been sober a while "it's all very well for you". All of us as newcomers have

doubtless asked similar questions in those early days.

Often, the AA Big Book and the information in each chapter initially may seem "out of reach" in terms of how it might help in establishing a new way of living. Living Sober is a practical primer, a comprehensive set of actions that successfully assist the newcomer to navigate how they can stay sober.

In the absence of a drink, on a daily basis, the newcomer is still confronted with the simple fact that everything about their lives must be prefaced by abstinence from alcohol, and the fact that old ideas behaviours no longer work. They must change everything and nothing

Much of what is written is a new blueprint for "Self Care" for those in early sobriety, laid out sequentially in plain language, and the information can be simply understood and applied.

At my own home group, Living Sober is frequently bought by group members and gifted to the newcomer, allowing the newcomer to "become part of" and longer term is a very useful and vital tool to assist the newcomer to stay sober on a daily basis providing a sound basis for early and on-going sobriety. Living Sober also provides a very important link between older group members providing both a discussion point and a sharing point for both.

Items of interest

Freedom Under God: the Choice Is Ours

BY: BILL W.

In its deeper sense AA is a quest for freedom--freedom under God. Of course the immediate object of our quest is sobriety--freedom from alcohol and from all its baleful consequences. Without this freedom, we have nothing at all.

Paradoxically, though, we can achieve no liberation from the alcohol obsession until we become willing to deal with those character defects which have landed us in that helpless condition. Even to gain sobriety only, we must attain some freedom from fear, anger and pride; from rebellion and self-righteousness; from laziness and irresponsibility; from foolish rationalization and outright dishonesty; from wrong dependencies and destructive power-driving.

In this freedom quest, we are always given three choices. A rebellious refusal to work upon our glaring defects can be a ticket to destruction. Or, for a time, we can stay sober with a minimum of self-improvement and settle ourselves into a comfortable but often dangerous mediocrity. Or we can continuously try hard for those

sterling qualities which can add up to greatness of spirit and action--true and lasting freedom under God, the freedom to find and do His will.

For most of us this last choice is really ours; we must never be blinded by the futile philosophy that we are just the hapless victims of our inheritance, of our life experience, and our surroundings--that these are the sole forces that make our decisions for us. This is not the road to freedom. We have to believe that we can really choose.

Similarly, our whole society, and every group in it, will constantly face these identical decisions. Shall we settle for destruction? Shall we try only for the temporary comforts of a complacent mediocrity? Or shall we consistently face the disciplines, make the sacrifices and endure the discomforts that will qualify us to walk the path that invariably leads toward true greatness of spirit and action?

These reflections are meant to be background for the theme of this article--the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

AA's Traditions are the yardsticks by which our fellowship can accurately measure its progress--or the lack of it. In our Traditions we see such wisdom as we have been able to muster in a quarter of a century of

living and working together. That these principles stake out the path we ought to follow, there can be little doubt.

As we contemplate the Traditions we see that they have two main characteristics, and that each of these aspects reinforces the other.

The first aspect of the Twelve Traditions is protection; the second aspect is progress. We are first reminded what our fellowship's temptations really are and by what means we may best deal with them. This is our basis for a continuous moral inventory of our collective behavior--the first step to actively casting aside our road blocks. In the affirmative or positive aspect of the Traditions we learn, both directly and impliedly, how we may best apply the high ideals of sacrifice and willing responsibility, trust and love, in our relations with each other and with the world around us. Out of these practices flows the spiritual energy that moves us along the road to full liberation.

As we ponder protection, we see that our Traditions warn against the perils of public fame and power, against the perils of great wealth, against the making of compromising alliances, against professionalism. We are reminded that we may deny no alcoholic member his membership, that we must never create an authoritative government of men. We are cautioned that we should never force AA's message upon the world by aggressive

promotional schemes, and that we should shun public controversy as the devil himself.

Such are typical examples of the protective prudence which our Twelve Traditions directly express, or clearly imply. Some claim that these warnings are nothing but the sum of our collective fears. Once upon a time this was very true. In our first years, every violation of these precepts seemed to threaten our actual existence. We then doubted if our rebellious membership could ever resist its great temptations. But we have resisted, and so we have survived. Therefore the stark fears of yesterday have since given way to a vigilant prudence--something quite different from unreasoning panic.

Of course, we know that we shall always have to deal with the fearful forces which are released when the human ego runs amuck--the same forces that are shattering the world of our time. Deliver us from temptation must therefore continue to be a prime ingredient of our every attitude, practice and prayer. When things go well, we must never fall into the error of believing that no great ill can possibly befall us. Nor should we accuse ourselves of "negative thinking" when we insist on facing the destructive forces in and around us, both realistically and effectively. Vigilance will always be the price of survival.

This is the protective aspect of our Traditions. But AA's Twelve

Traditions should provide us with far more than protection against mediocrity and dissolution--and they do.

Let's now think about the positive, the progressive side of AA's Traditions; the disciplined sacrifices and responsibilities that we shall need to undertake; the degree of mutual trust and love that we shall need to achieve if we are to find the greater freedom we seek. The length of this article will not admit a full examination of all Twelve Traditions in this respect, but a few examples can serve to illustrate just what we mean.

Take Tradition One. It says that AA's common welfare comes first. This really means that our personal ambitions will have to be set aside every time they conflict with the safety or the effectiveness of our fellowship. It means that we must sometimes love our society more than ourselves.

Tradition Two--"For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority. . . a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants. . . they do not govern." This is a study in mutual trust in God, in ourselves, and in our service leadership. This has been one of our finest experiments and it has succeeded far beyond our expectations.

Tradition Three defines the personal liberty of the AA member. It says, in effect, that any alcoholic can be an

AA member the moment he says so. Neither can any of us deprive him of that membership, no matter what his behavior. Perhaps no other society has ever staked out such a broad expanse of liberty for the individual as this. Every AA newcomer feels at once that he is wanted and trusted and loved. How well we understand his needs; certainly we have had them ourselves. Seldom has any alcoholic taken unfair advantage of that unlimited charter for freedom. We took this decision for individual freedom years ago. We are glad that we did; there has never been any cause for regret.

Tradition Four is yet another confident declaration of mutual trust and love as it flows from each AA group to the other. We give each group full autonomy, the undisturbed right to manage its own affairs. To make this condition doubly permanent and secure, we have guaranteed to all AA groups that they will never be subjected to any centralized government or authority. In turn each group agrees that it will never take any action that could injure us all. Rarely indeed has any AA group ever forgotten that precious trust.

Tradition Seven proclaims AA's principle of self-support. In it, we undertake to pay every cent of our own service expenses, meanwhile declining outside contributions.

The fact that we don't take money from the outside world builds confidence in every alcoholic who

thinks of approaching us. This we know. Public good will has also been increased because people like the idea that the once irresponsible alcoholics have now become responsible. There is no doubt, either, that this salutary practice takes us in the direction of increased freedom for ourselves. By resolutely declining outside funds, whether offered by individual donors or by governments, we are making dead sure that we shall always preserve our own liberty of action. Hence the old adage, "Who pays the piper calls the tune" will never be descriptive of us.

There is little question that large sums could be raised today for AA--that is, if we ever gave the word. Perhaps no greater calamity could befall our fellowship than such a development. We would be at once absolved from the beneficial responsibility of raising our own funds. With lots of other people's money available, our idea-a-minute members would doubtless conceive countless schemes for doing good. In those few past instances where we have taken outside money, distraction and contention within has been the almost uniform result. Therefore we are well aware that the responsibility for full self-support brings us great spiritual and practical blessings. This is sacrificial prudence at its best--a chief bulwark to our cherished freedoms.

Another example: Tradition Ten is an emphatic warning against public

controversy. This was perhaps the first AA Tradition ever to take shape. Of course we did reserve that sometimes enjoyable right of quarrelling among ourselves about lesser matters! But when it came to the awful issues that rock society about us, such as politics, religion, reform and the like--well, the early AAs knew these terrible conflicts were surely not for them.

Later on, a new aspect of this same peril came into view. All sorts of people and organizations begged us to "take stands," "deliver opinions," and "fight evils," all up and down the line. Again we instantly saw that if we ever embarked upon such a course, it would certainly be our finish. Drunks by the thousands would be kept away from AA through sheer prejudice. The same old peril would again menace us. This time it would crash in from the outside.

This was when we AAs knew for sure that we had to be at peace--internally, and with the world around us. No doubt mankind has wrung many a freedom out of violent controversy and bitter war. Yet we AAs have had to learn that the kinds of freedom that we must possess cannot possibly be obtained by violence. As a fellowship, we cannot fight anybody, anywhere or at any time. This has been proved. When we had directly attacked John Barleycorn, we had lost. Booze fighting had never worked. When we quarrel too much with each

other, we get drunk.

Hence genuine peace will always be a chief ingredient of AA's freedom. But let none suppose that we shrink from major conflict only because we are afraid. Nowadays we believe we keep the peace because we love each other.

Let's now examine that vital Tradition Eleven. It deals with our public relations. Here is our greatest channel of communication to the alcoholic who still suffers. Tradition Eleven reads: "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films." Since this great Tradition describes the most important application of AA's principle of anonymity, and because it sets the pitch and tone of our entire public relations policy, nothing can be more critically important. If personal ambitions ever invade our public relations we shall be badly crippled, perhaps lost altogether.

The danger, of course, is the possibility that we may one day recklessly abandon the principle of personal anonymity at the top public level. This possibility arises from the fact that many of us AAs have been, and sometimes still are, possessed by enormous power drives. These are frequently fuelled by an almost irresistible craving for money, approval, and public acclaim. My own past history is outstanding in this respect. I can well understand

the constant temptation to turn one's self into a public figure. Therefore I have urged, in season and out, that we AAs maintain our personal anonymity at the top level, no matter what the personal sacrifices may be.

Our chief hope for the future is that these appalling urges of ours will be held in restraint by self-discipline, by love of AA, and by firm group and public opinion. These powerful constructive forces, all working together, have thus far been enough. We pray that they may always prevail.

Let's look once more at how immense this temptation really is. A vast communications net now covers the earth, even to its remotest reaches. Granting all its huge public benefits, this limitless world forum is nevertheless a hunting ground for all those who would seek money, acclaim and power at the expense of society in general. Here the forces of good and evil are locked in struggle. All that is shoddy and destructive contests all that is best.

Therefore nothing can matter more to the future welfare of AA than the manner in which we use this colossus of communication. Used unselfishly and well, the results can surpass our present imagination. Should we handle this great instrument badly, we shall be shattered by the ego demands of our own people--often with the best of intention on their part. Against

all this, the sacrificial spirit of AA's anonymity at the top public level is literally our shield and our buckler. Here again we must be confident that love of AA, and of God, will always carry the day.

Lastly, in Tradition Twelve, we see "Anonymity as the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

This principle, and its enormous implications, touches every aspect of our lives. Anonymity is humility at work. To maintain the humility of our society we shall constantly take stock of our temptations and of our defects. The spirit of anonymity calls upon each of us for personal sacrifice in every level of our fellowship's undertakings. Only through such willing sacrifices can we AAs meet our responsibilities to ourselves, to the victims of alcoholism everywhere, and to society as a whole. Here we clearly see that only sacrifice can fulfil responsibility; that only high responsibility can lead to mutual trust; and that only mutual trust can be the foundation for great love--each of us for the other, and all of us for God.

In just this spirit, all of those present at AA's Twenty-fifth Anniversary in Long Beach rededicated themselves to the service of AA. They knew that the choice was theirs, and they made it. These were their telling words:

"By God's grace we are here assembled in grateful remembrance of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the founding of our fellowship.

"At this meaningful quarter-century mark we are deeply aware that we stand upon the threshold of a great door which opens wide into our future. Ours can be a destiny of ever-increasing promise and fulfilment. Our faith in this vision has never faltered.

"But the future would still lack its full use and meaning did it not bring us fresh problems and even acute perils--problems and perils through which we can grow into true greatness of action and spirit.

"To these ends we have pledged our lives and fortunes. We here rededicate ourselves to an ever deepening love of each other--love for the wondrous creation in which we live and serve, and love for its supreme Author, God Himself.

"We now entrust you of AA's distant reaches--you who so well symbolize the unique and loving communication that is ours in this universal fellowship--to carry this message to fellow members everywhere; and most especially to all those others who still know not, and who God willing, may soon issue out of their darkness into light."

1960 AA Grapevine. Reprinted with permission of A.A. Grapevine Inc.

Archivist Service Position(s) available.

We are looking for a person(s) with a passion for our history. Our Archives are an important part of our legacy of recovery in NZ since Alcoholics Anonymous was introduced to New Zealand in 1946. This is a rewarding area of Service offering personal growth in recovery.

At present our Archives consisting of both hard & soft copy material are located in our General Service Office in Lower Hutt. Ideally the following attributes would be desirable for those wishing to offer their services.

1. Passion for AA, in particular our NZ history & a curiosity to search for material.
2. Orderly way of working re documenting / indexing material (both paper & soft copy).
3. Good command of and ability with written English.
4. An understanding of Archive gathering protocols ie Gifting of material / voice recording / source verification etc
5. May be required to spend some time on site initially setting up Archive filing.
6. Tech / PC / Software savvy including Website admin if required.
7. Will be familiar with our Service Structure & willing to attend Assemblies / Conventions if required.
8. This Service Position(s) reports to the NZ AA Board while liaising directly with the Archives Committee.
9. It may be possible to split the Archivist roles with one person looking after all soft copy archiving/indexing remotely plus administrate a designated Website portal linked to our existing NZ AA Website. The other person to be Wellington based ie ability to work on site at Lower Hutt, archiving mainly hard copy material.
10. While having some knowledge of Archiving is desirable, those with similar attributes ie librarian, good command of classifying/filing logistics, appreciation of securing our AA History and a willingness to improve accessibility of our Archives for the Fellowship, are sound credentials.
11. Must be self-motivated with ability to achieve project completion goals.
12. Continuous sobriety of 5 years preferred.

If you believe you would be able to fulfil the above service position(s), please email GSO at nzgso@aa.org.nz . All enquiries should include "Archivist Role" in the subject line.

158th Northern Area Assembly

Saturday, 14th November 2020

Hosted by Western Bay of Plenty District of Alcoholics Anonymous

wbop.aa@gmail.com

New
Venue

@ St Andrew's Church, 8 Dee St,
Mount Maunganui, Tauranga 3149



10.00am Registration – \$20.00

11.00am Business Meeting

AA Sharing Meeting

AI Anon Meeting

12.30pm Lunch

1.30pm Business Meeting

AA Sharing Meeting

AI Anon Meeting

3.00pm Afternoon Tea

3.30pm Business Meeting

AA Sharing Meeting

5.00pm End of Business

7.00pm Public Meeting

A Public Meeting of AA for family
friends and community



**“..... we ask God for inspiration, an
intuitive thought or a decision.**

We relax and take it easy.

We don't struggle.”

Alcoholics Anonymous p.87

Subscriptions

Mainstay subscriptions fall on a fixed date of 1st April for a 12 month period (six issues) to 31st March the following year. New subscribers will pay a pro rata amount from when they join in the year. In February's issue each year renewal notices will go out with Mainstay for the following year.

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 Posted

Groups name:
(if order is for a group)

Contact phone number and/or email address:

Payment method:
 Bank transfer Cheque payment

Bank Account Details: NZGSO, 06-0501-0236572-00, Ref: Name and Mainstay
 Post completed order and/or cheques to: Mainstay, 2/30 Downer Street, Hutt Central, Lower Hutt 5010
 or complete the registration form at <https://aa.org.nz/members/mainstay/mainstay-registration-form/>

The 12 Traditions

1. *Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.*
2. *For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.*
3. *The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.*
4. *Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.*
5. *Each group has but one primary purpose-to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.*
6. *An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.*
7. *Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.*
8. *Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.*
9. *A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.*
10. *Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.*
11. *Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.*
12. *Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.*

I am responsible. When anyone,
anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of AA always
to be there. And for that I am
responsible.

