

**THE**



# **ROAD BACK**

**includes AA News Sheet**

**APR - JUN 2023**

**ISSUE NO. 441**

**"OPEN TO CHANGE"**

# Editorial

Welcome once again to the to the latest edition of the Road Back. The sunny days and warm temperatures arrived and in a strange way, seem to improve our general mood. It's almost the same way we can feel after going to an AA meeting. There's a kind of unexplained magic that happens around us, especially when we aren't looking for it. With the good weather, we often see more outdoor activities, parties, barbeques, get togethers etc., and it's often a time when we need to take particular care of ourselves. Remember to keep in touch with members that you haven't seen for a while, not just new members who also appreciate your support.

Recently I overheard a chat about online and physical meetings, and the pro's and con's of both. It reminded me of how we are very quite easily adaptable to our surroundings. During the pandemic, many workers had no option but to work from home, and many didn't like it. After a short while, it became more tolerable, and some may have adapted to the change. Might you even have enjoyed it? When we adapt and accept change it can become our new normal. Many people have been asked to return to their workplace, yet resist it. Perhaps it's simply change itself that is being resisted. Might it be, that the same is true for going to meetings? Is it just change that we resist? Maybe we became accustomed to looking at a screen rather than meeting in person. Oddly enough, after returning to the office, or after returning to a physical meeting, often I overhear how enjoyable people found it, and how much better they feel. Yet we resist! Many years ago I remember reading a slogan that often resonates with me. It simply said "Open to Change".

Once again it's disappointing to share that The Road Back team is still really struggling for articles from our members. Members have been asked through various options ways to submit something to us that any other alcoholic may appreciate reading. We have asked conference delegates to ask fellow members, we have asked at Intergroup Meetings, we have sent emails, and even brought sheets to the All-Ireland Convention to ask people to complete at their leisure. In total we were very disheartened to receive less than a handful of submissions. The response has been so poor that the Road Back team recently questioned if we can continue to produce this publication. *Quite simply we need your support to continue it.*

Interestingly, this seems to be a familiar observation throughout the membership. There appears to be many service positions open at all levels throughout Ireland for an extended period of time. Have you reached a point where you are leaving everything to somebody else? Perhaps it's time for you to take action. Perhaps you could write a few paragraphs for the next edition. Perhaps you could volunteer for a service position. We can't always leave it to somebody else. Has a level of apathy set in? Why don't you be the one to start making a difference, and why not start today?

This publication is for you and the more personal stories that we receive from you, the more interesting it will be for all members. You can e-mail us at [roadback@alcoholicsanonymous.ie](mailto:roadback@alcoholicsanonymous.ie) with your few words, a story, a poem, cartoon – anything you think would help any other member. Try to keep it to about 400-600 words – this article has 600

Finally, if you find it difficult to read this magazine online, why not ask somebody to print off a copy for you. If not, contact the General Service Office and they will send a copy to you.

Until the next time, enjoy the summer and most of all, keep safe, sober and well,

The Road Back Team



# Contents

# THE ROAD BACK

includes AA News Sheet

Step Seven - An exciting story.....	4
Our Slogans.....	5
My name is Bill.....	6
A Member's Story.....	7
Grateful to Make Amends.....	8
Poem - The Road Back.....	9
A Room Full of Smoke and Grace.....	10
Poem - AA's Birthday 10th June.....	11
That Ain't in the Book.....	12
Heard at Meetings.....	14
AA News Sheet.....	15 - 18
History of The Road Back.....	19
No Way!.....	19
The Most Satisfactory Years.....	20
Acting on a Lie.....	21
I Keep Coming Home.....	22
Twelve Steps to a Slip.....	23
Wisdom of the Rooms.....	24
Humour Page.....	25
I am Responsible.....	26
Triggers.....	27
My Last Drink.....	27
Full of Gratitude.....	28
Sobriety during the Pandemic.....	29

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 casues.

Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

The Road Back is published by  
The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland,  
Unit 2, Block C, Santry Business Park,  
Swords Road, Dublin 9, D09 H584 Ireland.  
Telephone (01) 842 0700 | Website [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)



# STEP SEVEN - AN EXCITING STORY

After making sure in Step Six, that we are entirely ready to ask God for a favour, we need to get down to it. Whether we believe in God or a vaguer Higher Power, or we simply want to hope that our shortcomings will fade away, we need to verbalise our requests either out loud or in our heads. We need to list our faults again and ask for them to be removed from our character and behaviour.

Step Seven says that we must do this “humbly” and what does it mean? We must say aren’t I good being willing to lose my weaknesses” or try to make bargains with God. We have accepted that we are powerless over alcohol so we know we must ask to be helped to give up alcohol permanently. We must ask for all our other shortcomings to be removed, saying that, although we will do all we can to help this, we need an invisible help to strengthen our resolve and actions.

Why should a Higher Power help us in this way? So many of us come to AA ashamed and feeling worthless. We have let so many people down that we do not feel justified in asking for help. However, we are now in a new, different world, that of Alcoholics Anonymous where the

norms are new and exciting. We are in touch with a Higher Power, however we may conceive it, and are assured by the AA literature and by our fellow alcoholics at meetings that, if we follow the Steps and ask for help, we will get it. In the old days, people used to say “Them’as wants don’t get”, but AA does not operate with negatives, only positives.

We must be forward thinking and full of hope and faith. When we put our request to our Higher Power, we may have to be patient and wait before we realise that all our shortcomings have gone. We know, from our drinking days, that we are poor judges of ourselves and we should ask someone else to monitor us. Our sponsor is an excellent choice for this and a loved one (if we still have one) can help admirably too.

And there is something that we must do which Step Seven does not stipulate. We must say thank you to God or whoever or whatever we believe has removed our shortcomings. And then we must stay sober and sleep soundly at night.

**Share, July 2022**



# OUR SLOGANS

What's the history of typical AA slogans like "First Things First" and "One Day at a Time"?

We don't have a great deal of information about the origins of AA's slogans and acronyms, but we can provide some sharing and preliminary information. Many of these slogans, as with other practices in AA, were simply passed along verbally to other members, so it is impossible to know who started using them first. It is possible that some of the slogans may have originally stemmed from the Oxford Group Movement language, but it could also be that they are original with Bill and Dr. Bob and the early members.

Members have always inquired as to the origins of various slogans, and it has always been difficult to narrow down; in our research we discovered a letter written by former GSO Archivist, Frank M dated 1989, who responded to a similar question that was posted to him. This was Franks response, "Your interest in the origins of 'One Day at a Time' is shared by many of us. Like hand holding, however, it is difficult to pin-point the exact 'moment'". That is the problem we find with most of our AA slogans unfortunately!

We do know, however, that many slogans commonly heard have been around since the early days of the Fellowship.

In December 1958 Ruth Hock (non-alcoholic), who was AA's first secretary, wrote a response to a similar question concerning different slogans. In her reply Ruth wrote:

"...Bill [W.] and I first worked together in January 1936 when he had been sober just a little over one year and at that time 'Easy Does It', 'Live and Let Live' and 'First Things First' were part of the daily conversation. They were also used in the very first drafts of the book,

but probably only Bill himself could tell you where he picked them up..."

"As far as I'm concerned all of the above were introduced into AA by Bill W. himself although not original with him."

"Some of these could have been used in Oxford Group meetings but there is no way for sure." In addition to Ruths response, page 220 of Bill W.'s biography, Pass It On, also addresses this topic:

"Some A.A. saws ` were also used as long ago as the late 1930s: 'First Things First,' 'Easy Does It,' 'Live and Let Live.' Because they appear in the first edition of the Big Book (at the end of the chapter on 'The Family Afterward'), it's probable that the use of the slogans originated with Bill and that he brought them with him from Vermont – old saws with new teeth."

**Mainstay, Aug / Sept 2020**



# MY NAME IS BILL

My Name is Bill and I'm an alcoholic

When I first came to the AA Programme many years ago, I wondered whether there would ever be a time when I was truly happy. Sometimes I thought that there was fleeting happiness, but I never had that feeling that all was right with the world or within me.

Over the past few years, I have come to the realisation that if I am to attain a good level of happiness, it is in direct proportion to my acceptance that the world is exactly where it is meant to be at this time, and not as I would like it to be. This means that if I can accept this in my life, I am doing what is asked of me in the serenity prayer – without question.



If I question any of the three parts of the Serenity Prayer, am I not questioning God's will? I remember an old timer many years ago trying to explain to me what this meant, but I was so focused on self at the time that I completely missed the point!! It seemed too simple by far.

As it says in the Big Book – 'acceptance is the key' – for me it is the key which unlocks the door to the many riches and blessings that I have received over the years from the programme, even though I couldn't – or wouldn't – see them some times. Blessings which gave me

intense gratitude to those people whom God has put in my path to show me the way. They will probably never know who they are – but thanks, anyhow.

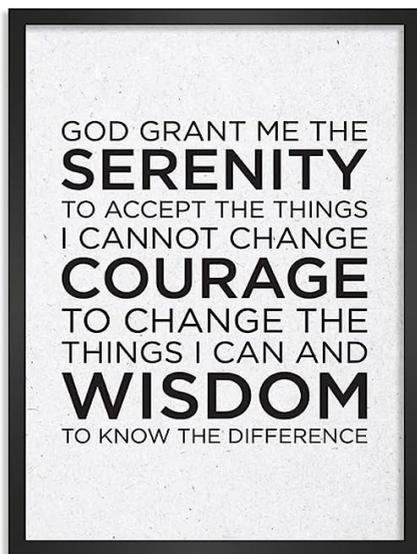
What makes me happy today?

Seeing a newcomer have a genuine smile when they realise that there might just be hope. The hug of a grandchild who is just pleased to see Grandad.

Watching members grow with gratitude as they embrace the programme. Just being within company with other alcoholics – with no hidden agendas or ulterior motives. Pretty simple, but very effective.

At least for someone who used to be totally self centred and absorbed. AA and God of my understanding have done this – not me – I just went along for the ride!!

**Mainstay Apr/May 2021**



# A MEMBER'S STORY

I was born in a small pub in a small village in north Kerry. I witnessed awful scenes between my father and mother due to my father's drinking. I was an only child. There was my aunt who lived with us.

I swore I would never drink alcohol. When my dad was sober, he was as good as gold. He died aged 55 years in 1963. I was 13 years old. It took me years to get over this.

School days were tough (physical and mental). In my late teens I started working in hotels and picked up a drink in Tralee.

I drank for about 25 years. I enjoyed about 5 years and for the last 10 I was in and out of A.A. I had serious car crashes and many hospitalisations.

By this time, I was married (2 small children) I held down a job although I never stayed too long in the same place.

My last hospitalisation was in Waterford. I came out around Xmas 1987 and went back to meetings (didn't touch a drink since).

I found it very difficult for a good few years. To make matters worse I was let go from my job. My wife had to go back to work. I was still attending meetings. I was full of self-pity and feeling lousy. Soul sickness is the best way to describe it.

The more I tried to fix things the worse I was feeling and after 6 or 7 months in A.A. I had a massive breakdown and finished up back in Belmont Park. I was put on heavy meds and came home after 6 weeks.

I went back to meetings and around Xmas 1989 I picked up a job.

When I eventually looked at the programme and tried utilising it, I slowly came out of the depression I was in.

I did some service in A.A. which helped enormously.

Today I count my blessings I have a new freedom and a new happiness and when the down days come, I still go to meetings and try to help others.

As an old-timer said to me one time:

"I can't get along without A.A. A.A will get along without me."

**Dan T, Cork**



# GRATEFUL TO MAKE AMENDS

I recently celebrated my 6th sobriety birthday and was feeling pretty chuffed with myself. I love sobriety birthdays. They're a great opportunity to reflect on what things used to be like and what they're like now.

Each year on my AA birthday, I try to get to one or two meetings, talk with friends in the fellowship and make connections with newcomers whenever possible. I spend as much of the day doing service as I can, trying to give back to a programme that has literally saved my life.

On this particular birthday, after getting home from my homegroup meeting and feeling buoyed up from so much AA love, I sat down at my computer and started scrolling through Facebook. My old best friend from high school was celebrating her 20 year wedding anniversary and had scanned her wedding album and posted the pictures. My feelings of contentment and pride at my six years of sobriety were immediately shattered. There I was, one of her bridesmaids, drunk as a skunk, with wine stains down the front of my dress, rheumy eyes, red nose and my hair a mess. And that was before the ceremony even began! Everyone was looking happy and cheerful, but I look sinister, creepy and wasted.

I did the worst of my drinking before social media and smart phones existed, so mercifully, there's not much visual evidence of my alcoholism. Seeing actual photographs in the bad old days was incredibly disarming.

I gathered myself and messaged my friend. I explained I had just seen her wedding photographs on Facebook and I apologised to her profusely for being a terrible bridesmaid and for having made such a mess of myself at her wedding. I worded my amends carefully,

making sure that I took full responsibility for my actions, and did not fob it off on being a stupid 20-something year old or some other excuse. I sent my message and immediately felt better. It was an amends that I didn't even realise that I had to make, and, despite the discomfort, I was grateful that I had the opportunity to do it. A couple of hours later she responded. She was gracious but reserved. She acknowledged my apology, but also told me about the other things I did that I had no recollection of. Hurtful comments I'd made and offensive things I'd done. Her memory of the night was acute because, after all, it was her wedding! For me it had just been an excuse to get drunk, and I'd gone a long way towards almost ruining her big day for her.

I'm immensely grateful I no longer have the desire to drink, but I don't ever want to forget what I used to be like. Perhaps in time my old friend will forgive me, perhaps she won't. It's hard for me to resist the temptation to meddle; I want to jump on a plane and go and visit her and explain myself and beg for her forgiveness until we are back to being the friends that we once were. But the programme of AA has taught me that I can only be responsible for cleaning my side of the street.

I can't force someone to forgive me, but I can be genuine in my apology. I can live each day with integrity and know that if I continue to practice the principles of AA in all my affairs and stay sober one day at a time, then who knows, perhaps one day I will regain my friends respect and love. But for now, I am grateful and humbled by this mighty programme and all it has to teach me.

**Mainstay Feb/Mar 2020**

# THE ROAD BACK

Light of the world, faint were our weary feet from  
wandering far  
but You bid us lift our gaze on high  
to the glory of the glowing sky  
in days long past, we missed our homeward way  
blind were our eyes, our feet were bound to stray  
but You did pity Lord, our gloomy plight  
and You did touch our eyes and give us sight.

Now Alleuias rise along the road  
our glad feet tread.  
Your love has shared our sorrow's heavy load  
there's light Overhead.

*Taken from Hand Me Down The Moon by Unsin  
O'Donovan*



# A ROOM FULL OF SMOKE AND GRACE

Sober many years a woman recalls her first meeting.

The day of September 5, 1975, started like most of my days. The first thing I did after waking was to see where I was sleeping – the couch or the bed. That might give me a clue about the night before. I would look at my husband and try to read his expression. If he was pleasant, I tried to piece the evening together from clues he might drop during conversation. If he looked disgusted, there was a good chance I had done some of my drunken behaviour, i.e., calling people in a blackout, bringing people home for a party or having a fight with him. If he told me in detail, my shame and remorse would overwhelm me, and I would once more promise to never drink again.

That morning seemed okay. I almost always managed to be on time for work. Looking back, I wonder how I ever managed. The job it took to present as normal to my co-workers was a supreme effort. I was once asked what the bruises on my leg were. Since it was too embarrassing to say I was falling down in blackouts, I said I had a rare blood disease! Another time someone asked me why I had called them on the phone. I had no recollection! What a lie I was living. Many days I was too hungover to think of drinking, but around 3 o'clock I would think about stopping for a bottle of scotch for cocktail hour or in case someone stopped by for a drink.

This particular day my husband was not coming home right away, and I had a bottle of scotch – ideal conditions for my cocktail hour. I put on some music, took out my cigarettes and prepared for another “fun evening”. There was blood coming out of my forehead and the policeman wanted to take me to the hospital. Neighbours had called to complain about the music. I had evidently fallen. I came out of a

blackout in the hospital to hear the nurse say to the doctor, “she doesn’t need anesthesia; she is drunk!” I never want to hear those words spoken with such contempt again.

The next morning I had 14 stitches and two black eyes. I pulled my hair over the stitches and hoped no one would notice. Such denial. It was a Friday, and my co workers went for a lobster roll, my favourite food. When the order came and I lifted the food to my mouth, I found I was shaking so badly I could not eat. Again, I hoped no one noticed.

I went home sick to lie down for some relief. Just as I was dozing off, the landlord called to say they would have to evict us for being so loud. Then my husband came home and announced he was leaving. Somehow, I knew he was serious this time. Then I said something that I did not even plan to say: “You can’t leave me. I am sick, and I will go to AA”. I was 33 years old.

I am now 67 years old and sober longer than the age of many of the newer members coming into our fellowship. Looking back to that first meeting I attended with my husband, I feel that God’s grace was in that room filled with smoke, and every other meeting I have attended since. Much of what I have learned in life has been in the halls of AA. I arrived there broken and confused about life. I learned, much to my surprise, that I have alcoholism. I found out that it is a three fold disease, and much of my confusion has been cleared up by listening to the experience, strength and hope of other recovering people. People there loved me until I could love myself. A most wonderful sponsor (now deceased) took me under her wing and showed me how to be a woman of dignity.

Through the Twelve Steps of recovery I was

given the gift of a meaningful and sober life.

Admitting that I was powerless over alcohol and that my life was unmanageable was not difficult. By listening to others share, I realised the life I was living was not sane. I remember one day toward the end of my drinking, my husband asked me why we never rode our bikes anymore or walked the beach. Looking back, I know that alcohol had made me settle for less in life. Step Three was the answer to my plight. Turning my life over to God on a daily basis for the past 33 years has given me the direction and guidance and power to live a life that is meaningful and rich. I have come to rely on him for every challenge that I face.

I was told that I never need to be alone again. When relationships become difficult, help is a prayer away, as long as I ask, "Your will not mine be done".

I have been working in the field of alcoholism for 25 years. This keeps the message of where active alcoholism can take me up front. My husband and I will celebrate 45 years of marriage in October, God willing. The tools are there for the asking. All I have to do is use them.

*Grapevine, January 2010*

## AA's BIRTHDAY 10TH JUNE

We're all of 88 today  
how time has flown  
Since Dr Bob got sober  
And thus the seed was sown

One alkie sharing with another  
His experience strength & hope  
And how this simple formula  
Still keeps us all afloat

"Where two are gathered in my name"  
They may call themselves a group  
From that auspicious date in thirty five  
Our world wide fellowship grew

Those anonymous coincidences saw bill there  
And another failed financial plan  
And ten phone calls before they met  
And how the first Step Twelve began  
Love and Service the keystones  
How Dr Bob described AA  
And surrender to a higher power  
In each step along the way

So let's in gratitude celebrate  
Our 88th anniversary today  
Maybe get ourselves a meeting  
And share our joy that way!

*Liam O'B, June 2023*

## THE ROAD BACK ONLINE

The Road Back Magazine can be downloaded directly from the Alcoholics Anonymous website:  
[www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie/the-road-back-magazine/](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie/the-road-back-magazine/)



# THAT AIN'T IN THE BOOK

We hear a lot of stuff said in meetings that can't be reconciled with the programme as described in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. What follows are some of the things we often hear, along with what the 1st Edition of our basic text, the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, has to say on the subject.

## ***Don't drink and go to meetings***

Page 59, paragraph 3: "Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a programme of recovery..."

## ***Just do the next right thing***

Page 86, paragraph 4: " We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision".

Page 87, paragraph 2: "Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas".

## ***Remember your last drunk***

Page 24, paragraph 2: "We are unable, at times, to bring into our consciousness with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. We are without defence against the first drink".

I haven't had a drink today, so I'm a complete success today

Page 19, paragraph 1: "The elimination of drinking is but a beginning. A much more important demonstration of our principles lies before us in our respective homes, occupations and affairs".

## ***This is a selfish programme***

Page 14-15: "For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead".

Page 20, paragraph 1: "Our very lives, as ex problem drinkers depend upon our constant thought of others and how we may help meet their needs".

Page 62, paragraph 2: "Selfishness, self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles".

Page 62, paragraph 3: "So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so. Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kill us!".

## ***Don't drink, even if your ass falls off***

Page 32, paragraph 2: "Many of us felt we had plenty of character. There was a tremendous urge to cease forever. Yet we found it impossible. This is the baffling feature of alcoholism as we know it – this utter inability to leave it alone, no matter how great the necessity or the wish".

## ***If an alcoholic wants to get sober, nothing you can say can make him drink***

Page 103, paragraph 2: "A spirit of intolerance might repel alcoholics whose lives could have been saved, had it not been for such stupidity. We would not even do the cause of temperate drinking any good, for not one drinker in a thousand likes to be told anything about alcohol by one who hates it".

# We are all just an arms length away from a drink

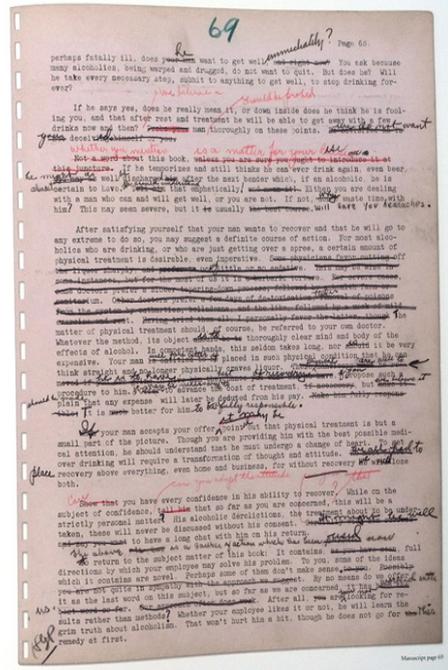
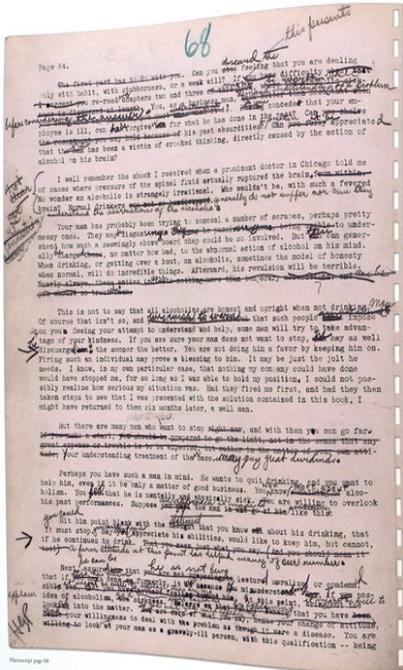
Page 84, paragraph 4: "And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone – even alcohol. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in liquor. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we find that this has happened automatically."

We will see that our new attitude toward liquor has been given to us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it.

We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We felt as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality – safe and protected. We have not even swung off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us."

# I choose not to drink today

Page 24, paragraph 2: "The fact is that most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink".



# Heard at Meetings

If you have  
to see, see  
the good in  
others

Sobriety is  
a journey  
not a  
destination

It works if  
you work it.  
It won't if  
you don't.

I'm not telling  
you it's going  
to be easy. I'm  
telling you  
it's going to  
be worth it

I was tired  
of being  
sick and  
tired.

My worst day  
in sobriety is  
better than my  
best day drunk

# AA News Sheet

APR - JUN 2023

## Is Alcoholics Anonymous a Charity?

A common question that we are often asked in the General Service Office is, "Is Alcoholics Anonymous a Charity?". This question regularly comes in from groups who are trying to open a new bank account or change signatories. In this scenario, a bank will usually ask if the group is part of a charity and if it is, can the group please supply the bank with the relevant Charity number. Then the groups contact GSO looking for the Charity number.

As things are today, The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland (the legal entity for Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland) is both a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) and a registered charity, registered with the Charities Regulator. This has been the case for many years. Conference this year decided to put together a subcommittee who will try to create a report that will greatly simplify and document why we are structured the way we are and how this happened. Hopefully when this is complete, it will help all of our members understand how we are legally structured and why.

We also have to remember that each individual group is autonomous. While every registered group is a part of the Fellowship in Ireland, they are not part of the Charity and therefore not entitled to use the Charity number. This might sound complicated but there are a number of very valid reasons why this is the case due to taxation and charity legislation. It gets more complicated when we say that while the groups themselves aren't part of the charity, all monies contributed in Tradition 7 collections are legally considered to have charitable status. Due to the way that our Fellowship is structured, as is stated on page 17, 2022 edition of our Service Handbook, "All money contributed at AA meetings belongs to the Fellowship as a whole

and is not the property of the group"

After the group has paid its running costs from these contributions, the surplus is passed through the structure and ultimately finds its way to the General Service Office (GSO) where it helps to pay for all the services that AA provides. The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous is responsible for the daily operations of GSO.

Acknowledging that groups are having increasing difficulties with financial institutions, we have been actively engaging with some of them to try to find solutions to various difficulties that groups are facing especially while trying to open new bank accounts. Some groups are having difficulty proving that they are "A Not for Profit Organisation" To alleviate this, Intergroup Secretaries can now issue a standardised letter that names the group and identifies it a registered group within the structure. This has so far proved sufficient for various banks seeking clarification on a group's status.

Another issue which seems to have arisen in recent times is that society in Ireland is clearly moving in the direction of a cashless payments. Less and less people are carrying cash on a daily basis. Numerous members have queried how they can make a contribution at meetings when they don't carry cash. We are working on this. We have contacted various financial institutions and are putting together a leaflet which will detail many of the options available to groups, and some observations about each one. Hopefully this will help groups that are considering collecting contributions electronically We will keep you up to date with developments on this.



## **New Meeting Directory**

As you will know, we have been working on producing a new meeting directory for some time now. There were some technical difficulties that delayed this a little, however rest assured, that the very latest information that GSO received will be used in its production. This will soon be available to purchase. All meeting information will continue to be available on our website, [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie), in the meeting finder section. We would like to thank all the groups for updating their meeting information in advance of this publication. Remember registered AA groups can submit changes to their group's information through the website. A guide to submitting a Group Information Sheet is available on the website too.

## **All Ireland Convention 2024**

As soon as we are finished one All Ireland Convention, many members are already looking forward to the next one. In 2024, the All-Ireland Convention will be hosted by the Leinster Intergroup Committee and will be held in the Tullamore Court Hotel, Co. Offaly, from 19th to 21st April 2024. The theme of the convention will be "Service With A Smile". More details will be available closer to the event. You will find the convention poster in this publication and on [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie).

## **CSO Closure**

Ulster Intergroup recently made the decision to close CSO in Belfast. The office officially closed on 30th June 2023. This office has been open for many years and was often a drop in point for members to call in for a chat or a coffee. The decision to close the office wasn't an easy decision to make. The Intergroup and Office Committee consulted many times with the Areas and Groups over a 12-month period. Following many long discussions and debates, the difficult decision was taken at Ulster Intergroup to close the office. The phone service continues to operate in Ulster, and literature sales will be facilitated through GSO in Dublin. Other activities will continue to operate through Ulster

Intergroup. Hopefully, there will be minimal disruption in services offered. Many thanks to Pat B. for his many years of Service in CSO.

## **Literature Price Increase**

Unfortunately, AA World Services announced an increase in the cost of their books and pamphlets of up to 30%. The last time that they increased their prices was in 2009. The cost of materials and production of literature has increased significantly for them. Prior to their increase, which took effect on orders placed from April 2023, there was a revenue loss of \$1.2 million.

For economic reasons, we source our literature from abroad, and due to this, some increases are inevitable. We will continue to work with AA World Services and AA UK to try to keep these increases to a minimum. We will also continue to review how and where we source our literature. An updated price list will be available shortly.

## **Speaker requests on the AA Website**

For some time, there has been a section on the AA website where schools can make a request for a speaker to come and give a talk about AA. GSO would then normally forward this request to the Public Information Convenor in the province where the request was made. The convenor would then normally pass the request onto an Area PI, and they would provide the speakers. Unfortunately, as there is at this time, no Public Information Convenor in any of the four provinces, GSO has had to temporarily suspend this service from the website until some of the vacant positions have been filled, and there are people available to respond to Speaker Requests.

## **Conference 2023**

As promised in the last issue, we are including highlights of the main decisions made at the General Service Conference, held in Tullamore from 10th to 12th March 2023. A copy of the draft minutes of this meeting is available on the website for anyone who would like more details

- A new document, "Suggested Guideline for Personal Conduct and Appropriate Behaviour for members of the General Service Conference", was agreed and will be added to the General Service Handbook. This is similar to a previous document agreed at Conference, which was for AA members attending meetings.

- It was agreed that the wording for the World Service Delegates (WSD) position be amended slightly. Previously, there was a gap of about 3 months from when one WSD finished their term to when a new WSD was elected. This didn't make a lot of sense, and there was a possibility that a World Service Meeting could be missed because we didn't have a WSD in place. Now, the term served by the WSD's will align with the Conference meetings, similar to other Conference members.

- It was agreed that the 4 Intergroup Young Peoples Liaison Officers (YPLOs) should be invited to attend Conference next year as observers. While they won't have a voice at Conference, it is hoped that this will give them an opportunity to better understand how Conference works.

- It was agreed, but not unanimously, that all decisions made at special meetings of Conference should automatically be passed without having to be discussed again at the following AGM of Conference. As this was not unanimous, it will become Conference policy after the expiration of 12 months, unless rescinded by another motion.

- It was agreed by Conference that the Board should carry out a cost benefit analysis on printing the Big Book in Irish.

- It was agreed to set up 2 subcommittees of Conference who will return to a full meeting of Conference with recommendations.

**A.** One subcommittee will look at the 'question' system used at Conference in GB to see if we should consider using a similar system in

Ireland. Using this system, any member can submit a question to Conference recommending a change that they would like to see in the Fellowship. A subcommittee of Conference in GB then compiles these questions and sends them out to all of the groups months in advance of Conference. Using that system, every group would get an opportunity to express their views on any proposed changes in the Fellowship.

**B.** The second subcommittee will look more closely at two separate, but similar, motions received by Conference. This subcommittee will examine questions such as:

Should we be a charity?

Should members of Conference be obliged to be members of the company?

Is there a conflict of interest by Conference members also being company members?

Do we need to change the company constitution?

If you have views on any of the above topics, please discuss them at your group conscience meeting. And be sure to send someone to your next local Area meeting. This is how your voice will be heard when decisions are being taken. Decisions are made by those who show up. So, if you want your voice to be heard, please make sure that you, or someone from your group makes it to the area meeting.

## Service Positions

Often, many members attending an AA meeting don't know very much about the Service Structure. So, here is a short explanation what a Convenor does and an excerpt from the Service Handbook, explaining what a General Service Representative GSR is, and does.

## Convenor

The term "Convenor" is often used in Alcoholics Anonymous, usually at Area or Intergroup committees. It might be a Prison convenor,



Public Information Convenor, Telephone Convenor, Hospital Convenor, etc. It may be simpler to think of a convenors role as facilitator or co-ordinator.

This person, having being elected by their committee, would usually be responsible for facilitating a meeting or talk outside of the group. For example, a PI Convenor for an Area would receive a Public Information request (which always come through GSO, and the Provincial Intergroup Convenor). The Area Convenor would then be responsible for ensuring that this talk takes place. If it was a school talk, the Convenor would firstly contact the school involved to confirm dates and times. Then they would source 2 speakers for the talk, usually a male and a female. It is also helpful to have young people do school talks, so that the students can identify better. Then the Convenor would brief the speakers on how the talk should be structured. There's a common misconception that the PI Convenor needs to be present or speak at all of the school talks. In fact, they don't need to be there at all. It's not part of their role to be there. Their role is simply to facilitate the meeting. They are also responsible for ensuring that groups in their Area have plenty of PI posters and that these posters are displayed in Hospitals, Doctors' surgeries, Garda stations, etc. In a similar manner, a Prison convenor is responsible for arranging for speakers to attend meetings in a prison. They don't usually attend the meetings themselves.

A phone Convenor can refer to the person arranging for members to answer the out of hours phones, but at group level it also refers to the member answering this phone itself. This convenor is responsible for connecting the new member looking for help to a member in their local area who will be listed in the Directory provided. While the person answering the phone should be kind and helpful, it is the member in the local who should be the one providing the 12th Step help.

## **General Service Representatives (GSR)**

'The strength of our whole AA service structure starts with the Group and with the General Service Representative (GSR) that the Group elects. I cannot emphasise too strongly the GSR's importance' (Bill W).

### **Duties and responsibilities**

The GSR as the Trusted Servant of both his/her Group and Area Committee, participates in discussions and decision-making at Area level according to his/her well informed Conscience. She/he will carry the views of his/her Group to Area and report back to his/her Group at their next Group Conscience meeting, being careful to include brief details of all discussions and decisions taken at the Area meeting. From Area meetings and from the reports of other officers the GSR will become familiar with what is happening throughout the structure of AA. The GSR also brings Group donations to Area, where appropriate, and returns receipts to the Group treasurer. As far as possible he/she should attend all Area meetings and all Group Conscience meetings (business meetings) of his/her Group. The GSR should hold no office in any other Group.

### **Qualifications**

The GSR must be an active member of his/her delegating Group, and preferably have at least two years continuous sobriety. He/she must enjoy the confidence and trust of his/her Group. He/she should be familiar with the programme and Traditions of AA, and the basic AA literature. He/she should be willing to place Principles before Personalities.

How GSRs are chosen and their term of office  
Each GSR is elected by his/her Group Conscience. Where possible, there should be two GSRs for each Group, with one being replaced by election each year. The GSR's term of office is two years

# HISTORY OF THE ROAD BACK

The first edition of the Road Back was issued by the First Dublin Group in April 1949 and has been continually issued since.

The first Road Back was three pages of single space stencilled typing intended as a vehicle for the group to communicate with the larger, rapidly growing A.A. world everywhere. By the second issue it was quoting a letter from Bill D. (A.A. member number 3), by August a letter from Bill W. himself and quoting Conor F. the Irish founder directly, as he and Margaret were again back on vacation from the U.S. It was soon listing newsletters and other events from all over the world including some comparatively nearby as in Belfast and London. Sobriety anniversaries were there from the beginning and new Irish groups as in Dun Laoghaire, Cork, Ranelagh, Bundoran, Limerick and Belfast.

Sackville edited the Road Back for twenty eight and a half years and gave it up in 1976 as his health faltered.

In all those years Miss Gillespie cut the single spaced stencils and reproduced the Road Back for a very modest charge. Sackville mailed copies around the world and articles were frequently picked up in New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and the U.S. to be re-used.

After Sackville retired, the First Dublin Group continued to publish the Road Back with Sean M. as Editor. – Followed by Fr. Pat.

In 1981 the General Service Board became the Editor of the Road Back, and have continued its publication to date. In 1992 on the suggestion of Conference, the Road Back was re-vamped into its present format. Mindful of its long tradition the General Service Board tried not to alter dramatically the tone or contents of the magazine, retaining all of the well known features, while introducing many new ones. The one disappointing aspect of the Road Back in recent years has been the lack of material being submitted by a now much enlarged Fellowship.

## NO WAY!

"Someone else will do it" I said to myself , surprised that I had even stayed for our group conscience meeting. Me a General Service Representative, no way.

The chair explained, "Our new GSR will represent the group for two years at Area meetings , forge links with the other group GSR's ,learn what's going on ,exchange ideas and information ,help carry the message and on a wider scale report on the Provincial Intergroup meetings "

I had the two years continuous sobriety and I was an active member of my group and ..... the next thing I knew I was elected.

Today, many years and some other positions later I can honestly say that it was the best decision that was ever made for me. My journey in sobriety was well and truly going in the right direction.

Today when anyone ,anywhere ,reaches out for help.I want the hand of AA always to be there and for that I AM RESPONSIBLE.

**Philip McG, Wicklow**

# THE MOST SATISFACTORY YEARS

The lyrics from a song I loved, "Tonight, I'm going to party like it's 1999..." summed up my life perfectly. I was always ready for a party – at work, in the pub, anywhere. When I was a boy growing up in the fifties, I was fascinated by the turn of the century. I wanted to live long enough to live beyond the 1900s and into the 2000s. The future always sounded so exciting – another world far away. I would be aged 53 in the year 2000 – that sounded so ancient and decrepit and I wasn't sure I would live that long.

What I didn't know was I would live that long – and that I'd be in such a dark place that I would want my life to end. On New Year's Eve, 1999 I wasn't partying. I was crashed out drunk, allegedly at work. My wife took our son to the Millennium Firework Display on the river Thames without me. Within days she was divorcing me. The second week of January 2000 took me to my first AA meeting. I was desperate to stop the divorce but that effort failed, as did my pathetic attempts to stop drinking. I used to sob, "My wife doesn't understand me..." Well I was wrong there too. She understood me only too well, which is why she divorced me. On my 53rd birthday, I awoke utterly alone, hung over and depressed. It was the week I moved into a tiny, two room flat behind a garage. Days earlier I had crashed a car, several times over the drink drive limit. Partying like it's 1999 didn't work for me.

But it reminded me of another favourite lyric, "Buy a fast car, put my lead boots on, and take a long, long drive... all I did was have a bit too much to drink..." It took me nearly 18 months – the worst period of my life – for me to understand one simple fact. I was powerless over alcohol, and my life had become unmanageable. "Doh!"

In my first six days without a drink, I lived and felt the first three Steps of AA. After the first awakening on a Monday evening, I experienced the second on Thursday. What I heard at an AA meeting told me – someone, somewhere was trying to tell me something. I had better listen. On the Sunday evening I handed my will and my life over to the care of AA. The man who told his story had me laughing so much, I vowed to keep coming back.

Soon it will be my 75th birthday and I don't drink, one day at a time. "The most satisfactory years of your existence lie ahead. Thus we find the fellowship, and so will you" (BB pg.152)

**Share, June 2022**



# ACTING ON A LIE

When God guided me to the rooms of AA, I was certainly a broken man and for that today I am grateful. There weren't many "yets" left for me to "achieve". My will and my actions had gifted me an isolation rarely understood outside of the Rooms. I had lost my pride, my purpose, my family, my home, my job and certainly my willingness to live. One thing I lost a long time beforehand, although I was blind to it, was control over alcohol.

The act of walking into a Twelve Step facility meant that I was finished doing all the necessary work on my first Step, although at the time I was unaware what that meant. It was the first honest act I had taken in a long, long time. In the facility I put pen to paper looking at myself; my powerlessness over alcohol; the unmanageability in my life; my insanity around alcohol and the basis of any apprehensions I had regarding a belief in a Power greater than myself. As my mind was now sober, for the first time in years, I could see clearly and objectively that my best will and action had landed me exactly where I was meant to be.

The love and guidance I found in that facility brought me quite quickly to the third Step and before I left, I had made a decision. Prior to leaving I was asked to define what "made a decision" meant to me and my answer that day was simply, "believed with 100% conviction in a right course of ACTION".

I handed my will over and attended a face to face AA meeting for the first time the very same day I was discharged. Through the grace of God, my sponsor and I found each other that first meeting. I came to see clearly that I had been acting on lies my entire life.

The first and most glaring was my illusion surrounding alcohol but the fourth Step inventory uncovered numerous lies that I had acted on and the defects at the root of them all.

For the first time in my life, I knew the power behind me when I became being honest, open minded and willing. A strong sense of direction, purpose, safety and faith entered my life and my heart. I was no longer acting on lies in my life and the freedom was enthralling. I had become willing to have God remove all my defects of character. This willingness empowered me to progress with the Steps and allowed me to step out of the way and let God do for me what I had never been able to do for myself.

As a result, today I am sober and I am a present and loving father, partner, son and friend. I am a useful member of society. I am self supporting through my own contributions. I hold service positions within AA that I just adore and been blessed with the honour of sponsorship myself. The simple fact that I am of service, can be relied upon and trusted amazes me each day and for this complete psychic change I thank God and the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous each and every day.

**Share, June 2022**



# I KEEP COMING HOME



When I first joined AA I lasted 4 years not drinking with a half baked attempt at recovery.

That was the best I could do at the time. I was still thieving, doing pot and not really working the Steps. I sounded OK mentioning the sponsor and steps when sharing to keep people at bay and off my back about the program. I inevitably busted, living a lie, using a drink as a way of getting a lady 16 years my junior as my girlfriend. I could not get rid of her or the drink for the next 5 years. I stayed sober for 9 months the first, 6 months the next, 3 months the next and couldn't get a fortnight for the next two years while doing one or two meetings a week. The only thing I did right was to keep coming back. Prior to that, I drank from age 15 to 32, four to five times a week. I was raised by an alcoholic dad and a violent gambling mother. I lost my eldest brother to an alcohol related car-bike accident when he was 19 years old and a lost a few uncles the same way – drunk and driving.

Luckily, old Harry R (53 years sober) while shaking my hand at the Sunday night meeting in Lismore, fronted me and simply said "when are you going to get bloody fair dinkum?" Those simple few words propelled me into this

unbroken 8 years and 8 months of freedom from alcohol. My sponsor inspired me to start a new spiritual progress meeting on Sundays in Lismore only a few weeks sober. I used to mock his first few years in recovery doing 10 meetings a week.

Thank you Lismore and surrounding districts for having so many meetings to go to. I work AA via the Big Book, sponsorship and service. At 3 years sober my sponsor cut the umbilical cord and suggested I don't drink and help drunks with regular meetings, Hospitals and Institutes, doing a day a week at the drop in centre in Ballina, which I have maintained for 5 years.

Now I have new family and I am living a life beyond my wildest dreams. I have just returned from San Antonio's 75th Anniversary of AA, visiting NY head office and Akron. So thanks to AA, my sponsor 34 years sober and my Dad 30 years sober – both still attending meetings regularly. I've knocked mine back to 6 meetings a week and loving it.

The best is yet to come.

**AA Reviver, May 2021**

# TWELVE STEPS TO A SLIP

Every slip has a beginning – know your danger signals

1. Start missing meetings for any reason, real or imaginary.
2. Become critical of the method used by other members who may not agree with you in everything
3. Nurse the idea that someday, somehow, you can drink again and become a controlled drinker.
4. Let the other fellow do the 12th Step Work in your group. You are too busy.
5. Become conscious of your AA “seniority” and view every new member with a sceptical and jaundiced eye.
6. Become so pleased with your own views of the program, that you consider yourself an “Elder Statesman”.

7. Start a small clique within your group, composed of only a few members who see eye to eye with you.

8. Tell the new member in confidence that you yourself do not take certain of the 12 Steps seriously.

9. Let your mind dwell more and more on how much you are helping others rather than on how much the AA program is helping you.

10. If an unfortunate member has a slip, drop him at once.

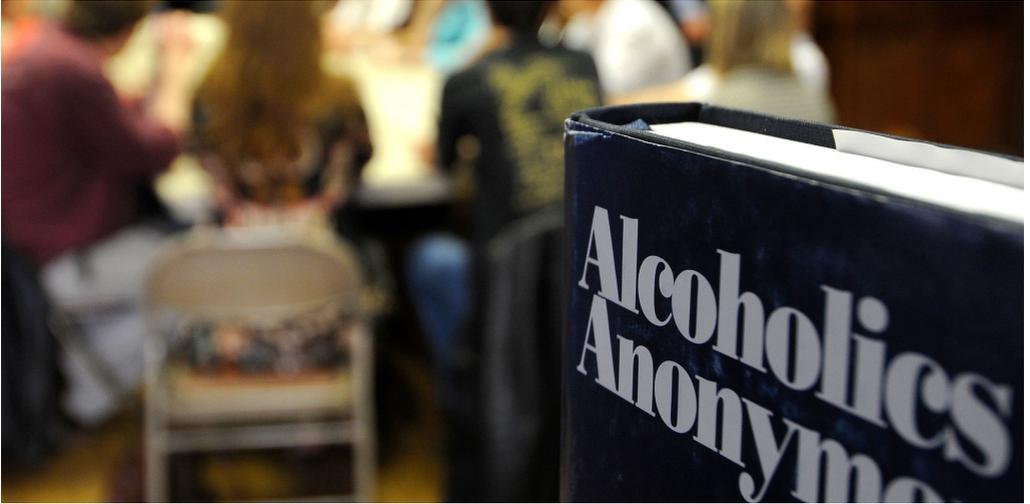
11. Cultivate the habit of borrowing money from other members, then stay away from the meetings to avoid embarrassment.

12. Look upon the 24 hour plan as a vital thing for new members but not for yourself. You have outgrown the need of that long ago.

**AA Reviver, May 2021**



# WISDOM OF THE ROOMS



How different my day started today in comparison to yesterday. My husband called me shortly after leaving for work this morning. While walking to the school where he teaches, he looked up and was awed by the setting moon. This from a man who never stops to smell the roses!! "Walk outside" he says to me, "look toward the pond, the moon is the most beautiful I have ever seen. I just wanted to share that with you".

My life became lonely and miserable when I lived in a bottle of vodka, no room for the beautiful, the unexpected. Now sober, I take time to pause and open myself to the wonders all around me, I am in awe. My husband gave me that opportunity today.

How, then, can I harbour any doubt that there exists a Power Greater than me? This universe is full of marvellous happenings. By observing the miracles in nature, the imponderable, I get a sense, just barely, of the mystery and

majesty of creation and the force behind it.

So I think this morning my eyes watched the beauty of a harvest moon lighting the western sky just as the sun was beginning to make its appearance in the east. I smelled the scent of pine trees behind my apartment – musty, yet sweet. I could hear the traffic in the distance as the city began to stir to life for another day. I could feel the softness of my dog's fur as I petted her, watching and listening to all this unfold before me, and tasted that first cup of coffee for the day....savouring it all the more.

I am profoundly grateful this day that with God's grace, I am sober.

***The News, April 2020***

# Humour



"I had a layover in Omaha ... which led to a hangover in Des Moines."

*I may look like I'm*  
**LISTENING**  
**TO YOU, BUT**  
*in my head I'm*  
**RECITING**  
**THE SERENITY**  
*prayer*



I'm packing an extra pair of underwear. The last meeting I attended here, they read some non-AA approved literature, and I shit myself.

**SPONSOR**

"Your job is to tell the truth.  
My job is to laugh at you when you don't."

# I AM RESPONSIBLE

I have come to realise that, primarily, I am responsible for my own sobriety.

I had a great sponsor early on who told me that the way to sobriety was easiest seen with a broom or tea towel in my hand. So I swept up after meetings or washed cups as I learned about sobriety.

I learned that all the people I knew in AA who were HAPPILY sober were those that had three things in common:

1. They were active in AA
2. They had found their own Higher Power
3. They practiced the program as set out in the Big Book

I wanted to be happy and sober so I just followed by examples. I was invited eventually, onto the 12 step roster. I learnt I was responsible for carrying the message but that I could only help by example and that I was only responsible for living my life AA's way and not for the newcomers sobriety.

I learned to take responsibility for various service positions. Group Secretary, delegate, GSR, chairman of our Intergroup, and state

Trustee. I learned that these positions carried little or no authority except the right to share my own experiences or stand under the bucket when someone wanted to tip it. Now, after 41 years, I am acting as the treasurer of my group and will hand over in due course.

I sponsor a few and have had the joy of seeing some of them come through to happy sobriety. I pray for those who didn't make it, especially for Clive, whose sobriety was so painful he couldn't survive. It took me a while for me to recover from the shock and sense of failure. My sponsor pointed out to me that I wasn't responsible for Clive's suicide.

I guess that my philosophy of being responsible is that I don't say no to an AA request, EVER! (unless I can't physically do the job or if I think its not a genuine AA request).

And I am a happy sober alcoholic today because of all of this.

***The News, April 2020***

## I am responsible...

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

# TRIGGERS

Hello all, I'm Gary and I'm an alcoholic.

Of late I've started to feel like a grateful alcoholic – I've been drink free for over eleven years, although I was a dry drunk for eight of those years, unbeknown to me, until I found AA and my sponsor through prison sponsorship.

I am serving a life sentence for murder, with a minimum of 16 years to serve of which I have served 14 years and 7 months to date. The judge described my crime as, "the wholly unnecessary taking of life". He was right. I deserve everything that was to come my way on the journey that befell me. My family and loved ones, as well as the man I killed, did not deserve any of it. Sober me had to do the time for drunk me.

I had two articles published in Share last year. Things in my world have changed since then. I am now bring supported by the prison for a Probation Board hearing to progress to an Open prison. When I got this news, I experienced huge triggers, not necessarily to drink but to celebrate. This made me think

about the future. The bad or the depressive times I can totally deal with, its not a trigger I'm used to them, but an insight into my addiction that I'd not considered, was celebration. I now know that feeling, "I want to celebrate" is a high risk situation and something I am going to have to manage. Living in the present has helped me and I realise how important a skill it is to have. Of course, talking, sharing, caring and getting support is imperative if I want to succeed – but one day at a time.

I'd like to end by saying thank you and expressing my gratitude to my sponsor, my family and AA members, as well as Share Magazine. Us alcoholics in prison just need to keep on dancing through the raindrops and keep navigating our environment. I look forward to getting to meetings, either in prison when possible or on the outside one day.

All the best.

***Share, August 2022***

## MY LAST DRINK - JOHN'S STORY

On the 23rd June, 1997 was when I had my last drink. I had reached that hopeless state of mind and body that they mention in the Big Book. I had also done or tried to do in the chapter more about alcoholism tried to control my drinking.

I came to AA through a treatment centre not knowing what to expect and the sense of identification I got was overwhelming .

I heard my story being told over and over and was blown away – I came into AA a broken man as well confused but knew if I drank again I would die – I thought my life was over but it was only beginning. I still go to AA on a daily basis I don't want to take my eye of where I came from.

I am very much involved in Alcoholics Anonymous, I owe my life to AA.

***John, Ireland***

# FULL OF GRATITUDE

My name is Kim O and I am a very grateful, recovering, sober alcoholic.

My sobriety date is 9th December 2014 and since joining this wonderful fellowship I have been on a voyage of self discovery. Never a day goes by without me learning something about myself, something I had completely stopped doing whilst alcohol was the only thing in life I was able to focus on.

As it says in the Big Book, there are ups and downs but that is life, you can't have one without the other. Like pretty much everyone in the entire world, the last two years has thrown up many difficulties for myself and my family but with my HP, the programme, meetings and my sponsor, I have been able to manage them without picking up a drink. A miracle when breaking a nail would have given me an excuse in the past!

My biggest saving grace these days and something that has changed my thinking and my life, is gratitude. I can turn any situation around in my head by being grateful for what I've got instead of being resentful for what I haven't. Even simple household tasks that used to irritate me are now a reason to be grateful. Instead of moaning about changing the bed again, I feel fortunate to have a clean bed to sleep in, in a country where I'm not worrying that I might have to flee my home at any minute. Instead of think "Ugh, I've to go to work today". I reflect on how lucky I am to have a job and be in a country where as a woman I can work and can make my own choices. This gratitude makes me and everyone around me so much happier.

I never fail to be amazed by the love and Fellowship in every Room of AA I go into, no matter where it is, including in other countries.

I recently attended a spiritual retreat – it had been cancelled for the last two years like most things. It came at exactly the right time for me, my head was a mess! There were 19 of us there, 16 of whom I'd never met before, but as is the spirit of the Fellowship, by the time I had left I knew everyone a whole lot better. Less than 48 hours after I had arrived, I left with a full heart, a calm spirit and a head empty of the tangle it had arrived with.

Some days I struggle to find peace and serenity, some days I feel like a spiritual giant. On both of these days I am growing and learning and I will do my best to continue to do so. Just over seven and a half years ago I arrived, thinking my life was over and there it was, just beginning.

God bless everyone.

**Share, August 2022**

**At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.**

—Albert Schweitzer



## SOBRIETY DURING THE PANDEMIC

During the pandemic, sobriety continued.  
I got sober in 1982.  
Don't take the first drink.  
Keep coming back.  
And, talk to us.  
Well where was I to go now?  
We weren't allowed to meet with each other.  
The C Word. 2020!!!

A member from Tallaght setup a Zoom called  
"The middle of the bed"  
I went from my sitting room!!  
My home group were a bit later before they  
zoomed.

I went there as well.  
To be honest I was glad to get a break from  
the traffic etc.

I didn't get a break from work though – I was  
a front line worker!  
But not quite the story of my life.

But since I was able to help!  
Pay the emergency payment and be there to  
see the magic of the new programmes on the  
computer fly up with no naysaying because it  
was a Pandemic.

Close your eyes – authorise and we weren't up  
in the Salerno beach head after all!

Thank God the minister within a few months  
opened up the physical meetings for those of us  
who wished to go.

1982 – onwards – continuous sobriety.

Thanks to a small effort on my part daily and my  
connection to AA all over the world.

***Imelda, April 2023***

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
**67<sup>th</sup> All Ireland  
Convention**  
SERVICE WITH A SMILE 😊

**19th – 21st April 2024**

**In the  
Tullamore Court Hotel**

*For hotel accommodation contact*

Tullamore Court Hotel,  
O'Moore Street, Tullamore,  
Co. Offaly, R35 D406, Ireland.

Tel: +353 (57) 934 66 66

Email: [hello@tullamorecourthotel.ie](mailto:hello@tullamorecourthotel.ie)



For more information, please email:

[allirelandconvention@alcoholicsanonymous.ie](mailto:allirelandconvention@alcoholicsanonymous.ie)

Updates will be made available on

[www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie) nearer the event

Hosted by Leinster Intergroup on behalf of the General Service Conference of AA in Ireland



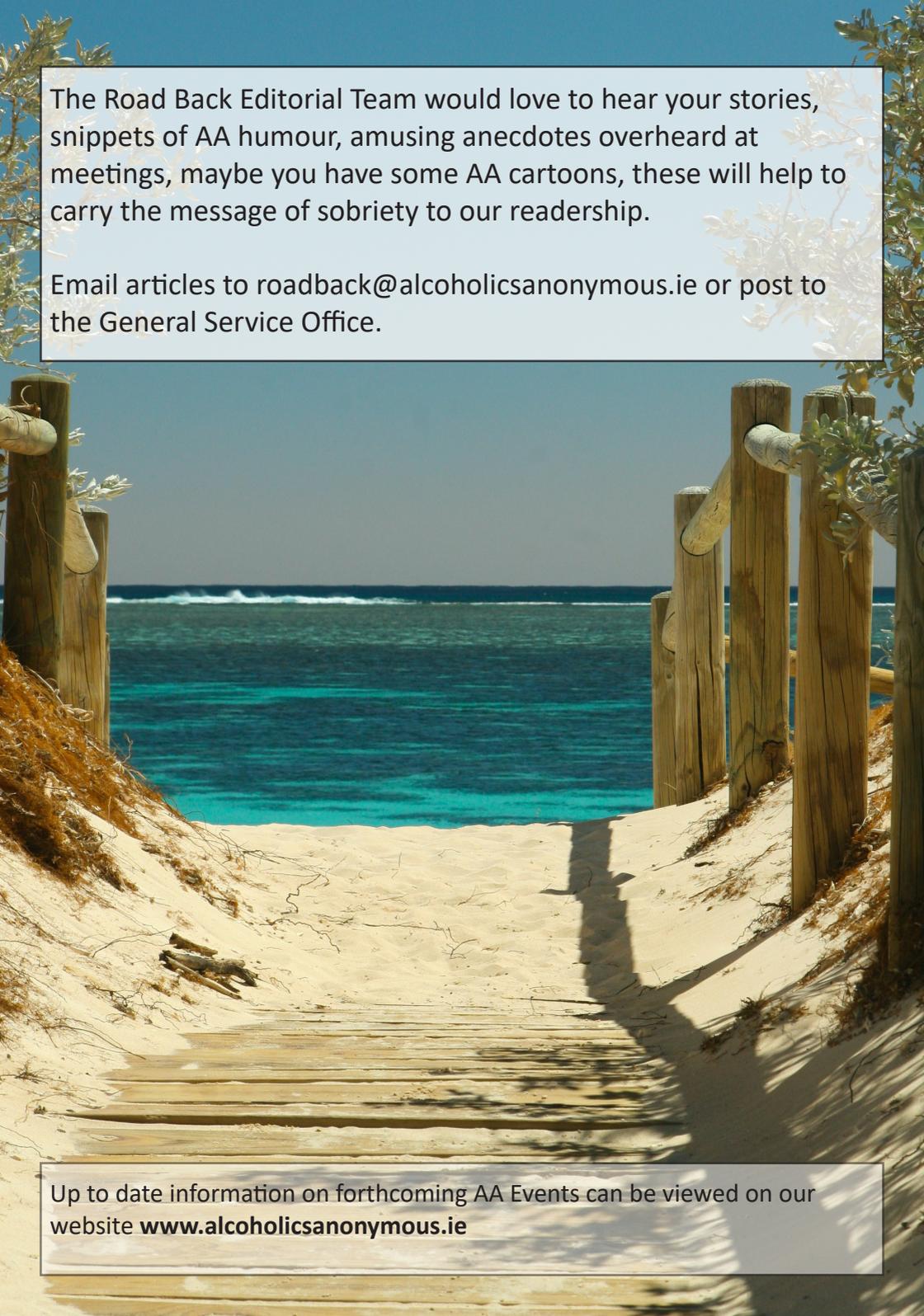
## The Twelve Traditions

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 non-professional, 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

## The Twelve 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.





The Road Back Editorial Team would love to hear your stories, snippets of AA humour, amusing anecdotes overheard at meetings, maybe you have some AA cartoons, these will help to carry the message of sobriety to our readership.

Email articles to [roadback@alcoholicsanonymous.ie](mailto:roadback@alcoholicsanonymous.ie) or post to the General Service Office.

Up to date information on forthcoming AA Events can be viewed on our website [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)