



dSprach vom Häärz

The Digest of the English-Speaking
AA Zürich InterGroup



Chairperson's Message

My dear Fellows, Officers, and GSRs of the Zürich English-Speaking Intergroup,

It is my privilege to have been entrusted to serve as your Chairman of IG for 2023-2024 (or until you impeach me). The last few weeks have been a whirlwind of discussion with IG officers on improvement ideas and objectives for 2023, as well as a packed weekend at the Continental European Region's Quarterly Assembly in Budapest on Dec 3-4, where I attended along with my fellow CER Rep, Jason S., and Joel B., CER's Health Liaison.

I hope this newsletter, our own little mini-Grapevine and Service News, will improve communication within our local fellowship, helping to keep you apprised of what is happening. If it is well received, we'll make it a recurring thing.

That highlights one of the principles I'd like to set forth for the coming year at IG: experimentation. We will try new things and see what sticks, starting with this newsletter. I offer the following principles (and related objectives) to guide our work in the new year.

1) **Focus on our Primary Purpose:** IG's efforts should be directed primarily to enabling our local fellowship to carry AA's message to the still-suffering alcoholic, and to serve our existing members. In that vein, we need to re-vamp our **outward-facing touchpoints to potential new fellows, in particular the website, webmail response, and telephone hotline.** In this newsletter you will read the story of a local fellow, and how she found us, which highlights the importance of these often-overlooked channels. As well, we will resurrect our **Public Information Committee** so that we can make our solution known to our target audience, being the English-speaking community of alcoholics in Zürich, Bern, Zug, and Lugano. The last two years have cleaned up many of IG's internal processes, and laid a good foundation for us to focus now more on our outreach work and less on inward looking IG matters (the navel-gazing of which we are often accused). At the end of 2023, I want us to be able to look back at the year and clearly

articulate what we as IG have done to carry AA's message farther.

2) **Experimentation & speed of action:** This newsletter is a case in point. We should try new avenues in support of our primary purpose. **Let's experiment and move quickly on non-contentious matters** (while respecting our Traditions and making decisions in an informed manner, especially on controversial matters) to **find what works and discard what doesn't.** Have a look in the events agenda for some **upcoming speaking events** already planned for the year. **If you have ideas,** either new ones or things you previously raised but which went nowhere, **please tell me about them!** I've seen the benefit of experimentation at the individual group level. It is invigorating and gets fellows involved and excited. AAs have plenty of opinions - let's distill those into actionable ideas so that we go from grumbling about "that do-nothing IG" to taking **personal responsibility to contribute to a strong service culture.**

3) **Accountability:** The work of IG does not take place in 75 minutes on the last Tuesday of every month. The work of IG in fulfilling our Primary Purpose should happen every day, be it through arranging 12th-step calls to the still suffering alcoholic who contacts our telephone helpline or webmail response, communicating what we do via an informative, attractive website, outreach activities via our Public Information and Young People's Liaison disciplines, putting on events through our Events Committee, or via some of the new ideas you all will surely bring forward. Therefore, I **encourage all GSRs**

Speaker Extravaganza: Karen R.

Friday 6 January 2023 19:00 CET by Zoom

We are very fortunate to be able to welcome **Karen R.** from Tampa, FL. who will join us on Friday 6 January 2023. Karen's story, "**Crossing the River of Denial**" is in Part II of the Big Book (4 ed.) p. 328.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88021828638>

to get involved in IG initiatives and committees - you as a GSR are part of the labour force of IG. Attending the monthly IG meeting and filing a report is not enough; I ask you to **involve yourself and rope in the fellows of the homegroup you represent** so that they can get involved in service beyond the individual group level. As well, **I expect all officers and GSRs to attend IG in person, other than those who live far away in other cities (e.g Lugano, Bern, etc.).** As a reminder, the online hybrid option for IG pre-dates Covid and was instituted to lessen the travel burden on GSRs from Lugano who were coming in monthly to attend IG. I have noticed that online attendees are rather disengaged. **I invite you to come physically to the new IG location, Cramerstrasse, and be present in mind and body.**

I know that I am asking more of you than has been asked before, but I would remind you why we do what we do. As Dr. Bob said in 1950 in his Farewell Talk to the First International A.A. Convention held in Cleveland, 3 months before he died

...Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words "love" and "service". We understand what love is, and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two things in mind.

Let us also remember to guard against that erring member the tongue, and if we must use it, let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance.

And one more thing: None of us would be here today if somebody hadn't taken time to explain things to us, to give us a little pat on the back, to take us to a meeting or two, to do numerous little kind acts in our behalf. So let us never get such a degree of smug complacency that we're not willing to extend, or attempt to extend, to our less fortunate brothers that help which has been so beneficial to us.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and whatever or however you celebrate, especially that you find time to commune with your Higher Power, and join us energized for the work that awaits us in 2023.

Guten Rutsch!

Yours in Love and Service,

A.J. P.

How I found A.A.

My name is L.G., and I am an alcoholic.

My drinking started to become a problem in June 2020. The COVID pandemic had begun, I had lost my job, and every day felt like being on holiday ... yet also somehow really stressful. I had been a regular drinker for about 15 years. A glass or two of wine each night, and more on weekends and date nights. I relied on it to take the edge off the stressful times, and to celebrate the good times. The stress of being in a new country, losing my job, homeschooling a kindergartner, having a two year old, and being in the same space as my husband 100% of the time provided endless excuses for me to take a drink. In less than a year I was hiding bottles of gin in my closet, and frequently passing out on the sofa before even tucking my kids into bed at night. I knew I had a problem, but the more I tried to control it, the more out of control my drinking became. I felt relief when my husband found a stash of empties in my closet. The game was up. I couldn't hide away on my own any longer.

Intro to InterGroup

*"Everything you always wanted to know about IG**

**But were afraid to ask"*

Tuesday 17 January 2023 20:15 CET by Zoom

All IG Officers and GSRs are warmly encouraged to attend but it is particularly focused on new Members.

This is an opportunity to find out more about what IG is, how it functions, what is expected of our Officers and GSRs, and also a forum to raise any questions you may have.

The call will touch on the broader service structure (CER and General Service Conference)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89690869468>

When I was 5 my parents discovered my nanny, Norma, was drinking heavily while she was caring for me and my sister. Fortunately, they were well informed about the disease of alcoholism, and they provided her with a lot of support while she got sober. After some time in rehab and starting her recovery in AA, Norma was back with us. That is when I first started going to AA meetings. Norma attended a lot of meetings, so I attended a lot of meetings with her. I sat in the back of the church basement with my giant stuffed Fivel mouse and my word search books. I saw her collect her chips month after month and year

after year. I saw people come back from relapses, heard countless rock bottom stories, and learned the Serenity Prayer. The most valuable thing I witnessed was the recovery of so many wonderful people. So, 25 years later, as I sat crying on my kitchen floor in front of a half dozen empty wine and gin bottles, I knew AA would help me.

I Googled, "AA meetings near me," and found the Zug meeting. I messaged the contact and received a lovely reply. It was difficult to go to that first meeting, but I felt at ease once the main speaker started. Maybe it was because I spent all that time in meetings when I was a kid, or maybe it was because I felt like I belonged, like I was with people who understood me for the first time. Whatever it was, it kept me coming back. I listened to the message, got a sponsor, worked the steps, and recently celebrated 16 months of recovery.

Conference Questions 2023

It's that exciting time of year again!

Dear All,

The AA Great Britain General Service Office has released the questions that will be considered at the April 2023 Conference. The questions are on pages 8-19 of the attached AA Service News.

All members are encouraged to provide feedback, as individuals or as a group. A.J. and I will be collecting this feedback to make sure that it gets to the appropriate Conference delegates.

Feedback can be submitted verbally or in writing. We will be happy to attend your group's business meeting upon request. We also intend to set up a couple Zoom calls in January and February. Conference delegates from the Central European Region will also host a webinar on February 11 from 10:00 to 12:00, open to all members.

As GSRs, please circulate these questions to your group for feedback and add it to the agenda for your next business meeting. Remember, members' feedback to these questions is the key avenue through which their voice gets heard as AA Great Britain provides guidance to our fellowship.

Feel free to contact A.J. or me with any questions. We will be in touch again in January, once we have dates set for the Zoom calls.

Yours in service,

Jason S.

CER Alternate Rep.

Events Calendar 2023

Speaker Extravaganza (Zoom) - 19:00-20:00 **Friday 6 Jan.** Karen R. from Tampa Fl., author of "Crossing the River of Denial" in the BB

Intro to IG (Zoom) - 20:15 **Tuesday 17 Jan.**

Save the date - Speaker Extravaganza Weekend (in-person) with Jack A., **8-10 Sept. 2023**

Circle your calendar for 2024 - Bob D. is coming to Zürich **14 - 15 Sept. 2024** to put on his Big Book workshop

Service Announcements



AA Telephone Hotline - Frank P. needs you! Sign up for your shift on the phonenumber.

A.J. is looking for a few good fellows to join the resurrected Public Information and Events Committees, as they rise like the phoenix from the ashes. Volunteer before he drafts you ...

And Finally

Congrats to the newly elected officers (Leanna G., Rick R., Mauro M., Joshua Archie R., Frank P., Laurence B., and Fraser M.) ...

and thanks to those who completed their service terms (Fiona M., Bruce W., Joshua Archie R., Fraser M., Alexis D., Bruno C., Naya N., and Roman S.).