



Rebellion Dogs Radio

Episode #50 – January 2020

“Carry the message” beyond the meeting

Warm wishes to you for 2020, Happy New Year, happy new decade, happy one-day-at-a-time. Episode #50 of Rebellion Dogs Radio and this corresponding blog is/was composed in the early days of the new year and a new decade.

We’re going to reflect a wee bit on what’s happened in the last ten years and pontificate a bit on what our next decade may hold instore.

“Sea change or sea-change is an English idiomatic expression which denotes a substantial change in perspective, especially one which affects a group or society at large, on a particular issue (Wikipedia).”

For members of secular AA, we may be both the “group” and the “issue” mentioned in this sea-change definition. Secular AA has grown but we are not well known. How can we bring our message out of the closet and into the mainstream?

Maybe secular AA isn’t a secret shame of recovery advocates, but we would likely fail a “brand-identification” test if we surveyed caregivers who help alcoholics: Employee Assistance Program workers, correctional and law-enforcement workers, treatment professionals and other medical workers. Our obscurity isn’t anyone’s fault, but our lack of outreach won’t correct without “a program of action.”

Can we look at the first twenty years of the millennium as the growth-stage of secular AA groups? The 20-year growth has been remarkable.



As far as the number of meeting times for AA atheists and agnostics goes, in the year 2000, under 50 secular AA meeting times were offered worldwide. At the end of the first decade of Century-21, we doubled to about 100 meeting times of atheist/agnostic AA groups. In the last decade, wow: according to secularaa.org we freethinkers meet 524 times a week worldwide in secular AA meetings.

At a natural time of reflection such as this, a five-fold growth over a decade is something to think about.

There was no International Conference of Secular AA in 2010. There were limited books, blogs and podcasts.

This past decade has seen a proliferation of content for and from secular-minded AA members. *The God Word: Agnostics and Atheists in AA* is one of the newest pamphlets available for the literature table and the Grapevine's *One Big Tent: Atheist and Agnostic members share their Experience, Strength and Hope* had the most pre-orders of any new Grapevine book.

Many of us depend on secular recovery podcasts that didn't exist in 2010. There may have been zero dating back to 2000. Not all secular 12-Step literature is "conference approved." Many AA's are writing memoirs and secular 12-Step books, stories and collections of stories. The "reading room" page of RebellionDogsPublishing.com has — while not every great offerings — dozens of great godless recovery literature written, in many cases by AA members who don't believe in a sobriety-granting, prayer-answering higher power. In fact, the Rebellion Dogs website didn't exist in 2010. *Beyond Belief: Agnostic Musings for 12 Step Life* was being written but would not be published until January of 2013.



I don't mean to single out *Beyond Belief*; it is one of *many* books that have altered the 12-Step and greater-recovery community. There was no way to know these remarkable books would mean so much to so many. At this new-decade time of reflection, I am humbled by your reaction to our book of musings. *Beyond Belief* crossed over the 16,000 copies mark. This volume of sales is not game-changer material as far as the publishing biz is concerned. AA's own *Daily Reflections* sells 150,000 copies every year. Other daily devotionals outsell AA's own. If I wanted to sell more books, I would have written a daily reflection book for the theistically inclined. That market is bigger, hungrier and spends their way to spirituality. But I wrote a book that I wanted, that I needed, but could not find in the marketplace. I wrote a book because there seemed to be an unmet need.

I didn't know if it would appeal to dozens or thousands; that wasn't the point. I don't know 16,000 people – but you do. The book's success has been due to fans who buy many and give them away or recommend books to loved ones. Thanks to booksellers and book lovers because I know you are sharing your enthusiasm. This isn't what I wanted to blog about today, but at this time of reflection I just wanted to say, "Thanks." Here is one letter I got this week – no last name or location is used. I don't mean to embarrass anyone, but I want to say thanks to Pat H and all of you. I love introducing loved ones to books and music. You have made it clear that I'm not alone. Here's what Pat wrote this week:

Dear Joe C,

Today I read the daily reading from *Beyond Belief* knowing that tomorrow I will start at the beginning for the fifth time. The book is a bit grubby now but still so important to my recovery.


I go to an Overeaters Anonymous meeting in *Anonymous-town*, England and have got at least three more people in my group reading *Beyond Belief*, all of us appreciating it very much.

So a great big thank you for this most important and helpful resource.

I wish you well in 2020. It is a good work you and your team do there at Rebellion Dogs. Thank you.

With all good wishes,
Pat H

Good wishes to you too, Pat. And thanks to everyone who shares what they read and also, those who share what they write. I am inspired by so many of you. That concludes this blog's look in the rearview mirror.



There is no prescribed AA “right” way or “wrong” way. Each of us uses what is best for ourselves—without closing the door to other kinds of help we may find valuable at another time. And each of us tries to respect others’ rights to do things differently.

Living Sober © A.A World Service,

Let's talk about what might be next for secular AA and the larger addiction/ recovery community. Not everyone is a reader and that's where AA meetings come in. Secular AA meetings offer that human connection that AA is infamous for and bypasses one of the classic objections to AA: “But isn't AA religious?”

This *Living Sober* passage was 30+ years of AA's collective experience, at the time of printing. This remains to be true in AA; I see many examples of

AA pathways that work; we all do. Let's talk about the value of secular AA gatherings and how we can transform from being the best kept secret in recovery to becoming common knowledge in recovery.

We aren't starting at zero. Some healthcare professionals already include agnostic/atheists AA groups (along with other special purpose AA groups) as a tool in what Joe Nowinski calls, developing “an individualized health plan.” Dr. Nowinski writes in his handbook, *Twelve Step Facilitation: A Therapeutic Approach to Treatment and Recovery* (Revised 2017)

Diversity and Democracy: Anyone wishing to implement TSF [Twelve Step Facilitation] should be aware of the great diversity that exists within the Twelve Step culture, as this awareness can add to the effectiveness of the program. Today, it is easy, especially in urban centers, to find fellowship groups specifically for women, for men, for the LGBTQ community, for young people, for older people, for clergy, for agnostics and atheists, for nurses or doctors, and so on. There are also Twelve Step groups for any number of cultural and ethnic groups. Looking at the official literature of Twelve Step fellowships reveals themes common to

addiction and recovery, but meetings themselves are run differently and vary greatly. This is one reason why newcomers to Twelve Step fellowships are encouraged to 'try out' a number of meetings – to explore and find one or more groups where they will feel most comfortable (p 21).

Other scholarly findings...

“Some atheists and agnostic clients reported AA-related benefit ... there are multiple pathways for behavior change in AA, not all of which rely on spiritual beliefs and practices.”

Journal of Studies on Alcohol (2002)ⁱ

“A.A. is so decentralized that in a very real sense, there really is no such single entity as “Alcoholics Anonymous” – only A.A. members and local A.A. groups that reflect a broad and ever-increasing variety of A.A. experience. ... The number of registered secular AA meetings in the U.S. has grown from a few dozen in the early 2000s to more than 400, and two international conventions of atheist and agnostic AA members have been held to date.”

William L. White (with Ernest Kurtz, PhD)ⁱⁱ

This decade, NAADAC (National Association of Addiction Professionals) amended their Code of Ethics reflecting the duty to accommodate a more diverse clientele. Here is a sample of the NAADAC Code of Ethics language:

Principle IV: Working in a Culturally Diverse World

Addiction Professionals shall be knowledgeable and aware of cultural, individual, societal, and role differences amongst the clients they serve. Providers shall offer services that demonstrate appropriate respect for the fundamental rights, dignity and worth of all clients.

So, the message – a responsive AA that speaks a contemporary language that we believe will better resonate with today’s newcomer to recovery – won’t fall on deaf ears. Professionals who come in contact with persons with alcohol and other addictions are looking for more arrows in their quiver to individualize service and meet changing client/patient needs.

This is a good time for members of the secular AA community and professionals to chat. Can the helping professionals find us; how easy are we to find? Is the time and location of your secular AA group, or mine, known to all professionals making referrals to our fellows who are currently suffering from alcohol use disorder?

AA is a household name but in the outreach I do, it's news to many that meetings are available that cater to potential members that prefer an irreligious meeting format. You and I know that today, while there isn't a secular AA meeting within a thirty-minute drive of everyone yet, most urban centers have one or more secular AA meetings and new meetings continue to get started. Online meetings are growing in popularity, too and filling the gaps where geography is still an issue.

In the first two decades we've gone from less than 50 to over 500 meeting times. Maybe the next decade, the 2020's, will be looked back as the getting-the-word-out era. You and I have a role to play in our local community. Small efforts can lead to substantial results.

I chair an outreach committee as part of my duties on Secular AA, the board stewards our biennial ICSAA. We have some other duties and AA service to do, between our International Conference dates. Not all the outreach committee members are board members. Anyone can join the committee if you'd like to be the local outreach contact for your area, or if you'd like to work behind the scenes – not everyone that helps with outreach has to be a public face of AA. Maybe, you are aligned with a professional organization; some of our committee are in health care or work in the legal system. Right now, we're working a few initiatives in both healthcare and the criminal-justice system. We are working on literature and guides for local and national efforts.

Like the larger AA service structure, we're not top-down. You can do your own thing independently and you don't need permission. But if there's anything we can do to help, outreach@secularaa.net is a good way to start a conversation.

So, getting involved in this committee is one way to get proactive. We have no geographic boundaries. Current committee members are from Canada and USA, but this is just as a result of who has stepped up, so far.

Hate committee meetings? I understand. Here is an incomplete list of things you or I can do personally, or with the support of our home group's business meeting.

- Be more active in your existing General Service Structure by volunteering in putting on meetings in hospitals and institutions or joining your local PI, CPC or treatment committees.
- Plan a special open-house meeting at your group and call it, "invite a professional." If members are comfortable discretely disclosing their own membership in AA with your family doctor or treatment counselor or lawyer, once a year, your group could put on an open-house meeting with a speaker or two and an abridged meeting format that includes some short description of what AA is and how we operate and how secular AA fits within AA-as-a-whole.
- Your group can create its own business card, postcard or trifold as a handout. If you're comfortable, have a contact name or email for anyone wishing to refer a client/patient to your meeting.
- Attend a community health fair and speak with people at the various booths. After you've been to your first local health fair, you may discuss the idea with your group of having your own booth at the next health fair. If AA is already there, volunteer your group members to do shifts to be available for anyone who has questions about AA for atheists and agnostics.
- Create a webpage, social media page and/or blog to help potential members find you, along with those who refer us to meetings. If you already have a website, consider a 'for professionals' page.
- Speak to your meeting landlord. Are you in a community center, a school, a Unitarian Universalist Congregation? Maybe they would welcome a poster or notice in the next newsletter or have a couple of you come to a speaking engagement at one of their events.
- Write a blog or newspaper article about secular AA.
- Ask a local treatment center if they would like your group to host a service meeting for their clients.
- Your home group or mine could design, fund and run a Google or Facebook ad informing interested parties of where and when our group meets. Yeah, AA has always been in telephone directories or ran small ads in the personal section of local newspapers. Such a public information effort is still *attraction, rather than promotion*.

Here's some guidelines from our General Service Office...

The Public Information (P.I.) Handbookⁱⁱⁱ addresses Why? and How?

"We carry the message by getting in touch with and responding to the media, schools, industry, and other organizations which can report on the nature and purpose of A.A. and what it can do for alcoholics.



This workbook will guide you through the Public Information process. The pages that follow suggest ways individuals can organize and perform P.I. work, as well as activities that have been successful for local P.I. committees.

Those undertaking P.I. work for the first time, whether it be at the area, district, group, or intergroup/central office level, are encouraged to read and take guidance from the information contained here. It is suggested that members taking part in P.I. work should have several years of continuous sobriety.

The first Public Information committee in A.A. was formed by the General Service Board in 1956. At that time, the following statement of 'A.A.'s movement-wide public information policy' was written and approved by the General Service Conference:

In all public relations, A.A.'s sole objective is to help the still suffering alcoholic. Always mindful of the importance of personal anonymity we believe this can be done by making known to him, and to those who may be interested in his problems, our own experience as individuals and as a Fellowship in learning to live without alcohol. We believe that our

experience should be made available freely to all who express sincere interest. We believe further that all efforts in this field should always reflect our gratitude for the gift of sobriety and our awareness that many outside A.A. are equally concerned with the serious problem of alcoholism.

As our co-founder, Bill W., wrote: Public Information takes many forms – the simple sign outside a meeting place that says ‘A.A. meeting tonight;’ listing in local phone directories; distribution of A.A. literature; and radio and television shows using sophisticated media techniques. Whatever the form, it comes down to *one drunk carrying the message to another drunk*, whether through personal contact or through the use of third parties and the media. The needs and experiences of people in your own area, large or small, urban or rural, will affect what you decide to do. The suggestions in this workbook are just that – suggestions – to spark your thinking on how best to work at carrying the message.”

PI has been around longer than Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) which was an offshoot of PI started in 1970. The *CPC Committee Manual*^{iv} goes on to say:

“A.A. has always valued friends in the professional fields. These associations have been mutually beneficial and completely in keeping with the A.A. Traditions.”

As a practical matter, check these manuals for guidelines about Traditions (anonymity, attraction – not promotion, etc.), and suggested goals for you and/or your CPC committees. We don’t need to reinvent the wheel; most of what AA-as-a-whole has learned over the years can be applied to any efforts that you or I embark on to inform the public about secular AA meetings. We are like any of AA’s special purpose groups. There is a role for women’s meetings to outreach to women’s shelters or treatment centers, young people’s groups are best suited to outreach to teen/youth social services, LGBTQ+ positive group members will speak as peers, talking about AA in the queer community and the AA role in addiction and recovery. For the same reason, who better to talk about a secular approach to AA that atheist and agnostic members.

The pamphlet *Speaking at Non-AA Meetings*^v is a good guide, too. What a group of nursing or psychiatry students need/want to know about AA is different than the details you might go into with a newcomer. In part, it reads:

“One question frequently asked is, ‘Should I tell my story?’ Those who have had experience in speaking to nonalcoholic audiences have learned that the average person wants to know what Alcoholics Anonymous is, what it does, and what he or she can do to cooperate, rather than to hear the personal-history type of talk that a member might give at an A.A. meeting.

On the other hand, experienced speakers have found that it is helpful to relate incidents from their own drinking history to illustrate a point. Citing the progressive nature of alcoholism or summarizing your case history can lend conviction to the rest of your talk.

Starting on page 15 of this pamphlet, you will find a list of questions that are usually asked by non-A.A. audiences. These are based on the results of a survey made by your General Service Office among groups and individuals in different parts of the United States and other countries. The number of questions you cover will depend on the speaking time you are allotted and whether there will be a question-and-answer period after your talk.

The topics that you will select for discussion may also depend, to some degree, on the particular audience that you are addressing...”

I first started talking about AA in high schools in 1977 along with a more experienced AA because I was a teenager. The other member would explain what AA was and wasn't, anonymity, how we cooperate with professionals, how our peer-to-peer structure differs from medical intervention, how to find meetings, what an open or closed meeting means, our relationship with Al-Anon and Alateen, etc. Some students have alcoholic family members. When I spoke, I would share what it was like, how I came to AA, what life's like now.

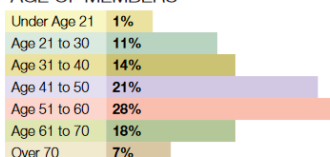
While there is no right or wrong way give a Public Information (or CPC) talk, I've seen a few things over the years that I felt left room for improvement. I have seen people do talks to high school, police academy or medical students and the speaker goes into details about their own step-work, about AA being spiritual, not religious and personal details that would interest a prospective AA member but I don't think focuses on what the public wants to know. Professionals aren't overly enamoured with what Bill W said in 1935 or 1965. AA members are interested in the personal journey; professionals want to know how AA members found out about AA, how many meetings they go to, the demographics, the

variations in meeting styles/formats, etc. The *A.A. Membership Survey*^{vi} is specifically designed by the PI trustees' committee to answer the kind of questions the public wants to know. Referring to it as a guide for outreach can be very helpful.

I remember a great song writing teacher who had years of music production and been in many bands. About song writing, he would say, "My father taught me that if you want to catch fish, think like the fish." What he meant is as a fisherman, he might like a certain part of the lake or being out on the water at a certain time of day. He might have a favorite lure or bait. But for best results, pick the location, time and lures that fish prefer. The message to songwriters was to not write the music and lyrics that meet your own needs – write what the listener on the other end of the radio wants to hear. If you think listeners want to hear how *you* feel, maybe some do. But for hit songs, you better show listeners that you know how *they* feel.

The lesson from song writing applies to AA outreach; know your audience and gear your communications accordingly. What they want/need to know will be different from what you or I want to hear when we're at a meeting.

AGE OF MEMBERS



Average Age of Members is 50 Years.

MARITAL STATUS OF MEMBERS

Married/ Life Partner	Single	Divorced	Other
41%	32%	21%	6%

GROUP MEMBERSHIP



86% of the members belong to a home group.

LENGTH OF SOBRIETY (YEARS)



The average length of members sobriety is almost ten years.



MEETING ATTENDANCE

Members attend an average of **2.5 A.A. meetings** per week.

INTRODUCTION TO A.A.*

Through an A.A. member	32%
Treatment facility	32%
Self-motivated	30%
Family	27%
Judicial System	12%
Counselor/Mental Health Professional	13%
Medical Professional	4%
Employer or fellow worker	4%
Non-A.A. friend or neighbor	3%
Correctional facility	2%
Al-Anon or Alateen member	2%
A.A. literature	2%
Newspaper/magazine/radio/TV	1%
Member of clergy	1%
Internet	1%
Other	6%

RELATIONSHIP WITH HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

75% of members' doctors know they are in A.A.
57% of members said they were referred to A.A. by a counselor, medical or mental health professional.

ADDITIONAL HELP . . .



BEFORE coming to A.A., 59% of the members received some type of treatment or counseling (such as medical, psychological, spiritual, etc.) related to their drinking.

74% of those members who received treatment or counseling said it played an important part in directing them to A.A.

AFTER coming to A.A., 58% of the members received some type of treatment or counseling (such as medical, psychological, spiritual, etc.) related to their drinking.

84% of those members who received treatment or counseling said it played an important part in their recovery from alcoholism.

MEMBERS OCCUPATIONS

19%	Retired
11%	Other (including self-employed)
8%	Unemployed
10%	Manager / Administrator
9%	Professional / Technical
7%	Skilled trade
5%	Disabled (not working)
6%	Health professional
5%	Laborer
4%	Sales worker
4%	Educator
2%	Student
4%	Service worker
2%	Clerical worker
2%	Homemaker
1%	Transportation
1%	Craft worker

* These numbers do not add up to 100% because respondents were allowed to select more than one.

Doing outreach work specifically about secular AA, I would explain briefly about special purpose meetings in general, how long AA for atheist and agnostics groups have been around, how some of our members attend other AA meetings, or participate in other mutual-aid or therapeutic care, while some of us find everything we need at our atheist/agnostic group, literature and/or secular AA conferences.

We can create our own flyers, pamphlets, postcards or websites. A lot of existing AA outreach material is fairly secular already.

The pamphlet, *AA as a Resource for the Healthcare Professional*^{vii} won't make claims like "real alcoholics can't recover from alcoholism without conscious contact with God." The pamphlet states, "But no belief in God is necessary; atheists and agnostics find plenty of company in A.A."

So have a look at what's already available and if you need to, or prefer to, create your own handouts or internet-messaging.

A General Service newsletter to professionals, currently available, is called, *About AA*^{viii} In a recent issue (Summer 2019), we hear from Nancy McCarthy one of our nonalcoholic (Class A) trustees. Her expertise is as a corrections professional who has worked in the criminal justice system within the greater St. Louis area in addition to working with Florida State University on new models for individuals coming in and out of prisons.

"Nancy highlights a recent article titled 'Public Intoxication: Sobering Centers as an Alternative to Incarceration, Houston, 2010-2017,' in the American Journal of Public Health, in which the authors conclude the following: 'misuse of substances has a significant impact on public health, directly contributing to crime, health issues, and lost productivity.' Starting in 2000, several cities in California, Texas and elsewhere established 'sobering centers' as a form of public-health intervention. ...This past spring, Leslie Backus (another nonalcoholic trustee), a health treatment provider and CEO at a rehab facility located in Savannah, Georgia, attended the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) gathering in Orlando, Florida. Over 2,300 attendees participated in this conference, and over 200 visitors stopped by the booth, asking questions and collecting in-formation about A.A. 'It was a great opportunity to assist local A.A. committees to meet and communicate with professionals.'"

I always find something new in these newsletters and just as two alcoholics talking together can relate best, professionals, hearing about AA from other professionals bridges the knowledge gap, effectively. Previous *About AA* newsletters focused on AA for the older alcoholic, the armed forces and common misconceptions about AA. From Spring of 2017:

“Medication-assisted therapy is big in the treatment community and there is a misconception that A.A. is somehow against medication; This is not true. A.A. as such has no opinion on what medication is appropriate for an individual. While it is true that some people may substitute addictions – pills for alcohol, say – many A.A. members truly need medication, and Alcoholics Anonymous does not offer medical advice. This is spelled out in the pamphlet *The A.A. Member – Medication and Other Drugs*, which clearly shares our experience of both situations – the possibility of alcoholics abusing other substances and the clear reality that some A.A. members need prescribed medications. It also suggests that it is the responsibility of our members to be honest with their doctors about their alcoholism and how medication affects them, and that all medical advice should come from a qualified health professional. I have shown this pamphlet to treatment professionals who seem surprised to see it. They have said: ‘That must be a brand-new pamphlet.’ But, no, it has been around since 1984 and was updated in 2011.”

If ever there was a time to be talking to professionals about secular AA, isn't it now?

Here's what is, was, and will be in the news in the year ahead and will be on the minds of professionals who come in contact with persons suffering from alcohol use disorder:

- **Pew Research**^{ix} “the share of “nones” – religiously unaffiliated adults who describe their religion as atheist, agnostic or “nothing in particular” – has reached 26%, up from 17% a decade ago.”
- **Canadian Broadcasting Corporation**^x “Atheist nurse wins fight to end mandatory 12-step addiction treatment for health staff in Vancouver.”
- **Legal Professional Blog**^{xi} “Treatment Obligation Violates Religious Rights: [James] Lindon raises the establishment clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in his objection to the condition that he re-engage with OLAP [Ohio Lawyers Assistance Program] ... Lindon states that he is

an atheist and that OLAP programs are substantially based on Alcoholics Anonymous, and similar programs that have a religious aspect to them. He notes that AA's 12-step program includes prayers and recitations from the Bible."

In our outreach efforts we may wish to avoid engaging or appearing to be engaged in the salacious public controversy. But with these type of stories in the news, there is no better time to communicate the role of secular AA and how we fit into AA-as-a-whole.

There are more options than ever before available for irreligious approaches to recovery from addiction. AA would neither endorse nor oppose Life Ring, SMART, Women for Sobriety nor any other secular approaches to recovery. We aren't in competition for a limited supply of alcoholics. What we AA's have going for us is that AA is ubiquitous; we'd be hard pressed today to find someone who's never heard of AA. The added knowledge about AA "without a prayer" ought to be well-received by caregivers in 2020. Professionals will already have come across studies and data endorsing AA as improving outcome rates. What we can add is that secular AA offers these benefits without fear of clients/patients being influenced to embrace prayer and theological philosophy.

Our current AA literature can help carry the message. Here's just a few excerpts:

"I came into the Fellowship seven years ago as a self-proclaimed atheist. ... I get what I need from the members of this Fellowship and the tools of the Twelve Step program; I can give this healing process a chance." Sheila's Story, *The 'God' Word*



“In Step Two, the ‘power greater than ourselves’ meant A.A., but not just the members I knew. It meant all of us, everywhere, sharing a concern for one another and thereby creating a spiritual resource stronger than any one of us could provide.” Jan, (agnostic) alcoholic from *Do You Think You're Different?*

“I don’t need God to have a higher purpose in my life and to practice the principles of the Steps. I simply need to believe that with help from the Fellowship and my inner resources I can change my own attitude and actions and continue to enjoy the enormous benefit that change has brought into my life.” Alex M., *Grapevine*, October 2016

If your new year includes a resolution and that resolution includes getting active in service work, maybe you’ll consider spending some time and energy in carrying the message about secular AA in our communities.

In the last year, I have been a guest on podcasts, been referred to a journalist for the *Canadian Atheist Magazine*, spoke at United Church congregation run by an atheist minister, I volunteer at a treatment center, talked to the director of the Physicians Assistance Program in Ontario, attended the Recovery Capital Conference in Vancouver and Toronto and started a draft for a secular AA outreach handbook. Once I got going, other people referred me, and opportunities present themselves. I like service work in mainstream AA. I find service work has less religious talk than Big Book meetings; go figure?

There is so much more I’d like to do. Our group is at U of Toronto; they teach doctors, psychologists and teachers. We should really have an annual information day for students and faculty.

Not everyone who loves AA will be happy or comfortable doing outreach. Just coming to meetings on time and welcoming newcomers is such important work. Some people are hyper-cautious about being seen in public talking as an addict. Stigma is real and some of us stay behind the scenes. There are both front-of-stage and back-room roles for outreach work in AA. So, think about it. Talk about it at your business meeting. Let’s see what we can do to help the still-suffering alcoholic, deploying the tools and opportunities available in 2020.

Join the conversation. If you’re already making headway, please share; if you wonder how you can help and where to start, get in touch. You can reach me at outreach@secularaa.net and/or news@rebelliondogspublishing.com

ⁱ J. Scott Tonigan, W.R. Miller, Carol Schermer, "Atheists, Agnostics and Alcoholics Anonymous" *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 9/2002

ⁱⁱ <http://www.williamwhitepapers.com/blog/2018/03/the-secular-wing-of-aa.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/M-27i_PubInfWorkbk.pdf

^{iv} https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/m-41i_CPCWorkbook.pdf

^v https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-40_speaknonAAmeet.pdf

^{vi} https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-48_membershipsurvey.pdf

^{vii} https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-23_aaasaresourceforhcp1.pdf

^{viii} https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/about-aa-newsletter-for-professionals

^{ix} <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/12/13/19-striking-findings-from-2019/>

^x <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/bc-byron-wood-nurse-12-step-religious-discrimination-settlement-1.5391650>

^{xi} https://lawprofessors.typepad.com/legal_profession/2019/09/ohio-considers-atheism-defense-and-sex-with-client-in-two-bar-cases.html