

LAA *Love Addicts Anonymous*

Meeting Type: Ordinary International Business Meeting (IBM)

Location: [Zoom Link](#)

Date: September 2, 2023

Start time: 8:00 a.m. PST (60 mins.)

Attendees: Katya, Andrew, Diane, Gwendolyn, Linda S., Pooja G., Roko, Susan P., Tisha, Vincent, Pamela

IBM Service Positions:

Chairperson - Katya

Secretary/Notetaker - Pamela M.

Timekeeper - Vincent

- I. **Opening Verse:** Serenity Prayer - “we version”
- II. **Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:** Pamela screen-shared meeting minutes from August for members to review. Vincent objected, stating he did not have an opportunity to review the minutes prior to today’s meeting and would like to take a closer look at the document before they are approved. Pamela interjected to ask for clarification regarding how drafts of the minutes are to be disseminated to the fellowship for inspection. Per Katya’s instructions, Pamela emailed the August minutes to Tisha for web posting but was unable to locate the minutes on the LAA website. Previously, minutes have been posted to the WAG, but Katya stated they are now posted to the LAA Website.

Katya proposed we add this item to the agenda for further discussion (i.e., how drafts of the minutes should be disseminated to the fellowship for review). To give members attending this meeting access to the minutes, Pamela copied a link of the Word document to the Zoom chat. Pamela asked where on the Website are the minutes posted. Tisha indicated she forwarded the minutes to the Web admin, who confirmed the documents were posted to the Website. Linda advised the minutes can be found by clicking on “Meetings,” “International Business Meetings, Saturday,” and scroll down to locate the month in question.

Pamela suggested it is unlikely the fellowship, as a whole, would know how to access the minutes on the Website; therefore, we should advise members as to exactly where to find them. Katya agreed and stated the minutes should also be posted on the WAG for members to access, as in the past.

III. Committee Reports:

- i. Website Committee – Tisha agreed the process of accessing the minutes on the LAA Website is very convoluted. She suggested the entire Website should be revamped for aesthetics, increased functionality, and greater transparency. Members should be able to access documents with much more ease. Tisha will make a recommendation to the Webmaster and discuss what the process would look like. Once she gathers this information, Tisha will report back to IBM.

The 7th Tradition link on the Website is fully functioning. Tisha thanked Vincent for his role in re-establishing the account. On one of the WAGs (IBM?), a fellow posted they had trouble with the link not opening to the donation page. Tisha was unsure what to make of this, as she personally has not had any trouble with the link. The conversion process from pounds to dollars seems to work fine, as well. If anyone has trouble donating via the Website, please let Tisha know. Katya suggested we add this topic as a discussion item.

- ii. Treasury Report – Vincent screen-shared a summary of the LAA bank account and provided an update. Once Vincent took over as treasurer, the existing balance of \$1,800 was transferred from Lena’s bank account to Vincent’s. The PayPal account, which had a balance of \$170 in donations, was frozen. To provide clarification regarding the donations remaining in the PayPal account, Vincent suggested to Lena that if we could not access the funds, we should refund the total amount back to the original donors. Instead, Lena refunded the donations prior to discussing Vincent’s proposal at IBM.

When Vincent took over as treasurer, he attempted to open a PayPal account, but the Website “kept crashing.” Consequently, a security alert was activated. PayPal requested photo identification documents via email; however, Vincent did not feel comfortable doing so due to identity theft concerns. Vincent subsequently opened an account with Square; however, the account was later terminated. Unfortunately, Square never provided a concrete reason as to why the account was closed. They kept referring Vincent to the company’s terms and conditions, suggesting there was a breach. Vincent never learned exactly what happened.

Vincent was finally able to open a Stripe account with no problems. Stripe requires that payments be made in pounds. When a debit or credit card is used for payment, conversion from U.S. dollars to pounds occurs automatically. A donor does not have to do anything on their end. The current bank balance is £1,578, which is equivalent to approximately \$2,000. Vincent noted donations have been slow, but he is unaware of any problems with the link.

- iii. Literature Committee – Katya asked if the literature committee was disbanded. Tisha indicated that the committee was not disbanded but is currently inactive due to the previous chair stepping down. Vincent reported that Chris was the former chair, and Dave was also on the committee. Vincent’s role on the committee was limited to preparing a draft of a document addressing patterns of love addiction versus recovery. The unresolved copyright issue has stalled progress in moving forward with this literature project. Katya suggested that approving the document Vincent co-created has nothing to do with the identity issue. She added we can adopt the literature as an additional piece to add to the Website. Vincent’s concern is that anyone could take a piece of LAA literature and sell it under their own name, and, absent copyright protection,

there is nothing we can do about it. Given the ongoing copyright dispute, Vincent believes it is ill-advised for LAA to produce new literature. Katya added this issue as a discussion item. Pamela expressed interest in the literature committee and asked about its primary objective or focus. The purpose of the literature committee, offered Tisha, is to review existing LAA literature, to make updates, and to produce new literature. The literature committee will also ensure the content is robust and meets the needs of the fellowship.

- iv. Identity Committee – Vincent advised that Mel is the chair on this committee. Tisha and Gwendolyn are also on the committee. At present, Gwendolyn is unable to participate on the committee on a consistent basis, but she is happy to share ideas. Gwendolyn’s main concern is that LAA will continue to run into legal and financial roadblocks until the organization establishes itself as a formal, legal entity. According to Gwendolyn, LAA cannot claim copyrights until it is organized as a formal, legal entity. Financial roadblocks, such as those we experienced with PayPal, will continue to be an issue unless we are able to provide documentation as a business organization.

Vincent does not want to serve on the identity committee but is happy to “bounce ideas off Mel,” informally. Katya expressed her concern about members “chiming in” but not being willing to serve on the committee in a formal way. What’s more, Katya does not support members doing business outside of meetings on the WAGs. The committee should be holding meetings that are properly facilitated and well run.

- v. **Fellowship Reports:** Katya asked members to provide updates, including service updates, on ODAAT and other LAA fellowships.
- a. ODAAT – no reporting.
 - b. South Africa – Pooja hosts the Tuesday meeting, and another meeting is held weekly on Thursdays. The Tuesday meeting lasts for 75 meetings, and the Thursday meeting lasts for 90 minutes. Both South African meetings use ODAAT literature, and all guidelines are adhered to. All information on the Website is kept up to date for both meetings.
 - c. Russia – Tisha communicated with two members from the Russian fellowship who indicated they are working on providing a representative to attend ODAAT meetings. The time zone difference presents a challenge, however. The fellowship is active, and meetings are held regularly. As an aside, Katya has been in contact with a woman named Sarah who intends to start a meeting in Iran. Katya provided Sarah with some of our literature, which she plans to translate.
 - d. LAA for Christians – Linda reported on the status of two Christian meetings and a Sunday step study meeting, all of which are currently active. One open meeting is held on Monday, and a women’s only meeting is held on Friday. Each meeting is scheduled for 75 minutes, and members have access to all resources on the Website. Weekly attendance for each meeting is between ten and 15 participants. In LAA for Christians, service commitments have been challenging to maintain. The step study meeting on Sundays is

held each month throughout the year. Linda advised she will discontinue hosting in 2024, as she's been involved with this fellowship for four years.

e. In-person – no reporting.

- vi. **Safety Committee:** Katya asked if the safety committee has been disbanded. Vincent advised that Mel was the chair of this committee, and an issue for which the committee was formed has been resolved. Presently, the committee is no longer active. Katya suggested the committee may need to be reinstated due to some of the discussion items below.

IV. **Discussions & Motions:**

- i. August Minutes – Based on Vincent's cursory review of the August minutes, he proposed making some changes. Regarding the copyright dispute, Vincent expressed concern that his views and rebuttals were not fully reflected in the minutes, compared to an opposing viewpoint. Vincent will confer with Pamela outside of the meeting to propose revisions.
- ii. Vincent – Treasury questions/concerns – To date, the 7th Tradition link on the Website appears to be working well. For donors who insist on using PayPal, Stripe offers the option to do so; however, there is a surcharge of £20 per month to add this service. Pooja asked if LAA would potentially encounter the same problems with PayPal as before. Vincent replied that Stripe administers the PayPal payment option, hence the reason for the surcharge. If IBM adopts this service, we will have no direct dealings with PayPal. No other questions or concerns were raised.
- iii. Pooja – LAA-wide safety guidelines for repeat offenders – Existing guidelines recommend suspension for repeat offenders (e.g., inappropriate dialogue, using the fellowship as a dating club). An offender from South Africa, however, has gotten around the suspension guidelines by moving to other WAG groups or ODAAT meetings. Katya reviewed the existing guidelines, which state that after the offender has been informed of the guidelines and the misconduct persists, the host can remove that person from the meeting immediately. Any action where a host must remove someone has to be elevated to ODAAT, IBM, or another fellowship in which they're involved. Online meetings and WAGs are run independently by a host or an admin, respectively. If the host or admin fails to take appropriate action, the safety committee recommends the person who feels unsafe should leave. Pooja expressed concern that "the victim" should be the one to leave. Andrew echoed Pooja's concern that the victim should be the one to leave, versus the offender.

Andrew posed the following question regarding Zoom: If an offender is under suspension, can the direct messaging (DM) function be disabled so they can continue to attend the fellowship? Linda opined that the existing safety guidelines for meetings appear to be working, but the WAGs are more problematic in terms of monitoring repeat offenders. Linda added that Zoom chats can, in fact, be disabled to preclude participants from chatting with each other. In this instance, participants could only chat, privately, with the host(s).

Gwendolyn, who has administered other WAGs, suggested that having at least three admins on a WAG allows for a discussion and quorum (e.g., three out of five) to take corrective action against an offender, (e.g., a time out; reinstatement). Andrew is not in favor of disabling the DM function among participants, as it is an important resource for newcomers to obtain temporary sponsorship and to do outreach, for instance. In lieu of disabling the DM feature, Andrew supports an avenue for due process wherein a person can bring their grievance to the safety committee, and the other party can defend themselves, if appropriate. In reference to the repeat offender Pooja mentioned earlier, the status of that individual is they have not been removed from all the LAA meetings and WAGs.

Susan asked an unrelated question: “Did Vincent upload the most recent copy of the LAA Basic Text, per the vote taken last month?” Due to time constraints, Katya took note of Susan’s question and proposed addressing it before the next business meeting.

The meeting was adjourned with the **LAA Closing Prayer**:

God,

We pray for inner strength and wisdom
to do together
what we cannot do alone.

Thank you for the courage to change.

Show us how to open our eyes
to your unconditional love for us,
and teach us how to love ourselves and others
in a healthy way.

May we find hope for a brighter tomorrow
and pass that on to others in need.

Thank you for a better way to live.