

Greater Toronto Area Intergroup

GENERAL MEETING TUESDAY DECEMBER 20, 2011

The meeting convened at 8 p.m. with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. Harold Y. (Port Credit) read the Twelve Traditions. **THOES MEMBERS PRESENT:** Anniversary, Aurora, Beverly Hills, Bloordale, Church Street, Credit Valley, Danforth, East York, Eventide, Erin Mills, Fellowship, Fifth Tradition (Scarborough), Glenholme, Keep It Simple (Scarborough), Kingsway, Leslie, Long Branch, Markland Wood, Midtown, Noon Rap, Port Credit, Primary Purpose, Richmond Hill, Saturday Morning Discussion, St. Andrews (Scarborough), Streetsville, Streetsville Action, Thornhill, Trial & Error, Twelve Tradition s(Pickering), Widening Our Gateway, Welcome, Weston Sunday Open, Willowdale, and Yorkville. **Executive Committee:** Aaron O. (EC member), , Barbara H. (Chairperson), Bruce D. (Vice Chair), Craig B. (EC member), Dan G. 9EC member), Don McG. (EC member), Sharolee G. (EC member), Harold Y. (Finance Chair). **District Liaisons:** Districts 02, 06, and 18. **Subcommittee Chairs:** Archives, Finance, and Website/Better Times.

CHAIRPERSON'S OPENING REMARKS – Barbara H. (Rox Glen Traditional), Executive Committee Chair: Barbara asked that any new Intergroup Reps/Alternates to please submit their contact information to the secretary. After wishing everyone all the best for the holiday season, she invited Wes B. (Long Branch) to read to those present this Christmas message from Bill W. (*from the Grapevine Christmas 1944 edition*):

ALL MEMBERS: Greetings on our 10th Christmas 1944. Yes, it's in the air! The spirit of Christmas once more warms this poor distraught world. Over the globe millions are looking forward to that one day when strife can be forgotten, when it will be remembered that all human beings, even at least, are loved by God, when men will hope for the coming of the Prince of Peace as they never hoped before.

But there is another world which is not poor; neither is it distraught. It is the world of Alcoholics Anonymous, where thousands dwell happily and secure; secure because each of us, in his own way, knows a greater Power who is love, who is just, and who can be trusted.

Nor can men and women of AA ever forget that only through suffering did they find enough humility to enter the portals of that new world. How privileged we are to understand so well the divine paradox that strength rises from weakness; that humiliation goes before resurrection; that pain is not only the price but the very touchstone of spiritual rebirth. Knowing its full worth and purpose, we can no longer fear adversity; we have found prosperity where there was poverty; peace and joy have sprung out of the very midst of chaos. Greta indeed our blessings! And so, Merry Christmas to you all – from the Trustees, from Bobbie and from Lois and me. –*Bill W.*

At this point in the meeting, the members of the Executive Committee introduced themselves to Floor members.

There was a **collection of the 7th Tradition**, which totaled **\$147.12**.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES – November 2011: **MOTION** to adopt Minutes as presented moved by Amanda (Noon Rap) and seconded by Molly (Willowdale). **MOTION CARRIED.**

FINANCE REPORT – Harold Y. (Port Credit), Chairperson: *the following was handed out to Floor members:*

GTA Intergroup Alcoholics Anonymous - Finance Report for the month November 2011

	INCOME	EXPENSES	NET ORDINARY INCOME
NOV. ACTUAL	\$29389	\$16421	\$12968
NOV. BUDGET	\$31376	\$25075	\$6301
NOV. YEAR-TO-DATE	\$344,272	\$307,907	\$36,365
NOV. YTD BUDGET	\$316,847	\$330,332	\$(13,485)

Literature and Medallion Sales in November are higher than expected; 13% over the budgeted amount. Year-to-date literature sales are at 99% of the budgeted expectation.

Our Total Income before Operating Expenses for November 2011 is 6% below the projected budget.

We are above budget for Gratitude Income for November 2011. Our YTD income from Gratitude is at 96% of the budget.

Total expenses for the month of November are below budget by 35%. Year-to-date total expenses are 93% of budget.

Our YTD Net Ordinary Income is much higher than budgeted. The YTD budget was expecting a loss; we are 170% over this budgeted loss.

	ACTUAL NOV. 2011	COMPARE to BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD	COMPARE TO YTD BUDGET	ACTUAL NOV. 2010	% Comparison Nov.2011 to Nov. 2010
GROUP DONATIONS	\$6,338	26% below budget	\$71,267	Exceeded budget by 14%	\$10,622	Down 40%
GRATITUDE	\$14,175	39% above budget	\$56,378	4% below budget	\$14,814	Down 1%

We are 26% below budget for group donations; however, Gratitude donations are above budget by 39%. We had budgeted for a \$13,000 loss but due to the ORC event (\$40,000) we are actually above budget by \$36,000.

At this time, Harold **presented the Proposed 2012 Budget** to Floor members (*copy attached to Minutes*). Harold entertained questions from Floor members:

Mike B. (Bloordale) asked about the budgeted \$40,000 loss: is this a practice, and what is the rationale? Harold replied that any loss would be taken out of our savings (Prudent Reserve). Mike also asked if there would be a new staff member, as the numbers show this. Harold answered that there is a budget for a permanent part time position for IT and database support. Mike then inquired about the \$17,000 allotment for Twelfth Step; Harold replied that this is for software for the automatic dial-up phone system for 12th Step calls.

MOTION to approve the 2012 Proposed Budget moved by Eric K. (Port Credit) and seconded by Mike C. (Beverly Hills). **MOTION CARRIED.**

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

ACCESS ABILITY – no report was given. **Next meeting:** Sun. Jan.15 at 11 a.m. at 234.

ARCHIVES – **Gord H.** (Bloordale), **Chairperson:** Gord thanked this committee for all their hard work over the past year. The Assistant Archivist has received a copy of a letter from AA member number three, Bill D. (Man on the Bed) sent to the ORC committee of 1952. Bill spoke at the 1952 event, and a letter of thanks was sent to the Chair. **Volunteers are welcome** for archival work at this committee. **Next meeting:** Fri. Jan.13 at 7 p.m. at 234.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES – no report was given. **Next meeting:** Mon. Jan.2 at 7 p.m. at 234.

COOPERATION with the PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (CPC) – No report was given. **Next meeting:** Mon. Jan.9 at 7 p.m. at 234.

INFORMATION AA DAY 2012 – Dan G. (Event Chair) reported that there will be no meeting in December. **Next meeting:** Mon. Jan.30 at 7:30 p.m. at 234.

ONTARIO REGIONAL CONFERENCE 2012 – no report was given.

PUBLIC INFORMATION – no verbal report was given. The following report was sent by e-mail: URGENT PLEASE NOTE: Jim A., incoming PI Chair for 2012 has resigned **therefore a new chair is needed immediately**. Anyone interested in standing for this position is asked to please email vivienhockeymom@hotmail.com and also attend the **January P.I. Meeting**, Monday, January 16th at Intergroup, 234 Eglinton Ave. E, starting at 7 30 pm. Thank you, yours in service, Vivien C.

TREATMENT COMMITTEE – **Bruce D.** (Fifth Tradition), **Executive Committee Liaison:** At the meeting held Dec.15, new ideas on how to carry the message were discussed; this will continue at the January meeting. **Next meeting:** Thurs. Jan. 19 at 7:30 p.m. at 234.

TWELFTH STEP – **Aaron O.** (Welcome), **Executive Committee Liaison:** New processes are beginning for scheduling phone shifts. A training session was held recently with our phone provider. There will be some testing of forwarding calls from a shift that will run from 5a.m. to 9 a.m. The number of calls will be tracked so that 23-hour phone answering can be considered. The **monthly Twelfth Step Committee meeting** will be changing from *the last Friday of every month to the second Wednesday of the month.* **Next meeting:** Wed. Jan.11 at 7:30 p.m. at 234.

WEBSITE/BETTER TIMES – **Aaron K.** (Yorkville), **Chairperson:** The Website and Better Times would like to thank all AA members who have supported the subcommittee with your ideas and contributions. It is a pleasure serving you as the Chairperson. I only continue to grow in this fellowship when I leave myself out of it and look to helping others. The committee is looking forward to serving you going into the New Year, and we wish you the best for the Holidays. Extra copies of this month's edition are available for pick up after this meeting. **Next meeting:** Sat. Jan.14 at 1 p.m. at 234.

RECEPTION – **Bruce D.** (Fifth Tradition), **Executive Committee Liaison:** 39 Reps/Alternates, 22 visitors, and 7 others were present at this meetings.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM Previous Meetings

MOTION to re-list the groups, Beyond Belief and We Agnostics moved by Allison B. (Responsibility) and seconded by Don (Markham Village). (*Motion presented at the November 2011 General Meeting*)

Regarding the above Motion, **a letter from our Area 83 Delegate, Robb W.** was made available for Reps at this meeting, and is attached to these Minutes. Barbara asked Reps to please read this letter and take back to their groups for discussion.

At the Executive Committee meeting in December, it was decided to invite three speakers on the 'pro' side (to re-list the 2 delisted groups) and the 'con' side (no to re-list) to address the Floor at this meeting, to aid in discussion. This Motion will **be voted on in March**, and discussion will occur over the next few months.

'Pro' Side: John (Widening Our Gateway) was hoping that the Executive Committee could reinstate the Agnostic Group Reps so they could address the Floor, and asked if this item could be reconsidered. Barbara replied that this will be discussed at the next Executive Committee meeting, and will bring back an answer at the January General Meeting. John added that we don't know what the Agnostic Groups have to say on the matter, and it would be helpful to know what they think in order to make an adequate vote.

'Con' Side: Dee T. (Streetsville) shared that this Floor has already made a decision to de-list the two groups beyond Belief and We Agnostics. He added that he is an Agnostic, but he has never felt unwelcome at an AA meeting. Nobody tells anybody in AA what to believe. AA is the very best opportunity for recovery, and that includes the 12 Steps. We have a responsibility to protect AA.

'Pro' Side: Mike C. (Beverly Hills) stated that 'Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow' is not Conference-approved; yet it is read at almost every meeting in the GTA. He felt that if we wanted someone to speak adequately for the "pro" side, it should be a member from one of the two Agnostic Groups that were delisted. He felt strongly that this would be the fair thing to so.

'Con' Side: Don C. (Keep It Simple) stated that a decision had been made to de-list the two groups is question. AA hasn't changed for 70 years; it is a God-based program. There is no need to modify the 12 Steps even if you are an

Agnostic or Atheist. He believes that there should be no modified Steps. He inquired as to whether there was a process in place for listing new groups with GTA Intergroup.

Molly (Willowdale) asked for direction with regards to this Motion, as she is a new Rep. Barbara directed her to read previous Minutes for the information and the process that occurred. She also emphasized that this primary issue was the re-written 12 Steps.

By way of providing information, Aaron K. (Yorkville) shared that he was on the Agnostic website, and there were several links to Treatment Centres, etc. The 'flavour' of this site was contrary to the Traditions. It seemed to be promoting Agnosticism. AA is a spiritual program. He didn't see why the 12 Steps needed to be changed. It is contrary to what the AA fellowship needs for unity.

Mike (Bloordale) asked that, since we don't have a lot of input from the "pro" side, can we as Floor members decide to have a member of one of the Agnostic Groups speak? Can we get a Sense of the Floor on this item? Wes B. (Long Branch) stated that these members currently do not have a voice on the Floor, as they have been de-listed. We need to change Procedures in order for this to happen.

Barbara then **asked for a Sense of the Floor:** Can we have a point of view from an Agnostic Group member? Twenty-nine Reps agreed to allow a member of the Agnostic Groups to address the Floor with eight opposed. The Floor agreed that an Agnostic Group member can address the Floor.

Brian N. (Beyond Belief) addressed the Floor. He is convinced that members present want to fulfill our Primary Purpose. He is also convinced that people here wouldn't want to harm AA in any way. Fundamentally we all want the same thing. What the Agnostic Groups did in the past was not detrimental...different, but not detrimental. The Agnostic Groups have something to offer GTA Intergroup, and these groups would like to be reinstated. He had a feeling that the Beyond Belief Group would remove the altered Steps.

Bill (Group?) shared that he brought this matter back to his home group, and as there was some confusion the group asked 'What are we really fighting about?' He admitted he couldn't provide an adequate answer. He therefore wants to know that everyone is voting on the exact same thing, and asked the Executive Committee to frame the question for better debate at business meetings. Barbara referred Bill to the Motion made at the December General Meeting, which pertains to this issue (*on Page 3 of these Minutes*). Aaron O. (Welcome) added that this debate is recorded in past General Meeting Minutes (*available on our website www.aatoronto.org*) and asked that Reps encourage other groups to send Reps to this forum for better representation.

'Con' Side: Wes B. (Long Branch): The twelfth step mentions "a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps..." we don't have the right to change the very foundation of our program. There have been many Agnostic members who have stayed sober using the 12 Steps. He mentioned that he has a spirituality that he learned in AA. There are 312 12-Steps-based programs; people have wanted to use amended 12 Steps to start other fellowships, and they have. In order to change the Step in AAs, we need a 75% majority of all members to do so. Wes felt that we need to have some criteria in the future about listing new groups with GTA Intergroup. This body has a right to decide what happens in the GTA. Although we are not part of the AA General Service Structure, we follow their suggestions (i.e. General Service Conference, Area Delegates).

'Pro' Side: Bob (Twelve Traditions) mentioned he has been around for about 20 years. He felt that "throwing people out of AA" should not happen. The whole issue is the website; if we list the Agnostic Groups, it should not be a problem. We need a 75% vote to change the 12 Steps; that's not what's being done. Everyone here should read them...they seem pretty innocent.

NEW BUSINESS

1. This **MOTION** is put forward by the Port Credit Group to change the GTA Intergroup Procedures and Guidelines wherever necessary to make it perfectly clear that an AA group needs to adopt the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts of AA; as adopted by the AA General Service Board in order to be recognized as an AA group by GTA Intergroup. Motion made by Eric K. Port Credit, and seconded by Dee T. Streetsville Group. *(Copy of Motion on file) As this Motion requires a change to the Procedures, there will be **discussion next month**, and then the Motion goes back to the groups. There will be a **Referendum Vote in three months**.*

2. **MOTION:** The Trial & Error Group moves that the Widening Our Gateway Group be suspended from any involvement at Toronto Intergroup. This group uses a set of steps other than the original steps used by AA for over 75 years contained in the Big Book and the Twelve and Twelve. Motion moved by Dan H. (Trial & Error) and seconded by Jim O. (Markland Wood). *(Copy of Motion on file). Explanation: Their meetings are conducted in the same manner as the Beyond Belief & We Agnostics Groups, using a set of steps other than those accepted and used by AA for over 75 years. They have been listed and unlisted on the website with these two groups since the last Intergroup meeting. I [Dan] have attended all three of these meetings and they use their own set of steps rather than the 12 Steps of AA. There will be a discussion of this Motion next month.*

3. **MOTION to** change the Guidelines portion of the Procedures and Guidelines to specify use of the current version of Robert's Rules of Order rather the stated specific version by Wes B. (Long Branch) and seconded by Mike B. (Bloordale). A vote was taken and the **MOTION CARRIED**.

CLOSING REMARKS: Barbara asked that the chairs from this meeting be stacked 8-high and placed at the back of the room. She wished all present a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned with the Responsibility Declaration..

NEXT GENERAL MEETING: Tuesday, January 31 at 8 p.m. at Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, 230 St. Clair Ave. West (west from St. Clair subway station on the Yonge line). The meeting will be held in the Flora McCrae auditorium.