

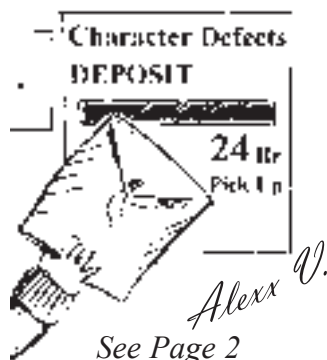


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50 Years

Congrats to Kaye H., of Thornhill Group, on her 50th Anniversary on June 18th ... story next month!



Scarborough Group's 50th Anniversary

The Scarborough Group started on June 17, 1953, and continues to keep its doors open every Friday night. I am an alcoholic, my name is Bob D., an active A.A. member of the Tuesday Collier Group in Barrie, Ontario. By grace, found, and abundant good fortune...due solely to the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous...its people, its program, and its prayers...my last drink was July 17, 1958.

Coincident with that date was also my very first A.A. meeting at the Scarborough Group, then located at St. Theresa's R.C. Church Hall at Midland and Kingston Road. It was in the Ave Maria Room. With a lot of vocal emphasis and blasphemy, I had earlier rejected an invitation from a dear friend and drinking companion to join A.A. that particular afternoon having over drank...yet one more time...I experienced a time of gloom, foreboding, helplessness, and abject defeat...not heretofore experienced with such gravity. Now past my thirtieth birthday...unemployed and unemployable...I could see nothing

ahead for me, but the madness and blackness of raging alcoholism.

The isolation, guilt, and bitterness intensified as I continued to drink...only to reflect upon (surely, the unseen hand) that my friend met at something called an A.A. Group Friday evenings. In that desperate moment I telephoned him...he came and scooped me out of the downtown

bad; and felt indescribably rotten would surely be an understatement. And yet I was welcomed with a cordial greeting, dignity, and with such a thoughtfully expressed concern. Would you let us help you? To this day, I am still impressed with that. Indeed, the meeting went on...and on...and on.

The Chairman chaired; the readers read (most everything that was ever printed); the speaker spoke; and my attention span was next to nil. Given the start of my own agony, I thought that the meeting would never end!! Being drunk and trying to act sober is very hard work...and something, because of A.A., I have never had to do since. The formal meeting was then over and I was now on the recovery end of A.A.'s most glowing-



Scarborough Group
3756 St. Clair Ave East (Just East of Brimley)

Toronto booze can and I was off to my very first A.A. meeting. En route to the meeting, my upper most thought was...now look what I've gone and done...if things aren't bad enough...I'm now adding A.A. to the mine of my dilemma. And couldn't wiggle out of it!! To say that upon my entry, I looked bad; smelled

ly practiced principle...compassion when I was caringly taken aside and made feel welcomed...in spite of my condition. There weren't many ladies in A.A. in 1958...Scarborough Group had three and it was one of them who was so kind and

See Scarborough Page 2

“Oops-Broke His Anonymity Again!” Dan McK.'s 40th Anniversary!

“This is Danny McK. Oops, broke his anonymity AGAIN!”

This is how I was introduced to this remarkable man by my then-sponsor Tom G. Danny was born in Montreal “a while back” (as he puts it). He was a classic “Montreal Irish Early Achiever” - kicked out of high school, in and out of jail while still in his teens, deported from the US before he was 16, etc. He worked as a cabbie in Montreal, which explains his driving style,

and for the railroad - in fact he and some pals stole a train once (after a few drinks in the yard) to get a quick ride to the railroad yard gates! After that, he decided to go on a Drinking Tour of Canada - he and a pal were going to B.C. He woke up in Banff after a three-day blackout - his pal had an interview lined up for a surveyor's job on the Banff-Jasper Highway, but was too drunk to make the interview. Danny went and pled his pal's case and got hired as well - neither of them knew anything

about surveying! Turned out the Foreman was in A.A. and “recognized the type”.

After a “Trial & Error” test market period with A.A. in both the US and Canada, Danny found himself in Toronto and started going to meetings regularly. June 7, 1963, is his Dry Date and the Young People's Group at Yonge and Summerhill was his first Toronto Home Group. Despite being an “Early Achiever” and the Group name;

See Dan McK Page 4



When it comes to carrying the message, I seem to have a lot of difficulty. I am not a great A.A. speaker, as I stumble through my talk not knowing what part of my story comes next. I have had a few successes, though, just by passing a few words of encouragement to a newcomer.

Once I was reminded that my help was received and did a lot toward helping a newcomer who was at a group reunion in Ottawa, when that newcomer took the trouble to e-mail me a few days later, thanking me for my help. And that is all it was, a few encouraging words I said to her between meetings.

I guess my carrying the message is pretty limited, but I keep

The Editors Say...

Carrying The Message

trying. I do think that one way many of us can carry the message is through **BETTER TIMES** articles, especially the current series about the steps. Just reading over the past **BETTER TIMES** issues, I can see that there are a lot of members submitting articles, mainly based on their experiences, and not necessarily coming from professional writers.

Perhaps that is the way many of you can carry the message. There are a lot of subjects that you could write about such as a story about one of your group members who has reached a cer-

tain period of sobriety worthy of an article similar to many you have seen in **BETTER TIMES**. Many of these articles were written by friends who saw something special in these long-time members and put their thoughts on paper.

At the moment **BETTER TIMES** is looking for articles on Steps Eight and Nine. Care to pass on your experience with one of those? Say about 300 words each. Is your group celebrating a special Anniversary and you think the group history to date is worthy of an article? Four hun-

dred to 500 words will put it on page 1. A similar article about your experiences in attending special events such as information A.A. day, or a regional reunion or conference would also be welcome.

Even short 100-200 word articles that could be used as fillers can help carry the message.

These could also include letters to the editor, which have not been seen very often in recent issues. Now get out your pen, typewriter or computer to carry your message in print. You can e-mail to btimes@aatoronto.org or joe@vex.net

Love In Sobriety.....Joe C.

The Sixth Step

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character

It has been a quite a few 24 hours since I made this plea to the God of my understanding "Please help me. I am not ready to die yet". These words are as clear to me today as the day I said them. That day I became willing to have God remove my obsession for alcohol. It was many, many months before I even really understood what a character defect was. I realized from step meetings talking to my sponsor and watching the winners in the program, that for me to stay sober there had to be a willingness to change. I slowly started to understand what was meant by character

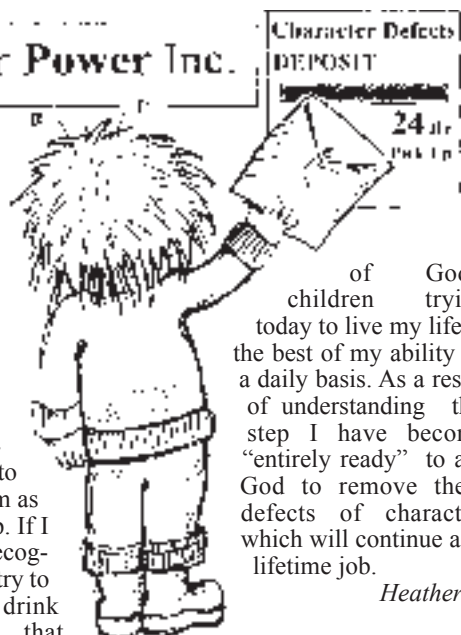
monster EGO gets in the way and I want to run things my way. This is always when things get off track and my life becomes unmanageable.

Today, I am aware of trying to be the best person I can be on a daily basis and I try to ask God on a daily basis to keep me aware of some of my character defects that are still with me and can rear their ugly heads when I least expect it.

As I read and studied Step Six, I understood that I only need to become willing to strive for perfection. I realize that I will never be perfect. I am one

defects, feelings of superiority, sloth, procrastination, greed, gossip, need to control, dishonesty, lust, and the list goes on.

I understood that I had to be willing to identify all my defects of character and ask God to help me remove them as they kept popping up. If I was not willing to recognize my defects and try to change, I would drink again. Sometimes that



of God's children trying today to live my life to the best of my ability on a daily basis. As a result of understanding this step I have become "entirely ready" to ask God to remove these defects of character, which will continue as a lifetime job.

Heather T.

Scarborough, from Page 1

caring to me even as sick, sad, and a sorry mess as I was. Over my right side came a lighted cigarette (we all smoked then) over my left side a half full cup of coffee with the rather reassuring words... "Don't worry if you spill it."

Then from that dear lady came the most comforting and reassuring words I have ever heard...with two taps on my left and this precise language choice... "You are going to be OK, you know."

Curiously...and it can only be the virtue of The Unseen Hand, I didn't vocally and hurtfully react by stating my plight...no money; no job; no car; no hope, along with a pending fraud charge. Rather...I believed her (then and now) which got me started on the A.A. path of recovery with a lifetime of good living to follow. Although the *Scarborough Group* was not my group, I was in attendance most Friday nights...and happily so!! I certainly got to know all of the active *Scarborough Group* members, relish the memory of their words and ways. Most are deceased but to this day they still cast a long positive shadow of hope into my life.

I attended the *Scarborough Group* many years after that first meeting and began my journey in the rooms of A.A.

The co-founders of the group were Alice Archibald, Agnes Treble, Allan Smith, Herb

Gordon, Bud Boyd, Roy Walters and John McD. All are deceased except John McD., who is living in retirement in Grand Bend, Ontario, to my best knowledge. The *Scarborough Group* had 21 very active members including the co-founders above. The *Scarborough Group* is very near and dear to my heart and I so look forward to sharing my message at the anniversary June 20, 2003.

May the *Scarborough Group*...50 years later...continue to thrive and flourish with the most noble of all objectives...to carry the message of hope to a suffering alcoholic.

God Bless You!! With much love and appreciation. Bob D.

BETTER TIMES

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Archives Alley

Publishing the Big Book

In the early days of AA, deciding to publish a book was a means of acquiring some income for Dr. Bob and Bill W. and to publicly acknowledge the help they could offer to alcoholics. Both men were fully engaged in working with alcoholics and had insufficient revenue to finance such a venture.

By 1937, Bill W. and Dr. Bob were in severe financial straits. Only Bill's wife Lois held down a job in a department store in Brooklyn. Dr. Bob's medical practice had ground to a halt and never fully recovered. Bill's future looked grim. The main reason that he went to Akron, Ohio was to gain control of a tire company that included a position for him. That fell through.

Bill W. wrote, edited and rewrote the Big Book. Ruth Hock, A.A.'s first secretary, typed it and circulated it to AA members from New York to Akron. Many outside of AA offered excellent guidance.

Hank P. was the first alcoholic that Bill W. sobered up in New York. He was a high-powered energetic entrepreneur and he engineered the publication of the book. His solution to financing the book was to sell shares for \$25 each (\$300 today). The shares called 'Works Publishing' eventually came under AA's control and the book was published in April 1939. The cost of the book was \$3.50 (\$40.00 today). Few of them sold.

Bill W. was offered \$1500 (\$18,000 today) in advances by Harper Bros. publishers for the book. It was a huge sum for an unpublished author. The newly formed Alcoholic Foundation was not supportive of AA's self-publication but Bill and Hank were adamant. Ironically, their only concern was a run-away best seller and how to deal with the flood of requests for help. That didn't happen overnight.

Today, our book "Alcoholics Anonymous" is one of the greatest successes in the history of publishing.

Bernadette MacL.

Recent Medallions

Jim N., 20 yrs., *Anniversary Group*. Apr. 30

Cheryl M., 20 yrs., *Aurora Group* May 17

Paul N., 1 yr., *Anniversary Group* May 21

Alan G., 5 yrs., *Islington Group* May 30

Upcoming Medallions

Dan McK., 40 yrs., *Half-Century Group* June 7

Greg W., 1 yr., *East York Group* June 10

Ruby R., 5 yrs., *Pathfinders Group* June 11

Kaye H., 50 yrs., *Thornhill Group* June 18

Tracey B., 5 yrs., *Islington Group* June 20

Glenn S., 10 yrs., *East York Group* June 24

Gerry C. 1 yr., *Islington Group* June 27

Lise R., 10 yrs., *Islington Group* August 8

Group Anniversaries

Scarborough Group 50 yrs, June 20, Speaker Bob D.

Special Events, Conventions & Conferences

More information on all these events is available on the bulletin board at the GTA Intergroup offices (address below).

Founder's Day 2003. June 6 - 8. Panels, meetings, 12 Traditions skit, dance, motorcade and more. AA, Al-Anon and Alateen. Pre-registration only: \$15US. Package plan: meals, room, registration, bus tour, and "Big Meeting" ticket: \$150US. Other options available. See Web site: www.akronAA.org and click on Founder's Day.

Ninth Annual Great Lakes AA Gathering, Manitoulin Island Territory. Hosted by Natives of North America & Wikwemikong First Nation. Theme is "A Sense of Belonging". June 6-8. \$30 for Speakers, Camping, Dance etc. Contact: Peter 705-859-2565, email shawedake@amtelecom.net, or call 234 for details.

Experience, Strength & Hope, Trillium Convention, June 20-22. International Plaza Hotel, Toronto. Full AA program. Info: Murray M. 905-897-8444 or John L. 905-272-3016.

Fourth Year "Fun Summer Sober Cruise" on Monday July 14th. 6.30 pm. \$40/person covers 4-hour Cruise & Dinner (Vegan Cuisine available). Yankee Lady II leaves foot of Jarvis St. & Queen's Quay 6.30 PM sharp. Advance Tickets Only! Call Mary S. 416-763-7477 for Tickets.

Happy Joyous and Free, Midland & Area One Day Round-up 2003. Sat. July 19, 9:00 am to 5:15 pm. Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre, 185 Yonge St., Midland ON. AA & Al-Anon. Round-up: \$10. Lunch: \$10. Ticket info: Richard-rbj-plj@csolve.net.

3rd Annual Step 11 Picnic and Family Day Location: Centre Island (Olympic Island) Saturday August 9th, noon to 6pm. Featuring Speaker Meetings. Admission Free. Further Info: Rick 416-231-1977. or John 416-234-8493.

Have You Heard?

Strength, Kindness, Honesty, Sharing, 12th Annual Fireside Sobriety Gathering and Open

Air Powwow. Aug. 28 - 31. Six Nations, Third Line, near Hagersville, On. Meetings, Dances, Powwow, Talking Circles, Corn Roast: Advance: \$20. At Gate: \$25 or \$8/day. Elders 65 and over free. Children under 12 \$2. Toronto contact: Leslie K. 416- 850-7356 or e-mail FiresidePowwow@yahoo.com

Cornerstones of Sobriety Hamilton and districts AA 35th Annual Autumn Leaf Round-up. Sep. 12 - 14. Sheraton Hamilton Hotel, 116 King St. W., Hamilton, On. Full AA, Al-anon, and Alateen programmes. Registration, dance & banquet: \$55/early bird (before July 31) \$50. Registration only: \$23/early bird: \$18. Alateen registration and dance: \$10. Info: Senga 1-905-387-5935. Hotel: \$129 single or double. 1-800-514-7101.

Miracles of All Ages, 8th Annual Mississauga Fall Round-up. Sat. Oct. 11. 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church, 3625 Cawthra Rd., S. of Burnhamthorpe. \$15 including cold buffet lunch. Info: Scott M. 905-454-5008, Mare M. 416-605-4295, or Steve A. 416-236-4914.

New Meetings

Friday Uptown Open Meeting, 8:00 pm. Holy Rosary Parish Hall, 354 St. Clair St. W. at St. Clair W. subway. Front entrance, downstairs. Non-smoking.

St. Joseph's Street Service Meeting.(C) Mondays 7pm, St. Joseph's House, 6 St Joseph's Street. One Block N. of Wellesley, West of Yonge. Enter through front door. Speaker meeting, followed by discussion. Non-smoking. No wheelchair access.

Meeting Changes

Downtown 5:15 Group Relocated to 95 Wellington St. at York, 9th floor

Meetings Discontinued

Keep It Simple Discussion Sunday 7 p.m.
Glen Watford group Wednesday 8 p.m.

Meetings Needing Support

Mount Dennis Group, Mon. (C), Thurs. 8:00 pm. (West)

How to reach us

Submit group news, medallions, other event notices, letters to the editors, or articles to **BETTER TIMES (before June 10 for the July issue)** by mail: c/o GTA Intergroup, 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 202, Toronto, ON, M4P 1K5, by fax 416-487-5855 or by e-mail to btimes@aatoronto.org. Only signed submissions with a means of contact will be accepted. Subscriptions available. Call Alexx at 416-487-8110.

Members present: There were 58 group reps, 6 DCM's and 8 Subcommittee Chairs Present.

The meeting was opened with a moment's silence followed by the Serenity Prayer, The 12 Traditions were read by **Bob D., Weston Group**.

FINANCE REPORT: **David H., (Erin Mills), Finance Chairperson.** David called attention to 2 documents available to Floor members at this meeting, **Bar Graph** and **1st Quarter Report.** David explained these at length and then entertained questions from the floor.

Dominic A., (Glenholme) and **Mark C., (Yorkville)** had questions which were adequately fielded by David.. A motion to accept was made by **Pat P. (Sponsorship)** seconded by **Mark C., (Yorkville).** Carried.

ELECTIONS:

New Operating Committee Chairperson (by acclamation) **Dan McK., (Half-Century)**

New Operating Committee 1st Vice Chair (by acclamation) **Dennis O., (Thorncliffe Park)**

New Operating Committee 2nd Vice Chair (by acclamation) **Bill H. (Bellamy)**

3 positions for **Junior Operating Committee members** were needed. New

Intergroup Report



Junior members (by acclamation) **Dominic A., (Glenholme), Mark C., (Yorkville)** and **Pat P., (Sponsorship).**

LIAISON REPORTS:

Editor's note: to conserve space the Intergroup Minutes have been shortened to fit in Better Times as Intergroup Report, Details of individual reports may be had by contacting 234.

Reception: **Mike E., (Kingsway).**
Operating Committee 1st Vice Chair. Mike explained Reception Procedures to Reps.

Grapevine: **Scot MacD. (Bloordale).**

Grapevine Chairperson. Grapevine Survey was passed around to members, which groups can fill out and return to their District Table. A revised Grapevine price list/order form is available.

Access Ability: **Peter B., (Keep It Simple).** **Operating Committee 2nd Vice Chair.** This Committee is looking for a Secretary. Please contact 234.

Website: **Peter B., (Keep It Simple).** Peter invited Website Alternate Chair **Christina M., (Welcome).** to address the floor. There was an all time high number of hits on the website. (4500). The committee is requesting members / volunteers to audit the site. Those interested e-mail postmaster@aatoronto.org

Public Information: **Mary Ann N., (Welcome).** Upcoming commitments, "Breakfast In The Park" (July - District 10) and a Health Fair at East York Town Centre (District 18).

Archives **Bob D., (Weston Sunday Open).** **Archives 1st Vice Chair.** This committee is in the process of editing the "History of AA in Ontario" book.

Reg called up the incoming Operating Committee Chair **Dan McK.** to formally close the meeting. Dan thanked members for this service opportunity. The meeting was adjourned with the **Responsibility Pledge.**

Janet S. Celebrates 25 Years

On Thursday, May 8 a special meeting was held at the *Kipling Group* for Janet S. who celebrated 25 years of sobriety!! Janet is an action person at her group as her fellow members will tell you. She has been a trusted servant in every position at the group level and is presently serving as Intergroup Rep. She has for the last two years taken on the responsibility of putting on an A.A. meeting at the Women's Detox Center.

Her many sponsees will quickly tell you that she is always there for them. Her wise counseling and fine-tuned sense of humor have saved the day on many occasions, proving once again that the A.A. program works if you work it.

As with most alcoholics, Janet has had many obstacles to overcome. Working in the education field, she was determined to achieve her Master's Degree, which she did with flying colours. She has had to face and cope with the loss of her dear friend and her own health problems from time to time but she has the 12 Steps to rely on, the loyal support of her Group at meetings, her many A.A. friends and of course The 6 Pack.

Alcoholics Anonymous never said it would be easy, but possible a-day-at-a-time. It is possible to stay sober for one day and those days have added up to 25 years for Janet.

"The Six Pack"

Dan McK, from Page 1

he felt he was still "Too young to be an alcoholic" and he wanted to meet some younger women - bars were OUT - where to go?? *Jack R. (Kingway Group)*, his first Sponsor sent him off to Church Dances! He was looking for "A nice, naive Irish Girl; straight off the Boat" who wouldn't know anything about him! Well, he met Maureen and the rest is history! She straightened him right out - they had a small family (five children and ten grandchildren, so far) and he got heavily involved in Service. In fact, he was one of Bill Wilson's "Bodyguards" at the 1965 World Conference in Toronto-he had to STOP people from shaking hands with him - 5,000 handshakes a day is too much!

Since then, Danny has been involved in Service on a continual basis - doing whatever needs to be done at 234 or elsewhere.

Among many other things, he was one of the founding members of the *Half-Century Group*, worked closely with Dr. Bell and his daughter Linda on AA's involvement at Bellwood, has Chaired Intergroup, the CPC Committee, he, Tom G. and others got **BETTER TIMES** started and he used to print it as well; and he was ORC Chair in 2002. Now he's Chair of Intergroup again!

He and his wife Maureen have also run a "Home Detox" for years-welcoming and helping the still-suffering alcoholic into their own home. His 40th Anniversary is on June 22nd, 2003 at St. Timothy's Church, 21 Leith Hill Road (one block north of Sheppard and one block west of Don Mills Road), at 7:30 pm. Speaker Bob D. from Tuesday *Collier Group* in Barrie. I am truly proud to call him my Sponsor and my friend.

Kevin M.