

BETTER TIMES

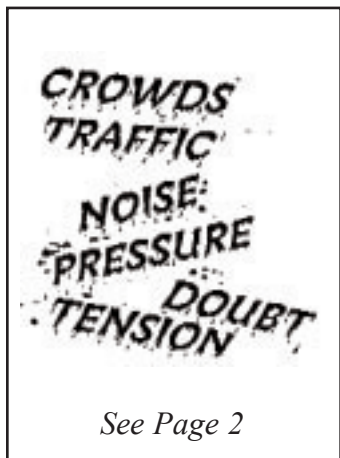


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When I came into AA, I asked how much I should put in the basket?

See story, right...



What is Intergroup?

What is Intergroup? There seems to be a lot of confusion amongst the membership about what Intergroup is, what it does and who is responsible for its support.

It is the responsibility of all of us who have been around for a while to try to explain the reasons for and functions of the Intergroup Office to newer people. Group Representatives and District Representatives need to ensure that they are passing on this information.

Intergroup is the central office for AA in the greater Toronto area. It first started on January 28, 1944, at 1170 Yonge St. It is now at 234 Eglinton Ave. East. This is where 84 greeters a week answer the 2,000 calls a month. It used to be 3,000, but the web site is getting 4,000 visits a month, leaving the greeters more time to talk to newcomers. The Intergroup office is where the archives are displayed, and where literature is available. This is where visitors to Toronto come to find out how AA works in Toronto. This is where the Meeting Lists are produced and kept up-to-date. This is where all the Committees meet, for example, the CPC Committee, the Archives Committee, and the Finance Committee, to name just a few.

Obviously, all this costs money. What happens to this money? Well, there is rent, salaries for one full-time and two part-time employees (as per Tradition 8), materials, taxes and the expenses for the committees to carry the message.

Whose responsibility is it to pay for these services?

According to the Seventh Tradition, it is the responsibility of every member of AA. We are self-supporting through our own contributions. The Twelfth Step says that part of our recovery is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. To do that, we need literature, meeting lists, and people at the other end of the phones.

When I came into AA, I asked how much I should put in the basket? I was told to put in the price of a beer, if I could afford it. Today, a beer costs around five bucks. So, if you have a FIN, THROW IT IN.

Some Groups are not taking on their share of the responsibility

There seems to be a perception of “them” and “us”. “Us” refers to the members and “them” refers to InterGroup. In reality, InterGroup is “us”. There is only one AA. Each Group is supposed to send a member to Intergroup to be a liaison between the Intergroup Committee (elected by the Group reps) and the Groups. Total transparency happens when members attend the meetings and participate in what is going on. Some of these Group Representatives have no idea what is going on.

Who gets sent to Intergroup? Members with ten, twenty, thirty years? NO. We send new members with one year

Office Expenses	Committee Expenses & Miscellaneous	
Tax\$7,000	Operations	Better Times
Rent\$21,000	Finance	ORC
Phone\$7,000	Archives	Info AA Day
Hydro\$15,000	Corrections	Winter Season
Insurance\$1,800	Treatment	Self Support
Office supplies\$6,000	Twelfth Step	Grapevine
Postage\$3,000	CPC	Access Ability
Salaries\$65,590	Public Information	Website
Payroll expense ...\$15,000		
Contract workers ..\$15,000		
SUB TOTAL: ...\$160,560	TOTAL:	\$18,067
GRAND TOTAL \$178,623		

ity and that seems to stem from certain resentments. RESENTMENTS ONLY HURT US. It appears that some of these resentments are over things that happened as long as ten years ago. Some people did not agree with the way some things were done and these resentments developed and grew and got passed on. That does not HELP THE STILL-SUFFERING ALCOHOLIC. Some people don't seem to know that the Intergroup Committee changes every six months.

How much is your Group contributing?

of sobriety because they are eager to work and they do their best. But they don't always understand the Traditions, some of them have never heard of Robert's Rules of Order, but when they make a mistake, we blame Intergroup! Who are the people at Intergroup? YOU ARE THE PEOPLE AT INTERGROUP! Attend your Group business meetings - if you don't have business meetings, start one. Get to know how it works. AA works from the ground up - from the Group level the bottom of the triangle.

The Editors Say...

Service - Our Third Legacy

I recently attended a District Service Day and found out how many opportunities for service are available. Some of these need to be filled right away, and I will mention these now.

There are many openings in District 22 for Alternate Chair Persons. If you are in this district, contact your GSR for a list of openings that need to be filled. Then go to your district meeting and find the details and requirements.

Another urgently needed service you can perform is to become a committee member for **BETTER TIMES**. This requires attendance at the editorial committee meeting once a month. Or you can become a writer or reporter for **BETTER TIMES**, which can be done at home.

The main stories are Group histories to mark a Group anniversary. These stories highlight the history of the Group from its beginning. Members who have been around since its beginning can often provide some interesting anecdotes about the early days of the Group. Looking back, some of these stories are part of the growing pains of the Group.

These articles usually run about 400 words and are used as a main article on page 1. They can also be followed with the announcement of the date that the anniversary is being celebrated.

Another type of article we use highlights the history of members receiving long-term medallions. These also tell a little of the history of the member receiving his/her medallion. This can also include the date of the medallion presentation or this date can be included in the upcoming medallions column on page 3. Histories of long-time members are usually 300-350 words. We also announce and cover upcoming Events and Activities of interest to the fellowship, to stimulate attendance and involvement. (*See Have You Heard?*)

Finally, there are odds and

ends known as fillers, which could be anecdotes you heard at a meeting, or they could contain an example of AA principles in action. These can be 150-200 words long.

Most importantly, all submissions must be made before the deadline, which is the 10th of the month prior to the month of issue. The date and the author's name should be included, as well as where the author can be reached.

So all you would-be authors, get out your pen, or your typewriter, or your computer, or contact your GSR or District and take your place in Service. The rewards are great...a more meaningful and enjoyable sobriety.

Love In Sobriety.....Joe C.

The Eleventh Step

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

With Step Eleven, we enter a fourth dimension of existence! We begin to sense the Flow of His Spirit and Power into us. We become God-conscious and we begin to develop a vital "sixth sense."

"Sought through prayer and meditation" Prayer is talking to God. He is my best friend, my confidante, my constant companion. It is never He who moves but I.

Meditation is listening and God speaks to me in as many ways as I care to listen. What used to be a hunch or inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind.

Step Eleven has saved my life! My doctor asked me to have a bone density test and as a second thought, I asked if a mammogram could be done at the same time. He said "yes" and arranged both tests within a few days.

As a result of the test, it was suspected I might have can-

cer. A biopsy proved positive and I underwent surgery and therapy, with a 95% chance of becoming totally free of the cancer!

"To improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him" Deep down in every

prayer I have ever used was "Please God show me the way."

One of my first sponsors got sober in 1945. He, with a few other members, drove 100 miles to attend meetings at 1170 Yonge Street. They were willing to go to any length to stay sober.

This wonderful sponsor told me that the steps would take me when I was ready and that I had to work at living the steps one day at a time for the rest of my life.

The principle of Step Eleven is awareness. As we live this step we become more aware of the world in which we live. We become more efficient, and we do not tire so easily because we are not burning energy as we did when we were trying to arrange our life to suit ourselves.

It works, it really does. With love in the fellowship of the Spirit,

Ruth K.



human being is the basic knowledge and concept of God – the great reality is within us.

"Praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out" The simplest and most rewarding

Intergroup from Page 1

Intergroup is exactly what the name implies - inter-group. Representatives of all the groups together to conduct the day-to-day business of AA in Toronto in order to ensure THAT WE CARRY THE MESSAGE TO THE STILL SUFFERING ALCOHOLIC. THAT IS OUR ONLY JOB!

*Dan McK
Chair, Operating Committee*

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Opinions expressed in BETTER TIMES are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Greater Toronto Area Intergroup.

Archives Alley

HANK P.

Hank was an oil executive from New Jersey. He was a tall, redheaded, former athlete, with good looks, drive and enthusiasm. It has often been said that the Big Book would never have been written without Bill W., nor published without Hank. Hank was the unofficial co-founder of the New York AA Group, and his story can be found in the first edition of the Big Book, under the title "The Unbeliever". The story was dropped from later editions. Although an avid and devoted member of AA, Hank remained sober for only four years.

Resistance to publishing the Big Book was fierce by some AAs in 1939, but opposition gave way when members' stories were to be included. Many hoped their stories would be used, but it was truly Hank's optimism that carried the project over many hurdles during that time.

Hank P. returned to serious drinking several months after the publication of the Big Book. His business, "Honor Dealers", had collapsed and he was beset by financial troubles. He suffered through a period of anger, depression, and paranoia and blamed Bill W. for all his many problems. There was the failure of his business, his wife's impending divorce against him; and his secretary's decision not to continue their relationship.

Despite the many mean-spirited actions that Hank perpetrated against Bill, Bill's reaction was a sterling example of how AA truly worked. He loved Hank and was deeply hurt by the loss of Hank's friendship and Hank's continuing effort to discredit him. However AA owes a debt of gratitude to Hank, for although sober for only a few short years, he contributed greatly to AA. Hank died at the age of 54, after a long illness associated with his chronic alcoholism.

Bernadette MacL.

Have You Heard?

Recent Medallions:

John M. 20 yrs., *Bellamy Group* Oct. 6.
John K. 25 yrs., *Pathfinders Group* Oct. 8.
Fred 15 yrs., *Lighthouse Group* Oct. 10.
John S. 1 yr., *Bellamy Group* Oct. 12.
Isabelle B. 25 yrs., *Lighthouse Group* Oct. 17.
Christine O. 5 yrs., *Keep It Simple Group*, Oct. 26.
Andy P. 1 yr., *Bellamy Group* Oct. 27.

Upcoming Medallions:

Glen B. 10 yrs., *Back To Basics Group* Nov. 7
Crista C. 1 yr., *Westmoreland Group* Nov. 11.
Ron L. 25 yrs., *Pathfinders Group* Nov. 19.
Elizabeth S. 1 yr., *Saturday Morning Discussion Group* Nov. 22.
Barb N. 1 yr., *Aurora Group* Nov. 23.
Arnold P. (formerly of *Lawrence Park Grp.*) 35 yrs., *River Drive Park Group* (Newmarket) Nov. 24.
Patrick H. 1 yr., *Glenholme Group* Nov. 24.
Tommy C. 1 yr., *Glenholme Group* Nov. 24.
Sue D. 5 yrs., *Don Valley Group* Nov. 25.
Debbie B. 15 yrs., *Thorncliffe Park Group* Nov. 28.
Sam B. 1 yr., *Glenholme Group* Nov. 29.
Thomas D. 20 yrs., *Don Valley Group* Dec. 2.

Things We Cannot Change:

The following AA member died recently:
Jim S. *S.O.S. Group* September 25

Group Anniversaries:

Pathfinders Group. 35 years, Nov. 5.

Special Events, Conventions & Conferences:

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

East York Roundup Saturday Nov. 1, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. St. Columba Church, 2723 St. Clair Ave. (East of O'Connor Drive). Al-Anon Family Panel, Women's Panel, Long-Timers "Ask-It-Basket", keynote speaker, fellowship, pot-luck supper. Admission 7th Tradition at the door.

Archives Breakfast The 19th Annual Archives Breakfast will be held Nov. 9, at the Oasis Convention Centre, 1036 Lakeshore Road. Tickets available at 234, through your Intergroup Rep., and at the door. Cost \$22. Speakers: Ann M., Ridgetown, Ont. and Ben W., *Thorncliffe Park Group*. Chairing will be Bob D., of Barrie, Ont. who recently Celebrated 45 years sobriety. On display will be many archive memorabilia.

Winter Season Open House Sponsored by Toronto Intergroup, Thurs. Dec. 25, 2003, at Emmanuel-Howard Park Church, Roncesvalles and Wright Ave. (WEST) Doors open at 9 a.m. Food served at 11 a.m. Two meetings 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Everyone Welcome.

New Groups:

Newcomers Meeting (C) Friday 7 p.m. (SUBURBAN NORTH) St Mary's Anglican Church Hall, 10030 Yonge Street, at Major Mackenzie, Richmond Hill, Topic Discussion. NO SIGNERS, non-smoking, Wheelchair access.

Meeting Changes:

Richmond Hill Discussion Group (C) Wednesday

(SUBURBAN NORTH) New time: 8 p.m.

Richmond Hill Group (O). Friday (SUBURBAN NORTH) New time: 8 p.m.

Rule 62 Group (C). Saturday 8 p.m. (CENTRAL) Discontinued.

Meadowvale South Group (O). Thursday 8:30 p.m. (SUBURBAN WEST) Relocated to

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 293 Queen Street South, Streetsville.

Birchcliff Group (O). Thursday 8 p.m. Discontinued.

Gift Of Life (O). Thurs. 11 a.m. (NORTH WEST) Now open as of Oct. 9. Time changed to 1:30 p.m.

St. Lawrence Group (C). (CENTRAL) Wed. 7 p.m., meeting held in kitchen on second floor.

Steps to Serenity (C), (EAST) Sat. 8 p.m., time changed to 7 p.m.

Punjabi (English meeting). Friday 8 p.m. (SUBURBAN NW) time changed to 8:30 p.m.

Wednesday Lunch Group Meeting (O). Wed. 12 noon (CENTRAL) additional directions: steps from subways. Meeting Details: Speaker Meeting, followed by discussion.

First Things First Disc Group (C). Tues. 1:30 p.m. (SUBURBAN WEST). Name Changed To **First Things First Meeting (C).** Add Details: Last Tuesday of the month, Tradition.

Bypass Group (C). Mon. 8:30 p.m. (NORTH). Time changed to 8 p.m., (men's meeting)

Meadowvale South Group (O). Thurs. 8:30 p.m. (SUBURBAN WEST) Address change: St. Andrews Presbyterian Church 293 Queen Street South, Streetsville.

Downtown 5:15 Group (C). Wed. (CENTRAL) meeting details to read: 4th FLOOR ROOM 400, Beside Elevators.

St. Lawrence Group (C). Wed. (CENTRAL) Meeting time changed to 7:30 p.m.

Lawrence Plaza Disc. Group (C). Wed. 8 p.m. (NORTH) has a LOCATION CHANGE: Amesbury Community Centre, 1507 Lawrence Ave West, west of Keele.

Brentcliffe Disc. Group (C). Sun. 10:30 a.m. (CENTRAL) Name Change to Donwood Group.

St. Josephs (O) Mon 8 p.m. (WEST) at Se. Joseph's Hospital HAS BEEN DISCONTINUED.

Markham Stouffville Hospital Tues 7 p.m. (SUBURBAN NE) now BACK ON at hospital

Scarborough General Hospital Tues. 7 p.m. (NORTH EAST) now held in Room 5 downstairs.

St. Lawrence Group Wed 7:30 p.m. (CENTRAL) DISCONTINUED

Bypass Group (C) Mon 8 p.m. NORTH. New Start Time: 8 p.m. New Location St. Edwards Church, 73 Churchill St., Willowdale.

How to reach us

Submit Group news, medallions, other event notices, letters to the editor or articles to **BETTER TIMES** (before Nov. 10 for the Dec. issue), mail to 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 or e-mail joe@vex.net. Only signed submissions with a means of contact will be accepted. For subscriptions call Alexx at 416-487-8110.

Chairperson's Opening Remarks (Dan McK.)

Finance Report: Ron S. (North Toronto), Finance Committee member, remarked that the income and expenses for August leave a deficit of \$7,609 for the month, which makes for a deficit \$48,278. Ron stated that "We're still on target to meet budget"; of course this depends on how well Gratitude month comes through.

Liaison Reports

ARCHIVES: Bob D. (Weston Sunday Open), **Ist Vice Chairperson**, talked about the Annual Archives Breakfast to be held Sunday, November 9 at the Oasis Convention Centre (Mississauga). (See *Have You Heard*, page 3, for details.)

CORRECTIONS: Matti H. (Wanstead), **Operating Committee Liaison**. A Secretary is needed for this committee. Volunteers are needed for West Detention.

CPC: Mary J. (Saturday Morning Disc.), **Operating Committee Liaison**. There is a new supply of Beginner's Pamphlets, folders and holders. CPC was present at the Metro Convention Centre for the American Psychological Association conference, and will be present at the Legal Profession conference to be held on October 23-25.

GRAPEVINE: Scott MacD. (Bloordale), **Grapevine**

Intergroup Report



Chairperson Grapevine displays will be at the Mississauga Fall Roundup on October 11, a 50-year medallion for Billy J. at the Bayview Group, and regularly at the Sunday Morning Men's meeting. Please contact this committee if you would like a Grapevine display at your Group.

INFORMATION AA DAY: Robb W. (Streetsville), Info AA Day 2004 Chairperson. The date has been set for Saturday May 15,

2004. The 2004 Info AA Day will be the 25th anniversary of this joint effort between the 9 GTA General Service Districts and Toronto Intergroup. All input / ideas from members are welcome.

NEWSLETTER: Dennis O. (Thorncliffe Park), **Operating Committee Liaison**. An open invitation is extended to all those members who have stories and articles to write pertaining to the AA fellowship. **New committee**

members are welcome!

ONTARIO REGIONAL CONFERENCE: Steve H. (Pine Hills), **ORC Committee member**. The 2004 ORC will be held on **March 19, 20, and 21** at the Royal York Hotel.

PUBLIC INFORMATION: Kevin M. (North Toronto), **Chairperson**. The **P.I. Speaker Training Seminar** will be held on Saturday October 25 9 a.m. at Glebe Road United Church. Anyone is welcome to attend.

RECEPTION: Mark C. (St. Joseph St. Meeting), **Operating Committee member**. Mark commented that about 200 members are needed to 'staff' the service committees at any given time, including at the district level. He made an appeal to those present to carry the message of involvement in service work to their Group.

TWELFTH STEP: Donna M. (Thorncliffe Park), **Twelfth Step committee member**. This committee is still looking for more volunteers for the phones.

WINTER SEASON OPEN HOUSE: Matti H. (Wanstead), **Operating Committee Liaison**. Winter Season Open House will be held all day on December 25 at Emmanuel-Howard Park Church (Roncesvalles and Wright Ave.). Volunteers are needed on Christmas Day to help and serve food.

Agincourt Acorn Group – 30 Years

This Group, which was founded on November 7, 1973, by the late Stan J., became known as the Group where you got double AA – double the love, double the fellowship and double the help. Particularly help for the newcomer. Since its inception, this Group has always met at the same location, at Knox United Church hall, at Shepard and Midland Ave.

We are called the "Acorns" because Stan knew that sturdy oaks from little acorns grow. Also because we are sometimes a little nuts, but just in a fun way.

We also coddle our longtimers (one has 49 years sobriety) and encourage them to stay around as an example to new-

comers. We are very proud of our membership in Alcoholics Anonymous and our celebration of 30 years as a Group, which will be celebrated on November 11, 2003, at 8 p.m. Knox United Church hall, 2569 Midland Ave.

Maureen J.

Letter to the Editor

Greetings!

I am the editor of the North Orange County (CA) Central Office newsletter, *The Anonymous Times*. Our managers, Babs and Roxy, returned from the Central Office/Intergroup Seminar with samples of all your wonderful newsletters. I have been pouring over them and having quite an enjoyable time doing so!

They are all fabulous and unique and have given me mountains of new ideas for our

own newsletter. I would like to propose that we newsletter editors form a "network", where we share ideas, tips and even stories, jokes and articles. If possible, we would like to be included on your newsletter mailing list. If you are interested in receiving a copy of *The Anonymous Times* or just want to say hi and introduce yourself, please reply with your name and mailing address. Thanks again for a great read!

Gratefully Yours in Service,
Jenni J. North Orange County Central Office

We Cannot Not Change

How comfortable it is when we can be in charge of our changes – when they are voluntary! Yet often change comes as a surprise, and this is when we are truly challenged. It may be a job

transfer, a promotion, a new boss – or a layoff. Some people fare well in rocky boats and enjoy the chaos of uncertainty; others fear the unknown. If we can accept that every molecule in the human body replaces itself every seven years, why do we have such difficulty recognizing that some beliefs and ways might also need to change every seven years? Our old photo albums reveal how quickly our physical bodies change. Mental changes come more slowly and may be more difficult to identify. Recall some of your "I used to thinks."

Resisting change does not bode well in a world that is constantly changing. We must ask ourselves what we really fear about change and use change as an opportunity for growth. Just for today, I will acknowledge that I will continue to change.