

# BETTER TIMES



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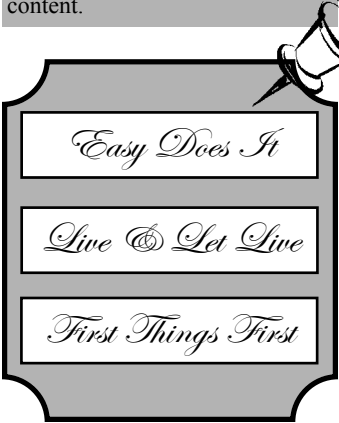
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**BETTER TIMES**  
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*Opinions expressed in BETTER TIMES are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Greater Toronto Area Intergroup.*

**How to reach us**  
 Submit group news, medallions, other event notices, letters to the editor or articles to BETTER TIMES (before the 10<sup>th</sup> of the prior month of issue), by mail, fax or email. Only signed submissions with a means of contact will be accepted. For subscriptions call Alexx at 416-487-8110. Not responsible for hyperlink content.



## Sober Surfing

The BETTER TIMES recently, asking what we meant about the line in our Masthead “Not responsible for hyperlink content”. We explained that we occasionally will report on websites not associated directly with Toronto Intergroup or Alcoholics Anonymous, and therefore, we are not responsible for their content, nor the contents of any sites accessible, or ‘linked’.

Some of you may know this story, but some time ago, the BETTER TIMES ran an article on “The Web”, and provided some interesting sites. One of these sites ‘linked’ to another, and the occult-type content rather offended some members. Since then, armed with a disclaimer, we take care to include information about Web Sites that would be interesting, beneficial and non-offensive to our readership.

There are three web sites, however, that do not require our concern in this matter, for they are considered official ; our own GTA Intergroup site, www.aatoronto.org, General

Service’s www.aa.org, and the Grapevine web site www.aagrapevine.org. It is these three I will expand a bit on.

**AA Grapevine aagrapevine.org**  
 This site is fairly recent to the World Wide Web, and contains a vast amount of information on the classic Meeting In Print. It offers a glimpse at the current issue, with links to a few articles, and some history on the magazine. There’s a bulletin board for members to post thoughts and ideas, an area dedicated to the humorous ‘Ham on Wry’, and a Shopping Centre for ordering all Grapevine materials.

You can also subscribe to the archives of the site, allowing access to all articles contained in the magazine since it’s inception in 1944. The cost for membership is a meager US\$15.00 per year.

**Alcoholics Anonymous www.aa.org**  
 While not as interactive as the sister AAGrapevine.org, this site provides information on everything you needed to know about AA but were afraid to ask (and if your still afraid, then ask

your sponsor). All pamphlets are available in digital format, a section is dedicated to the Archives, and you can even view those Public Service Announcements without waiting for a TV Special to air.

One of the new features of this site is to view the First Edition of the Big Book in it’s entirety online (including the stories). This is a great reference tool when you need to look something up (say, for instance, if you’re writing a By the Book article and your book is upstairs where the baby is sleeping).

**Toronto Intergroup www.aatoronto.org**

I was fortunate enough to be part of the original Committee who formed Toronto’s Website, and like to think in a small way that I helped make this dream a reality. The site had already been constructed for some time (through countless hours of some dedicated AA’s like Myles W.) and my part was simply assisting in the protocol and logistics of making it happen.

My dream was to be able to  
*See Surf Page 2*

## Toronto 2005 Update

In 1995, thirteen cities bid to be the host of A.A.’s 2005 International Convention. Four cities (Atlanta, St. Louis, San Antonio and Toronto) were short listed by G.S.O and in November 1996, Toronto was chosen as the 2005 site.

Since then, GSO has been busy putting together a program that includes:

- A Thursday night ‘Party in The Park’.
- Friday and Saturday night dances
- 200 meetings Friday through Saturday
- Marathon meetings in English, Spanish and French
- A Friday night opening ceremony which includes a march past of the flags of participating countries

- Big meetings in the SkyDome Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning.

As A.A. members of the host city, our job is to greet attendees as they arrive, get them to where they want to go, and make them feel welcome during their entire stay in Toronto. To make sure this happens a Local Host Committee has been established to organize a volunteer force of approximately 4,000 A.A. members to meet and greet:

- At airports, train and bus stations
- In hotel lobbies
- In subway stations and on sidewalks
- At shuttle bus stops
- At the Convention Centre and SkyDome

- At the registration desks
- At meetings
- At dances and parties

Volunteers are also needed to decorate the convention areas, to handle the marshalling duties for a Fun Run, to help attendees with special needs, and to assist those who speak languages other than English.

The excitement is building! 2005 has arrived and we are only 5 months away from the big event. Let’s show the World that Toronto A.A.’s know how to have a good time!

For more information, check out the web site at www.toronto2005.ca

*Barry W.  
 Chair, Toronto 2005 Local Host*

We all recognize these words - "The Sun will Rise" - they're read at the beginning of most meetings. They're particularly appropriate this Saturday morning, early in the New Year, as it snows like hell! However, I am sure the sun HAS risen somewhere as the "White" is a lighter colour! We start this editorial stuff early as we have to put **BETTER TIMES** together at the start of each month to get it to you by the end. Our distribution is mainly done at the monthly Intergroup Meeting, so if your Group isn't getting it, ask your Intergroup Rep to arrange for a Group Subscription!

I'm writing this from the perspective of a still relatively New Year and you will read it in late January or early February.

### Surf from Page 1

look up a meeting online, and this is one of the many features available to Toronto AAs and visitors. The site provides basic information on AA, order forms for literature at 234, back issues of **BETTER TIMES**, Intergroup General Meeting Minutes, pages dedicated to Committees, Groups and Events, and contact information for Greater Toronto Area Intergroup.

As the site explains, it is always under construction, with features added consistently by a dedicated set of volunteers. Our recent Intergroup meeting announced the work to involve

## The Editors Say...

### The Sun Will Rise....

By the time you read this, I hope that the Volunteer Signup Meeting for the World Convention 2005 on January 23rd will have been a great success - many willing hands are needed and the Event is getting closer every day. We have committed some space in every issue of **BETTER TIMES** right up to July to keep you apprised of the planning, preparation and needs of the many Volunteer Committees involved. This is a BIG event requiring BIG efforts - everyone can help!

Of course, we'll continue to try to give you as much informa-

tion as possible about other events and activities of interest to the Fellowship, interesting history from "Archives Alley", articles on Group Anniversaries and special Long-timer Medallions (if they did it, so can you!) and so on.

Occasionally we miss Notices in "Have You Heard" - we're only human - and if a piece of paper gets passed to us at Intergroup or a Meeting it CAN get lost. I have apologized for this before, because we know that it can be very important for a person to see that "special" Medallion Announcement -

especially for newcomers.

The safest way to get these Announcements to us is by email. That way, we have a record of it at 234 and it goes right into the infamous 'HYH File' (which drives Alexx crazy every month!).

Back to the "Sun Rising..." it's intended to remind us that the world goes on, no matter WHAT may have happened to us. The best thing to do is "Roll with the Punches", learn from our experiences - both good ("Hey, things DO get better!") and bad ("Won't do THAT again!") and keep trying to live a better life.

And, as it's still early in 2005 as I write this, I wish you all the best for the New Year.

*Kevin M.*

Districts, and I believe it's only a matter of time before we can order literature or even participate in online meetings.

As mentioned, there are other sites on the World Wide Web. A search for "Alcoholics Anonymous" on the Google search engine (no, I'm not endorsing them, it's just an example) resulted in over 500,000 results. Some are fantastic resources, some aren't. I personally look for sites that are informative, 'We'-centered and follow the Traditions. The three I just mentioned do just that.

Happy surfing.

*Gord MacK.*

### Sandy W. 30 Years of Service

In the winter of 1990 I was painfully scraping my alcoholic bottom. By this point I had literally forgotten there was a solution. I had been introduced to A.A. in 1975 and again in 1978. I met Sandy W. on both occasions, however, I wasn't ready to surrender. On that cold lonely day in 1990, I ran into Sandy 'coincidentally'. He didn't recoil from my unkempt appearance and pungent smell, and simply said, "It's good to see you again, Lynn! How are you doing?"

We chatted for a while, which was the first normal human conversation I had experienced in a very long time. Sandy didn't bring up A.A. meetings at first, but simply gave me very kind and humane treatment. This compassionate acceptance reopened the door of my heart to

A.A., and I began to attend meetings with Sandy. Thank God he walked in with me, for I was honestly not able to come back solely on my own.

Sandy has been involved in this kind of 12th Step work for his entire 30 years in AA. He started many meetings that are still in operation today. The work of people like Sandy W. ensures there is a place for newcomers to come to. Sometimes, all a newcomer really needs is to be treated with humane kindness for hope to be rekindled in their hearts.

Sandy W.'s 30 Year Medallion celebration takes place on Feb. 5, 2005 at The Sanctuary, 25 Charles St East., at 2.00 pm. Congratulations on your 30 years, Sandy! And thank you!

*Lynn B.*

## By the Book

### The Grouch and the Brainstorm

This quirky little phrase sounds like something out of a children's fable collection, and yet, it's right out of our book. On page 66, in the midst of describing our essential Fourth Step, these two villains are identified as Public Enemy Number One.

"If we were to live, we had to be free of anger. The grouch and the brainstorm were not for us. They may be the dubious luxury of normal men, but for alcoholics these things are poison."

I don't believe I was the first in AA to have no idea what this paragraph meant, and in order to understand where a

Regular Joe can go with some uncertainty, yet an alcoholic like me was never to venture, I first had to understand the meaning of these two words.

If you don't own a dictionary, there are several sources online. From Dictionary.com, I determined that a grudge was more than a resentment. It is defined as "a resentment strong enough to justify retaliation." Now THAT I can relate to.

I sincerely doubt that Bill W. was referring to "a sudden clever plan or idea" when he used the word brainstorm. Though my Ego may argue, "clever ideas" are not my forte.

More likely, he was referring to the second definition of "a sudden, violent disturbance of the mind". Now that sounds a little more familiar.

Armed with this information, I now understand a little more what resentments are, and what they are capable of inside me. Does this allow me to believe that letting go of these things will help me, or even be possible at all?

Probably not.

The Fourth Step contains an

element of Faith that is sewn into the entire Program of Recovery. At this point, my theory must be that by identifying every Grudge and Brainstorm in my life, and by writing and sharing these, the 'letting go' will come as I begin to see the part I played in creating them.

As Fear "set in motion trains of circumstance which brought us misfortune", Faith will "enable us to match calamity with serenity".

*Bible Gord.*

## Archives Alley

To the best of her recollection, Ruth Hock, the first secretary of AA, met Bill W. in January of 1936. She remembered him being a little over a year sober.

When Ruth applied for the secretary position at Honor Dealers, she was prepared for a position in a business that distributed products to independent gas station owners. The office had just opened in Newark, New Jersey at 17 William Street. She was hired on the spot and began work immediately.

Eventually, the majority of the work was being relegated to the writing of a book. The first afternoon Ruth worked, a visitor to the office met with Bill. Through an open connecting door, she heard fragments of a discussion about drunken misery, a miserable wife and that drunkenness was a disease. She was taken aback at the hard-hearted approach of Bill W. and Hank P. (New York's AA #1) to the visitor which was tempered by outbursts of laughter at his drunken episodes. Ruth's initial take on the 'business' was that if they spent as much energy and enthusiasm on Honor Dealers as they did on the drunks, they might get somewhere. The activities of Honor Dealers slowly but surely declined and there was more and more correspondence with drunks and more of them showing up in the office.

Ruth Hock's recollections are peppered with the wonders and miracles that resulted from a work position she simply happened into. From it, she was given the ability to laugh at herself and to accept the puncturing of her own self-importance. This is one of the basic steps in A.A. To quote her directly: "I believe it makes every individual more likable and lovable whether alcoholic or not. What little I have been able to absorb has made life much simpler for me, I know."

*Bernadette MacL.*

## Have You Heard?

### Recent Medallions

**Alex S.**, 1 yr., *Scarborough Centenary*, Jan.1  
**Colin N.**, 30 yrs., *Scarborough Centenary*, Jan.14  
**James S.**, 1 yr., *Westmoreland*, Jan.25

### Upcoming Medallions

**Bob S.**, 20 yrs., *Glenholme*, Jan.31  
**Sean McD.**, 15 yrs., *Westmoreland*, Feb.1  
**Jen H.**, 1 yr., *Rexdale United*, Feb.3  
**Sandy W.**, 30 yrs., *the Sanctuary (25 Charles St E - 2 p.m.)*, Feb.5  
**Bruce M.**, 25yrs., *New Anchor*, Feb.10  
**Michael B.**, 10 yrs., *Rexdale United*, Feb.10  
**Ted T.**, 15 yrs., *Rexdale United*, Feb.17  
**Tom McP.**, 10 yrs., *Rexdale United*, Feb.24  
**Ruth F.**, 10yrs., *New Anchor*, Mar.10  
**Rita S.**, 10 yrs., *Brampton New Life*, Apr. 4

### Meeting Changes

**DON MILLS GROUP** (O) Wednesdays CENTRAL: **NOW AT 8:00 p.m.**

**HERE and NOW Meeting** (C) Saturdays CENTRAL: **MEETING AT 7:00 p.m.**, in addition to the 10:30 a.m. meeting on the same day, at the same location.

**BEGINNERS MEETING** Saturdays 3 p.m. CENTRAL: **temporarily CANCELLED.**

**All meetings at the SCOTT MISSION** (Tuesday & Thursday noon, and Saturday 2 p.m.) **DISCONTINUED.**

**U of T DISCUSSION** Mondays 5:30 p.m. CENTRAL: **DISCONTINUED.**

**U of T DISCUSSION** Thursdays 5:30 p.m. CENTRAL: **NEW LOCATION & NEW TIME - 6 p.m. at OISE Building, 252 Bloor St W, 2nd Floor, room 213.** Rotating Big Book / 12 & 12 discussion.

**KEYS TO SERENITY** (O) Mondays 8 p.m. CENTRAL: **MOVED TO TUESDAY NIGHT, same time & location.** Thursday meeting (C) remains on Thursday night.

### New Meetings

**Discover Recovery** (O/C) Fridays 7:30 p.m. NORTH: 191 Yorkview, 1 block south of Finch at Bathurst. Rear door, basement (meeting in Boardroom). Big Book study (please bring your own Big Book). Meeting goes until 9:30 p.m.; smoke break in between.

### Meetings Needing Support

**PARKDALE SUNDAY MORNING MEETING** Sundays 11 a.m. WEST. Needs support in the form of Chairpersons, Speakers, Steering Committee volunteers, and general attendance. Contact Sean (416)516-9769 if you can be of help. *See flyers.*

**MOUNT DENNIS GROUP** Thursdays 8 p.m. WEST. 71 Guestville Ave, S of Eglinton, W of Weston Rd. *See flyers.*

### Special Events, Conventions, and Conferences

**GTA Intergroup Correctional Facilities & Treatment Facilities SERVICE DAY** on Saturday, January 29, 2005, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Glebe Rd. United Church, 20 Glebe Rd E, Toronto (N of Davisville subway). **DAY IS FREE.** Featuring: coffee, snacks, lunch, speakers, panels, literature, & Fellowship. *See flyers.*

**41st International AA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE** in Las Vegas, NEVADA February 10 - 13, 2005. Information & Registration: [www.iaawc.org](http://www.iaawc.org). Questions? Contact Jane G (702)258-7321 or Cathy B (702)248-9899.

**SPACECOAST ROUNDUP** February 10 - 13, 2005 at the Holiday Inn Oceanfront Resort, Melbourne, FLORIDA. Contact (321)724-2247 or [intergroup@aaspacecoast.org](mailto:intergroup@aaspacecoast.org).

**9th Annual SOBER SAILORS BIG BOOK STUDY** in the Caribbean on February 13 - 20, 2005. Contact [Sober\\_Sailors@mail.vresp.com](mailto:Sober_Sailors@mail.vresp.com).

**24th Annual FLOWER CITY FELLOWSHIP CONVENTION** March 4, 5, and 6, 2005 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Rochester, NEW YORK. Call 1-800-233-1234 for Hotel bookings, or contact Rochester Area Intergroup, 10 Manhattan Square Drive, Suite D, Rochester NY 14607.

**54th Annual MIRACLES RALLY** "Never Alone Again" in VICTORIA, BC at the Da Vinci Centre April 8, 9, & 10. Contact Eric (250)385-8329, Nick (250)595-7812 or contact [corrine4@shaw.ca](mailto:corrine4@shaw.ca).



Harvey's bitter, drunken version of "Let It Snow" brought down the house at what turned out to be his last office Christmas party.

**They Keep Going, and Going, and Going, and ...**

As the regular contributor responsible for submitting the Intergroup Report, I am supposed to take the monthly General Meeting minutes as gospel. While it clearly states that this meeting was held Tuesday December 24th, the fact that I received them on the 21st creates some doubt. Also, I don't know of even a die-hard Intergroup Fan that would show up on Christmas Eve. Perhaps Danny McK.

A couple of weeks before that, though, Lynn used the Intergroup Meeting forum to reiterate that, "The bottom line is carrying the message." He believes that Sub-Committee structure and communication between Intergroup and Groups at large have eroded. While I'm positive that "prayerful reflection" wouldn't hurt, I believe this particular situation warrants a bit more action.

'Action' is also the theme of the last ditch "We Can Make It" letter from the Finance Committee, noting we were still over \$9,000 in the hole as at November 2004, and short \$8,000 from last year's Gratitude Month Campaign contributions.

Self-Support has had a "pathetic turnout" recently, reminiscent of the occasions in the past where this Committee eventually disbanded and needed to be reformed. While it is difficult at the best of times to encourage membership in Sub-Committees,

**Intergroup Report**



seems to have the toughest time acquiring and retaining members.

The beginning of a new year brings along the Spirit of Rotation (unless, of course, you're the Editor of **BETTER TIMES** or the Energizer Bunny) and several Committees are without a chairperson. They include Archives, Corrections and Grapevine (although Scott is doing the Bunny thing until one is found).

The Public Information Committee reported the potential total audience of the Holiday TV Special on Drinking and Driving, when three 30-second AA Public Service Announcements were aired for free, was between 150,000 and 200,000.

The Twelfth-Step Committee is

burdened" with only four members and eight vacancies. With a tidal wave of calls into 234 expected for the 2005 International Conference, it is hoped this call for action will be met soon.

The Website Committee is looking to expand the scope of the site to include information on Districts, but with their own vacancies of Secretary, Alternate Chair and Alternate Webmaster, they certainly could use a little help.

The Operating Committee gathered recently to review the Procedures and Guidelines. While their meeting was considered constructive, this is an ongoing process.

And finally, the 'Hazelden Books' issue finally came down

to a decision. Again. The actual motion from the St. Jamestown Group to allow Intergroup to offer books other than Conference Approved literature included a clause, whereby only Groups that requested alternate recovery related materials would be offered this service, out of respect for each group's autonomous conscience. Not surprisingly, the motion was defeated. Again.

I am reminded of the 80/20 Rule as it applies to our Third Legacy, Service. Twenty percent of our membership completes eighty percent of our Service work. This latest account of the business of GTA Intergroup and its sub-Committees, particularly that of Self-Support, indicates this Rule is closer to 95/5. It's ironic that part of the mandate of Self-Support is to encourage Service, and they have the most difficulty attracting volunteers.

The result is a select few die-hard Service Junkies approaching burn-out mode, as some pass their third and fourth terms in positions. The rest ride along the recovery wave, content that they had at least put their own chair away last week; oblivious to the Spiritual-like experiences rewarded to those who try to give back what they so freely received.

I have just one question. Where are all the people who told us how Grateful they were at Candlelight Meetings recently?

*Gord MacK.*

**GREATER TORONTO AREA INTERGROUP**  
**MONTHLY BOARDROOM BOOKINGS FOR SUBCOMMITTEES FEBRUARY 2005**  
 \*Subcommittees meet at the Intergroup Office (234 Eglinton Ave E, Suite 202) unless indicated otherwise.

- Mon. Feb.7 . . .SELF-SUPPORT COMMITTEE . . . . .7:30 p.m.
- Wed. Feb.9 . . .CORRECTIONS CTE . . . . .7:30 p.m.
- Thurs. Feb.10 .GRAPEVINE COMMITTEE . . . . .7:00 p.m.
- Fri. Feb.11 . . .ARCHIVES COMMITTEE . . . . .7:30 p.m.
- Sat. Feb.12 . . .WEBSITE COMMITTEE . . . . .1:00 p.m.
- Mon. Feb.14 . .CPC COMMITTEE . . . . .7:00 p.m.
- Tues. Feb.15 . .FINANCE COMMITTEE . . . . .4:30 p.m.
- OPERATING COMMITTEE . . . . .7:30 p.m.
- Wed. Feb.16 . .**BETTER TIMES** NEWSLETTER CTE . .7:30 p.m.
- Thurs. Feb.17 .TREATMENT FACILITIES CTE . . . . .7:30 p.m.

- Sun.Feb.20 . . .ACCESS ABILITY COMMITTEE . . . .11:00 a.m.
- Monthly PHONE TRAINING SESSION 1:30 p.m.
- Mon. Feb.21 . .PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE7:30 p.m.
- Tues. Feb.22 . .GENERAL MEETING of GTA Intergroup  
at Glebe Rd. United Church . . . . .8:00 p.m.
- \*Thurs.Feb.24 . \*ORC 2006 Committee (tentative date) .7:30 p.m.
- Fri. Feb. 25 . .TWELFTH STEP COMMITTEE . . . . .6:30 p.m.
- Mon.Feb.28 . .INFORMATION AA DAY CTE . . . . .7:30 p.m.

\* meeting will be held at 234 from now on (every last Monday of the month)