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BETTER TIMES

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Wes B. Celebrates 50 Years of Contented

In the AA program there is a saying called "Remember When" and Wes B. sure does. On February 28, 1956 he left home to deliver fuel oil to three locations in Deseronto, ON. He told his wife that he'd be home in time to celebrate his son, John's eighth birthday. He wasn't.

But Wes never made it home. Instead, he spent the day in the hospital with a broken neck and numerous lacerations. After drinking all day with a friend, Wes had rolled his tanker truck off of Highway 2 near Sand Hill, ON. After his hospital release, Wes took time to recover at home – taking comfort in what he loved best by drinking alcohol through straws.

On October 4, 1956, Wes was taken to his first AA meeting in Belleville, Ontario by his wife, Margaret. The speaker that night was Jack H. Wes was able to identify with Jack. Wes admitted that he had a problem with alcohol. When Wes left the meeting he realized that, through no will of his own, the desire to drink had left him.

October 4, 2006, Wes B. celebrated 50 years of contented sobriety!

Wes moved from Napanee to Toronto and then to Oakville where he joined the White Oaks Group of AA. Wes & three other members (Irving C., Don G., Al D.) decided that a new group was required in Oakville. On Sept. 4, 1964, the Hopedale Group of AA was started. Forty-two years later this group is going strong.

While driving oil tankers in Oakville, Wes suspected another driver, Joe O'B. had a drinking

Downtown Discussion Group which is still open.

Realizing that the north area of Burlington required a new open meeting he went into action. In mid-1997 he started a meeting at the Brant Hills Church in Burlington. The meeting moved to St. Gabriel's R.C. Church and on Dec. 8, 1997, The Brant Hills Group was formed with Wes B., Tom S., Jim M., Sharon M. and John P. as its founding members. The Group now has 35 members and is well attended.

He could not have achieved 50 years without the help of the AA fellowship and its members. Wes has been giving back what was so freely given to him for the entire length of his sobriety. He has helped countless alcoholics that were still suffering. Wes still attends

four to five meetings per week and he continues to help & sponsor many alcoholics.

Best wishes, Wes, from your friends in The Brant Hills Group and all your other friends in the fellowship of AA who you've helped stay sober "One Day at a Time".

Jim M., Brant Hills Group.

Wes B. 50 Years

problem. Wes gave him a copy of the AA Big Book & took him to meetings. Joe O'B., with some 45 years of sobriety, is the speaker for Wes' 50th Anniversary Meeting.

In 1972, Wes moved to Burlington, ON, and very quickly joined the Glenhaven Group of AA. In the early 1990's, Wes & four other alcoholics started the

I Gave at the Office

Every one of us has probably used this tired cliché at one time or another. Yet, in our world, contributions are not just financial. Giving time to the office is important too. The magic of AA in its simplest form is "one alcoholic talking to another". There are 180 phone shifts every week filled by volunteers. The Gratitude envelopes did not assemble themselves. Members work on sub-committees and meet monthly in the boardroom.

At this time of the year we have Thanksgiving, and Gratitude month. There are many things in recovery to be grateful for besides sobriety and peace of mind. You may have received something in the mail from "234" already. Your contributions at this time make it possible to continue carrying the message of recovery to the next suffering alcoholic for the next 12 months. Our seventh tradition reminds us that it is us and only us that bear the responsibility for making this possible by mixing money and spirituality in the proper proportions.

We all recite the Responsibility Declaration occasionally. If we want the hand of AA to be there in the future, then we owe it to those who come next to have the opportunity we had. This opportunity is sort of like passing the torch from one generation to the next. The light from that torch must never die out. In order for that not to happen, we all can give a little so that the next suffering alcoholic can receive a lot.

Jim A., Thursday East End, D18 Self Support

Step Eleven
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.

THINK ! THINK ! THINK !

To me this slogan is the start of my program of recovery from dependence and addiction to alcohol.

The dictionary meaning of 'think' is: *to be of opinion; to form and entertain an idea of; to imagine to oneself; to consider; becoming mentally aware of.* The last meaning mentioned here, in my case, depends on God's grace. I vaguely remember now, that I was only occasionally mentally aware of the ill effects alcohol had on me. But I was of the opinion that people and circumstances were to blame—not me. As the full mental awareness of my problem unfolded, I found I was powerless in controlling it.

For me *becoming mentally aware of* translated into: You are what you think you are. All of us, before coming to AA, did some sort of stinking thinking, which got us deeper in trouble with our family, friends and jobs.

I love to remember the story about the salesman who found himself stranded in the country side with a flat tire and no jack to help him. *It's late in the evening and this salesman decides to walk to a farm house to borrow a jack. As he is walking he*

imagines the farmer saying to him: "How come you city folk are so dumb—forgetting to carry a jack?" And the salesman imagines his courteous reply: "No sir, my son cleaned out the car this morning and forgot to put the jack back." And as he walks towards the farm house, the lights come on. "Oh God!" thinks the salesman, "he's having supper." Yet, as he nears the farm house the lights go out. "No, he's probably going to bed early." As he considers this, the salesman finds himself standing on the veranda with his finger on the door bell and a voice from the upper window greets him: "What can I do for you?" and the salesman shouts back, "you can shove that jack for all I care!"

For me, the story shows how my lack of awareness often turns into stinking thinking – and this often turns into unhealthy and inappropriate actions and behaviours. Even in sobriety I must be diligent in watching my thinking – avoiding retaliation or anger whenever a situation baffles or scares me; it's a way of life I have been taught through the 12-steps and through a conscious relationship with my Higher Power.

Ronny H, Bellamy Group

25TH ANNIVERSARY KEEP IT SIMPLE GROUP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS FOUNDED NOVEMBER 5TH, 1981

In honour of this special occasion, we will be hosting a social before the meeting and we extend this invitation to all members past and present as well as the friends of Keep It Simple Group.

Date: Sunday, November 5th, 2006
Location: St. Stephen's Church
 3817 Lawrence Avenue East (just east of Scarborough Golf Club Road)
Time: Doors Open at 5:30
Theme: The Importance of the Home Group

Refreshments will be served. This is an Open Meeting and is open to all who wish to attend.

CORRECTION: Our apologies to Ronny H. in the publication of 'Fiery Message' last month indicating he had written this article. He has pointed out, he is not the author. Author is unknown.

Bernadette MacL. (ed)

For The Sake Of Discussion

Since this column began I have been surprised by the response – or lack of response – it has generated. Mind you, I know its being read because folks mention specific articles to me.

As the title suggests, material posted here is intended to provoke thought and occasional commentary. More importantly, this space was not designed to be the private preserve of one individual.

Rather, the hope has been that others would provide 'guest columns' or at least alternate views which could be presented in future editions.

In fact, the majority of comments that I have received have been complimentary and usually in agreement with opinions that have been expressed.

While my ego laps up the positive thoughts that have been expressed, nevertheless I am disappointed that I have failed to cause some of you to take issue with my writings and to provide counter commentary for the consideration of the readers of Better Times.

My own experience in this fellowship has been somewhat contrary to the passive response this space has generated.

Any evening I am in the mood for strenuous debate all I have to do is to go to a discussion meeting and throw out a small grenade of a topic. Even better, I can go to a business meeting, light a small fuse, stand back and watch the series of explosions that are sure to occur.

Let's consider a few topics that are sure-fire igniters.

1. For openers, should the Lord's Prayer be said at meetings?
2. Should the 'special' meetings held around December 25 be referred to as "Christmas" meetings?
3. Does even moderate use of "soft" and prescription drugs mean you still don't have a 'dry date' ?
4. During medallion nights should the meeting last only one hour even though we have left the speaker who drove in from Windsor only seven minutes to talk?
5. While we are at it – should medallion recipients each have their own special night? Or should they be required to share it with others with a similar date?
6. Still on medallions – should every reader/secretary etc. be given time to comment on their unique relationship and admiration for 'our hero' or should that be left to the sponsor?
7. If you haven't been even moderately active in a group should you expect a medallion?
8. Should non-AA literature be read at meetings?
9. Should it be for sale at meetings?
10. Should men sponsor women, and vice versa?

Now-you see how easy it is?

I look forward to receiving your comments and column suggestions.

John G., Unionville Group

Hockey Anyone!

We have started up a regular hockey skate for AA members. We have already had one Saturday and the mood was enthusiastic so we decided to rent the ice for the entire year. We were very careful to try and avoid conflict with meeting times of all groups in the Toronto area.

Note: We will also be participating at the end of our season in Windsor's Coffee Cup Hockey Tournament. Last year we had a team participate from Toronto

for the first time in its 33-year history participate in the hamiltoncoffeecup2006 tournament. Toronto was represented with 6 players and no goalie. I'm positive that if the town of Hamilton can have 3 teams that Toronto could ice at least 1 full team this year in Windsor, maybe more. If you require additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Gary W., Twelve Step Group
garyw.12step@sympatico.ca

Archives Alley

Florence R.

There was a great deal of discussion around the title of the Big Book prior to publication. Numerous suggestions were made, one being 'One Hundred Men'. When Florence R. came into AA in New York in March of 1937, that initial title was discarded. Instead, she declared, it should read 'One Hundred Men and One Woman'.

Florence was the first woman to get sober in AA. When she wrote her story of recovery for the Big Book, she was over a year sober. She was the ex-wife of a man that Bill W. had known on Wall Street and she felt that her drinking problem would be resolved after the divorce. That didn't happen. Her ex-husband took Lois W. to visit her in Bellevue and both Lois and Bill took her into their home when she was released.

She moved to Washington, D.C. and tried to help Fitz M. who started AA in that area. (Fitz's story in the first Edition was "Our Southern Friend".) It could not have been easy for her to get recovery in AA in those early days. Not only was AA untried and challenging; it was hostile, uncharted territory for women. Many AA's were 'quick to judge and slow to praise'. Many women find solace with other women in life, but in AA, the women were primarily spouses of AA members. They were said to be doubly resentful towards women alcoholics.

Despite all this, Florence paved the way for the many women who followed. She was in Washington by the time Marty M. entered the program in New York. Florence's story entitled "A Feminine Victory" in the first Edition must have been very encouraging to Marty.

Florence eventually married an alcoholic who did not get sober. She started drinking again and disappeared. Fitz M. found her in the morgue. She had committed suicide.

*Bernadette MacL.
King City Group*

NOTE: Bernadette's account of the first woman alcoholic is a powerful reminder of what it was like to be a woman in a society

RECENT MEDALLIONS

Name	Yr.	Group	Date
Herb D.	20	East York	Oct 3
Bill M.	1	Westmoreland	Oct 6
Bob W.	20	Sunday Scarborough	Oct 7
Finton Q.	5	East York	Oct 10
Frank M.	20	King City	Oct 16
Catherine C.	1	Traditional	Oct 20
Marwyn B.	10	King City	Oct 23
Susan McC.	10	Scarborough Centenary	Oct 23
Henning F.	5	Glenholme	Oct 23
Steve S.	1	Unionville	Oct 25
Jerry L.	35	Recovery Group	Oct 26
Eugene V.	10	Chartwell	Oct 26
Ziggy Z.	1	Westmoreland	Oct 29

UPCOMING MEDALLIONS

Name	Yr.	Group	Date
Mark L.	1	Westmoreland	Nov 9
Barb H.	1	Unionville	Nov 15
Alec M.	1	Aurora	Nov 17
Mary W.	1	Place to Share Aurora	Nov 18
Dan S.	1	Armour Heights	Nov 20
Tom C.	1	Twelve Steps	Nov 22
Jean H.	35	Kingsway	Nov 22
Billy C.	5	King City	Nov 27
Tom S.	15	Saturday Morn Disc	Dec 2
Pat B.	20	Aurora	Dec 3
Jeremy M.	1	Aurora	Dec 5

MEETING CHANGES

FREE SPIRIT GROUP Saturdays 8 p.m. (SUB. NORTH) **effective Oct 7, 2006** will be holding its meetings at the Lake Wilcox Community Centre, 81 Wildwood Ave, Richmond Hill (Oak Ridges).

NEW MEETINGS

TRIAL AND ERROR GROUP C Tuesdays 7:00 p.m. Big Book Study. Mimico Presbyterian Church, 19 Mimico Ave. Royal York and Mimico, South of "GO" Stn.

THE STEP ELEVEN MEETING (C) Tuesdays 12:15 noon (CENTRAL): Calvin Presbyterian Church, 26 Delisle Ave (one street N of St Clair, off Yonge St). Meeting focus: Step Eleven & meditation. BYOC ('bring your own coffee!'). One-hour duration.

LAWRENCE PLAZA DISCUSSION (C) 8 p.m. Thursdays (NORTH): St. Leonard's Anglican Church, 25 Wanless Ave., 2 blocks N of Lawrence on Yonge St. (behind fire station). Step discussion.

MEETINGS NEEDING SUPPORT

MOUNT DENNIS GROUP Thursdays (Closed Step Discussion) 8 p.m. (WEST): 71 Guestville Ave., S of Eglinton, W of Weston Rd. Open Speaker Meeting on Mondays at 8 p.m. *Call 234 for details.*

PORQUOI PAS! GROUP (French-speaking)

with extremely prejudicial beliefs. The sad fact is, around the world, women alcoholics still suffer this stigmatism. As Pushtin, the Toronto International Convention speaker from India, reminded us: women in India (and around the world)

continue to struggle with societal precepts and the desire to stay sober. Thankfully, Alcoholics Anonymous does not enter into this debate. Instead, the ONLY requirement to attend a meeting is a desire to stop drinking – regardless of gender, age, race,

creed, or sexual orientation. Thank God for the singleness of purpose.

*Romana K.
Roxglen Traditional Group*

Have You Heard?

Fridays (C) 8 p.m. NORTH. Lansing United Church, 49 Bogert Ave. at Sheppard and Yonge. *Closed discussion.*

BEVERLY HILLS GROUP Fridays 8 p.m. (NORTH WEST). Greenborough Community Church, 2000 Keele St. N. of Eglinton Ave. This meeting which has been in service for 36 years, is regularly visited by many treatment centre newcomers. The group needs support in the form of Chairpersons and Speakers. *See flyers for details and contact information.*

LAWRENCE PLAZA GROUP 8:00 p.m. Sundays (NORTH) (O). **New time and location:** St. Leonard's Church, 25 Wanless Ave., 2 blocks N. of Yonge & Lawrence (behind fire station).

ST. PATRICK'S GROUP Tuesdays: Big Book study (C), 6:45 p.m.; open speaker meeting (O) follows at 8 p.m. (CENTRAL) St. Paul's RC Church, 83 Power St., at Queen St. East, east of Parliament.

DON VALLEY GROUP Tuesdays 8 p.m. (O); Thursdays 8 p.m. (C) Step Discussion. (NORTH) Advent Lutheran Church, 2800 Don Mills Rd., 2 blocks N of Sheppard Ave. East at Don Mills divide, Don Mills subway (Sheppard subway line).

PARKLAWN GROUP (O) Fridays 8:30 p.m. (WEST) is in need of attendance, Chairpeople, Speakers, and new members. Humbercrest United Church, 16 Baby Point Rd., Jane and Annette St.

CENTENARY GROUP Monday (C) Thursday (O) 7 p.m. (NORTHEAST)

SUNDAY SCARBOROUGH GROUP (O) 8 p.m. (EAST)

FREEDOM FRIDAY GROUP Friday (C) 8:15 p.m. (CENTRAL)

SPECIAL EVENTS, CONVENTIONS, and CONFERENCES

22nd Annual ARCHIVES BREAKFAST sponsored by the Archives Subcommittee of GTA Intergroup **Sun. Nov. 5, 2006** at the Oasis Convention Centre, 1036 Lakeshore Rd E, Mississauga. 9 a.m. coffee, 10 a.m. breakfast, followed by meeting at 11 a.m. Guest Speaker: Mel C., Toledo, OH, 56 years sober. Tickets: \$25 (includes buffet breakfast). Free parking. For more information, see flyers, or contact 234 for more specific info.

Manitoba KEYSTONE CONFERENCE "Let's Keep It Simple" November 3, 4, 5 at the Ramada Marlborough Hotel, Winnipeg. For more info, call (204) 942-0126 (AA Central Office).

30 Years for Service Meeting. Scarborough General Hospital. November 21st. Takes place at the Crockford Wing—Boardroom 1 basement.

Wayne D. (*Golden Mile*) OC Chair invited Brian Murphy of Law Insurance Brokers to attend this September 26th meeting to give us info on Group Insurance coverage. The program is issued on a master policy, with certificates of insurance issued to each group. This allows us to reduce administration and to allow us to get around the minimum premiums that the various insurance companies charge to individual groups. This policy would be open to all members in Ontario.

Jim W. (*Half Century*) gave the Finance Report. Income for the month of August was \$13,182. Expenses were \$15,823, leaving a loss of \$2,641. Last year at this time, we had a loss of -\$6,756 in August.

October is Gratitude Month. Envelopes for people not currently on our mailing list should be taken back to the groups. Wayne D. stated "I have my group's checkbook with me; I have been authorized to donate \$1,000 to Intergroup. I challenge any other group to do the same!"

Barbara H. (*Welcome*) reported on the ORC 2007. The theme of the upcoming event is 'Surrender to Win' and will be held March 16, 17, and 18, 2007 at the Royal York. Pre-register for the early bird draws. There will be four draws: November, December, January, and one in February. The hotel has given a free room night: this draw will be made for everyone who books a hotel room prior to Feb.28.

Ed H. (*Twelve Steps*), Access Ability noted that in July, the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) invited the Access Ability Committee to set up a table at its biennial conference this year in Toronto. On September 16, the Access Ability Committee participated at the Scarborough District 22 Service Day. Access Ability is requesting a change to the new integrated volunteer forms mentioning some of the service options available: "Buddies" list, shut-in request / volunteer; wheelchair and sign language interpreters.

Tim R. (*Chartwell*) Better Times Newsletter highlighted featured articles on Gratitude Month and the upcoming Archives Breakfast.

Roy R. (*Trial & Error*) Kits were made available by Archives



for reps to sign out to their groups containing one Archives Breakfast flyer and tickets for this upcoming event (Sun. Nov. 5 at the Oasis Centre).

There were no CPC or Grapevine reports.

Niels B. (*Hill*) of Corrections stated the Volunteer Coordinator has returned to the Metro West Detention Centre. The 'Bridging the Gap' program is working effectively at Corrections. Volunteers needed for both institutions. Corrections Correspondence is looking for volunteers to write to inmates (men working with men; women working with women). GTA members interested can use the Intergroup Office as their forwarding address.

Diana M. (*Danforth*) announced the upcoming Info AA Day 2007 will be Sat. May 12 at Lansing United Church.

Tom S. (*Saturday Morning Discussion*) pointed out that Public Information has placed 120 Big Books in the library system at the Toronto District schools. There will be a presentation to the U of T medical students by the P.I. Events Coordinator (Bryan W., Rox Glen Traditional). The folder / holder campaign is being initiated with the Police Stations in the GTA. Public Service Announcements are being put on at TV stations.

Jim A. (*Thursday East End*) mentioned that a Self-Support presentation was given at the recent Scarborough Dist. 22 Service Day. Jim thanked all who submitted updated groups lists

and who have donated for Gratitude. EFT (electronic funds transfer) is an alternate monthly method of donation.

Diana M. (*Danforth*) reported for Treatment Facilities. Diana read a notice of motion to state what's going to happen between Treatment and Corrections; "the how of working between the two of us". A long discussion ensued.

Wayne summed up this debate as follows: "We're going to take this as an operational procedure, and the Operating Committee is going to go with the arrangement of the previous committees. Corrections and Treatments Facilities subcommittees will meet at the same time and place, and they will come up with a reasonable way of conducting business for carrying the message to the suffering alcoholic that is dealt with in those two areas. Districts are welcome to send both their Treatment and Corrections Chairs to this meeting, and business should be alright."

Mike K. (*Yorkville*) of Twelfth Step Committee stated that phone volunteers are needed for all shifts. One year of continuous sobriety and one phone training session is needed.

Christina M. (*Welcome*) reported for WEBSITE. A member recently joined this committee and has offered to look at the site to see how it can be improved. A response letter has been written for the Webmaster; a letter that explains how to submit (i.e. a Group Page) for the site. A Chairperson is needed, as Christina will be rotating out of this position.

Marvyn W. (*Streetsville Action*) is WSOH chair. The committee ratified the payment to the Emmanuel-Howard Park Church before Monday, Dec 25. Volunteers welcome! Email wsoh2006@yahoo.ca or contact 234. Tom S., music coordinator for the event, is looking for musical volunteers.

Wayne D. closed the meeting mentioning that Public Speaker volunteers (for P.I.) are needed for elementary schools; that next month's General Meeting is on Halloween, so "costume dress optional" and most importantly, that elections will be held at October's General Meeting.

Respectfully submitted:

*Bernadette MacL.
King City Group*

GTA Subcommittee Meetings—November 2006		
Date	Committee	Time
Wed 1...	Self-Support	7:00 pm
Sat 4...	Winter Season O.H.	1:00 pm
Mon 6...	Corrections + Treatment ...	7:00 pm
Thur 9...	Grapevine	7:00 pm
Fri 10...	Archives	7:00 pm
Sat 11...	Website	1:00 pm
Sat 11...	Spiritual New Year's Cte ...	2:00 pm
Mon 13...	CPC	7:00 pm
Sun 19...	Access Ability	11:00 am
Sun 19...	Phone Training Session....	1:30 pm
Mon 20...	Public Information	7:30 pm
Tue 21...	Finance Subcommittee	4:30 pm
Tue 21...	Operating Committee	7:30 pm
Wed 22...	Better Times	7:00 pm
Fri 24...	Twelfth Step	6:30 pm
Sat 25...	Winter Season O.H.	1:00 pm
..... (2nd Meeting of the month)		
Mon 27...	Info AA Day	7:30 pm
Tue 28...	Monthly General Meeting ..	8:00 pm
Of GTA Intergroup—Glebe Rd. United Church 20 Glebe Rd. East (N of Davisville subway)		
YET TO BE SCHEDULED:		
Ad Hoc Implementation Meeting		