

BETTER TIMES



December 2007
25¢

Contents

Beaches Group Celebrates 60 Years.....	1
The Broken Tree	1
Big Book Promise... ..	2
Why Study AA History?	2
Rick F. Passes.....	2
Thought of the Month	2
Archives Alley	3
Have You Heard?	3
AA is a Spirit	3
Intergroup Report.....	4
This Month's Cartoon.....	4
Life After Splat	4

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Tradition Twelve

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Beaches Group Celebrates 60 Years

The Beach Group was started on December 7th, 1947 by Wilf D. (dry date Aug 8, 1946) and Fred H. (dry date April 13, 1946). The two members who lived in the Beach district felt that an AA group was needed in the area. The Beach Group was an original group because when groups were started they were named after the area in which they were located. Some of the other original groups were: Kingsway Group, North Toronto Group, Danforth Group, Oakville Group and the Lakeshore Group. There were ten original groups that formed the Central Committee (now called GTA Intergroup).

For the first ten years the group met at Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church on Queen St. E. across from the old Woodbine

Race Track. For the last fifty years the group has met at Bellefair United Church on Queen St. E. (east of Woodbine Ave.) opposite Kew Gardens. As the years passed the group's name was changed to the Beaches Group to reflect the name of the area.

In early times, the 7th Tradition basket was often short of money to pay the rent. After the meeting, group members with some sobriety would take up a silent collection to be sure there was enough money to pay the rent.

Today group members like the Beaches Group for the following reasons: there is a lot of stability in the members and the group; there is calmness and serenity present; it's solid and traditional; it's comfortable and friendly. Members come from a large

cross-section of life, all walks of life and with different views. It feels like home with old friends and smiling faces, old-timers, a lot of long-timers, mid-timers and newcomers who keep you on your toes. Members are generous with the 7th tradition. There is great support of women, sobriety and very friendly people in the group. We welcome newcomers and visitors from other groups.

On Tuesday Dec. 11, 2007 at 8pm the Beaches Group will celebrate their 60th Anniversary. The guest speaker will be Audrey G. from the Whitby Group. Audrey just celebrated her 50th year of sobriety on September 13th, 2007 and received her 1st year medalion at the Beaches Group.

Come and join us in this celebration.

Eddy G., Beaches Group

The Broken Tree

Many years ago when my children were small and I first came to AA, I heard a story from a speaker about an unfortunate incident at his home one Christmas. It made me very sad to think that such a thing would happen. The speaker aptly described his children and how the anticipation and expectation that Christmas Eve was destroyed by the drunken antics of one of his buddies who fell into the Christmas tree. Lights, decorations and holiday presents were smashed. As quickly as the tree collapsed, the radiance in their small expectant faces disappeared that beautiful winter night.

A few years later, when I returned to AA for another attempt at sobriety, I wrote a story for a local newspaper entitled "The Broken Tree". It was certainly anonymous as to its source

and yet, an uncle of mine wrote a letter in his Christmas card that year telling me that he was sorry there was such trouble in our home. I took offence immediately. For goodness sake, I thought! The story was not about me.

Yet in reflection, I realize that the alcoholism in our home was much more obvious than I would have liked to believe. Ours was not the 'broken tree' similar to the story I had heard in AA about another home affected by alcoholism. But many years later, when I reflected on the story and what was really happening in my home at that time, I realized that every Christmas in my alcoholic home was filled with a 'broken tree' of some sort. It was either the physical inebriation that came with family, friends or our celebrating the season; or it was the hangover that inflicted the with-

holding of joy from our children during these wondrous and happy days. More often than not, it was the 'dry drunk' behaviour of stressed out, financially strapped, uncontrollable emotions that knew not how to find peace and serenity at this beautiful time of year. The offense I took to my uncle's keen observation was lost on me years earlier in his unwelcome missive. It has only been years later in sobriety and in retrospect that I can hear the wisdom of those written words.

There hasn't been a 'broken tree' in my home for many years now. It has been replaced by peace, serenity, harmony, an abundance of dear friends and new ones; a new way of living that has been promised to everyone who lives in AA, whether it's Christmas time or not.

*Bernadette MacL.
King City Group*

Big Book Promise

We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

We, who have fulfilled the conditions, are promised two things here, a form of freedom and a form of happiness. Not just any form, but a *new* form. My 1940 Webster's dictionary, closest thing I've got to Bill Wilson's era, defines *new* as *recent in origin, modern, novel, lately made, produced, invented, or discovered; recently entered upon or commenced; not previously used; fresh.*

This sounds as if it's going to be like something I've never known before; it won't be the old happiness of sinking into oblivion late at night, or the old satisfaction of getting in the last word. It'll be something different from anything I've known before. It won't be like any of the old happiness I've known.

Scary thought No. 1: How will I recognize it when it comes? I was over 5 days off the booze before I could accept that I'd gone a single day without a drink. It was a new dryness, one founded on hope, not terror. What if my new happiness comes, singly, or hand-in-hand with my new freedom, and I don't recognize them? What if they loom up in front of me, around me,

permeate me, and I'm too busy hunting for something gold-plated or sexy that I let them pass me by?

Scary thought No. 2: *lately made, produced*; It's possible that I might have to produce something, and that sounds like work. It might not be manna floating like snowflakes from the sky, as I have dreamed. What if I have to dig for it, walk for it, or just sit still for a long time, something that seems nigh impossible at times.

Scary thought No. 3: *invented or discovered*; It's possible that it won't come of my work at all; it might come from some other agency. Perhaps there's nothing I can do to speed up production. I'll have to wait for it, getting on with my new life in the meantime.

Scary thought No. 4: *recently entered upon*; I hope this is one of those either-or things. If not, then it sounds to me as if I ought to stumble over these new things pretty soon after satisfying the stated conditions. If I think I've satisfied the conditions (what does *painstaking* mean anyway?) and I don't see the new happiness and new freedom, could this mean that I need to be more painstaking?

Chris G.
Bloordale Group

Rick F. passes

Members of the Newmarket Group grieved the loss recently of a beloved member of their group. Rick F. passed away November 1, 2007 at his parent's home in Queensville surrounded by his loving family. A well-known, active member of the Group for the past thirteen years, his many sponsees will dearly miss him as will his sponsor, Donny S.

His humourous and friendly personality was a mark of his

individuality and he had a gift to make us laugh at our failings as well as his own. Rick had spoken at the ORC within the last few years and was a well-known speaker. His loss has been deeply felt by family, friends and all members of AA. He was 47 years of age.

Rick's last breath on earth was his first breath with God. He touched many and inspired those who had the privilege to walk with him on this journey in recovery.

Bernadette MacL.
King City Group

Why Study AA History?

Why study, or for that matter, even discuss the history of Alcoholics Anonymous? What difference would it make? How could it affect how we live and work our own individual recovery? Who cares?

The Washingtonians, the Oxford Group and others forgot where they came from. Their watered-down changes to their respective movements eventually led to their demise. AA members could take notice and begin to learn their roots.

Group records indicate that in Cleveland, Ohio there was a 93 percent success rate for recovery in the early 1940's. Could these astounding figures be attributed to the fact that only low-bottom alcoholics came into AA? Could they be attributed to the lack of multiple addictions? Both Dr. Bob and Bill had difficulties with substances other than alcohol. Bill struggled with these problems until his death in 1971. Why did they stay sober?

The original members of AA, between 1935 and 1939 went to only one meeting per week, and that meeting wasn't an AA meeting - they were Oxford Group meetings. They got well and recovered. Why? There was no 90-in-90 back then. It is not even mentioned in the first 164 pages of the Big

Book. There were no conventions, retreats or treatment centers as we know them today. There weren't even the 12 Steps until 1938. Why did they stay sober, on a continuous basis, until their deaths?

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous promises a changed life, removal of obsession, removal of fear and being "rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which we have not even dreamed." Were these people who wrote the book long-term members of AA? Did they have decades of recovery behind them which gave them the wisdom to write such a "prescription for a miracle?" The longest term of sobriety for those who wrote this book was just over four years. They didn't have the benefit of daily meetings, many didn't have telephones and there were no 28-day treatment centers. The study of the history of AA will show you what it was that worked so many wonders.

Strengthening the fellowship: Hopefully, this continuing open discussion will not only serve to strengthen your personal recovery, but also begin to strengthen AA as a whole. Revolving Door Recovery will eventually lead AA towards the fate of the Washingtonians and the Oxford Group. For the sake of the future generations of alcoholics, I pray that AA remain strong.

Submitted by Betty M.,
Erin Mills Group

Thought for the month:

If you can't be a good example then at least be a horrible warning.

Archives Breakfast 2007

The 23rd Breakfast, which supports the Archives Committee in its preservation of GTA archival material, was held Sunday, November 04, 2007 at the Oasis Convention Center in Mississauga. 200 plus attendees enjoyed a historical presentation by Amy Filiatreau, our GSO archivist from New York along with the delicious buffet. A poignant commemorative silence was held at the opening of the meeting when AA members called out names of those who have now passed on. Amy pointed out that she 'works for us'. Three important people in her life were affected by the disease of alcoholism. Her father, her 'hero', has been sober in AA all of her life.

In New York, Archives documents the history of AA at a national and international level. It is the repository for information of AA archival past dating back to the 19th century. It connects the cumulative experience, strength and hope of all who came before. It fields numerous requests submitted; to date in 2007, there have been 1600; normally 7 requests per day. Typical questions are about the AA co-founders, early pioneers and the Lord's Prayer.

Audios of Bill W., Dr. Bob, Lois W., Ebby T., Nell Wing, Marty M. (AA and Women) though somewhat distorted, were briefly summarized by Amy. One audio of Bill W. can be found online on YouTube.

One of the most recent undertakings of the Archive's office is a new publication entitled *Markings: Your Archives Interchange*. This newsletter is available free by print or electronic media at www.aa.org. Amy invited anyone to contact New York; better still, come and visit the Archives Office and Stepping Stones (Bill and Lois' home in Bedford Hills). Email her at archives@aa.org or call 212-870-3400.

Maire O. was chairperson for the morning meeting. Door prizes included several original beautifully framed Twelve Steps along with books and CD's. A sobriety countdown was held.

Bernadette MacL.
King City Group

Recent Medallions:

Sylvie C	1	King City	Nov 5
Richard G	10	Aurora	Nov 11
Frank M	15	Aurora	Nov 17
Susal L	5	King City	Nov 19
Barb M	20	Aurora	Nov 20
Clara McQ	40	Welcome	Nov 25
Amir	5	Armour Heights	Nov 26

Upcoming Medallions:

Valie L	25	Sunday Morning Discussion	Dec 2
Glenna R	10	Thornhill	Dec 3
Sandy T	10	Thornhill	Dec 5
Milton B	15	East York	Dec 11
Amanda Y	1	Thornhill Group	Dec 17
Tony G	20	Aurora	Dec 20
Bill S	35	Anniversary	Dec 26
Tom W	15	Aurora	Dec 30

Things we cannot change

John B. formerly of the Beaches Group and past DCM District 22 passed away in Victoria, B.C. on Oct. 27

John L., Courage to Change AFG. Mississauga passed suddenly Nov. 10

Meeting Changes:

Milliken Group, called the Markham Village Group as of Jan. 1.

Promises Group, Ajax, Closed Meeting now meets Wed., 8 pm

By The Book Group (Suburban North) Tuesday Mtg. Elgin Burrows Arena, Richmond Hill – Discontinued

Tuesday Night Disc. (NW) Tues. mtg. now starts at 7 pm

AA IS A SPIRIT

It cannot be touched, nor can it be completely understood.

It is as wide as the world, yet small enough to fit snugly into the mind and heart of man.

It has brought light where only darkness dwelt.

It has given hope to the helpless and help to those who yearned in despair.

It has nourished forgiveness in those who know no pity.

It has given strength to the weak and humility to the strong.

It has given greatness to the common.

It has spurred to higher goals those who strove for nothing.

It has brought to the destitute a home.

It has transformed sorrow into a weapon of happiness.

It has given purpose to the trackless and shelter to the lost.

It has taught patience to the hurried and action to the slothful.

To youth it has given vision. To the aged: promise.

To the lonely: companions. To the restless: rest.

To the sick it has been a doctor.

To the dying it has revived a desire to live.

To those who have fallen it has been a helping hand.

Events:

Beaches Group (East) - 60th Group Anniversary Dec. 11
Winter Season Open House Emmanuel Howard Park Church, 214 Wright Ave., off Roncesvalles. Dec. 25 from 10:30 am to 4:30 pm. Call 416-487-5591 for more info.

Spiritual New Year's Eve, Dance & Buffet. Holy Rosary Parish Hall, 356 St. Clair Ave. W. at Spadina West subway. AA meeting starts at 8 pm. Dance and pot-luck buffet starting at 10 and the spiritual service at 11. \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door. The best way to bring in the New Year!

Streetsville Group will be celebrating 50 years of carrying the message on Tuesday Jan.15 at 8:30 pm at the Meadowvale Church Centre in Meadowvale Mississauga

Scarborough Centenary Group - celebrates 25 years as a group, and 30 years as a service meeting Jan. 17

16th Annual Toronto Winter Roundup with Clancy I. from Venice CA. Sat. Jan. 26, 2008 from 9 am to 9 pm. York Reception Centre (location of Toronto Sunday Morning Men's Meeting).

\$50 – includes dinner & coffee breaks. Pre-registration by Jan. 19, 2008. Speaker Tapes/Cds will be available onsite. Visa and Mastercard accepted. For more information or tickets please contact Rodney S at 647-588-7751 or 905-398-1404. Online payment available at www.torontowinterroundup.com

Ontario Regional Conference Mar. 14, 15 & 16 2008 at Fairmont Royal York Hotel. 3 Day registration \$30, Early Bird Registration Draw Monthly. For Tickets and Information please contact www.aatoronto.org or email: orc@aatoronto.org or phone 416-487-2677

It has no judgment against the unteachable

Nor has it praise for those who learn.

To the outcast it has been a family.

To the childless it has given children.

To the ignorant: wisdom. To the wise: tolerance.

It has given to all men and women that which is most precious.

It has given love for truth with enough left over to share with each other.

ANONYMOUS

GREATER TORONTO AREA INTERGROUP

MONTHLY BOARDROOM BOOKINGS FOR SUB-COMMITTEES

*Subcommittees meet at the Intergroup Office (234 Eglinton Ave E, Suite 202)

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES:

Every first Monday of the month at 7 pm

SELF-SUPPORT:

Every first Wednesday of the month at 7 pm

GRAPEVINE:

Every second Thursday of the month at 7 pm

ARCHIVES:

Every second Friday of the month at 7:00 pm

WEBSITE:

Every second Saturday of the month at 1 pm

COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (CPC):

Every second Monday of the month at 7 pm

ACCESS ABILITY:

Every third Sunday of the month at 11 am

PHONE TRAINING SESSION:

Every third Sunday of the month at 1:30 pm

PUBLIC INFORMATION:

Every third Monday of the month at 7:30 pm

TREATMENT FACILITIES:

Every third Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm

INFORMATION AA DAY: Starting Sept. 2007,

Every last Monday at 7:30 pm

TWELFTH STEP:

Every last Friday of the month at 6:30 pm

FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE*:

Second-last Tuesday of the month at 4:30 pm

(*non-committee members: attendance by appointment only)

OPERATING COMMITTEE*:

Second-last Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm

(*non-committee members: attendance by appointment only)

Better Times NEWSLETTER:

Last Wednesday of the month before the Intergroup meeting, 7 pm

THE MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING of GTA INTERGROUP is held on the last Tuesday of the month at 8 pm at the Glebe Road United Church - 20 Glebe Rd E, off Yonge St. (near Davisville subway)

Life after Splat

Mumpty Dumpty did everything possible to “roll” her son in the right direction. When pleading or arguing didn’t work, she would “egg him on” by calling him “softy” or “runny”. Humpty, being EGGceptionally stubborn, would not endure the short-term discomfort of boiling water.

Had he been hard-boiled, would he have escaped his dreadful fate? Could Mumpty ‘have said more, done more?’

Humpty wasted his days, “high” on his wall, isolated within his shell. On the day of

his terrible fall, a panic-stricken Mumpty summoned the troops, who were powerless to help. This was EGGactly what she had feared! Defeated and EGGhausted, she surrendered. As Humpty lay helpless at the “bottom” of the wall, Pan and Butter approached. They suggested he “share” his ingredients and follow a simple recipe. With no other options, he humbly agreed.

Humpty was miraculously transformed into a fried egg, sunny side up! To this day he remains a “good egg” provided he helps other “scrambled eggs” on a daily basis.

*Submitted by Victoria M.
High Park Group*



October '07

Intergroup Report

FINANCE: Month's Income was \$30,483, with Expenses of \$17,072 for a difference of +\$13,411. The Gratitude response has been good; thanks to members as their financial support is appreciated. Member's help is also needed in the reduction of the debit of literature: Current to 60 days: \$11,380.26. 61 days and over: \$3,035.36. Total: \$14,415.62. A new Finance member has been elected: Gregg W. (Rox Glen Traditional). One other member (Bruce L./Back to Basics) has showed interest, and is invited to attend the Nov. Finance meeting. One more FC member is needed by December.

MOTION to suspend Regular Business moved by Judy (Aurora) and seconded by Alex (Welcome) to facilitate elections for the Operating Committee. CARRIED.

ELECTIONS After the protocol for Elections was consulted from the GTAI Procedures & Guidelines, the following elections were held:

Interim election re: Juniors moving up to Seniors/2 new juniors needed, due to resignations: Reg S. (Melrose) and John M. (Thornhill), elected by acclamation.

Operating Committee Chair: Arwen H. (Primary Purpose), new Chairperson by acclamation. Lyle G. (Thornclyffe Park) is 1st Vice. Harold Y. (Port Credit) is 2nd Vice. Juniors moving up to Senior Positions: John M. (Thornhill), Reg S. (Melrose), and Brad H. (Bayview).

New OC Juniors: Bill M. (Westmoreland), Aaron (Yorkville), and Woody K. (Willowdale), by acclamation.

AD HOC: Lynn B., Chairperson, presented the “Proposed downsized GTAI” re: present subcommittee structure. The ad hoc Position paper was also provided for reps, along with a brief background of the ad hoc initiative. The main concern of ad hoc findings: “top-heaviness” of subcommittees. The (2) documents provided at tonight's meeting is “to provoke dialogue between the groups”. The document(s) also addresses the issue of lack of volunteers on subcommittees. Lynn read GTAI Mission Statement for clarity. More copies of Position Paper will

be available for next month.

ACCESS ABILITY: Set to go to ‘People in Motion’ event in June 2008. Access Ability now has a Secretary.

ARCHIVES: Reps reminded of the upcoming Archives Breakfast Nov.4. Start time: 9 a.m. Archives Repository has moved to 5th Floor, by request of the landlord.

BETTER TIMES: Nov issue is available. A list of extensive meeting changes is highlighted in the ‘Have You Heard’ section. A Special 2-page insert for (Dec/Jan) Holiday Season will be available, with all relevant Holiday announcements. CALL FOR XMAS MEETINGS / CANDLE-LIGHT MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS! Deadline: Nov 10 (for Dec issue), and Dec 10 (for Jan issue).

Corrections: The committee monthly meeting time has been changed to 7:30. Big Books for Corrections were received from an anonymous donor.

CPC / Grapevine / Info AA: no reports.

ORC: The Graphics were presented for the event, and reps were asked to take these back to their groups. There will be 2 dances on the Saturday night of the event.

P.I.: P.I. was involved in 3 health fairs. The ‘Holders/Folders’ campaign is ongoing. One resume has been received for P.I. Chair, as Tom is rotating out of the position. The new PSA's from GSO (30-second spots) are airing on the Space Channel.

Reception: 78 people present: 51 reps, 16 alts, 4 district liaisons, and 7 chairs.

SELF-SUPPORT: Gratitude is going well; extra Gratitude envelopes are available. Reps are urged to ask their group secretary for Group member update lists.

TE: no formal report. Stephanie reported that the Alt.Chair position status is in question at present, due to this member being unavailable due to personal reasons. The TF Chairperson is currently recovering from a stroke. More information will be available soon.

12 STEP: NEED GREETERS! Training: 3rd Sunday of every month at 1:30 p.m. at 234. One year of sobriety needed. This committee needs a Secretary and Greeter Captains.

WEBSITE: New Chair/Fran H (Kingsway). The new site has been launched. There is also a new Webmaster: Andy C. (Thornhill). The committee is also involved in the process of switching the server host for the site.

WSOH: The Church has been booked (Emmanuel-Howard Park Church, Roncesvalles & Wright Ave.) for the event, to be held December 25. There will be entertainment and music. NEED VOLUNTEERS for food prep (need 10 turkey cookers, + veggie prep and desserts). Unfinished Business: none.

NEW BUSINESS: Dan (Half Century) expressed members' concerns regarding the removal of financial files (QuickBooks program) from Intergroup, stressing the principle of anonymity, and the fact that this action is also against the Privacy Act of Canada. Arwen explained the Operating Committee's reasoning for this action, stating that a discrepancy of 8% in the financial figures needs to be accounted for before the 2008 Proposed Budget can be passed. A solution was offered by Arwen: that the financials will not be taken off premises. Instead, the OC is proposing an on-site (at 234) analysis with Arwen and Fran H.(Web Chair, who has an accounting background). Executive Secretary, Carole Keenan, explained her duties in extracting from QuickBooks/reporting financials to the Finance subcommittee, while clarifying the auditing, budgeting, and financial reporting processes. DISCUSSION.

A Sense of the Floor was taken regarding files with personal information: that this information is not taken off site at any time. Vote was UNANIMOUS; no information is to go off site at any time, as per instruction from Floor members. Dialogue on the on-site analysis initiative to follow next month.

This discussion was followed by a MOTION from Eric K. (Port Credit), seconded by Russell (Oakville) that the Operating Committee and/or the Finance subcommittee look further into the finance discrepancy issue; “...to do whatever necessary to find the problem”.

Group Reps were instructed to take this Motion back to their groups for discussion.