

Gratitude continued from pg. 1

...money in your pocket and your wife has let you back in the bedroom and you are complaining about a car you don't deserve that is burning some oil. You go over there, sit down and make a list of your blessings. Then, you get off your ass and go find a sick alcoholic and tell him what God has been doing for you that you couldn't do for yourself". Jack learned his lesson well. Eight years later, having moved to Dallas, he and a few other grateful members of the old Town North Group dug into their pockets and came up with enough money to start the 24 Hour Club; a refuge for suffering alcoholics.

Another on my favorite stories is that of Bob W., a legend in our part of the country because of the many alcoholics he sponsored into sobriety. Bob was near death on his parents' ranch in West Texas. A sober and grateful member of Alcoholics Anonymous, living in the Panhandle of Texas, heard of Bob's condition from Bob's brother. This grateful alcoholic picked up a couple of his protégés and drove the 335 miles to see him. Bob was so sick that he was hardly aware that these men had come. Three days later, these men returned to their homes and Bob was on his way to recovery. They drove 670 miles and invested three days to try to carry a single message: "We have had a spiritual awakening as the result of the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous". That is "Gratitude"!

Wesley Parish, another legend who helped a great number of alcoholics find sobriety, clarified the difference between being "thankful" and being "grateful". He explained that when we are "thankful", it is enough to say "thank you", but, when we are "grateful", we must have spent some of our spare time in search of suffering alcoholics so that we might pass on to them what has been so freely given us.



It is only by giving that we might receive or, as my 2nd sponsor would say, "Givin' is livin', usin' is losin' and lyin' is dyin'". These words reflect what we learn to live by in the Twelve Steps. "Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us. (A.A., pg. 77)

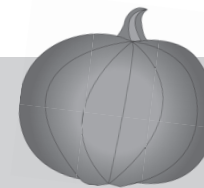
So it would appear that most folks who claim to be "grateful" are, in reality, just "thankful". So, if you are "grateful", what have you done to deserve this day of life and sobriety?

PASS IT ON!!!

By Ronnie H. (now residing in Macon, Georgia)

PRODUCED MONTHLY FOR AA MEMBERS IN THE GREATER TORONTO AREA

# BETTER TIMES



October 2008  
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## MISSED MEDALLION ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Donna C.	25	Unionville	Aug 6
Margot R.	10	Unionville	Aug 13
Claus B.	30	Unionville	Aug 20
Margaret C.	1	Unionville	Aug 27

All recent and upcoming medallion announcements should be sent to [bettertimes@aatoronto.org](mailto:bettertimes@aatoronto.org)

## Gratitude — What is it?

Gratitude is a topic of many discussion meetings. But how many who claim to be grateful in these meetings comprehend the meaning of this often used word? One of my friends once properly define it when he said, "I don't give a damn what you think or how you feel when you say you are grateful. Just tell me what it is that you are doing to show God how much you appreciate what He has done and is doing for you".

In "As Bill Sees It", page 29, Bill Wilson wrote: "Gratitude should go forward, rather than backward. In other words, if you carry the message to still others, you will be making the best possible repayment for the help given you."

Gratitude is far more than an attitude, as is so often heard in our meetings. Gratitude is ACTION!! That is: search out (A.A., pg 96), go to (A.A., pg 102), and try to carry this message to other alcoholics! (A.A., pg 60 & 89)

The first example we have of gratitude is Ebby's effort to help Bill Wilson. Ebby, two months sober, had heard that Bill was in serious trouble with his drinking. Ebby "sought out", "went to" and "tried to carry" his message of hope to a suffering alcoholic.

A second example of gratitude is Bill's desperate search for an alcoholic to carry his message to on the evening of May 11, 1935. His motive was a selfish one. Over the previous five months, Bill had stayed sober by searching out and trying to carry his message of hope to serious drinkers in New York. The only success he had was that he had stayed sober. Bill knew on that day in Akron, his only hope was to find a suffering serious drinker to whom he could tell his story. So, he decided to "search out", "go to" and "try to carry his message of hope" to a problem drinker. Bill's selfish motive turned into a selfless motive when he finally found a man who did, in fact,

want to learn how to live sober. To help insure the sobriety of his new friend and his own, Bill stayed in Akron until the fall of 1935. The result was a miraculous program for treating alcoholism: Alcoholics Anonymous.

There have literally been thousands of demonstrations of gratitude within the Fellowship Alcoholics Anonymous since then. One of my favorite stories is that of a very dear friend, Jack F. Jack took sober on February 11, 1991 in Texarkana, TX. He had only been sober a few weeks when he complained to his sponsor that his car was burning oil. Jack's sponsor seemed irritated with him and when asked about it, his sponsor explained, "Yes I am you ungrateful SOB. You showed up there a few weeks ago with 3 dollars in your pocket. You didn't have a job. You didn't have a car. Your wife wouldn't let you in the house. Today, you have a job, you have a car, you have (Continued on page 4)

## 24th Annual Archives Breakfast

December 1, 1985 is a significant date for perhaps two reasons. That morning, the first Annual Breakfast was hosted by the Archives Committee. That same morning, I awoke sober for the 433rd day in a row.

I did not attend that first event. Nor was I a regular attendee for next decade. By the mid-1990's, still sober, active in service to A.A. and with a growing awareness of the history of our fellowship, I made it a point to attend as frequently as I could. I enjoyed listening to the long-timers reminisce about what A.A. was like when they 'came around'.

A few years ago, I submitted a résumé to serve as Chair of the Toronto Intergroup Archives Committee. My application was accepted in the summer of 2005. This is the fourth consecutive breakfast event with which I have been involved. Such is the attraction of service in Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Archives Committee invites you to attend the 24th Annual Archives Breakfast, Sunday, November 2, 2008 at the Oasis Convention Centre in Mississauga. Kaye H. and Ben W., both from the Toronto area, are our planned speakers. Between

them, they have over 100 years of sobriety. Coffee will be served at 9:00 am, breakfast at 10:00. The open meeting will begin about 11:00 o'clock.

The archives traveling display will be set up for your perusal. We plan on interesting door and raffle prizes. Friends you know will be there. Friends you have not yet met will be there as well.

Please join us to celebrate the rich history of AA in Toronto. Tickets are \$25, available from Intergroup reps, GSR's and the Intergroup Office.

Roy R  
Chair, Archives Committee

## August '08 Intergroup Report

**Chairperson's Opening Remarks: Reg S.** (Melrose), **Chairperson** Effective immediately, all subcommittees will be listed on Meeting Agenda regardless of whether or not there is a report and this meeting will now close with the Responsibility Pledge.

**Finance Report: Gregg W.** (Rox Glen Trad.) No meeting in August. The current report indicates a credit of \$7,000.00. Regarding the 234 rental increase, the landlord felt we should start paying double our current rent of \$6.00 per sq. ft. As a compromise, the landlord opted to increase 234's rent by 25% each year for the next four years. IG agreed to pay the 25% increase this year, another 25% increase in 2009 and then look for more affordable rent elsewhere.

### Subcommittee Reports

**Ad Hoc:** Lynn B. (City Central) Inside the September Better Times is the insert of the changes on the operating structure. On the back of the sheet there is a summary of the motion explained, and a rationale of the motion. Lynn explained that main reason for restructuring is lack of participation: there are not enough volunteers for all the subcommittees. A survey from 2006 determined Intergroup should be a communication centre

only. There will be a special meeting concerning this motion at St Clements church Sept 11th 7:30p.m. It was suggested that Intergroup record the minutes of this meeting and this suggestion will be discussed at their next meeting. Next mtg: Thurs., Sept 4 at 8 p.m. at 234.

**Info AA Day:** Terry H. This is the 30th year and we would like all the support from the membership that we can. Next mtg: Mon., Sept 29 7:30 p.m. at 234.

**Access Ability:** No report. Next mtg: Sun., Sept. 21 at 11 a.m. at 234.

**Archives:** (Roy R., Trial & Error) The committee is developing a draft of Archives Committee Operating Procedures. On completion, it will be sent to the OC. The 24th annual archives breakfast is approaching. Tickets will be available at this general meeting and future GMs. Next mtg: Fri., Sept.12 at 7 p.m. at 234.

**CPC:** Courtney R. (Living Sober) On Aug. 17, CPC did a presentation to the Markland Wood Group business meeting. The committee will be attending District 22 Service Day. In October, CPC will meet with Pace Consulting — a national organization of EAP professionals, at their management meeting to discuss AA. Next mtg: Mon., Sept 8 at 7 p.m. at 234.

**Public Information:** No report. Next mtg: Mon., Sept 15 at 7:30 p.m. at 234.

**Corrections:** No report. Next mtg: Tues., Sept.30

at 7 p.m. at 234.

**Treatment Facilities:** No report. Next mtg: Thurs. Sept.18 at 7:30 p.m.

**Reception:** Rick Mc. (Six Points) 54 groups and 10 guests were present this evening. 7th Tradition: \$176.32.

**Twelfth Step:** Jim O. (Markland Woods) 12 step call list has been updated and will be available on computer. Our day time scheduler needs a weekly phone greeter for Fridays 9 until 1 p.m. There are 155 people on the 12 step list and phone greeter training sessions are now emphasizing phone greeters to arrange 12 step calls. Next mtg: Fri., Sept.26 at 6:30 p.m. at 234.

**Better Times/Website:** Marvyn W. (Streetsville Action) BT/Website committee wants to make it easier for the membership to access contact e-mails for the subcommittees. People need to be directed to [www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org) where information should be located. There has been a change on the meeting selector on the site (i.e. for finding wheelchair accessible meetings). Calgary Intergroup has contacted us and is interested in using our site as a possible model for their city. Next mtg: Sat. Sept. 20 at 1 p.m. at 234.

**New Business**  
No new business

**Next General Meeting**  
Tues., Sept. 30 at 8 p.m. at Glebe Rd. United.

# ACCESS ABILITY

Consider the possibility that someone you love or care about is deaf or hard of hearing; now consider the possibility of that someone admitting that they have a drinking problem and admitting they need help.

You contact 234 or open the meeting book and find an A.A. meeting to attend; then you see the meeting you want to attend marked as "no sign language interpreters allowed". To the deaf or hard of hearing alcoholic, this may suggest that they are not welcome. This is the issue that deaf/hard of hearing alcoholics face every day in A.A. in Toronto.

The Intergroup Access Ability Committee strives to ensure access to all alcoholics who wish recovery. Despite our continued efforts, situations like the one previously mentioned continue to arise.

Our committee page on the A.A. Toronto website includes a copy of the code of ethics that sign language interpreters adhere to. Groups or individuals may also refer to A.A. guidelines to learn where World Service stands on this issue. Using professional sign language interpreters is acknowledged as the only way to carry the message to the deaf alcoholic.

Although wheelchair access has improved, there is still a long way to go. We ask members to consider whether your group is properly accessible, meaning that all meeting rooms and the washrooms are accessible and that there is no obstacle to entering the meeting location. It is important that the address listed in the meeting book include a street number as Wheel Trans will not book a ride without it.

The Access Ability Committee strives to raise awareness regarding these concerns and to ensure that meetings, service days, conferences, and all activities related to Alcoholics Anonymous are accessible to all alcoholics. We provide literature in large print, Braille, CD, and in sign language with closed captioning on VHS.

Our committee is involved in carrying the message to events outside of A.A. We attend People In Motion (Canada's largest national trade show highlighting services and equipment for the disabled), The Association of Visual Language Interpreters Convention, and Mayfest (Deaf Cultural Convention) just to name a few. Our committee has also

created a buddy list at 234 for 12 step volunteers wishing to assist blind or severely disabled alcoholics who wish to attend meetings.

The Access Ability Committee is dedicated to improving access to all disabled alcoholics. You do not have to have a disability to join the committee, which meets at 11am on the 3rd Sunday of every month at 234. We encourage all who are interested in helping us to carry the message to attend a meeting of the Access Ability Committee.

Stephanie K.  
Intergroup Access Ability Committee

## "Miracles Can Happen In AA"

Waking up with the shakes, dry heaves and cold chills on hot days in August. Wondering where and when the next beer was coming from? I felt as if my world was over if I couldn't get a good swig of drink in my mouth. I remember my shaking, crying body pressed humbly against my mother's, in the hardship of resisting my compulsive urge to drink. While she hugged me, I decided to make a dedicated attempt to stop living a lie. Since then, that wonderful embrace has moved on, but I feel the same warmth from other people in Alcoholics Anonymous. From the start of my recovery, A.A. has taken me on a journey of self-realization with an awesome spiritual quality. Although detoxification was difficult, giving up alcohol was a sweat I could wipe away. I had more of a problem giving up what I had become over the years. I never believed that my life could change; I thought I would always be the same and would just have to cut corners to stay afloat. A desire to stop drinking was the foundation of my new life and where my troubles began to cease. I realized that I was powerless over alcohol — and myself for that matter — and that my Higher Power could show me a way to walk safely in His grace. I could see myself in the text, in the stories of experience, strength and hope, and in the one-on-one conversations I had with other alcoholics. I think it is a miracle that I was able to find a fellowship of people like me, because I have never truly felt internally understood or accepted by society. I always questioned what normal was, but I guess normality is really just humanity, no perfection required. I can get along with people outside of A.A., I'm not any less a human being — it can be tough. But why not? Why not a challenge? Why not some honest hard work? Why not a go-getter instead of a quitter? Why not a "Yes I can," instead of "I can't, not right now?" I've always taken the easy way out, why not do it differently this time around...

Mike L., formerly Oakville North

"If you are looking for something in this newsletter to criticize, you will find it. We aim to please everyone". The editors.

## archivesalley

Virtually any member who has an interest in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous is familiar with the Jack Alexander article which appeared in the Saturday Evening Post in March 1941. Much less well known are other writings which were also important to our development while admittedly less influential.

Among those was a piece written for the 1939 edition of Liberty magazine entitled "Alcoholics and God". It was commissioned by Dr. Charles Towns of Towns Hospital in New York where Bill W. had been 'treated' periodically. (Bill was never too keen on the title). Dr. Towns described religion as the root cause of 'cures' he witnessed — including Bill W.'s. In the piece, the reporter describes Bill's situation as follows 'About three years ago a man appeared at the hospital in New York of which our doctor is head physician. It was his third "cure". Since his first visit he had lost his job, his health and his self-respect. He was now living on the earnings of his wife.

He had tried every method he could find to cure his disease: had read all the great philosophers and psychologists. He had tried religion but he simply could not accept it. It would not seem real and personal to him.' He went through the cure (mostly purgative) as usual and came out of it in very low spirits. He was lying in bed, emptied of vitality and thought when suddenly a strange and totally unexpected thrill went through his body. He called out for the doctor. When the doctor came in he looked up and grinned.

"Well doc," he said "my troubles are all over. I've got religion" "Why, you're the last man...." "Sure, I know that. But I've got it. And I know I'm cured of this drinking business for good." He talked with great intensity for a while and then said, "Listen doc, I've got to see some other patient — one that is about to be dismissed."

And thus was born the movement which is now flourishing with sensational success as Alcoholics Anonymous.'

## HAVE YOU HEARD?

### Recent Medallions:

Rick G.	1	Unionville Group	Sept 10
Monique A.	5	Anniversary Group	Sept 10
Don F.	1	Markham Village Group	Sept 15
Helena P.	5	Streetsville Group	Sept 15
Ron G.	10	King City Group	Sept 15
Lucie C.	15	R & R Group	Sept 15
Ted S.	1	Bloordale Group	Sept 16
Brian W.	1	Anniversary Group	Sept 17
Angelo C.	1	R & R Group	Sept 22
Ray T.	5	King City Group	Sept 22
Chris R.	5	Markham Village Group	Sept 22
Jane L.	20	Prince Edward Group	Sept 29

### Upcoming Medallions:

Fred B.	20	Fifth Tradition Group	Oct 8
George S.	5	Westmoreland Group	Oct 9
Lisa D.	1	Meadowvale Fellowship	Oct 13
Pete S.	1	Bloordale Group	Oct 13
Jim R.	15	Bloordale Group	Oct 15
Dan F.	20	The Hill Group	Oct 16
Jane	1	Markham Village Group	Oct 20
Steve C.	25	Westmoreland Group	Oct 21
Bill M.	30	Mississauga Group	Oct 26
Ann	25	Glenholme Group	Oct 27
Lal G.	10	R & R Group	Oct 31
Tommy	1	Markham Village Group	Nov 3
Suzanne T.	1	Living Sober Group	Nov 4
Fred	10	Markham Village Group	Nov 24
Arnold P.	40	Riverdrive Park Group	Nov 24

### New Meetings:

**The Bathurst Group** (C) Wed. 8pm (SUBURBAN NORTH): Rosemount Community Ctr., 1000 New Westminster Dr., Thornhill. Step/Topic Discussion.

**The Bathurst Group** (O) Sun. 8pm (SUBURBAN NORTH): Rosemount Comm. Ctr., 1000 New Westminster Dr., Thornhill.

**Saturday Morning Meditation Meeting** (C) Sat. 10am

(CENTRAL): Trinity St Paul Church, 427 Bloor Street W (Bloor and Spadina), across from Dominion store.

**Thursday Noon Meetingv** (C) Thurs. 12pm (SUBURBAN NORTHEAST): Wideman Mennonite Church, 10530 Hwy 48, Markham. Enter at south door facing parking lot, meeting in lower hall.

### Meeting Changes:

**Markland Wood Group** Tues/Thurs (SUB WEST): Meeting time changed to 8pm

**Parkway Group** (C) Wed 8pm (NORTHEAST)

### Announcements:

**The Hill Group** celebrates their 60th anniversary on Oct. 23.

**The Prince Edward Group** will celebrate it's first anniversary on Sept. 22nd.

**The Glenholme Group** will celebrate 25 years of service on Mon. Oct. 27. All are welcome to join in a night of gratitude at St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, 640 Glenholme Ave (at Eglinton).

**A Place to Share Women's Group** in Aurora will be celebrating their 20th Anniversary on Nov 1st at 11:30am at the Aurora United Church. Open speaker meeting and pot-luck lunch, all are welcome.

**Toronto AA Hockey** is looking for players and anyone interested in front office, coaching or assisting duties. They play Sat. at Ted Reeve Arena Bubble (Main and Gerrard) 2 pm.

### Events:

**The Stouffville Discussion Group** has invited the "York Region Meeting" to the Stouffville United Church on Sat. Sept. 13 from 3 to 4pm. 1940s Dr. Bob Style Step Meeting, with the 12 Steps done in 4-One hour meetings. Newcomers, Midcomers and Old-Comers — all are welcome.

**Fall Area 83 Assembly** will be held on Oct. 24-26. All GSRs are encouraged to attend on behalf of their groups.

**History and Spiritual Roots of the Twelve Steps** takes place Sat. Oct. 4, from 9:30am to 2:30pm at St Mary's Anglican Church (Yonge & Major Mackenzie, Richmond Hill) Speakers will include Uwe F. (1960's) Kaye H. (1950's) and Harry G. (1940's). Potluck Lunch to be served. Public Transit and Handicap Accessible.

**24th Annual Archives Breakfast** will be held on Sun. Nov. 2. Doors open at 9am, breakfast served at 10am and speakers will begin at 11am. Tickets are \$25 per person and can be bought from Intergroup and GSR Reps or at Intergroup Office.

**Fifth Annual York Region Roundup** will take place on Sat. Oct. 4, from 9:30am to 2:30pm at St Mary's Anglican Church (Yonge & Major Mackenzie, Richmond Hill). Potluck Lunch to be served. Public Transit and Handicap Accessible.

**Mississauga Fall Roundup** will be held on Sat. Oct. 4th at St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church (Cawthra & Burnhamthorpe). Doors open at 8am. Hot and cold buffet to be served. Tickets are \$20 for AA & AIAnon, \$5 for Alateen. Visit [www.mississaugafallroundup.org](http://www.mississaugafallroundup.org) for more info.

### Things We Cannot Change:

Rene D. of the Shepherd Group passed away on Sept 4th. Tuesday August 19 there was a celebration of the life of Cathy Ann M. of the Beaches Group.

GREATER TORONTO AREA INTERGROUP <b>MONTHLY BOARDROOM BOOKINGS FOR SUB-COMMITTEES</b> *Subcommittees meet at the Intergroup Office (234 Eglinton Ave E, Suite 202)	
<b>CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES:</b> Every first Monday of the month at 7 pm	<b>INFORMATION AA DAY:</b> Every last Monday at 7:30 pm
<b>SELF-SUPPORT:</b> Every first Wednesday of the month at 7 pm	<b>TWELFTH STEP:</b> Every last Friday of the month at 6:30 pm
<b>ARCHIVES:</b> Every second Friday of the month at 7:00 pm	<b>FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE*:</b> Second-last Tuesday of the month at 4:30 pm (*non-committee members: attendance by appointment only)
<b>WEBSITE and Better Times NEWSLETTER:</b> Every second Saturday of the month at 1 pm	<b>OPERATING COMMITTEE*:</b> Second-last Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm (*non-committee members: attendance by appointment only)
<b>COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (CPC):</b> Every second Monday of the month at 7 pm	<b>THE MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING OF GTA INTERGROUP</b> 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)
<b>ACCESS ABILITY:</b> Every third Sunday of the month at 11 am	<b>Phone 234 to ensure the meeting you want to attend isn't cancelled during any particular month...</b>
<b>PHONE TRAINING SESSION:</b> Every third Sunday of the month at 1:30 pm	
<b>PUBLIC INFORMATION:</b> Every third Monday of the month at 7:30 pm	
<b>TREATMENT FACILITIES:</b> Every third Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm	

## The Gratitude Roundup October 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>

Little did I know that on a Sunday in November 1993 I would step into my first A.A. meeting and that my life would be changed forever...or that it was even possible for me to stay sober for any length of time. I found a new freedom and a happier more contented life.

That meeting was the Sunday open meeting of the Highnoon Group at Sherbourne & Queen. The group, like a number of groups in the city, was listed as "Gays and Lesbians welcome". Today, I feel comfortable at any meeting of A.A., mostly because I am more accepting of myself, and also because my perception of many things has changed, including how I think other people view me. But then, like many in early sobriety, I am not sure if I would have stayed in A.A. if it were not for these groups.

An important component of my sobriety has been my service commitments. I have learned a lot about myself through my service commitments over the years and I am currently the Registration Chair for The Gratitude Roundup.

The Gratitude Roundup is an annual conference in Toronto hosted by gay,

lesbian, bisexual, and transgender members of Alcoholics Anonymous, with AI-Anon participation. Everybody is welcome, regardless of orientation.

The Gratitude Roundup started 30 years ago in Toronto, and is one of the longest running Roundups hosted by the GLBT community. Approximately 200 people attend which allows us to schedule workshops where members can share their own experience on a variety of topics. This sharing has helped many members feel less alone, especially those from smaller communities where there are fewer GLBT members. Many look forward each year to being entertained at our recovery themed "Gratitude Show", breaking bread at our banquet and brunch, listening to speakers and sharing their experiences with friends both new and old.

I would like to invite you all to attend The Gratitude Roundup and experience "A New Freedom" on October 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel, 475 Yonge St. Visit [www.torontogratitude.com](http://www.torontogratitude.com) to get more information, register and to view our full programme of events.

Gary G., Frontrunners Group