

BETTER TIMES

Produced for A.A. members, by A.A. members in the GTA



Stories Matter!

"It was the ~~best~~ of times,
It was the ~~worst~~ of times,
It's now my time to shine."

There are a million stories in the rooms of **Alcoholics Anonymous**, the ones shared in this issue are but a few to add to your own recovery story.

Alcoholics Anonymous

NOVEMBER 2022



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Why Stories Matter

The story-teller in [A.A.](#) is not to entertain, or inform. It is not to enthrall or convince. In most cultures with an oral tradition, stories carry the energy, magic and spirit of a culture as well as the words and meaning. And A.A. is, in some ways, an oral tradition. Sponsors and sponsees sit with each other and share stories. We share our stories with each other at meetings, and occasionally one of us stands up and shares his story entire. These stories not only lodge in our minds but beat against our hearts, imploring them to open. The words travel from the mouth of the speaker to the "innermost self" of the alcoholic listener.

The power of stories is greater than direction or instruction. When my sponsor and I went through the pages of the big book we read but also shared our stories together. When my sponsor told me about his bottom, and I identified with it, the magic of the story took hold. I am here today because of that one story among all the rest my sponsor told me. My job in A.A. is to promote our oral tradition, even in the form of the written word. Because every word, like every breath, should be in the service of God and each other. — **Darren G.** [Last Stop Freedom](#)

Medallions

NAME	YEARS	GROUP	CELEBRATION
Bill S	10	Anniversary Group	Nov 9 7 PM
George F	40	Reaching Out Group	Nov 15 8 PM
Matt E	1	Back to Basics	Nov 21st 7:30 PM
John T	40	Reaching Out Group	Nov 29th 8 PM

Meeting Changes

This pandemic has brought about incredible changes and quickly; please don't forget that our website and meeting list updates are dependant on you letting us know [here: https://www.A.A.toronto.org/update-or-change-a-meeting/](https://www.A.A.toronto.org/update-or-change-a-meeting/)

Opinions expressed in *BETTER TIMES* are those of the authors and don't necessarily reflect those of the [GTA A.A. Intergroup](#). The Editor reserves the right to edit for length, content and grammar in accordance with layout and quality purposes. Submit group news, medallions, other event notices to: webmaster@A.A.toronto.org. Letters or articles to the Editor (200-500 words) for *BETTER TIMES* at bettertimes@A.A.toronto.org

Winter Season and New Years'

Virtual Alkathon

Winter Season Virtual Alkathon

Saturday December 24

12 noon to 12 midnight

Sunday December 25

4 p.m. to 12 midnight

(Event IDs and
PWs to follow)

New Year's Virtual Alkathon

Saturday December 31

12 noon start thru to

Sunday January 1

until 12 noon

(Event ID and
PW to follow)

CALLING ALL GTA ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS GROUPS!

If your group wants to host a meeting, contact our committee now.

Prime Spots are moving fast!

CONTACT OUR COMMITTEE AT winterseasonvirtualalkathon@aatoronto.org

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

To be a Tech Host for the event.

Anyone with Zoom Hosting experience
is welcome; training also provided!
Minimal time commitment; maximum
service reward!

WANT TO JOIN OUR COMMITTEE?

It's not too late! Our next meeting:

MON. NOV. 14 at 7 p.m. (virtual)

ID# 899 5764 1062 PW 038086

Demystifying

AA World Service's

COMPREHENSIVE MEDIA PLAN

A strategic plan to connect and communicate A.A.'s program of recovery in the spaces we occupy.

- A free online event hosted by Area 83, Eastern Ontario
- A four-part series of panel discussions with General Service Office staff and those working with the plan
- English-French Interpretation will be provided
- To Register please visit:

Meeting codes will be sent later in an email

**Wednesdays
7:00-8:30 EST**

November 16

"Carrying the Message"
An Introduction to the
Comprehensive media
plan

November 23

"Is A.A. Advertising?"
Google Grants & More

November 30

"A.A. on Social Media"
LinkedIn, Instagram
& YouTube

December 7

**"Apps, Websites, &
Content Creation"**



November is Tradition Month

Bill Wilson on 1 & 5

Tradition One

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on A.A. unity.

Our whole [A.A.](#) program is securely founded on the principle of humility—that is to say, perspective. Which implies, among other things, that we relate ourselves rightly to God and to our fellows; that we each see ourselves as we really are—"a small part of a great whole". Seeing our fellows thus, we shall enjoy group harmony. That is why A.A. [Tradition](#) can confidently state, "Our common welfare comes first."

"Does this mean," some will ask, "that in A.A. the individual doesn't count too much? Is he to be swallowed up, dominated by the group?"

No, it doesn't seem to work out that way. Perhaps there is no society on earth more solicitous of personal welfare, more careful to grant the individual the greatest possible liberty of belief and action. [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) has not "musts." Few A.A. groups impose penalties on anyone for nonconformity. We do suggest, but we don't discipline. Instead, compliance or noncompliance with any principle of A.A. is a matter for the conscience of the individual; he is the judge of his own conduct. Those words of old time, "judge not," we observe most literally.

"But," some of us argue, "if A.A. has no authority to govern its individual members or groups, how shall it ever be sure that the common welfare does come first? How is it possible to be governed without a government? If everyone can do as he pleases, how can you have aught but anarchy?"

The answer seems to be that we A.A.s cannot really do as we please, though there is no constituted human authority to restrain us. Actually, our common welfare is protected by powerful safeguards. The moment any action seriously threatens the common welfare, group opinion mobilizes to remind us; our conscience begins to complain. If one persists, he may become so disturbed as to get drunk; alcohol gives him a beating. Group opinion shows him that he is off the beam, his own conscience tells him that he is dead wrong, and, if he goes too far, Barleycorn brings him real conviction.

So it is we learn that in matters deeply affecting the group as a whole, "our common welfare comes first." Rebellion ceases and cooperation begins because it must; we have disciplined ourselves. Eventually, of course, we cooperate because we really wish to; we see that without A.A. there can be little lasting recovery for anyone. We gladly set aside

personal ambitions whenever these might harm A.A.. We humbly confess that we are but "a small part of a great whole."— **Bill W. (A.A. Grapevine December 1947)**

Tradition Five

Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Says the old proverb, "Shoemaker, stick to thy last." Trite, yes. But very true for us of [A.A.](#) How well we need to heed the principle that it is better to do one thing supremely well than many things badly.

Because it has now become plain enough that only a recovered alcoholic can do much for a sick alcoholic, a tremendous responsibility has descended upon us all, an obligation so great that it amounts to a sacred trust. For to our kind, those who suffer alcoholism, recovery is a matter of life or death. So the Society of [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) cannot, it dare not, ever be diverted from its primary purpose.

Temptation to do otherwise will come aplenty. Seeing fine works afoot in the field of alcohol, we shall be sorely tempted to loan out the name and credit of Alcoholics Anonymous to them; as a movement we shall be beset to finance and endorse other causes. Should our present success continue, people will commence to assert that A.A. is a brand-new way of life, maybe a new religion, capable of saving the world. We shall be told it is our bounden duty to show modern society how it ought to live.

Oh, how very attractive these projects and ideas can be! How flattering to imagine that we might be chosen to demonstrate that olden mystic promise: "The first shall be last and the last shall be first." Fantastic, you say. Yet some of our well-wishers have begun to say such things.

Fortunately, most of us are convinced that these are perilous speculations, alluring ingredients of that new heady wine we are now being offered, each bottle marked "Success"!

Of this subtle vintage may we never drink too deeply. May we never forget that we live by the grace of God—on borrowed time; that anonymity is better than acclaim; that for us as a movement poverty is better than wealth.

And may we reflect with ever deepening conviction, that we shall never be at our best except when we hew only to the primary spiritual aim of A.A.. That of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers alcoholism.— **Bill W (A.A. Grapevine April 1948)**

"My Story Came Out of His Mouth"

My grandma said that great granny drank because she was ashamed to be Algonquin. My mom says grandma was ashamed too. When I was born my Metis dad was already losing to alcohol. My mom had to escape his insanity so we went north. She finished high school there and we lived in co-op housing.

My mom met a decent guy who said, "You can call me Dad now."

"I have a Dad!" my little brother yelled. We moved to the trailer park and were adopted by this decent guy. That meant my Metis name had to be erased. My adoptive dad was restless so we moved a lot, then alcohol got him too.

When I was eighteen I went to college. It was hard to be there so I turned to the family solution, drinking. I graduated and got a job. I drank at work, but I was a 'workaholic' so they let it slide. I met my wife, we had twins and for a year I didn't drink. However, I don't remember their second birthday because of this disease. I tried to control myself: diets, light beer, just spirits, therapy, drugs, but nothing worked.

Then we had three kids and I would drive drunk. My wife put up with me, waiting for something to give. John Barleycorn would take me places: emergency wards, tangles with the police. I just thought, "I'm no good, I should die".

Finally someone said, "There's a place for people like you..."

I said, "Where's that?"

"A.A.!" they said and I hated them.

However one morning I thought, *I'm either hitting the liquor store, killing myself or going to that damn meeting.*

I slunk around the meeting just to peek and someone took my arm and said, "Come on in!"

I sat in a room with six guys. I was sweating, then someone said, "I can't keep drinking because I end up in emergency and I wanna kill myself." When I heard that something fell away from me, a great broken thing.

Stunned, I thought, "*MY story came out of HIS mouth.*" A wind blew through me, just like Bill W. said. So I did the twelve steps. I became of service, and now I have hope. I finally made it back to a place I'd forgotten. You see, this disease had erased from my mind the fact that my Metis grandfather was in A.A.!—**Luke G**, [High Park Group](#)

PHONE GREETERS ARE NEEDED

24/7/365

Sign up for a shift by emailing
12step@A.A.toronto.org

Or call
416-487-5591

Check Out These Other Service Opportunities!

Express your interest by sending an email. It's that simple to give back what has been so freely given to you and me!

[Information Technology \(IT\)](#)
[Finance](#)
[Winter Season Open House](#)

[Twelfth Step & Phone Greeters](#)
[Operating \(formerly Executive\)](#)
[Communications](#) (**Better Times Needs Writers!**)



GREATER TORONTO AREA
INTERGROUP

Winter Season Open House 2022

2022 Event Committee Volunteers are Welcome!

Come join us at our

Next committee meeting

Sunday November 13 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Bloordale United Church, 4285 Bloor St. West, Etobicoke



Food contributions appreciated!

Turkeys ~ Hams ~ Sweets ~ Soft Drinks ~
Water ~ Snacks

If you or your group can help, please
contact Tony Z. 416-836-7511

wsoh@aatoronto.org

SUBCOMMITTEES:

if you would like to have an information
table at the event, let us know so we
can make arrangements

This year's event will be held

Sunday, December 25, 2022

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Roncesvalles United Church

240 Roncesvalles Avenue, Toronto

All Are Welcome

Fun, Food, Fellowship, AA and Al Anon Meetings – details to follow

The GTA Archives Committee invites you to attend the

38th Annual GTA Archives Breakfast *Sunday November 6th 2022*

Oasis Convention Centre
(1036 Lakeshore Rd. E., Mississauga)

9am-1pm, Tickets \$35

9am – Coffee | **10am** – Breakfast | **11am** - Open Speaker Meeting
Door Prizes, Raffle Tickets



Guest Speaker
AI R Fellowship Group, Toronto

Contacts for Tickets:

Glenn G. Chair	647-572-5687	Bill C. Dist. 10	416-268-5455
Amy L. Sec.	905-767-8405	Charlie D. Dist 14	905-715-1664
Eddy G. Archivist	416-536-7536	Francine D. Dist 08	416-829-8259
David T. Ass't Arch	613-868-9243	John M. Dist. 18	416-277-4285
David G. Treas.	416-536-5601	Gord H. Immediate Past Chair	
Patty A. Dist.10	647-226-8857		416-414-8374

"Whenever a society or civilization perishes there is always one condition present; they forgot where they came from."
- Carl Sandburg.

GROUPS BEGUN IN NOVEMBER

Nov. 17, 1947 - [Oakville Group](#)

Nov. 24, 1954 - [Unionville Group](#)

Nov. 25, 1956 - [East Toronto Men's Meeting](#)

Nov. 5, 1967 - [West Toronto Men's Meeting](#)

Nov. 1, 1968 - [Pathfinders Group](#)

Nov. 11, 1969 - [Beverly Hills Group](#)

Nov. 6, 1973 - [Agincourt Acorn Group](#)

Nov. 8, 1977 - [Scarborough General Hospital Meeting](#)

Nov. 8, 1979- [Westmoreland Group](#)

Nov. 5, 1981 - [Keep It Simple Group](#)

Nov. 15, 1994- [Noon Rap Group](#)

Nov. 6, 1999 - [St. Andrews Meeting](#)

Nov. 27, 2012- [Little Denmark Traditional Group](#)

Nov. 30, 2012- [We Are Not Saints Group](#)

"The Topic was Anger"

I recently attended a meeting wherein the topic was "anger." An interesting topic to say the least. As I listened to each person share I reflected on my own behavior and what I have learned over the years.

In the [Big Book](#) of [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) I am told that **"if we were to live, we had to be free of anger. The grouch and the brainstorm were not for us."** This has been for me an exceedingly difficult defect to overcome. I know that my temper is quick to rise and slow to cool. What happens when I rise to anger is that I have lost all ability to be reasonable and I begin to practice the three Rs of anger—**revenge, resentment, and retaliation.**

When I become angry, I immediately begin to plot how I will get back at the person, place, or thing, or situation. This leads onto a burning resentment wherein I conjure up numerous ways of obtaining revenge and this in turn is followed by the act of retaliation.

For me anger arises because someone is not doing something I want them to do, or I am being challenged for something that I have done, and I do not embrace criticism good or bad. I tend to react to these situations as a challenge to me to my ever-so-delicate ego.

To live in serenity and peace, and defeat my anger, I refer to the Big Book [Acceptance was the Answer](#) and the often quoted page 417 which in part reads:

"Acceptance is the answer to all my problems. When I am disturbed it is because I find some person place, thing, or situation--some fact of my life—unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept the person place or thing as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at the moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God's world by mistake." What a wonderful and inspiring passage! Is this not

what we pray for every time we recite the [Serenity Prayer](#)? Accept the person, place, thing, or situation and not to rise to anger.

The remedy to overcoming my defect of anger is to:

Understand I cannot change anyone

Pray for the person for two weeks that they receive everything that I would want

Discuss my feelings with my sponsor or another member of the Fellowship

Prepare myself in advance of situations which may lead to my anger rising

By doing so I can live a reasonable, serene and peaceful life.—**Tom McN**, [Rexdale United](#)

The Twelve Traditions A Distillation of A.A. Experience



As newcomers, many of us say to ourselves, "Let the group officers worry about the Traditions. I'm just an average member. They're rules for running groups, aren't they? And everybody tells me, 'There are no rules in A.A.!' Then we look closer—and find that the Traditions are *not* rules—and they are *not* just for

officers. They have deep meaning for each one of us, as the Twelve Steps do.

Like the Steps, the Traditions were not figured out in advance, as courses of action against future problems. The action came first. Pioneer A.A. groups, with nothing to go on except the trial-and-error-and-try-again method, soon discovered: "Well, that way didn't work. But the other one did. And *this* one works even better!"

Both successes and failures were reported in letters to A.A. headquarters (eventually to become the General Service Office). In went these shared experiences of A.A.'s first ten years, and out came the Twelve Traditions. In 1946, then in the "long form," they were published in the A.A. Grapevine. By 1950, they had been condensed to their present form and were adopted by A.A.'s First International Convention.

"Our Traditions are a guide to better ways of working and living," co-founder Bill W. said. "And they are to group survival what A.A.'s Twelve Steps are to each member's sobriety and peace of mind.... Most individuals cannot recover unless there is a group. The group must survive or the individual will not."...



THE
A.A.

NEWSPAPER

NO. 11

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5TH, 1925

TWO-CENT EDITION

EXTRA! EXTRA!**DID YOU KNOW?**

FROM THE GTA A.A ARCHIVES OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

- November 26, 1895, Bill W. was born in a room behind a bar in the Wilson House (formerly the Barrows House aka the Mt. Aeolus Inn & Tavern) a village hotel in East Dorset, VT run by his grandmother Helen Barrows Wilson. Bill was named after his paternal grandfather, William C. Wilson, who was quite prominent in the community. According to Bill's sister Dorothy, their grandfather was an alcoholic who found sobriety through a profound spiritual experience while hiking on Mt. Aeolus.
- On November 18, 1912, Bill's schoolmate and "first love" Bertha Bamford died after surgery at the Flower Hospital in NY City. Bill learned about her death at school the next day. It began a 3-year episode of depression that severely affected his performance at school and home.
- In November 1940, Bill and Lois moved into a small upstairs bedroom at the 24th St. Clubhouse for about a year.
- On November 19, 1939, Bill W.'s money problems make him want to go back to work, but New York A.A.'s urge him to stay on as head of the movement.
- In November 1943, New York [A.A.](#) celebrates its 9th Anniversary with a dinner attended by 800 people. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale is the guest speaker.
- In November 1949, as plans for the International Convention in Cleveland in 1950 were being laid, Earl T. founder of A.A. in Chicago, suggested to Bill that the [Twelve Points to Assure Our Future](#) would benefit from revision and shortening. Bill set out to develop the short form of the [Traditions](#) in time for the Convention.
- In Nov. 1949, the short form of the Traditions was published in the Grapevine. The entire issue was focused on the Traditions. An article by Bill W. asked subscribers if the Thanksgiving Holiday week should be dedicated to discussing the Traditions. The replies were overwhelmingly in favor. Later, the month of November became Traditions month. When the 12 & 12 was published in 1953, two wording changes were made to the 1949 version. The term "primary spiritual aim" in [Tradition 6](#) was changed to "primary purpose" and the term "principles above personalities" in [Tradition 12](#) was changed to "principles before personalities."
- In November 1950, a pamphlet titled "Your Third Legacy Will You Accept It" was published to explain the General Service Conference plans and procedures. It contained a "Temporary Conference Charter" of "Twelve Suggested Principles." Bill W. wrote a December Grapevine article titled "Your Third Legacy." Both publications used both Bill's and Dr. Bob's names in the byline.
- In November 1986, the [Big Book](#) is published in paperback.



OLD GTA MEETING BOOKS ARE NEEDED FOR THE GTA ARCHIVES

**TO DONATE A.A. GTA ARCHIVAL ITEMS, PLEASE CONTACT THE
GTA ARCHIVIST EDDY G. at 416-536-7536**