

BETTER TIMES

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



Stuck in a ditch, in a rut?

The path is often winding but mile markers along the way point us not only forwards but remind where we have been. Good or bad they are like **timestamps** that remind us how far we have already come.

Alcoholics
Anonymous

AUGUST 2022



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MEDALLIONS



NAME	YEARS	GROUP	CELEBRATION
Atul D.	10	Erin Mills	Aug 1
Sara W.	1	Friendly Group	Aug 1
Dorothy C.	60	Danforth Group	Aug 4
John M.	30	Danforth Group	Aug 4
Patrick F.	25	Danforth Group	Aug 4
Kelly	15	Danforth Group	Aug 4
Christina P.	10	Erin Mills	Aug 15
Pam M	5	Fifth Tradition Group	Aug 16
Marnie S	22	Fifth Tradition Group	Aug 16
Rose S	5	Fifth Tradition Group	Aug 16
Lori L.	1	Bloordale Group	Aug 21
Naomi O.	1	Friendly Group	Aug 22
Sean M.	15	Fifth Tradition Group	Aug 23
Magda K.	5	Sisters in Sobriety	Aug 24
Dave E.	5	New Life Group	Aug 30
Bob D.	45	Fifth Tradition Group	Aug 30

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Wanna stay sober?

We're looking for people who want to stay sober by doing service!

Check out which committee you'd be interested in

Express your interest by sending an email

It's that simple to give back what was so freely given to you and to me!

[Information Technology \(IT\)](#)

[Finance](#)

[Winter Season Open House](#)

Service-related workshops i.e. Traditions, Concepts Workshop

[Twelfth Step](#) & [Phone Greeters](#)

[Operating](#) (formerly Executive)

[Communications](#)

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.aatoronto.org/update-or-change-a-meeting/](https://www.aatoronto.org/update-or-change-a-meeting/)

TIMESTAMPS & GRATITUDE

An old friend and I had a discussion about her concept of *Timestamps* that went like this.

Me: What is that thing you mentioned about *Timestamps*? I have been thinking about them and wondered if you might flesh them out a little bit.

She: Sure. I'm glad *Timestamps* resonated with you and as they say, *sharing is caring!*

Me: I have been thinking of them sort of like mile markers, not quite milestones.

She: I didn't originally consider it as something that equates to a milestone, like in the development of something. For me, *Timestamps* are more a way to recognize the more difficult moments from my past without getting drawn into all the emotion. For example, I had an extremely emotional event occur some years ago.

Me: Hmm . . . how does that equate to a *Timestamp*?

She: In the past I would relive that day over and over and wallow and drink my face off. In recovery, and with the help of my sponsor and my Big Book, I shifted my thinking to acknowledge it as a day that something significant happened but that doesn't require me to give all my energy to and wallow in it, it's simply a *Timestamp* in my life.

Me: Oh, so sort of like a snapshot, is that what a *Timestamp* looks like?

She: I acknowledge it, knowing the *Timestamp* will always be there, but don't relive that day in July anymore. It gives space for neutrality and peace.

Me: I think I get it but was also thinking I could think of these *Timestamps* as *Mile Markers*, a way to affirm good positive events that come from being sober and doing the next right thing and glance back at as a reminder.

She: It's interesting to broaden the concept out to milestones, like starting school or finding a job and then to use it as a tool to consider how far we've come. Hopefully the concept will help others as it has for you and I and people can recognize their own *Timestamps* and not have to relive them in real time, all the time.

Me: Yes, That's it. Thank you, this has been helpful!

A few days later while sitting with another friend, when asked what his next goal was, he stated, "I'd like to get my own place, but I can't. I can't seem to find a way past this place I am stuck in, this rut I can't seem to get out of." Together we discussed his accomplishments since he had decided to take the seat at his first [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) meeting just over a year ago. The seat he had bought and paid for had provided him with a set of [steps](#) for living not just a sober life but a full and meaningful one. Sensing an opportunity, I then explained the concept of *Timestamps* and how

with his sponsor they might make use of them as I had. Let's glance back at what he had accomplished since that first time he recited the [Serenity Prayer](#).

My friend got Sober. . .
Timestamp

He got a Sponsor. . . *Timestamp*

He got a Homegroup. . .
Timestamp

He got active in Service. . .
Timestamp

He got a Job. . . *Timestamp*

He has a Positive Bank Balance. .

. *Timestamp*

He has achieved ONE year of sobriety and received a Medallion and a Cake. . . *Timestamp*

All things he previously believed he couldn't do. What advice then did I have to offer my friend and how does it relate to my own gratitude? I'm grateful for being granted the opportunity at another chance to learn and grow, a chance to listen and share.

When I look in the looking glass, I now think with all I've learned and so much more yet to come. One thing I've learned when I think about words is how I can't abide the word "can't". Nope! Not for me anymore. Instead: *I'll see, I'll try, I will, I'll do, I did.*

Thank you very much. I just won't abide *can't*. A *Timestamp* for me. How about you? —**Dave R.**



AAGRAPEVINE
The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous



GREATER TORONTO AREA
INTERGROUP

Winter Season Open House 2022

2022 Event Committee Volunteers are Welcome!

Come join us at our

*First committee meeting of
the season*

Sunday August 14 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Bloordale United Church, 4285 Bloor St. West, Etobicoke

Calling on

Volunteers!

We have Service Opportunities for...

Greeters, Set-Up, Kitchen Help, Food Prep,
Servers, Turkey Cookers, Meetings Support, and
Tear-Down

contact Tony Z. 416-836-7511

wsoh@aatoronto.org



This year's event will be held

Sunday, December 25, 2022

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Venue: Roncesvalles United Church
240 Roncesvalles Avenue, Toronto

All Are Welcome

For a day of Fun, Food, Fellowship, AA and Al Anon Meetings

NOTES FROM ATTENDING THE GTA INTERGROUP VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR A SAFE A.A. MEETING: SHARING BEST PRACTICES

On July 30, Intergroup facilitated a workshop to share best safety practices for A.A. meetings. After an introduction to some Safety Materials found at aa.org two guest speakers shared their experience around practical solutions for a Safe A.A. Meeting. Here are some of the highlights:

SPEAKER BILLY N. FROM FLORIDA IS THE PAST CHAIR OF A.A. WORLD SERVICES BOARD

Billy started by saying: "My comments are based on my extensive experience in all levels of service but groups are autonomous and make their own decisions. Ask yourself this; is it my/our business? If the answer is no, then it's none of my/our business", so go about your business! Our [Third Tradition](#) is very inclusive and accepting of all who have a desire to stop drinking.

The common reference to "13 stepping or 13 steppers" is unacceptable because it has the potential to make light of harmful or violent behavior and criminal offences. These unwelcome interruptions in an alcoholic's sober journey can have a disastrous and sometimes deadly impact. Every alcoholic has a right to a safe meeting.

Billy also shared that a call to the Police is NEVER a group decision. Every person has the right to call the authorities when they feel the need for help from the authorities. A group inventory might assist in deciding the course of action(s) for certain situations that may arise. See [A.A. Group Pamphlet 16](#)

Caution should be exercised in using the statement "there are no victims, only volunteers" especially as it relates to a person's manner of dress. This should not be construed as an invitation for predatory behavior. "If we do a kindness, we have a duty to protect newcomers as they are broken, very broken. They don't owe us anything." said Billy. Hate language affects us all but words that are triggering are subjective to the individual and their lived experience.

SPEAKER CARRIE B. FROM OREGON WAS THE 2020 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE SAFETY IN A.A. SPEAKER

"A Tradition study is the #1 way to keep us and our members and groups safe and unified" said Carrie. Anonymity is not a cloak for criminal behavior and there are many thinly disguised predators such as; sexual, financial, treatment industry, sober coaches, businesses, sober living home owners etc.

To be aware is to know that "they" don't have to follow A.A.'s [Tradition Six](#) or [Tradition Eight](#). Calling the proper authorities does not go against A.A. Traditions. Any conduct within an A.A. meeting is subject to the same laws that apply outside the meeting.

GROUP PRECAUTIONARY CONSIDERATIONS:

Involvement in any business ventures, investments, loans, employment and/or any services offered in exchange for any fees is outside of the purpose of an A.A. group.

So that your group can carry out your meeting, please keep in mind that disruptive behavior is not tolerated. As an opening statement example: This group defines disruptive behavior as [insert examples]

In discussions about safety, keep the focus on our primary purpose, our common welfare, and placing principles before personalities. Communicate clearly what A.A. is and what it is not, see A.A. Safety [Flyer 228](#).

Consider developing group guidelines and procedures on safety pre-emptively so that you are not reacting but in a ready position should a situation arise as deemed unsafe or disruptive by the group. Consider including safety as a topic for a group inventory.

Besides the Traditions, there are many ways to increase safety in meetings. Good sponsorship is a tool we can use to increase safety, see [Pamphlet 15](#). We can start by talking about potential dangers and potentially dangerous people. It doesn't have to be a secret. If there is an individual who is known to the group as a predator, let the new person be aware. Carrie said "when it comes to the safety of people attending meetings, a group not only has the right to act, it has the responsibility to do so."

Predators are like cockroaches: the only way to get rid of them is to shine the light on them. It is important to select good leadership in our groups, districts and areas. Good leaders should know the proper procedures in case of an emergency situation and know how to stay calm but firm when potential dangers arise.

See page 14 *Safety – An Important Consideration*: [67th Annual Meeting of The General Service of Alcoholics Anonymous](#)

See also: The A.A. Member-Medications and other Drugs [Pamphlet 11](#) and A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues—and their sponsors [Pamphlet 87](#) and [SMF 209](#)

—Mary M. [Erin Mills Group](#)

SAFETY CARD FOR A.A. GROUPS

(The General Service Office has made this optional statement available as an A.A. service piece for those groups who wish to use it.)

Suggested Statement on Safety

Our group endeavors to provide a safe meeting place for all attendees and encourages each person here to contribute to fostering a secure and welcoming environment in which our meetings can take place. As our Traditions remind us, the formation and operation of an A.A. group resides with the group conscience. Therefore, we ask that group members and others refrain from any behavior which might compromise another person's safety.

Also, please take the precautions you feel are necessary to ensure your own personal safety, for example, walking to your car in a group after a meeting. If a situation should arise where someone feels their safety is in jeopardy, or the situation breaches the law, the individuals involved should take appropriate action. Calling the proper authorities does not go against any A.A. Traditions and is recommended when someone may have broken the law or endangered the safety of another person.

Service Material from the General Service Office

Our Common Welfare

Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.

— Tradition One (Long Form)

It is hoped that our common suffering as alcoholics and our common solution in A.A. will transcend most issues and curtail negative behaviors that could jeopardize the safety of anyone attending an A.A. meeting. Nevertheless, Alcoholics Anonymous is a microcosm of the larger society we exist in. As such, problems found in the outside world can also make their way into the rooms of A.A. For this reason, groups and members discuss the topic of safety — to raise awareness in the Fellowship and to seek through sponsorship, workshops and meetings, to create as safe an environment as possible to carry A.A.'s message of hope and recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic.

CIRCLING BACK FOR SURVIVORS

Alcohol found me—yet again—wandering the catacombs of a sanitarium. I had surrendered myself at the feet of the medical establishment and though I expected no solution, here my symptoms would be abated.

The corridors stretched on and on -the ethereal stasis of purgatory where I might be washed clean. Here I stood, appointed in blue, hair nets pulled over my feet. A shivering denizen of King Alcohol's mad realm. Physically sober—and very, very sick.

I had become accustomed to this course. Catapulted from the streets into the embrace of doctors and the outstretched hands of [A.A.](#). Bathed, bandaged and ejected back into orbit.

As far as I could tell this would never change. I needed to drink like I needed to breathe. I needed love, and here it would be replenished.

I had unshakable faith and the action to match it—I knew a power greater than myself and it was choking the life out of me. Alcohol had become my master.

The message that finally held me still in that hospital was one with depth and weight. It was carried by those who had found the way out, only to circle back for survivors.

The oasis that had always vanished over the horizon had finally come into focus. I knew I needed a new way to live but accepting this fully and serving a different purpose is radical. The salve of abstinence is potent, but it is just a prelude to a beautiful life. I was taught how to build a relationship with God through the teaching and practice of the [12 steps](#).

They showed me that I could be sober and that I could be happy about it—that this was not the exception to the rule but an outcome they promised would materialize if I only surrendered. They were the living proof of this. I took their suggestions and walk a free man, circling back for survivors where I can. With gratitude.

—Jack W. Toronto H&I

DR. BOB'S FAREWELL TALK

My good friends in [A.A.](#) and of A.A.

I get a big thrill out of looking over a vast sea of faces like this with a feeling that possibly some small thing I did a number of years ago played an infinitely small part in making this meeting possible. I also get quite a thrill when I think that we all had the same problem. We all did the same things. We all get the same results in proportion to our zeal and enthusiasm and stick-to-itiveness.

If you will pardon the injection of a personal note at this time, let me say that I have been in bed five of the last seven months and my strength hasn't returned as I would like, so my remarks of necessity will be very brief.

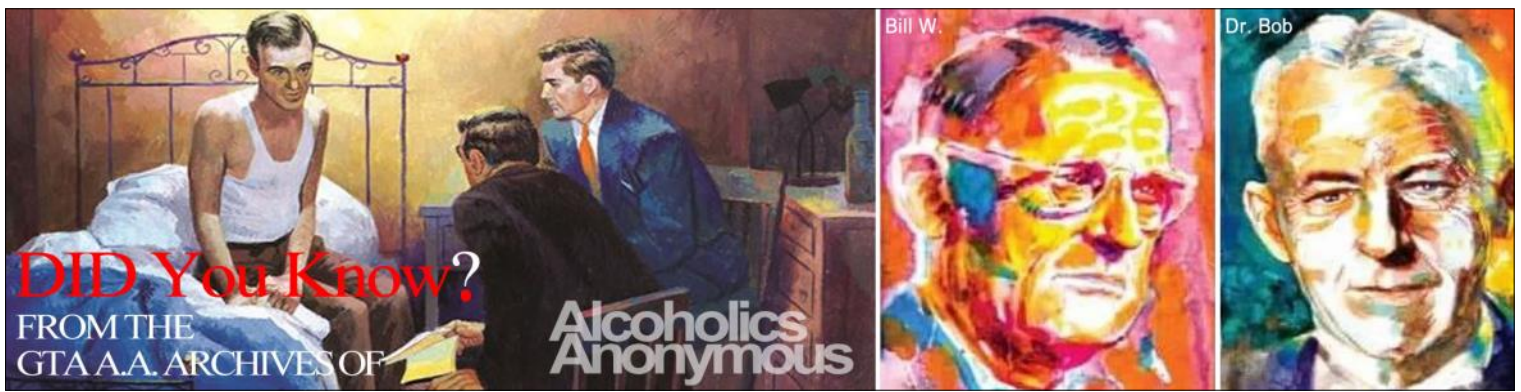
There are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis. One is the simplicity of our program. Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind, but have very little to do with our actual A.A. work. Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words "love" and "service." We understand what love is, and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two things in mind Let us also remember to guard that erring member the tongue, and if we must use it, let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance.

And one more thing: None of us would be here today if somebody hadn't taken time to explain things to us, to give us a little pat on the back, to take us to a meeting or two, to do numerous little kind and thoughtful acts in our behalf. So let us never get such a degree of smug complacency that we're not willing to extend, or attempt to extend, to our less fortunate brothers that help which has been so beneficial to us.

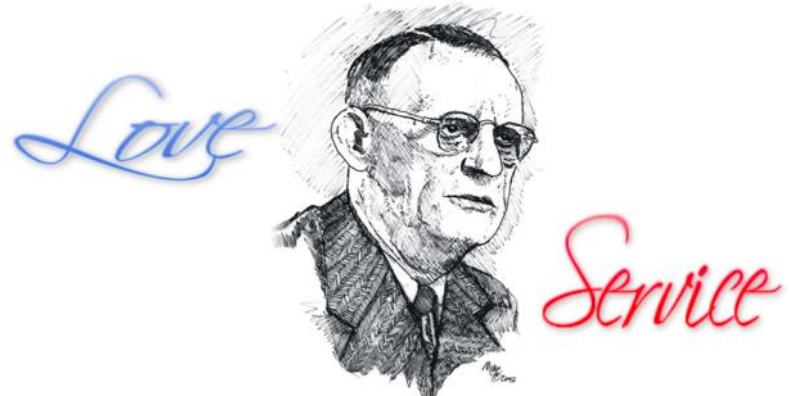
Thank you very much.

—1st International A.A. Convention 1950 Cleveland





- On Aug. 8, 1879 [A.A.'s](#) co-founder Dr. Bob (Robert Holbrook Smith) is born in St. Johnsbury, Vermont. Dr Bob took his last drink on June 10th, 1935 which is the founding date of A.A. in Akron, Ohio. He was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 1948 and his last public appearance was at the [1st International Convention](#) in 1950 in Cleveland where he famously said: " Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words 'love' and 'service.'" He died of cancer in his 15th year of sobriety on November 16, 1950.
- In Aug. 1934 on Bill's third admission to Towns Hospital in NYC Dr. Silkworth pronounced him a hopeless drunk and told Lois that he would have to be committed. Bill left the hospital a deeply frightened man. He found a little work on Wall St. which began to restore his badly shattered confidence. He went on his last drunken spree on Armistice Day Nov 11th, 1934.
- In Aug. 1935 Bill W. returns to NYC from Akron and seeks out alcoholics at the Calvary Mission and Towns Hospital. Meetings were held at Bill and Lois's house at 182 Clinton St. on Tuesday nights. The house also became a hangout and refuge for sober alcoholics.
- In Aug. 1937 Bill and Lois stopped attending Oxford Group meetings and the NY A.A.'s separated from the Oxford Group. This was the beginning of A.A. separating itself from outside affiliation and set the groundwork for what would later become Tradition 6. The Akron group remained affiliated with the Oxford Group for two more years.
- In Aug. 1942 the A.A. Office in New York granted distribution rights for the [Big Book](#) to Dr. George Little. Dr. Little formally transferred these rights to the Toronto A.A. Club on Sept. 22, 1944.
- On Aug. 16, 1948 a permanent secretary, Marg Meek (North Toronto Group), was hired for the Central Committee (today [GTA Intergroup](#)) in Toronto. The office was at 331 Bay St. Marg held the position for 25 years.
- On Aug. 2-4, 1968 the [11th International Conference of Young People in A.A.](#) (ICYPAA) was held at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto.
- On Aug. 6, 1981 the 1st meeting of the Archives Committee was set up by representatives from Ontario Provincial Committee (OPC)--the four Areas in Ontario and Toronto Intergroup. In 1991 Toronto Intergroup becomes the sole sponsor of the Archives Committee.
- On Aug. 18-21, 1988 the 1st Canadian National AA Convention was held in Halifax in an attempt to make it a regular Canadian event every 5 years. Two 7th Traditions had to be requested in order to make it pay for itself.
- On Aug. 3, 1993 the [Toronto Intergroup](#) Offices at 234 Eglinton Ave. E. moved down from 502 to 202. Money was short at Intergroup and the smaller space lowered the rent substantially.



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



GREATER TORONTO AREA
INTERGROUP

Winter Season

Virtual Alkathon

*Volunteers are
Needed!*

- Tech Hosts and/or Virtual Greeters
- Secretary
- Tech Coordinator

**Zoom security
and hosting
experience
(while not a prerequisite)
is definitely an
asset!*



*Interested? Please join us at our startup
Committee Meeting Mon Sept 12 8pm
(held virtually) ID: 823 3050 6592 PW: 434622
All volunteers welcome and encouraged to join
us! winterseasonvirtualalkathon@aatoronto.org*

24/7/365

PHONE GREETERS ARE NEEDED

Sign up for a shift by emailing:
12step@aatoronto.org

Or by calling: 416-487-5591



H	J	Z	C	E	V	A	I	T	A	N	G	I	B	D	Q	H	X	W	R	CONVENTION
W	R	J	B	C	J	E	C	N	A	R	E	L	O	T	K	G	F	P	N	SERVICE
H	Z	N	B	A	A	R	T	O	T	E	S	Q	J	W	S	T	O	S	T	TWELFTH
H	K	I	G	E	Y	N	T	Z	G	G	F	N	E	M	W	R	X	S	P	INTERNATIONAL
T	M	L	F	P	V	I	X	A	N	K	N	V	C	W	H	Z	F	E	F	CONFERENCE
B	Z	Z	V	Q	L	N	P	Y	R	C	O	T	I	M	B	W	O	N	C	LOVE
Q	K	H	A	V	K	V	R	J	M	P	I	K	V	G	W	E	R	I	K	PEACE
E	O	N	L	L	F	E	K	I	O	H	T	X	R	N	E	Z	D	P	R	HAPPINESS
S	M	A	C	M	S	N	N	W	U	E	N	E	E	R	I	T	I	P	F	TOLERANCE
X	A	I	O	F	D	T	W	H	N	N	E	M	S	N	J	M	A	A	W	JOYOUS
X	U	D	H	U	Y	O	Z	E	T	R	V	L	S	T	A	K	F	H	V	MOUNTAINTOP
P	U	U	O	O	L	R	A	R	A	I	N	O	E	T	E	J	S	V	S	TOWNES
L	I	E	L	V	M	Y	M	H	I	E	O	V	I	B	I	A	U	B	Z	AKRON
A	X	R	I	A	D	M	A	W	N	T	C	E	T	R	L	N	O	I	Z	OXFORD
N	N	F	C	J	O	H	Y	H	T	T	R	X	I	Z	B	Y	M	U	M	INVENTORY
O	Y	M	S	O	F	K	F	R	O	A	I	W	X	F	Y	F	Y	N	K	ALCOHOLICS
I	G	V	P	G	W	L	L	Q	P	Y	Z	M	E	J	E	C	N	O	V	ANONYMOUS
T	E	L	Z	B	V	Z	O	T	S	I	G	O	L	O	T	C	O	R	P	FREUDIAN
A	I	W	Z	C	O	M	W	G	C	N	D	Q	P	P	K	R	N	K	K	COMPLEXITIES
N	U	O	H	T	F	L	E	W	T	M	H	K	M	U	O	T	A	A	V	IGNATIA
R	M	V	S	O	J	T	R	E	F	Z	C	C	O	T	B	E	S	U	R	THOMAS
E	D	N	W	O	C	O	N	F	E	R	E	N	C	E	H	H	N	L	V	HOSPITAL
T	N	K	Y	R	R	W	L	A	I	Q	F	L	O	K	J	O	Q	J	P	MAYFLOWER
N	M	O	Q	D	K	N	X	N	L	A	T	I	P	S	O	H	M	Z	Q	ANNE
I	U	A	X	I	F	E	Z	N	H	W	O	W	E	U	P	I	V	A	T	HENRIETTA
S	U	J	T	E	M	S	L	E	Z	X	W	L	K	M	A	J	H	V	S	PROCTOLOGIST

GROUPS BEGUN IN AUGUST

- Aug 1965 [Alderwood Discussion Meeting](#)
- Aug 1, 1961 [Oshawa Friendship Group](#)
- Aug 3, 1978 [Oshawa Thursday Noon Hour Meeting](#)
- Aug 10, 1958 [Lawrence Plaza Group](#)
- Aug 15, 1982 [Eglinton Park Group](#)



BETTER TIMES / 10

WE NEED STORIES

bettertimes@aatoronto.org