

# BETTER TIMES

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



Acceptance is the answer  
to *all* my problems **TODAY.**

It brings me **BALANCE**  
and grants me **JOY.**

Shakespeare said, "All the worlds a stage,  
and all the men and women merely players."  
He forgot to mention that I was the chief critic.



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# Alcoholics Anonymous

JULY 2022



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NAME	YEARS	GROUP	CELEBRATION
Devon B	1	<a href="#">Friendly Group</a>	July 11th, 2022
Rob D.	20	<a href="#">Erin Mills Group</a>	July 11th, 2022
Marnie B.	1	<a href="#">Erin Mills Group</a>	July 18th, 2022
Michelle H.	1	<a href="#">Friendly Group</a>	July 25th, 2022
Shannon S.	15	<a href="#">Fifth Tradition Group</a>	July 26th, 2022
Sebastian S.	15	<a href="#">Fifth Tradition Group</a>	July 26th, 2022
Karl B.	30	<a href="#">St. Clements Group</a>	July 27th, 2022

## 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](#)

[Twelfth Step & Phone Greeters](#)  
[Operating](#) (formerly Executive)  
[Communications](#)

Workshop

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

Winter Season Virtual Alkathon

Created in 2020; virtual, round-the clock meetings are held on Dec 24-25 and Dec 31-Jan1 hosted by GTA A.A. groups. Send an email expressing your interest in participating to: [winterseasonvirtualalkathon@aatoronto.org](mailto:winterseasonvirtualalkathon@aatoronto.org)

## 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/>

## Better Times NEEDS STORIES

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: [cc@aatoronto.org](mailto:cc@aatoronto.org). Letters or articles to the Editor (200—500 words) for *BETTER TIMES* at [bettertimes@aatoronto.org](mailto:bettertimes@aatoronto.org)



# PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR A SAFE AA MEETING: SHARING BEST PRACTICES

SATURDAY JULY 30, 2022 1PM EST

ZOOM ID 882 9167 3558 PASSCODE 985845



Hear from our speakers:

Carrie B., from Bend Oregon, DCM District 5, Area 85

Safety in AA speaker at the 2020 International Women's Conference

Billy N., from Palm Beach Gardens Florida

Past Chairperson of the AA World Services Board

Learn about new safety literature from the General Service Office (GSO)

# In The Rough Going

In his story in the book [Alcoholics Anonymous](#), Bill Wilson wrote that in his early years whenever he was overcome with “waves of self-pity and resentment” he took himself to Towne’s Hospital to find an alcoholic to work with. This practice he said often set him “clean on his feet.” He called the [12<sup>th</sup> Step](#), working with other alcoholics, “a design for living that works in the rough going”. As an alcoholic I sometimes have childish ambitions. I want perpetual smooth sailing. I want everything to come together and never fall apart.

Recently I had a crash course in the principle of this kind of acceptance. Near the end of May I went out into the back of the house I rent an apartment in and cleaned up the yard. I was proud of myself, for the yard was piled with junk—chicken wire and broken furniture and glass and plastic which I lugged to the sidewalk for pick up on garbage day. I was proud of the work for I thought I was doing something nice for my landlord and my upstairs neighbors.

In the end I did the opposite. My neighbors came home from vacation and told me I’d thrown out their seeds in pots I thought were empty but for soil. I was mortified. I am not used to harming people anymore. I felt fear, and guilt, and for a few moments here and there the old feelings of unworthiness. I offered to compensate and the next week they sent me a bill for almost \$4000.

I did then what I’d been taught to do in A.A., to put my design for living into high gear. Double down. As always, my first line of defense was to increase my [meditation](#) time. In meditation I tried to open my heart to my neighbors, to ask God to save me from being angry. I listened to the advice of a friend about an ancient Indian battle technique. Instead of flight or fight, instead of moving bone and muscle, you relax and align yourself with gravity. You remember that there is no adversary but yourself.

I’ve also learned through sponsors and the sharing of others in [A.A.](#) that complaining about people doesn’t help, even if you think you’re right. *Especially* if you think you’re right. My friends, when I told them about the unreasonably large bill for twenty or so common variety plants, said my neighbors were “horrible” people. When I defended them and said they were as far as I knew good people, everyone disagreed. “Not bad perhaps,” said one friend, “but not good either.” It was strange to be defending my neighbors who were suing me against the indignation of my friends who love and care about me.

The basic principle of A.A.—[Step 1](#) through Step 12—is that what binds us to each other is our shared suffering. We can only love other alcoholics when we see their suffering and acknowledge our own. This is the most important lesson A.A. has taught me. What a wonder it has

been to learn that this can be applied to the outside world. Not everyone is an alcoholic but everyone suffers. It is the human condition, the prerequisite for life and therefore the basis of our love and tolerance. Who would have thought when I stumbled into A.A.

LOVE IS TOLERANCE  
TOLERANCE IS LOVE

almost seven years ago to solve my drinking problem that addressing my living problem would turn out to be more important. My neighbors are, I think, still angry, still suffering from the loss of their plants. So I can open my heart to them—love them, take responsibility, but not for what I don’t owe. As God’s people, Bill Wilson wrote, we stand on our own two feet. We don’t crawl before anyone. And so I stand still, and let gravity take over.

— Darren G, [Last Stop: Freedom](#)



# Couldn't Guarantee The Haircut

I am a 57-year-old barber from Etobicoke. I came to Alcoholics Anonymous in 1990 and joined the world-famous [Kingsway group](#) at St. George's on the hill. I came to my first [A.A.](#) meeting to support an old friend that was being charged with Impaired driving; in other words I came to support him and not for me. The group was at least 150 people strong that night and before the meeting started, folks came up to me stuck out their hand and said "Hey! Great to see you. Keep coming back!" I went over and made a coffee for my friend and myself and at the meeting's end, still more came up to me and smacked my leather jacket and said "Keep coming back!" Others spun me around and tapped my shoulder and said "Hey friend! Keep coming back!" and spun me around again. I felt like I was in a square dance and later learned that it was a dance for life, and I had better learn those dance "steps" or else!

After many sponsors (some like Charles Manson) and many dry dates, I found myself living in Georgetown Ontario working in my own shop, drunk and stoned everyday! I couldn't guarantee your haircut would be even or balanced after 1pm as I was situated beside a bar and would drink rum and coke all morning and all afternoon! I soon got a reputation in my shop as a drunk and many people stopped coming to my service. That feeling of rejection I felt my whole life came back like a tidal wave and I was overwhelmed with self pity and remorse. More rum would fix that and moving to a small town like Mount Forest. I bought a small bungalow and wow did the drinking and outside issues take off, like a rocket exploring a drunken space voyage. My bottom came as another heart attack put me in my place. I couldn't wait to get out of the hospital to murder a triple rum and coke as the three days in hospital were crazy due to the sweats and withdrawals.

What I found was I couldn't stop of my own will and felt doomed to go on until I died. Suicide was my final option as terror, bewilderment, frustration and despair took hold of me. I managed to get four days sober and called A.A. in the area to find where a meeting was in that small town. I was directed to a Saturday night Big Book study and met my first A.A. sponsor who took me through the process of first admitting I was finished and my life was powerless over the alcohol obsession. He taught me how to find a power greater than me. He said "Hey man! Frame this to work for you! Make A.A. your very own!" and went on to say "Do you think this A.A. process could work for you?" I came to believe very slowly and after life

changes began to happen to me; the thought of an omnipotent external power began to take hold of my life. My long-time friend Eddie from the [Beaches group](#) made it clear to me that my journey was about steering the boat with my paddle away from obstacles that could be of harm to me, and allowing my God to direct the current of life to take me in the direction, wherever my God wants me to grow. I didn't fight any more against the current in the river of life but I let go of the paddle and my boat turned around on its own. Doing so allowed me to begin my journey down stream where I don't fight anything or anyone anymore. Today Eddie is my sponsor and he is always there as others in our fellowship are there for me. They taught me that I will grow through, what I go through, one day at a time.

—Patrick B, [Centennial Group](#), London Ontario

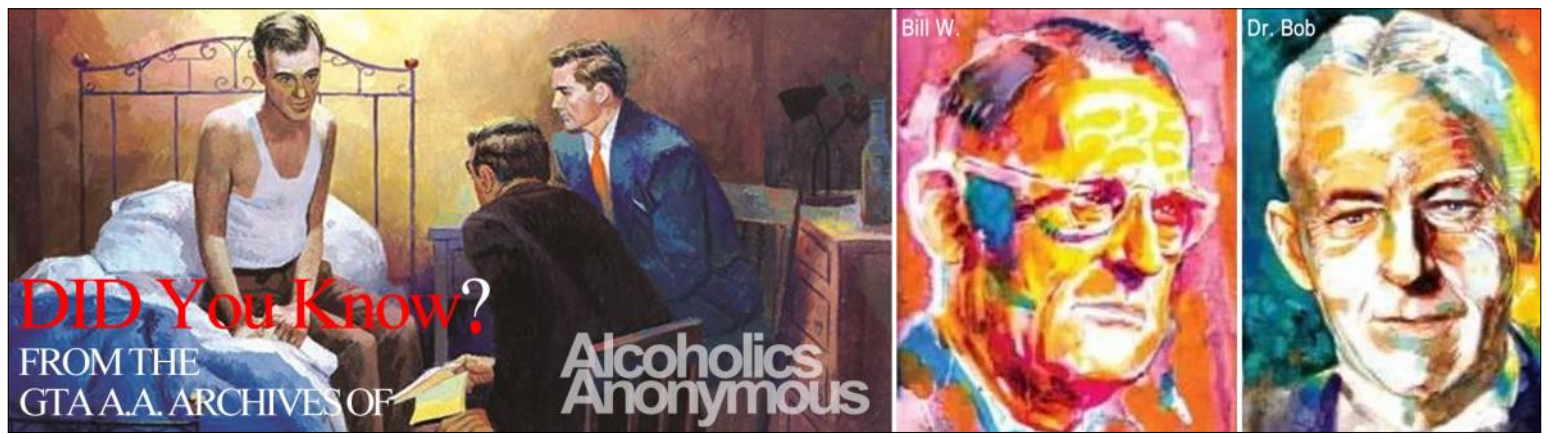


## GROUPS BEGUN IN JULY

July 1960  
June 3, 1979  
June 18, 1972  
July 19, 1993

[Mount-Royal York Group](#)  
[Responsibility Group](#)  
[East York Group](#)  
[Rox Glen Traditional Group](#)





- In July 1934, Ebby T. was approached in Manchester Vermont by his friends Cebra G. and Shep C., who did considerable drinking with Ebby but were now abstaining. They informed Ebby of the Oxford Group in Vermont but Ebby was not quite ready yet to stop drinking.
- In July 1934 Bill W. had a second admission to Towne's Hospital where he met Dr. Silkworth for the first time. Dr. Silkworth explained to Bill the obsession with and the allergy to alcohol. Bill started drinking again almost immediately upon discharge. He was unemployable, \$50,000.00 in debt, suicidal and drinking around the clock.
- On July 15th 1938 Bill W. wrote a letter to Messrs. Richardson, Chipman and Scott of the Rockefeller Foundation, inviting them to his home on 182 Clinton St. New York for meetings of [Alcoholics Anonymous](#). This was the first documented use of the name of the Fellowship.
- July 1st to 3rd in 1955, the 2nd edition of the [Big Book](#) "Alcoholics Anonymous" was introduced. Bill renumbered the pages. Page 1 began with "Bill's Story" instead of "The Doctor's Opinion." Ed B. and Nell Wing (Bill W.'s second secretary) assisted Bill W. in its writing. The personal stories were organized into three sections: (1) "Pioneers of AA," (2) "They Stopped in Time," (3) "They Lost Nearly All." Thirty new stories were included. The 2nd edition had a new appendix with the short and long form Traditions. However it mistakenly listed the short form version published in the November 1949 Grapevine instead of the version published in the 12 and 12 in 1953. The error was not fully corrected until the sixth printing in 1963.
- In the July 1962 Grapevine edition, Editor Jack M. creates the cartoon strip Victor E. and appears for the first time in the Grapevine. Today, Victor E. is an A.A. icon.
- In July 1982, non-alcoholic Milton Maxwell becomes trustee emeritus on account of illness and non-alcoholic Gordon Patrick from Toronto becomes the first Canadian Chairman of the Board at General Service Office.
- July 2nd to 4th in 1993, the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> commencement of A.A. in Canada was held at the Metropolitan Toronto Convention Centre with about 6,000 in attendance. On Wednesday, January 13th in 1943 at 6:00 pm the first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous in Toronto Ontario Canada took place at the Little Denmark Restaurant on 720 Bay Street (on the west side) between Gerrard St. and College St. Present at the meeting were two non-alcoholics, Reverend George Little and Reverend Percy Price and six alcoholics —Tom E., Bruce M., Sam McC., Bus McT., Dorothy C. and Weems C.
- June 30th to July 3rd, 2005 the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and 12th International Convention was held in Toronto with over 44,000 in attendance. We were the first city to host the International Convention twice. The theme was "I Am Responsible" repeating the theme of the 1965 Convention held in Toronto. Also the Convention commemorated the 50th anniversary of Bill W. turning over the operation of the Fellowship to the [Conference in 1955](#) in St. Louis.



## 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



# PHONE GREETERS NEEDED



**24/7**

**365 days a year the phones are answered!**

PLEASE, sign up for a shift

it doesn't take a lot  
to get a lot

and to give a lot

to the still suffering alcoholic

Contact [12step@aatoronto.org](mailto:12step@aatoronto.org)

Visit [aatoronto.org](http://aatoronto.org)

Call 416-487-5591

I would like to tell you that I had the best phone shift last month. I've been doing it now since January of this year. I used to do it years before Covid but now it is more rewarding than ever. In that shift which is 1-5 every other Thursday, I had gotten 2 calls from newcomers and I was able to get both of them to meetings as well as talk to them a little. Give them encouragement. I also had a call from someone needing Al-Anon and I gave them that number as well. I felt really good afterwards. There really is nothing to it. Answering the phone and helping another alcoholic, that's it. Plus, I am doing it from my home which is another bonus right now. I have done other shifts as well and I look forward to taking other ones when I can. —**Nancy H.**, [Mississauga Group](#)

## On That Sunny Morning

All I remember is waking up and looking at the sunny blue sky. Where am I? How did I get here? Waking up in a path around the corner from my ex girlfriends parents' house. Another blackout....

My name is Nick D. and I'm an alcoholic. I remember that sunny morning, sweating with my head pounding looking all over the place trying to figure out what to do. Another blackout which had been occurring for years and years. Alcohol was everything to me; if I wasn't drinking I was thinking about drinking. I couldn't imagine life without alcohol. "Living sober" : how can I do that? That afternoon I was faced with another intervention which would lead me to attend my first A.A. meeting that Friday night. Of course right after that meeting I went and drank. But there was something about you people that I could relate to. I was a consistent relapser with stacks of 24 hour chips. I had no other choice but to keep coming back as everything else in my life was in shambles. Within a two year period I had six months of sobriety, a few months, a few weeks but never continuous. The company I was with was sending me to Rehab in California and all I

had to do was stay sober for 24 hours and I couldn't even do that. I resigned before they found out I didn't go. Ego? You think?

But then the miracle began to happen. I woke up December 19th in 2017 and I felt different. It's like I knew I was done. I dove right into the program and more importantly, did the [12 steps](#) of [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) thoroughly. I got involved as General Service Representative of my home group—service, service, service. The obsession got lifted, and I haven't had a drink since. I have rebuilt my career and more importantly I am present in my 11 year old son Jackson's life. I get to have a calm, peaceful, happy life not having to worry about the next problem. I'm grateful I've been taught this way of living. The program is designed for us to live a beautiful life without alcohol and I can truly say if it wasn't for Alcoholics Anonymous I wouldn't be sober. My home group is the [Oakville Mens' Meeting](#) that meets at 8pm every Thursday at St. Simons Church.

With Gratitude,

—**Nick D.**, [Oakville Mens' Meeting](#)

# ACCEPTANCE

## WORD SEARCH



is the

# ANSWER

K	D	X	B	V	P	O	H	F	P	O	I	S	F	W	Z	L	M	Y	L	ACCEPTANCE
H	W	Y	O	E	K	D	T	E	P	A	U	C	F	J	U	Y	T	Q	R	FOURSEVENTEEN
M	V	Z	N	S	C	D	N	I	L	R	U	V	J	N	Q	B	X	S	E	DOCTOR
N	A	W	D	D	S	N	H	W	R	P	U	L	W	F	V	L	H	O	Y	PAUL
U	I	X	A	D	H	S	A	E	Z	A	F	P	X	F	I	K	E	D	A	BALANCE
C	W	C	G	Y	D	M	N	R	L	F	O	U	E	S	U	R	A	F	R	JOY
F	Y	X	E	N	B	D	S	H	E	D	T	M	L	A	U	A	D	R	P	RADICAL
S	K	B	E	P	E	J	V	C	R	L	Y	L	Q	N	C	O	G	G	J	PEACE
D	W	I	H	R	F	U	Y	C	G	M	O	K	W	C	E	E	Y	C	E	MEDITATION
K	R	F	Q	M	H	O	Q	G	E	M	Q	T	E	T	C	S	F	O	G	PRAYER
F	O	Z	R	J	G	M	U	D	O	Y	B	P	F	F	F	K	S	C	J	FIRSTSTEP
S	R	K	C	E	U	I	I	R	Q	A	T	X	R	R	R	C	E	J	I	SURRENDER
X	A	Z	C	J	E	T	L	Y	S	A	X	A	F	I	O	P	T	W	I	LOVE
N	V	P	R	O	A	K	O	L	N	E	C	R	N	N	H	H	A	U	E	TOLERANCE
M	H	H	L	T	T	M	V	C	K	C	V	W	T	A	C	K	A	V	C	HAPPY
O	I	M	I	X	L	S	E	Q	O	W	D	E	P	P	C	O	B	E	N	JOYOUS
D	M	O	E	G	G	U	P	M	O	S	N	P	N	N	L	D	I	S	E	FREE
E	N	Z	U	E	R	B	P	C	F	T	Y	R	L	T	I	L	H	C	I	MEETINGS
E	S	U	L	D	T	A	L	I	M	O	Q	O	B	J	E	U	C	A	R	FRIENDSHIP
R	E	H	N	X	S	I	R	E	U	J	R	T	L	L	V	E	I	G	E	CONTENTMENT
F	Z	L	X	S	H	S	N	P	J	A	G	C	M	A	I	G	N	Q	P	BONDAGE
J	V	O	I	A	T	T	Q	G	C	L	B	O	J	M	C	Z	A	J	X	FREEDOM
G	P	O	D	S	M	V	S	Y	S	U	T	D	B	N	G	I	G	E	E	COMPASSION
K	N	B	T	E	B	A	L	A	N	C	E	W	U	X	B	U	D	P	O	EXPERIENCE
V	Q	E	U	G	Y	Y	Z	O	H	L	A	C	M	G	F	A	L	A	V	HELPFULNESS
K	P	S	P	O	N	S	O	R	S	H	I	P	L	J	O	Y	B	A	R	SPONSORSHIP



Today, an A.A. presence can be found in approximately 180 nations worldwide, with membership estimated at over two million. There are more than 123,000 A.A. groups around the world and A.A.'s literature has been translated into over 100 languages. ( Reprinted from [A.A. Around The World](http://A.A. Around The World) —aa.org )



# Group Spotlight

The first meeting of the [Last Stop: Freedom](#) group was held on Sunday September 27th, 2020. Initially it was a Covid-response online meeting begun by a group of friends in A.A. who were both affected by the meeting closures and wanting a place for newcomers to log on and hear the message of the 12 steps. The meeting was well-attended from the start. Several newcomers who came to our meeting became members and remain sober.

The [LSF](#) group decided in March of 2022 to become one of the first online Covid-response A.A. meetings in Toronto to go in-person. We made the slightly controversial decision not to have a hybrid meeting or an online meeting of the same name on the same night. Lock, stock and barrel on April 17<sup>th</sup> 2022 Last Stop: Freedom moved to its in-person location at Trinity-St. Paul's Church at 427 Bloor Street West in The Chapel Room on Sundays at 7:30 PM.

Each week a chair person reads a passage chosen from the "[Big Book](#)" of Alcoholics Anonymous and sober alcoholics share their experience with that topic. Our emphasis is on the newcomer and the spiritual awakening that comes with working the steps. We like to think that one of the things that make our meeting special is our willingness to talk about our awakenings within the context of a variety of spiritual traditions. It would hardly be a Last Stop meeting if someone didn't mention Ram Dass, or Buddhism or God. Love and tolerance of others is definitely our code. There is lots of opportunity for service at our group. Some of our service commitments have little or no sobriety requirements so everyone can get involved.

Our business meeting is the last Sunday of the month after the regular meeting and we are always looking for new people to join our A.A. family. We joke that we have the shortest business meetings on the planet.



Once we had one while we put the chairs away! There is parking behind Bloor near Spadina, and the meeting is only a few hundred yards away from the Spadina subway station. The Walmer exit puts you practically at our front door. Members usually come early and sit on the steps and chat and we often go for coffee or food after the meeting at a restaurant a half-block away. The church requires masks in the hall but they're optional in the meeting room. Remember to bring your own coffee as church protocols don't permit us to make our own. We're proud of our group, the support we have for each other, the openness and inclusiveness of our meeting. We hope to see you there.

—[Last Stop: Freedom Group](#)

**LAST STOP: FREEDOM GROUP**  
OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

**In The Chapel Room!**

**SUNDAYS @ 7:30 pm**  
**427 Bloor Street West**  
**Trinity-St Paul's Church**

"The tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have found a common solution. We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree." -- "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous Pg. 17