

BETTER TIMES

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



GRATITUDE

AND SERVICE, WORK HAND IN HAND

Alcoholics
Anonymous

OCTOBER 2021



GREATER TORONTO AREA INTERGROUP

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NAME	YEARS	DRY DATE	GROUP	CELEBRATION
George H	30	Sep 15, 1991	King City Group	Oct 4th
Joanne G	10	Oct 15, 2011		Oct 15
Michelle C	1	Oct 19, 2020	Sisters of Sobriety	Oct 20

CLICK ON THE PIC TO GO TO:

Alcoholics Anonymous
Area 83 Eastern Ontario International



SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

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[IT Sub-Committee Members](#)

[Self-Support Chair](#)

[Finance Committee Member](#)

[2021 Winter Season Virtual Alkathon](#)



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 your letting us know

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

communications@aatoronto.org

Letters or articles to the Editor (200-500 words) for *BETTER TIMES* at



GREATER TORONTO AREA INTERGROUP

MISSION STATEMENT

Greater Toronto Area Intergroup is a coordinating body that supports the 12 step work of A.A. groups in the Toronto area, providing a point of contact between individual groups, our members, the public and the still-suffering alcoholic.

GRATITUDE and SERVICE

In 2020 approximately 350 members contributed more than \$88,000 - over a third of Intergroup's total income. It is our hope that A.A. members and groups continue to assist Intergroup in Carrying the Message and to remain Self-Supporting.

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AT WORK

With contributions from A.A. groups and individual members, Intergroup is able to provide activities and services to help the still-suffering alcoholic.

WAYS WE CARRY THE MESSAGE:

Maintaining a 24 hour a day 7 days a week telephone HELP LINE

Arranging Twelfth (12th) Step calls to newcomers

Preserving and displaying A.A. material of historical significance

Sponsoring the Annual Ontario Regional Conference (ORC)

Maintaining the GTA Intergroup Fellowship website

www.aatoronto.org Developing a soon to be launched Newcomer Page and Help Chat feature.

Publishing the [BETTER TIMES](#), a Newsletter for A.A. members, by A.A. members

Our staff (special workers) operate the literature department, provide administrative support to all committees, respond to all inquiries from A.A. members and the public.

Thank you for participating in the GTA Intergroup GRATITUDE CAMPAIGN

No amount is too small!

How to Make Contributions

- Mail a cheque or money order. Please make cheque payable to "Toronto Intergroup"
- Online at www.aatoronto.org Click on [Make a Contribution / 7th Tradition](#) in the top left corner
- Interac E-transfer: Contributions@aatoronto.org
- Monthly Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) from your bank account/Visa/MasterCard, contact our office 416-487-8810 or admin@aatoronto.org
- Cash or Debit by visiting our office.

GTA Intergroup is a registered charity. Official donation receipts will be provided for all contributions accompanied by a name and address. Receipts for online contributions are issued immediately.

Please note that in keeping with A.A.'s 7th Tradition, contributions are accepted only from A.A. members.

24/7 HELP LINE: 416-487-5591

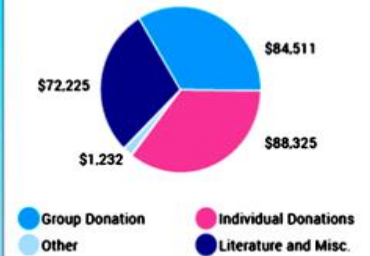
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www.aatoronto.org

GTA Intergroup 2020 Income Sources & Expenditures

2020 Income Sources



2020 Expenditures



GRATITUDE & SERVICE

"Gratitude can only be expressed in deeds ...not words"

ETERNALLY GRATEFUL

Today I have gratitude for A.A. and God's grace. If it weren't for grace I wouldn't be here. In my drinking days I did unspeakable harm to everyone who came into contact with me. A person like that deserves to be punished and yet I was pardoned and blessed. Me! A low-bottom type-three alcoholic forgiven and loved. And this grace is inexhaustible. God never runs out. In sobriety when my character defects flare up and I fall short and miss the mark God continues to confront my human indifference and rebellion with forgiveness and blessings. Today I am FREE. I have escaped the bondage of self with a life better than anything I could have imagined. For that I am eternally grateful.

—Emily D, [Last Stop: Freedom Group](#)

7th Tradition
"Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."



Better Times Newsletter

Submit Your Stories

Looking for submissions on

the big book

The First 90 Days

service

and personal stories

poems

articles

letters

Submissions to the Editor(s) (between 200-600 words) for [BETTER TIMES](#) at bettertimes@aatoronto.org
The editor(s) reserve the right to edit for length and content.

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SLIP: SOBRIETY LOST ITS PRIORITY

I once was at a meeting where the word *SLIP* stood for *Sobriety Lost Its Priority*, and I laughed. “Trust one of our own,” I thought, “to hit the nail right on the head.”

The truth of the matter is I would not have my over forty-four years of abstinence from alcohol if I had not kept my sobriety as a priority. When I got sober, I did not live in a world that accepted me maintaining my sobriety as a priority. I am not snivelling and going into the poor me’s when I say this. It was just a fact.

One thing about having forty-four years is that when people hear that number they ask me how I did it. How did this blackout drunk who saw ravens coming through the walls get sober? Who saw a dog (not visible to anyone else) eating up her arm? Who—when the binge took her—drained off a bottle of whiskey or more and who at times lived in that hell of watching herself drink? Who pleaded with herself not to drink yet continued to drain the bottle? Who was still doing this even when the warm glow of the booze had passed? Well, I thought I would share some of that with you.

Now, as far as I know, I cannot stay sober today on yesterday’s sobriety. So, I am gonna tell you what I do today:

1. When I wake up (this includes snoozing), before I open my eyes, I ask the Higher Power/loving God for help to keep me sober this day and direct my thoughts and actions. (Check out the [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions](#), [Alcoholic Anonymous](#), [Came to Believe](#) and [Living Sober](#) books and ask your sponsor to figure out how to get yourself a Higher Power/loving God).
2. Sometime in the day, I do my more extended prayer and meditation (it should be done soon, shortly after you wake up, but hey, I get it in).
3. Identify anything that blocks me feeling my Higher Power/ loving God (sometimes I know by a murky feeling I get inside of me and other times the spiritual axiom noted in [Step 10](#) tells me I am off balance). I process and deal with the imbalance to the point of being restored to my Higher Power/ loving God (this has sometimes—not too often in the forty-four plus years—taken me to professionals and other twelve-step programs.)
4. Know each day what Step I am on.

In the day I am either going to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, trying to be of service within A.A. or for A.A. and/or attempting to carry the A.A. principles into all my affairs. I don’t take the first drink in whatever form it is.

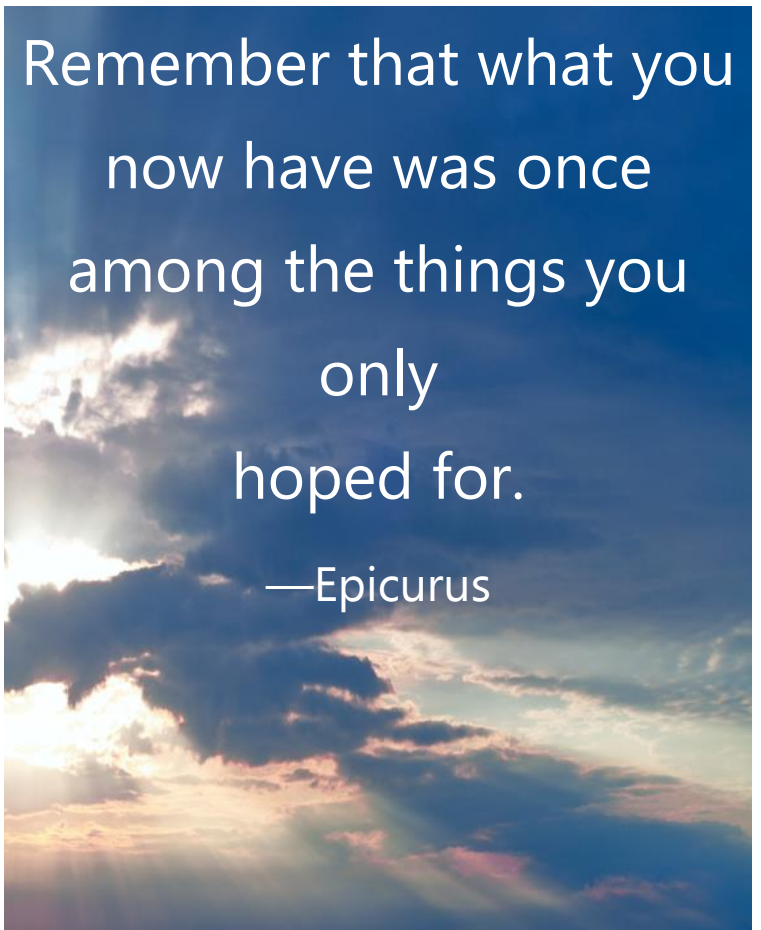
—Susan Ida B

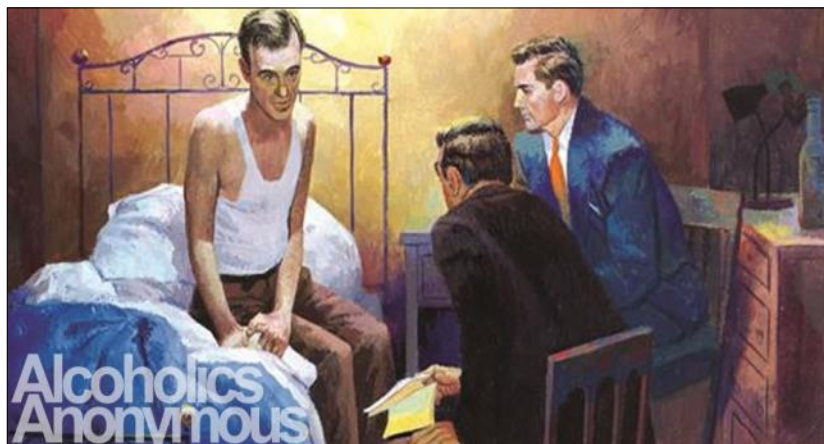
GRATITUDE IS AN ACTION

Oh sure, I contribute to [Intergroup](#) on my A.A. anniversary, and in the month of October I do the same for [Gratitude month](#). However, money is just a part of it. My sponsor taught me the value of service early on in my sobriety, something I continue with to this day. Now that I am retired and on a fixed income, I’ve adopted the philosophy of, “Give a little money, give a lot of time.”

When I am truly grateful, I’m no longer thinking of myself, I’m thinking of others. I ask myself; how can I best carry the message of [Alcoholics Anonymous](#)? I get involved and be “a part of.” There is something rewarding about being a small part of something much bigger than myself. When I add service into my life, it gels the other two legacies of unity and recovery together. By doing service, I am bolstering my unity with the fellowship, which in turn improves the quality of my recovery. I try to use the triangle as a gauge of how well my sobriety is doing. Am I doing too much of one, and not enough of the other two? When I can put balance into my recovery, unity and service I know I am heading in the right direction.

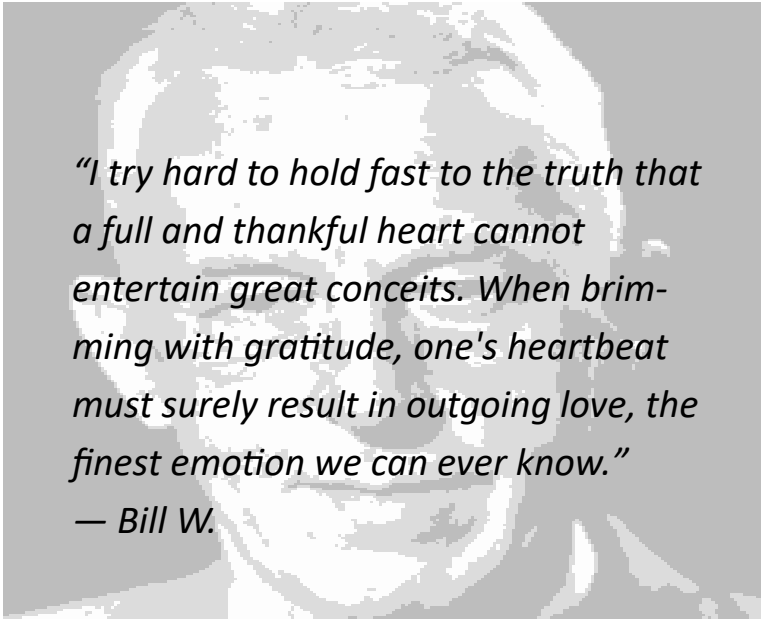
—Dave R, [The Dogs](#)





- Oct. 20, 1928—Bill signed a pledge in the family Bible: "To my beloved wife that has endured so much, let this stand as evidence to you that I have finished with drink forever." On Thanksgiving, Bill signed another pledge in the family Bible: "My strength is renewed a thousand fold in my love for you." In January 1929, Bill signed yet another pledge in the family Bible: "To tell you once more that I am finished with it. I love you." On September 30, 1930, Bill wrote his last promise to stop drinking in the family Bible: "Finally and for a lifetime, thank God for your love." After that he gave up making promises in despair.
- October 1937,—[A.A.](#) meetings are held weekly on Tuesday nights at Bill and Lois' home at 182 Clinton St. Brooklyn, the first New York A.A. group. Leaders of the Oxford Group at the Calvary Mission in New York ordered alcoholics staying at the mission not to attend meetings at 182 Clinton Street. Bill and Lois received criticism from Oxford Group members for having "drunks only" meetings at their home. The Wilsons were described as "not maximum" (an Oxford Group term for those believed to be lagging in their devotion to the Oxford Group principles).
- October 1942—with the help of San Francisco, A.A. members and Clinton T. Duffy (Prison Warden), the first A.A. prison group was established in a maximum security prison at San Quentin Penitentiary. It generated much favorable national publicity. State and Federal prison groups quickly spread across the country.
- Oct. 23, 1949—New York area's first female member, Florence R., starts drinking again, does not recover and commits suicide. Bill knew her husband from Wall Street. Bill and Lois got her out from Bellevue. She was the first female drunk who stayed at Bill's house. She was also the only female New York member of A.A. who objected to calling the Big Book "100 men" when names were being discussed. Her story "Feminine Victory" in the 1st Edition of the Big Book helped Fitz M. start the Washington Group.
- October 1954—the "Alcoholic Foundation" changed its name to [General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous \(GSO\)](#). The original idea of an all-purpose Foundation was abandoned.
- October 1959—Gratitude Month began for the purpose of requesting contributions from the members of the Fellowship in Toronto to support [GTA Intergroup](#) which supports the members, newcomers and groups of GTA.
- Oct. 24, 1973—the 1st [Archives Committee](#) meeting established at GSO with Nell Wing (GSO Archivist) in charge. The committee currently meets 3 times per year.
- Oct. 27-28, 1984—the [Eastern Ontario Area Assembly](#) was again held at the 401 Inn in Kingston Ontario for 2 days and has continued with the 2-day sessions on Saturday. Information Service Day is held and on the Sunday of when the Area Assembly is held.
- Oct. 5, 1988—Lois Wilson, widow of Bill Wilson and co-founder of Al-Anon Family Groups, dies at the age of 97. Michael Alexander, past Board Chairman, wrote, "Many A.A.'s today feel their lives are owned to Lois as well."

OLD GTA MEETING BOOKS ARE NEEDED FOR THE GTA ARCHIVES
TO DONATE AA/GTA ARCHIVAL ITEMS TO THE GTA ARCHIVES PLEASE CONTACT
THE GTA ARCHIVIST EDDY G. at 416-536-7536.



"I try hard to hold fast to the truth that a full and thankful heart cannot entertain great conceits. When brimming with gratitude, one's heartbeat must surely result in outgoing love, the finest emotion we can ever know."

— Bill W.

REBORN

The [Big Book](#) amazingly promises that we will be reborn (p. 63). In Big Book context, Bill W. may have been referring to Dr. Carl Jung's description of a spiritual experience: "Ideas, emotions, and attitudes, which were once the guiding forces of the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side and replaced by a completely new set of conceptions and motives . . ." (p. 27). Of course, Bill himself had a near similar experience at Towns Hospital (p. 14).

I had a similar experience when I was about three months sober but had not yet worked the steps. One late night while meditating on a pier of rocks protruding into the ocean in Santa Monica, California, I was overcome with a tremendous surge of energy and joy that sent me sprinting down the beach. This lasted a long time but had dissipated by the next morning. It occurred to me that I had experienced the same as Bill Wilson on page 14—perhaps, I too had become "reborn!"

But alas, two months later I marched into a bar and almost ordered a gin and tonic. Thank God I didn't, but I certainly had not had the Big Book definition of a spiritual experience: "A personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism" (p. 567).

But as time passes, I realize that God has removed the mental obsession to drink alcohol so long as I remain in a fit spiritual condition. Indeed, the 10th Step promise on page 85 have happened: "The problem (mental obsession) has been removed. It does not exist for us." In this context, I have been reborn!

— Bob S.

AN ADDICT FELL IN A HOLE

and couldn't get out.

A businessman went by and the addict called out for help. The businessman threw him some money and told him to buy himself a ladder. But the addict could not buy a ladder in this hole he was in. A doctor walked by. The addict said, "Help! I can't get out!" The doctor gave him some drugs and said, "Take this. It will relieve the pain." The addict said thanks, but when the pills ran out, he was still in the hole. A well-known psychiatrist rode by and heard the addict's cries for help. He stopped and asked "How did you get there? Were you born there? Did your parents put you there? Tell me about yourself, it will alleviate your sense of loneliness." So the addict talked with him for an hour. The psychiatrist had to leave, but he said he'd be back next week. The addict thanked him, but he was still in the hole. A priest came by. The addict called for help. The priest gave him a Bible and said, "I'll say a prayer for you." He got down on his knees and prayed for the addict, then he left. The addict was very grateful, he read the Bible, but he was still stuck in the hole.

A recovering addict happened to be passing by. The addict cried out, "Hey, help me. I'm stuck in this hole!" Right away the recovering addict jumped down in the hole with him. The addict asked "What are you doing? Now we're both stuck here!!" But the recovering addict said, "Calm down. It's okay. I've been here before. I know how to get out."

The moral of the story is that the best person to help someone struggling with a cunning, baffling and powerful ailment like addiction is someone who's been there and recovered.

— Author Unknown

24/7 365 DAYS A YEAR

THE HELPLINE PHONES ARE ANSWERED

WE NEED HELP!

Please consider signing up for a shift.

Contact: 12step@aatoronto.org

Visit: aatoronto.org

Call: 416-487-5591

It's not a lot

to get a lot

and to give a lot to the still suffering alcoholic

TRADITION TEN

"Alcoholics Anonymous, has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy."

D	K	K	Z	K	L	U	X	N	N	M	I	C	P	M	P	K	X	X	L	Tradition
D	B	W	K	O	K	N	X	M	S	G	O	V	E	R	N	E	D	L	C	Controversy
M	A	C	M	H	R	R	K	E	S	S	O	P	W	X	G	Z	D	A	Q	Political
N	S	B	A	I	E	L	H	X	T	L	E	O	Q	Y	F	S	J	V	Z	Religious
I	A	E	N	J	L	Z	H	E	S	W	I	U	O	V	Z	A	O	I	I	Reform
X	I	G	O	M	I	K	Y	E	H	T	D	C	S	O	B	H	S	V	Y	Public
W	K	L	N	P	G	A	G	T	T	U	V	Y	G	S	K	N	C	R	K	Provocation
X	B	O	Y	T	I	V	K	O	R	A	E	L	K	W	I	W	J	U	M	Opinion
Z	W	A	M	E	O	O	O	R	F	A	R	S	Q	R	B	A	B	S	N	Corporate
T	Y	B	O	Q	U	U	B	A	G	M	D	O	S	X	U	R	X	G	Y	Anonymous
V	U	M	U	O	S	T	Z	H	T	P	F	I	P	A	F	D	D	S	T	Issues
U	U	W	S	F	A	S	E	U	T	R	I	V	T	R	K	B	P	S	E	Outside
N	L	N	A	V	Q	I	K	I	D	O	Z	M	T	I	O	R	J	E	I	Self-Righteous
P	A	O	O	S	V	D	V	K	G	V	F	P	O	R	O	C	W	N	C	Governed
X	U	I	K	C	H	E	O	D	X	O	X	P	N	I	Y	N	G	I	O	Virtue
G	T	N	S	I	I	I	A	N	P	C	D	M	H	S	K	Q	R	S	S	Society
X	I	I	U	L	X	Q	N	I	H	A	Y	J	R	R	T	H	O	U	E	Alcoholics
P	R	P	O	O	T	D	R	G	Y	T	R	E	L	E	E	Y	U	B	V	Survival
O	I	O	E	H	P	L	F	K	T	I	V	J	N	L	J	P	P	J	I	Business
P	P	I	T	O	O	A	U	W	L	O	M	V	M	U	C	R	D	I	T	Squabble
Y	S	L	H	C	L	V	M	B	R	N	N	R	G	C	I	K	O	L	O	Money
N	N	K	G	L	I	H	D	T	T	O	O	I	W	T	L	R	J	C	M	Reluctance
R	P	T	I	A	T	Q	N	N	D	F	O	O	A	A	B	K	S	O	Y	Spiritual
O	A	V	R	Y	I	O	D	G	E	I	M	C	T	N	U	B	O	C	F	Motives
J	N	M	F	E	C	P	E	R	I	S	H	X	L	C	P	E	S	E	I	Perish
Q	P	T	L	N	A	V	X	H	G	B	T	U	U	E	Q	X	G	W	K	Ten
F	G	C	E	O	L	C	A	Y	Q	Z	N	S	Q	U	A	B	B	L	E	Drawn
P	T	N	S	M	I	Q	E	K	D	Q	U	L	R	Z	H	M	J	M	N	Washingtonian
O	M	G	W	I	H	Q	L	N	W	X	O	G	Z	K	X	T	M	G	R	Group



GREATER TORONTO AREA
INTERGROUP

GROUPS BEGUN IN OCTOBER:

Oct. 2, 1947 - [Danforth Group](#)
 Oct. 8, 1970 - [Chartwell Group](#)
 Oct. 8, 1951 - [Friendly Group](#)
 Oct. 13, 1965 - [Anniversary Group](#)
 Oct. 15, 1975 - [Brampton New Life Group](#)
 Oct. 15, 1948 - [Hill Group](#)



Oct. 16, 1983 - [Acceptance Group- Oshawa](#)
 Oct. 20, 1977 - [New Anchor Group](#)
 Oct. 21, 1987 - [Scarborough Thursday Noon Meeting](#)
 Oct. 25, 2013 - [Sisters In Sobriety Group](#)
 Oct. 28, 1993 - [Living Sober Group- Thornhill](#)

GROUP SPOTLIGHT

[Tuesday Afternoon Big Book Discussion](#)

It's not all in the title folks...Tuesday Afternoon Big Book Discussion does indeed happen on a Tuesday afternoon at 1:30, but it also happens on a [Friday night at 8!](#) The joke is not intentional and really the joke was on Fred B., formerly of the [Port Credit group](#) in Mississauga. He wanted to resurrect the Tuesday afternoon meeting he enjoyed so much from the time he moved to Mississauga in 2008. Back then the meeting was part of the Restoration & Recovery (R&R) group. As happens with some groups, attendance began to dwindle at R&R and with the onset of the pandemic, R&R was forced to close its doors.

An inquiry to St. Thomas à Becket Church where R&R meetings were formerly held, led to granting the meeting space to the new Tuesday Afternoon Discussion group. What wasn't planned on was the meeting space included the Friday night spot!

"But I only planned for a Tuesday afternoon meeting," thought Fred. How many times have our plans turned out differently than we mapped out in our minds? So the Friday night meeting anecdotally named the Tuesday Afternoon Discussion group was born. The plan for resurrecting a one-hour Tuesday afternoon group has become a full blown group with two meetings a week, and people are needed to fill both the seats and the service positions!

The first meeting since the pandemic shutdown occurred on September 21st with approximately 13 alcoholics in attendance at this closed discussion meeting. Current church and local/provincial health regulations are complied with. The current COVID protocols of physical distancing, masks at all times except when speaking and contact tracing are being practiced.

There are polarized views on meeting formats whether in-person, virtual or hybrid. All are needed for those willing and wanting to hear and practice the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, discover the solution to alcoholism and to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic. When asked "What makes this group great for the newcomer?" Fred answered "It's all about the newcomer with a focus on the [Big Book](#)".

"When I was in Oregon years ago I attended a meeting where there was a 10-minute lead talk. They would go around the room and talk about what's going on with them and how the lead talk resonated in any way with them. The lead speaker format was simply: what got them there, what they did to get sober and what they do to keep sober!"

This format was adopted for the Friday night closed discussion meeting with a lead speaker and then topic discussion afterward. By group conscience, respectful, Big Book based cross-talk is encouraged.

The last Friday of every month will be a regular open speaker meeting. "I didn't know what I was getting into," said Fred with his small plan to open up the Tuesday afternoon meeting he fondly remembered. The God of his understanding had other plans and now this newbie group of 3 members in total welcomes anyone with a desire to stop drinking to come check us out and stay a while.

There are service opportunities for newcomers to help set-up, tear-down and make coffee etc. Those with a year of sobriety or more are welcome to join and fill the Group Service Rep., Intergroup Rep. and Secretary roles.

The church is wheelchair accessible and there is plenty of parking and public transit is conveniently located at the adjacent [South Common Mall](#) in Mississauga. It's the hope of these three members of this newly formed group that this Group Spotlight will attract alcoholics to the Tuesday Big Book Discussion group held Tuesdays and Fridays, all are welcome.

—Fred B., [Tuesday Afternoon Discussion Group](#)

—Mary M., [Erin Mills Group](#)

