

BETTER TIMES



Produced for A.A. members by A.A. members in the GTA **FEBRUARY**

focus 2021

THEN NOW TOMORROW

TELEGRAM PRINT OR DIGITAL

R. H. SMITH, M. D.
2ND NATIONAL BLDG. AKRON, OHIO
TELEPHONE: HE-8523 REG. NO. _____

R FOR alcoholics
ADDRESS _____ DATE Feb 1937

Always remember it

1. Trust God
2. Clean house
3. Help others

NR 1 2 3 INF. _____ M. D. _____



"Carry the Vision"

Ontario Regional Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous March 19 - 21, 2021



AA SPEAKERS include
Diana M, FL, Jeff V, ND,
Cliff & Lori G, OK
Zoom ID: 896 002 3291
password: orc2021

Al-Anon SPEAKERS include
Andrea McS, Scotland
John M, Australia
Zoom ID: 453 408 4275
password: orc2021

No registration fee! Alateens required to preregister.

WWW.aaorc.ca

NARCISSUS: MEET MISSUS PRINCIPLES-BEFORE-PERSONALITIES

A layperson's definition, aka the vernacular, reads: **narcissist** n. egoist; an ego-centric, arrogant or self-centred person.

It was 8:59 when I looked at the computer screen and saw about a hundred faces staring back at me. I was about to chair an A.A. meeting, and each week had been exactly the same, but today something felt different in me. For today I saw neither the 100 sick souls waiting to hear something that might alleviate their suffering, nor the opportunity to perform a vital service. What I saw was an audience, and an opportunity to perform, period. I probably just needed a laugh.

Perhaps I should qualify first, for you see, I was once a professional actor. For 15 years I sacrificed everything I had for my career, including any relationships, and I thought it paid off. I've recently filed taxes for my best years in film & TV, and discovered how much money I earned, then pissed away on booze. There are shows I can barely remember I did. That was around the time I sacrificed everything I had left for my other career, my voracious drinking habit.

But back to the meeting at hand. It opened all right, with several of those little green hands popping up shortly after the daily morning reading. Then I noticed my buddy Johnny was next to share, and introducing him, I busted out my Jack Nicholson impression from *The Shining*: "Here's...Johnny!"

That was it -- I was off to the races. A Second City-trained actor, essentially ignoring the script in hand, playing without a director to an immense audience with a subconscious desire to laugh, while staring into a camera mere inches from my face and with the ability to watch myself at the same time? I mean, do the math. I had chaired many times before, but upon later reflection, I knew that today something had not felt right. I also knew that before the meeting was over I managed to work in some snippets of Kramer, about half the cast of *The Simpsons* and a whole whack of Ace Ventura, too.

Then my phone suddenly jangled me back to the present. It was a good friend from the meeting. Normally she is a staunch supporter. These are not normal times.

Me: Hey, how's it going?
Friend: Buddy, I'm a little concerned, you may have noticed I left the meeting early.

Me: Yeah, how come? What's up?

Friend: Well, I was going to ask you the same thing. Is everything okay?

Me: Of course not, I snapped. Why did you leave the meeting?

Friend: Something was bothering me. I just couldn't watch anymore.

What ensued was a brief but intense reminder of many of the things we routinely discussed, such as ego and false pride and exerting one's will upon others, all of which she neatly summed up with the following nugget: "All I can say, buddy, is that it's about principles, not personalities." She wished me well and hung up.

I felt like the air had suddenly been sucked out of the room. During the next 24 hours I wrestled with many emotions, including resentment, anger, pride and embarrassment, before basically succumbing to shame and failure. I considered resigning from my commitment to the chair with a month still to go, but in the end another friend talked me down off that particular cliff.

"You love to chair! And you're wonderful at it when you just stick to the script and be yourself. You don't have to be anybody else." And therein lies the rub. All my life I've been hiding behind the many characters I have played, and the multiple masks I have worn, because it is safer that way. All my life, even in recovery, I have been afraid to be as my Creator made me -- without a script or camera, fictional role or a spotlight. That is a very selfish way to live. But today at least, I am aware of it, and that is the first step towards change.

That is what this program is teaching me. And so long as I remain teachable, and stick close to my Creator, sponsor and other winners in the program, like the dear friends who helped me through this latest Narcissus Crisis, I am in good hands. Until tomorrow. David P., [Birds of a Feather](#)



CLARITY

Was thinking in my mind one day something I surely knew
The attempts I faced before with this had never pulled me through

Life continued on for me but changes would not follow
I continued to feel the guilt within, my soul remaining hollow

I am not quite sure when it came - some hand above the dark
But it pulled me out that final day and lit me like a spark

At last I found a road that day and saw myself once more
This time with a bit of help I see it's not a daunting chore

No fog nor sadness dwell for now, no questions of my pain
For joy of life for sunshine, for feeling children's laughter here again

This new found wonder all around I never could take notice
Until I found the man within - he seems quite kind and honest

So I am thankful for the new found me - the peace the light the rain
I am thankful for the here and now, the spirit to sustain

This will be a long and curvy road, will surely be a fight

The lion in the grass they say may have me in his sight

My hollowness is over though so he can stay right there

Save your time with me my friend my strength can match your stare

One final word before I go right now so not to lose my way
I have felt this awful burden lift and life looks here to stay Patrick W., [Restoring Life](#)

Day of Recovery
with 12 speakers
from AA, Al-Anon
and Alateen

ZOOM INTO RECOVERY

Celebrating Recovery Through the 12 Steps

Saturday, February 6, 2021
9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Meeting room opens
at 8:30 am

For further information or
7th tradition please email:
crtts17@gmail.com

Zoom meeting ID: 894 8104 7569
Zoom meeting Password: 953 644

ID: 894 8104 7569 Password: 953 644

8:30 Zoom meeting room opens
9:00 **Open Meeting**
9:15–10:15 Step 1 Mildred F, Fox Glen Traditional Group, Toronto – A.A.
Step 2 Pamela M, Etobicoke Family Group, Etobicoke – Al-Anon
Step 3 Mary R, Just for Today, Conyers, Georgia USA - A.A.
10:15–10:25 **Morning Break**
10:25 –11:25 Step 4 Carole S, Hope for Today, Milton – Al-Anon
Step 5 Terri H, The Saturday Johnston Meeting, Johnston, Iowa – A.A.
Step 6 Mary B, West Seattle Saturday Morning Group, Seattle, WA– Al-Anon
11:25–11:55 **Lunch Break**
11:55–12:55 Family Panel: Recovery in the Family
Judith W. Coffee Hour, Al-Anon
William W. Prince Edward Group, A.A.
Jazlyn W. Hope Prevails Alateen
Robyn W. Downtown Noon Al-Anon
12:55–1:55 Step 7 Jessica R, Westmoreland, Toronto - A.A.
Step 8 Nicky D, Waterdown Al-Anon Family Group – Al-Anon
Step 9 Mike B, Parkwood Hills, Ottawa - A.A.
1:55–2:05 **Afternoon Break**
2:05–3:05 Step 10 Catherine K, Preston Al-Anon Family Group, Dallas, Texas – Al-Anon
Step 11 Donald R, Broadford, Isle of Skye - A.A.
Step 12 David E, Just for Today, Chicago, Illinois – Al-Anon
3:05 **Close Meeting**
For further information or 7th tradition please email: crtts17@gmail.com



NAME	YEARS	DRY DATE	GROUP	Celebration
Adam S.	1	Feb 1 2020	Erin Mills	Feb 1 2021
Bruce H.	35	Jan 15 1986	Sidney Noon Serenity	Feb 6 2021
Kayla S.	1	Feb 14 2020	Last Road of Recovery	Feb 14 2021
Linda T	40	Feb 22 1981	Erin Mills	Feb 22 2021
Gabrielle M.	20	Sep 25 2000	New Anchor	Feb 25 2021

George M. of [Dry on the Danforth](#) received his 25 year medallion November 25, 2020 from another member Wilfred L. He received this literally while standing on Danforth Street, outside their home group church, Hope United Church.

HOW TO MAKE A VIRTUAL A.A. MEETING BETTER

Sharing in a meeting can be the most spiritual experience. When we listen, truly listen, we can find strength and hope from another member's experiences and when we share from our hearts, we can tell of our newfound strength and hope. The etiquette in our meetings is to respond to the one sharing by remaining still and quiet during the share and thanking them at the end of their share. After the meeting in fellowship, we can approach the one who shared and offer feedback if they wish. In a crosstalk meeting, one can offer feedback in the meeting (by asking the chair to do so). It is suggested that any disruptions during a share can be distracting to all in the meeting. For example, we turn off our smartphones. It is the right thing to do.

Here are some suggestions for virtual meetings. In a virtual meeting, we now have a microphone and a camera assisting us with getting connected to others and we see and hear others on a screen with speakers or headphones. This changes how we share. Remaining still and quiet is something that changes in a virtual meeting and it is suggested that we consider that we can be disruptive without even knowing it.

Stepping away from your desktop to answer the door for a delivery or laptop to take a call in the same room, or ambient noises can be terribly distracting to those listening to someone share. It is suggested to turn off your video and audio when you are not present.

If you choose to have a bite to eat, not something we typically do in an in-person meeting other than a coffee and cookie; it is suggested to turn off your cameras. A close-up of you eating may not be welcome.

Another suggestion – it is nice to have a picture of yourself in place of a black frame. Be sure to update your name with your first name and last name initial to maintain your anonymity.

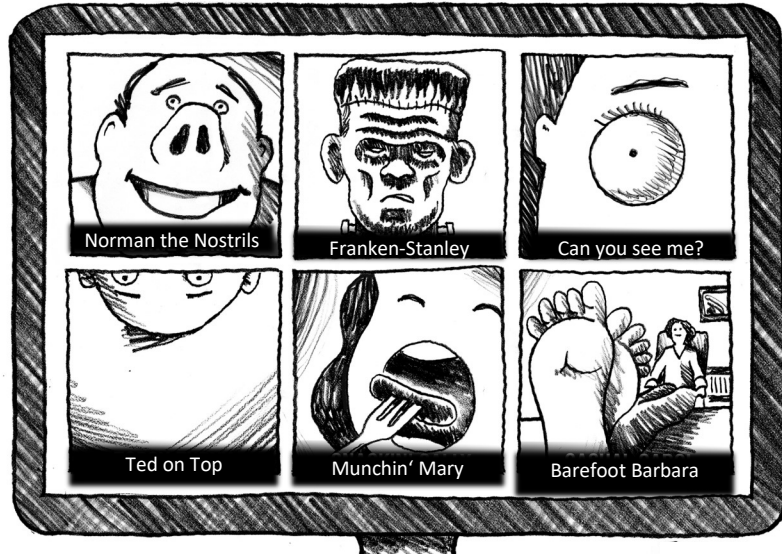
For those using Smartphones, it is safest to stand still when you are sharing. If you are walking with the camera on whether sharing or not causes much motion. This movement is distracting and can use up some of the bandwidth causing internet connection problems. Losing someone during share due to bandwidth can be helped by turning off video and not moving around if your camera is on.

In regard to the internet connection problems we encounter; it is suggested to remain patient and let the

host or chair talk about any internet connection problems. Do not feel the need to jump in. This causes more confusion than anything else.

And one more suggestion is to ask the person who sets up your meetings to add 15 minutes before and 30 minutes afterwards. When the chair and other members support this Fellowship time; it's especially good for new members looking for answers and it mimics the casual encounters before and after in-person meetings. I do miss the hugs and handshakes though.

Randy C., [Communications Committee](#)



24/7 365 days a year the GTA A.A. phones are answered ... usually by the same 12 people !

PLEASE, sign up for 1 shift two times a month

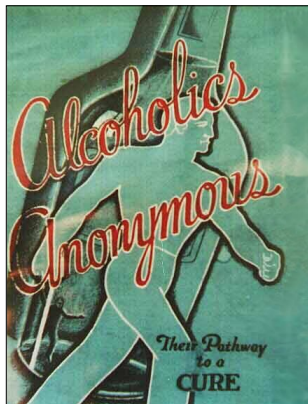
it's not a lot

to get a lot

and to give a lot

to the still suffering alcoholic

Contact 12step@A.A.toronto.org



Dr. Bob and Ralph



Bill W.



On Feb. 8, 1940 John D. Rockefeller Jr. sponsored a dinner for A.A. at the Union League Club. The dinner led to favorable publicity for A.A. and raised \$2,200.00 (\$1,000.00 from Rockefeller). Rockefeller and his dinner guests continued to provide about \$3,000.00 a year for the next 4 years up to 1945 when they were asked to stop.

Big Book royalties could look after Dr. Bob and Bill and group contributions could pay the office expenses. This ended all outside contributions to A.A.. It led to the principle of being fully self-supporting, declining all outside contributions and later formed the basis of [Tradition 7](#). The Rockefeller and dinner guest loans were repaid out of Big Book income.



Dr. Harry Tiebout

In Feb. 1939 Dr. Harry Tiebout became the 1st psychiatrist to endorse A.A. and use A.A. principles in his practice. In the summer of 1944, Bill began twice-a-week treatment with Dr. Tiebout for debilitating episodes of depression. Some members were outraged and castigated Bill for "not working the program," "secretly drinking" and "pill taking". Bill endured the attacks in silence.

In Feb. 1939 Dr. Howard, a Montclair, NJ, psychiatrist, suggested to remove all forms of coercion from the Big Book manuscript, put on "we ought" basis instead of "you must".

In Feb. 1940 the Alcoholic Foundation office moved from 17 William St. Newark, NJ to 30 Vessey St., Room 703, in New York City. Its mailing address was Box 658 Church St. Annex Post Office. Ruth Hock became A.A.'s first national Secretary.

In Feb. 1942 Bill W. pays tribute to Ruth Hock, A.A.'s first secretary who has resigned to get married? Ruth's signature appeared on some 15,000 letters sent in response to inquiries about A.A. by the New York office. Bobbie B. took Ruth's place as secretary.

In Feb. 1943 during WWII gasoline rationing, the Office of Price Admin. recognizes the "importance and social significance of the work done by A.A." and grants A.A. the right to use cars for 12th Step work in emergency cases.

In Feb. 1959 A.A. granted recording for the blind permission to tape the Big Book.

On Feb. 7 and 8, 1948 Bill W. and Lois came to Toronto. On Saturday Bill spoke at Central Technical School at a closed meeting of 800 then Sunday at an open meeting of 1,400 at the Tivoli Theatre on Richmond Street.

The following GTA A.A. Groups started in February:

February 22, 1948 the [Lakeshore Group](#) in Toronto started. Today they are 73 years old.

February 17, 1969 the [Liverpool Group](#) in Pickering started. Today they are 52 years old.

February 5, 1986 the [Fifth Tradition Group](#) in Scarborough started. Today they are 35 years old.

The only fitting way to begin my short story is by saying my name is Adam S. and I'm an alcoholic. I suffered from my abuse for 26 years along with those around me. At the beginning of 2020, I found myself completely broken and devastated. A lost soul traveling through an existence. In the hopes of finding a life worth living, I began my journey.

Upon entering the Erin Mills group, I found friendship, knowledge, experience, and a way of life that I wanted very badly. I have yet to be in an in-person meeting, yet I have the privilege of finding this life of love and happiness I coveted. Having accomplished this solely in virtual meetings. It is a testament to A.A. and the power of it's message, that one so broken can find happiness. I am eternally grateful as I celebrate 1 year of sobriety February 1st 2021.

Adam S. [Erin Mills](#)



WORD search

TRADITION TWO
For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority...

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SUBMIT A BETTER TIMES ARTICLE!!

Please send us in your own words, your ideas, your journey, your experience, strength and hope in 200-500 words to bettertimes@A.A.onto.org*

TRADITION TWO

"For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

T	I	A	N	P	G	S	I	A	Q	K	X	L	D	O	T	F	R	T	O	Tradition
U	A	I	M	D	F	G	D	K	S	O	H	O	I	U	Z	F	H	F	S	Fellowship
A	S	R	E	B	M	E	M	K	C	Q	G	T	S	Y	I	L	Z	E	H	Conscience
N	N	Z	X	V	M	H	N	D	I	I	S	U	T	O	O	T	R	L	K	Vote
O	B	A	D	Q	T	O	O	K	L	V	W	V	R	X	L	V	E	P	T	Majority
N	R	E	V	O	G	G	I	T	O	T	L	Y	I	O	A	F	V	P	G	Two
Y	G	L	V	F	J	R	T	E	H	X	E	L	C	N	Y	V	I	A	F	Equals
M	U	S	S	X	L	S	A	S	O	Q	Y	B	T	U	X	H	T	B	D	Govern
O	J	D	J	Q	R	N	R	I	C	C	F	S	F	J	S	L	E	M	I	Ultimate
U	X	X	Y	X	E	O	E	T	L	T	O	Y	B	W	N	X	X	P	S	Authority
S	F	T	O	P	R	I	D	R	A	T	X	M	O	E	J	T	S	I	C	Servants
G	C	O	Q	H	U	S	I	E	A	N	Q	L	F	T	H	I	A	K	U	Trusted
R	F	S	G	C	S	I	S	P	R	M	L	C	B	O	E	S	O	G	S	Group
O	D	O	F	P	A	C	N	X	C	E	R	P	Z	V	R	H	T	N	S	Expertise
G	L	O	H	K	E	E	O	E	F	O	K	H	S	K	L	T	K	Z	I	Leaders
B	C	E	E	N	R	D	C	Z	T	R	A	C	E	G	R	R	D	N	O	Alcoholics
E	R	T	A	Q	T	I	R	X	C	O	N	S	C	I	E	N	C	E	N	Members
U	V	E	Q	D	E	Z	N	S	V	J	E	V	R	E	S	S	S	N	E	Comfort
W	Q	I	S	B	E	L	O	N	G	I	N	G	E	X	Z	L	V	T	Y	Belonging
N	C	E	T	P	S	R	I	Q	Y	Q	A	H	T	V	Q	M	U	E	O	Representative
O	O	I	L	A	O	R	S	X	E	S	S	L	A	U	Q	E	L	T	P	Anonymous
N	U	I	O	M	T	N	U	F	I	Y	T	I	R	O	H	T	U	A	I	Secretary
H	W	A	T	V	I	N	S	W	I	T	K	E	Y	M	D	Q	Q	M	N	Responsibility
I	E	E	U	I	D	B	E	I	C	H	U	A	O	A	B	A	C	I	I	Serve
L	L	F	M	C	D	B	N	S	B	F	J	R	F	J	G	C	N	T	O	Decisions
Q	C	K	X	T	T	A	Z	S	E	I	A	D	S	O	R	A	T	L	N	Treasurer
X	O	W	E	U	E	V	R	M	Q	R	L	J	B	R	O	W	T	U	N	District
Q	M	O	O	Y	D	O	M	T	F	X	P	I	S	I	U	A	W	K	J	Opinion
H	E	U	Y	C	Q	I	O	J	Y	N	Q	E	T	T	P	L	U	U	W	Consideration
G	U	J	Z	T	R	U	S	T	E	D	F	I	R	Y	U	P	V	L	S	Welcome
																				Discussion

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ALL MEDIA INQUIRIES ARE TO BE SENT TO THE OPERATING COMMITTEE CHAIR oc.chair@A.A.toronto.org

GROUP SPOTLIGHT

Lakeshore Group

A local watering hole; that's where the Lakeshore [Group](#) first met, at the Hotel Sagamore. When you come to the Sunday night open meeting, you'll see a group of fellow A.A.'s at the entrance chatting and greeting people as they arrive.

That was before COVID-19. Like most groups, virtual became the norm to get a meeting and share with others. One alcoholic talking to another in a new format. **It had to work!** Today, in-person meetings are beginning to open up alongside the virtual to get the doors open for newcomers.

There are 55 members at this Toronto Intergroup District meeting which began February 22nd 1948 at the Hotel Sagamore.

The Lakeshore was splintered from the Kingsway group which started 21 months earlier in May of 1946. The "Fab Five" Hugh C., Tom B., John H., Jim C. and Eddie W. are rumoured to have been the instigators.

A table with members' lanyards is surrounded by friendly faces like Dave G., a long-time Leaf fan greets you upon entering, the coffee and cookies are to your right.

The slogans are burned into wood which were made by long timer Dorothy K. for the groups' 50th anniversary in 1998. Dorothy celebrated 30 years of continuous sobriety in 2012 at the Lakeshore Group.

Long timer Earl M. just celebrated 45 years. Julie P.



and John A. sit at the Literature table and have a box for your old Grapevines to donate to institutions. [Closed discussion meetings are held at 8 pm Thursdays](#) Members like Secretary and former Group Service Representative (GSR) Phil L. (8 yrs), Karla K., Danielle L (10 yrs;) and Alison L. who set up the virtual meeting together are a cohesive force during COVID.

Lise O. (6 yrs) spent 4 years as secretary, Don W. (26 yrs) was GSR, Audrey M. (23 yrs.) and David B. (13 yrs.) who is past DCM, Alt. DCM, GSR and Chair of the 2020 Mississauga Fall Roundup and Earl M. (45 yrs) who started the Long Branch Group. Cy W. Who just celebrated 19 years are examples of service and dedication at the Lakeshore group.

If you plan on attending a medallion celebration, go early as food is put out before the meeting (pre-COVID). The church is fully accessible with a wheelchair ramp and elevator. At the Lakeshore group newcomers are always welcomed.

Peter M., [Royal York group](#)

