

BETTER TIMES



Produced for A.A. members by A.A. members in the GTA **JANUARY 2021**

AN ALCOHOLICS FIRST STEP FIRST

traditions
anonymity
attraction

responsible
service
self-supporting
purpose

autonomy
membership
conscience

recovery

suffering

STEPS CAN BE TRICKY

But since you are here...
you have already taken the hardest one
there is no time like this time to begin again
through hard work, perseverance, and fellowship
we will join you and be here to help guide you
every step of the way as you begin this trip, your journey
fear not the slippery slopes you may encounter
many have travelled this path and you will not be
ALONE.

David R., The Hill Group

Ontario Regional Conference

Cliff & Lori G - Oklahoma, OK
Diana M - Largo, FL



SAVE THE DATE
March 19 - 21, 2021

Register to receive updates at

www.aaorc.ca

We are continuing to work hard to put together the ORC Program for you. Our hope is to keep the spirit of the ORC alive until we can meet again in person, whenever that may be.

We will have A.A., Al-Anon and Alateen speakers and panels Friday night, Saturday and Sunday.

For the A.A. program, we have confirmed:
Cliff and Lori G. Oklahoma, OK
Deb H., Akron, OH
Diana M., Largo, FL
Peter M., Boca Raton, FL
Rachel F., Miami, FL

Please check the ORC website aaorc.ca, for regular updates or to sign up for the ORC newsletter to receive regular updates.

Sign up for the newsletter is found on the website.

Yours in Love & Service,
Lisa W., Chair 2021 Virtual ORC
If you have any questions, please [email us](#).

Newsletter Sign-Up Bottom of Home Page aaorc.ca

<input type="text" value="First Name"/>	<input type="text" value="Last Initial"/>	<input type="text" value="youremail@example.com"/>	<input type="text" value="AA, Alanon or Alateen"/>	<input type="submit" value="Submit"/>
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Never Alone

If there ever was a time I wasn't lonely
I can't recall when that was
If there were times I felt alone in crowds
I know it's me because
I've always felt a need for connection
I've always needed to belong
I've always been outside looking in
My isolation was so strong

From somewhere a light grew
It grew from a tiny spark
It shed the darkness that I felt
Had plagued my lonely heart
Suddenly I knew that
My sadness it could end
I felt as though I was protected
I'd found my inner friend

Seeking purpose and direction
Asking guidance on my way
I remember that I'm not alone
Every time I kneel and pray.
Jay S. [The Hill Group](#)



Winter Season Open House has been a fixture of our Greater Toronto Area Intergroup (GTAI) since 1944. Even though we could not have a live in-person event in 2020, it was important to keep the Winter Season Open House event alive through the holiday season. The GTAI Operating Committee gave the green light to a virtual event and in three short months, dedicated A.A., Al-Anon and Alateen volunteers brought the concept to life. A very sincere thank you to the 10 member Winter Season Virtual Alkathon (WSVA) Committee, the A.A., AL-Anon and Alateen groups that made up our Zoom hosting teams and hosted virtual meetings.

Sincere Gratitude, **Marvyn W. [2020 GTAI Operating Committee Vice Chair/WSVA Meeting Scheduler](#)**

It was my privilege and honour to serve as one of the hosts on the technical side of the 2020 WSVA. I had the pleasure to hear speakers from around the world and make some new friends. The highlight of the two 24 hour Alkathon's was when a woman on the phone from Ottawa said that without that noon meeting on New Year's eve, she would not be sober today. This encapsulates the success of the event, carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic. I want to raise my hat and say thank you for letting me be part of this day. Happy New Year's to all! **Bert J. [Silverbirch group](#)**

It was a fabulous experience being part of a committee that brought the Alkathon to fruition. Logging into the events I lived the theme, I was no longer alone for the holidays, and pretty grateful for that. Happy New Year everybody!

Dave R. [Longbranch group](#)

Recovery, Unity and Service. Our three legacies brought forward through our modems this year. Thank God for A.A.

Lisa B. [The Hill Group](#)

I felt incredibly happy to take part in the first ever WSVA, it kept me focused on my recovery throughout the holidays and gave me an opportunity to help carry the message. **Aaron M. [Markland Wood Group](#)**

The Beginnings of A.A. in Canada: January 13, 1943 Toronto



On January 13, 1943, two friends of alcoholics, the Reverends George Little and Percy Price, along with six alcoholics -Tom E., Bruce M., Sam McC., Buzz McT., Dorothy C. and Weems C., met at the Little Denmark Restaurant in Toronto. Something special happened that day and another meeting was held at the same location the following week.

On Thursday, January 28th 1943, the first organized A.A. meeting was held at the Metropolitan United Church

House. Six people attended. In a matter of just two weeks the attendance at the meeting had tripled. On February 25th, Dorothy C., the first woman in A.A. in Canada, attended the meeting at the Metropolitan United Church.

Weekly meetings continued at the Church House until June 10th. On June 12, 1943, the meeting moved to 160 Bloor Street East to the newly acquired Club Room. Alcoholics Anonymous was launched in Canada.

By October 22nd, A.A. was established in Windsor and on November 26, 1943 in London.

In gratitude for this new found sobriety, a dinner was held on December 16, 1943, in Toronto at the Royal York Hotel. There were 80 people in attendance including newly minted members of Alcoholics Anonymous along with family members and other supporters of sobriety. Today, we know this dinner as the Ontario Regional Conference (ORC) Banquet.

As a result of the rapid growth of A.A. in its first year, on January 28, 1944 Toronto members rented a building at 1170 Yonge Street. Bruce M. had learned that a Royal Bank branch was closing. After negotiations, an agreement was reached that the rent at "1170" would be a nominal \$50 per month, which ironically was not paid for years.

The office was open daily and a regular Thursday night meeting was established. This later became known as the Central Group. "It soon became known across the continent simply as '1170' and its location was described as 'across from the liquor store'." A second group formed before Christmas 1945 and the East End Group was in the planning stages.

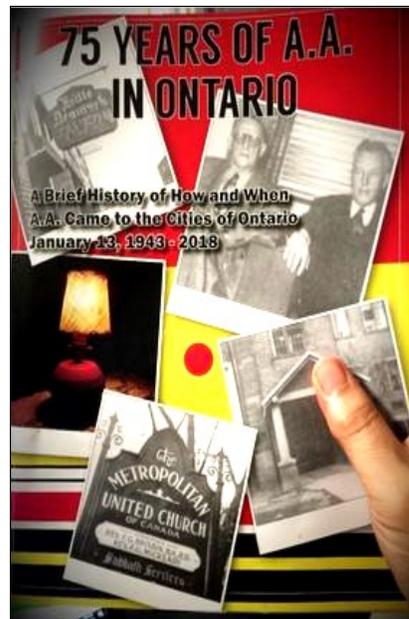
By October 1945 the Women's Group was formed soon followed by the Midtown, West End, Victor, Parkdale, Kingsway and North Toronto groups.

In October, 1947 there were ten groups in Toronto and the first Central Committee (today Greater Toronto Area Intergroup) was formed at "1170" Yonge with procedures drawn up by Glen G. Marg M. of the North Toronto group became the permanent secretary and held the position for 25 years. In August, 1948 an office was opened at 331 Bay Street to deal with administrative matters. "1170" remained open to provide services to alcoholics.

The office moved several times and in 1987 was established at 234 Eglinton Avenue East where it has remained until today. The Central Committee became Toronto Intergroup and is known today as the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) Intergroup, serving A.A. from Oakville in the west, to Keswick on Lake Simcoe in the north, to Scarborough in the east. Lake Ontario forms the southern border.

In 1947, the first meeting in a correctional facility took place at the Mimico reformatory, initiated by Dr. Little. This meeting was likely the first of its kind in the Canadian Penal System.

Taken from the 75 Years of A.A. in Ontario Booklet
Written by Peter N. & Eddy G., [GTA Archives Committee](#)



The 2018 ORC committee commemorated the 75th anniversary of A.A. in Ontario.

Peter N. and Eddy G. compiled history from cities and towns from the 4 Ontario areas and Sean D. the design and layout artist.

A copy was given to each 2018 ORC registrant and Area 83 Fall assembly to all the groups through the DCM's of each District.

COMING BACK DURING COVID

There was a time when I had a negative view of alcoholics. Little did I know it was more prevalent in my family than it looked. That's likely why I'd grown up with these messages—I was learning from a culture of denial. As a teenager I loved alcohol, and drugs were easier to get. I started using hard drugs, and after a couple years of that, regular drinking seemed like a healthier choice.

Fast forward a while and I went to my first A.A. meeting drunk with alcohol in my purse and drank immediately after the meeting. I needed to drink to not shake at that time and not feel it was being disruptive, but still. That was before I realized I needed medical detox, or knew what that was. I attempted to go to one A.A. meeting a week—LOL. I rarely made the one meeting, but A.A. became a sort of option. I made several more attempts to go to meetings, never really taking the program seriously. To attend 90 in 90 seemed like a militant and ridiculous concept.

I remained a 24/365 drinker for a couple more years until winding up in CAMH and doing a 21-day program. I was able to string together a few days, then weeks of sober time, and had a new lease on life. But I turned to outside issues after a couple months and drinking was inevitable. Thus, began my pattern of sober time for a few months followed by a bender of epic proportions. It's been six years now.

COVID has actually been a good thing for my recovery. I think. During the first month of COVID, I was writing my master's thesis and trying to learn how to work from home. I was just not doing well at all. I had another slip and got fed up with the cycle. I was horrified to realize it had been about 37 benders since rehab. They weren't even fun anymore, just dangerous. I decided to give A.A. a shot—a fair try. I had to resign myself to the fact that my recovery would not look like an effortless movie montage. I had failed at instantly “getting it” my first time and I was going to have to do a hell of a lot of work, daily tedious work.

I was lucky enough to find a local group that meets every morning online. This makes the elusive 90 in 90 seem attainable. I got a sponsor and went through the Big Book. I've been working the steps and getting outside help for other issues. I even started praying every morning. I had been waiting to get into treatment since last year and the opportunity came up so I took it. Now I'm back to working from home and have built a healthy routine around recovery. Life certainly isn't ideal, but I've created a more solid foundation from which to give sobriety a fair shot—72 days so far (November 2020). Wish me luck!

Sarena J., [Birds of a Feather](#)



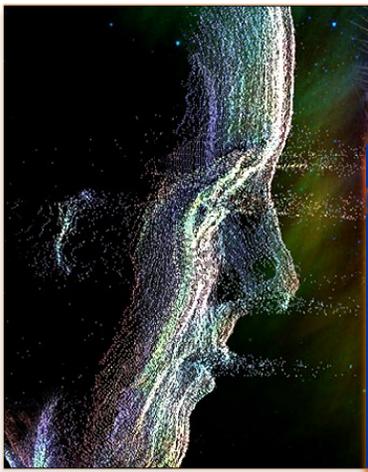
FINDING A SPIRITUAL SOLUTION

In the global trauma of 9/11 I did not have a spiritual practice or program that could carry me across the chasm that erupted in my psyche. My spiritual foundations were adolescent and unanchored and over the ensuing years I sunk into extended bouts of anxiety with the onset of PTSD; a catch-all diagnosis for many different manifestations of trauma. Immobilized by fear I couldn't look myself in the eye, afraid I wouldn't be able to deny the truth of the stranglehold alcohol had on me. I sought more solutions outside myself - men, marriage, moves-decisions always powered by alcohol. I was either riding the tsunami of an inflated ego or drowning in fear-based bottom-of-the-barrel self-esteem. More and more often I found myself alone staring in bewilderment at the bottom of another empty wine glass. Five years ago I walked into the rooms of A.A. and learned about a spiritual solution to my spiritual malady and knew at once that my spiritual condition had been the true cause of all my suffering.

As Covid took hold of our nation and the world I did not feel alone nor was I bewildered by things I did not understand. I knew on the deepest level that I would not need to drink over anything brought my way as long as I sought solutions to fear through reliance on God, working the program and staying close to the fellowship. I am grateful to newcomers who have found their way to the Zooms of A.A. so we can continue the spirit of love and service online and trudge this road of Happy Destiny together no matter what tomorrow brings. Jaana L., [Aurora Group](#)



NAME	YEARS	DRY DATE	GROUP	CELEBRATION
Arman H.	10	Jan. 1 2011	Erin Mills	Jan. 1
Angela J.	5	Jan. 4 2019	New Anchor	Jan. 7
Bob B.	25	Jan. 21 1996	Erin Mills	Jan. 25



DO YOU KNOW?

Happy 78th A.A. Birthday Toronto, Ontario, Canada!

On Wednesday, January 13, 1943 at 6:00 pm the first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous in Canada took place in Toronto, Ontario at the Little Denmark Restaurant on 720 Bay Street (on the west side) between Gerrard St. & College Street. 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.

We Salute You & Thank You – All the AA Giants who came before us to help us find AA in the GTA, Ontario & Canada.

In Jan. 1938 New York A.A. splits from Oxford Group.

In Jan. 1938 first sale of Works Publishing stock is recorded.

In Jan. 1939 Jim B. (Big Book story is "A Vicious Cycle") a former atheist gives A.A. "God As We Understand Him" and "Power Greater Than Ourselves". Jim later moved to Philadelphia in February 1940 and was the founder of that city. He helped start A.A. in Baltimore.

In Jan. 1939 Dr. Bob states in a letter to Ruth Hock that A.A. had to "get away from the Oxford Group atmosphere". In 1945 Bill W. encouraged the 41st St. Clubhouse in NY to take in a black man who was an ex-convict, with bleach-blonde hair, women's clothing and wearing makeup? The man also admitted to being a "dope fiend". When asked what to do about it, Bill asked "did you say he was a drunk?" When answered "yes" Bill replied "Well I think that's all we can ask."

On Jan. 23, 1961 Bill wrote a letter to Dr. Gustav Jung which acknowledged his contribution to the A.A. movement? In 1931 Rowland H. was treated by Dr. Jung in Zurich, Switzerland. Rowland was a patient for about a year, sobered up and then returned to drinking. Treated a 2nd time by Dr. Jung, Rowland was told that there was no medical or psychological hope for an alcoholic of his type; that his only hope was a spiritual or religious experience - in short a genuine conversion experience. Rowland sobered up in the Oxford Group in 1931 and was a prominent member of Calvary of Episcopal Church in NYC (the Oxford Group US HQ). Rowland helped Ebby T. find sobriety in 1934. Bill wrote that this was "the first in the chain of events that led to the founding of A.A."

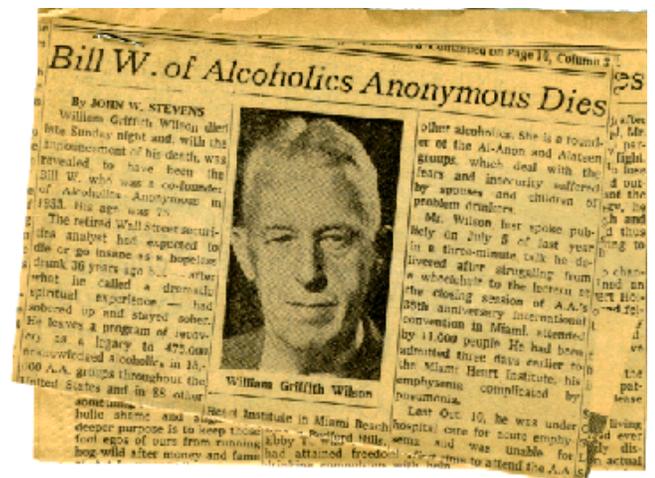
On Jan. 30, 1961 Dr. Jung replied to Bill's letter. Bill wrote again to Dr. Jung, however, Jung suffered a stroke and passed away on June 6, 1961. The letters Bill and Dr. Jung exchanged were printed in the Grapevine and are preserved in the book "Language of the Heart."

On Jan. 24, 1971, at 11:30 pm William Griffith Wilson (Bill Wilson), age 75, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, 36 years sober, died (of emphysema, although sometimes described as heart failure, complicated by pneumonia) at Miami Heart Clinic, Miami Beach, FL. It was also his and Lois 53rd wedding anniversary.

On Jan. 26, 1971 The New York Times publishes Bill Wilson's obituary on page one. Bill's name, picture, and story carried world-wide in public media for the first time. In 1990, Life Magazine named Bill one of the 100 most important figures of the 20th century.

The following GTA Groups started in January:

- | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------|
| Jan. 14, 1959 | Twelve Steps Group | 62 years old |
| Jan. 2, 1978 | Erin Mills Group | 43 years old |
| Jan. 5, 1983 | Rouge Valley Centenary Group | 38 years old |
| Jan. 6, 1984 | Thorncleft Park Group | 37 years old |



WORD search

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TRADITION ONE

*"Our common welfare should come first;
 personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity."*

I	D	V	W	H	L	E	D	D	Z	Y	T	E	I	R	B	O	S	W	Q
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D	V	N	D	A	C	O	M	M	O	N	Y	Y	N	R	D	B	I	D	N

Tradition
 One
 Common
 Welfare
 Unity
 Controversy
 Depends
 Deeply
 Ego
 Group
 Whole
 Jeopardized
 Individual
 Liberty
 Personal
 Humility
 Perspective
 Progress
 Greater
 Conscience
 Principle
 Alcoholic
 Personal
 Conviction
 Affecting
 Recovery
 Sober
 Behaviour
 Fellowship
 Together
 Sobriety

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Submit group news, medallions, other event notices to: communications@aatoronto.org
 Letters or articles to the editor (200-500 words) for *BETTER TIMES* at bettertimes@aatoronto.org

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

GROUP SPOTLIGHT HIGH PARK GROUP

On December 22, 2020 the [High Park Group](#) achieved 46 years in existence!

The Etobicoke Group was started on December 22, 1974 by Robbie Z., David Z., Jim M., Dale McL., Sid McL., and Vern L. The group was started because there were no discussion meetings on Friday and no open meetings on Sunday in the west end of Toronto.

The group's first location of 11 years 9 months was at the [All Saints Anglican Church at 2850 Bloor Street West](#) (corner of Prince Edward Drive and Bloor Street) from December 1974 to September 1986. David Z.'s wife Marg who was a member of Al-Anon came up with the Etobicoke group name because the church location was in the Etobicoke area.

The group moved to its second location on October 4, 1986 to the [St. John's Anglican Church at 288 Humber-side Avenue](#) (High Park Avenue North of the High Park subway station). The group has been at this location for over 33 years. The group changed its name to the High Park group in April 1989 because the church was located in the High Park area.

The group has always held its open meeting on Sundays, and their discussion meeting on Fridays. Both meetings start at 8:30 pm. The Sunday meeting time was changed to 8 pm in March 2000 and the Friday meeting time changed to 8 pm in October 2005.

The 3 slogan boards were made by Jack R. (Kingsway Group) when the group started. The front table cover was made by Mary D. in the 1990's.

The Seasonal Candlelight Meeting in December is famous throughout the city. Group members form a committee to decorate the room and organize a huge pot-luck feast.

The High Park Group is known for its warmth, good energy and liveliness. Approximately 7 years ago, the group had a gradual influx of new members and the group has grown to 90 members. The service positions do not require a lot of sobriety which encourages newcomer participation and service fulfillment. The group is active in putting on service meetings in [District 12](#), at [CAMH](#), [Ozanam](#), [Homestead](#) and [Renascent Graham Munro women's house](#).

Note: This history was taken from the GTA Archives records of Robbie Z. who was one of the founders of the group and Mary S. a member for 28 years.

Eddy G., [GTA Intergroup Archives](#)

