

# BETTER TIMES

Produced for A.A. members, by A.A. members in the Greater Toronto Area  
**DECEMBER 2020**



## STEP TWELVE PASS IT ON



Dr. Jung



Rowland



Ebby



Bill

DR. JUNG told ROWLAND...

ROWLAND told EBBY...

EBBY told BILL...

BILL told DR. BOB...

THANK GOD  
SOMEONE TOLD ME



Rowland



Ebby



Bill



Dr. Bob





## A message from our incoming Communications Committee Chair

In my first years of sobriety, I was alone at Christmas. I didn't have family to go to, but I had my A.A. group and that saved me. This Christmas, we can't go anywhere. The medical experts have advised us to stay home and isolate-very dangerous for any alcoholic in recovery. So, it's more important than ever to reach out, to help each other, and to remember that we are never really alone.

I'm going to hold on to these words in the Step 11 prayer:

*"... that where there is doubt, I bring faith-that where this is despair , I may bring hope-that where there are shadows, I may bring light.-that where there is sadness, I may bring joy... Lord grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted, to understand than be understood, to love, than to be loved"*

Have a safe holiday, Carla T.

## Holiday Wishes From the team at **BETTER TIMES**

With hope in our hearts and the serenity that comes from service, survival during this pandemic, especially at this time of year is possible. As we trudge together on our journey, try to remember, from sharing we may make another's journey more peaceful.

**Thankful** I am reminded that to be thankful is more a state of mind, and also that at this time of year I, like many, have so much to be thankful for.

**Grateful** For me, it's a truly spiritual feeling less of mind, more of emotion. Spiritual awakening evolves when I no longer am that miserable person who only thought of myself. When I think of the God of my understanding first, you people second, and myself last, things seem to work out for the better.

**Faith** With perseverance and acceptance in all aspects of our lives, good things will happen in God's time.

**A.A.** The love that binds us as spirits on this human journey as we lift each other from the darkness, and into the light of freedom.

***From us to you, be safe, be well, be kind, HAPPY HOLIDAYS!***





GREATER TORONTO AREA

INTERGROUP

## WINTER SEASON VIRTUAL ALKATHON

A 24 Hour Marathon of Alcoholics Anonymous meetings with 2 Al-Anon/Family meetings

ZOOM COORDINATES: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/87394968628>

MEETING ID: 873 9496 8628

PASSCODE: 192803

Each group has the opportunity for multiple meetings and formats within their one hour time slot.

Stay tuned for the exciting speaker line up visit [www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org) often for updates leading up to this historical event!

90 min. time slots: fellowship | set-up | meeting | closing 14 A.A. meetings & 1 Al-Anon/Family meeting per day

*You are no longer alone for the holidays!*

### THURSDAY DECEMBER 24<sup>th</sup>

TIME	TORONTO AREA GROUP
Noon	<a href="#">Noon Rap</a>
1:30 p.m.	<a href="#">Erin Mills</a>
3:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Mississauga</a>
4:30 p.m.	Al Anon / Family
6:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Saturday Into Action</a>
7:30 p.m.	<a href="#">Silverbirch</a>
9:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Hadenuffyet Big Book Discussion</a>
10:30 p.m.	<a href="#">Fellowship of the Spirit</a>
Midnight	<a href="#">Midtown</a>

### FRIDAY DECEMBER 25<sup>th</sup>

TIME	TORONTO AREA GROUP
1:30 a.m.	<a href="#">Markland Wood</a>
3:00 a.m.	<a href="#">Port Credit</a>
4:30 a.m.	<a href="#">One Paragraph at a Time</a>
6:00 a.m.	<a href="#">Anniversary</a>
7:30 a.m.	Al-Anon/Family
9:00 a.m.	<a href="#">Sisters in Sobriety</a>
10:30 a.m.	<a href="#">Greater Toronto Area Intergroup</a>



GREATER TORONTO AREA

INTERGROUP

## WINTER SEASON VIRTUAL NEW YEAR'S ALKATHON

A 24 Hour Marathon of Alcoholics Anonymous meetings with 2 Al-Anon/Family meetings

ZOOM COORDINATES: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/87394968628>

MEETING ID: 873 9496 8628

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*You are no longer alone for the holidays!*

### THURSDAY DECEMBER 31<sup>st</sup>

TIME	GROUP
Noon	<a href="#">East York</a>
1:30 p.m.	<a href="#">Meadowvale Fellowship</a>
3:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Long Branch</a>
4:30 p.m.	Al Anon / Family
6:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Tradition &amp; Concept</a>
7:30 p.m.	<a href="#">Sunnyside</a>
9:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Welcome</a>
10:30 p.m.	<a href="#">Open Hands</a>
Midnight	<a href="#">Steps to Serenity</a>

### FRIDAY JANUARY 1<sup>st</sup>

TIME	GROUP
1:30 a.m.	<a href="#">Beaches</a>
3:00 a.m.	<a href="#">Friends of Bill W.</a>
4:30 a.m.	<a href="#">Streetsville St. Andrew's</a>
6:00 a.m.	<a href="#">Beverly Hills</a>
7:30 a.m.	Al-Anon/Family
9:00 a.m.	<a href="#">Mount Royal—York</a>
10:30 a.m.	<a href="#">Love and Tolerance</a>



# MESSAGE FROM THE 2021 ONTARIO REGIONAL CONFERENCE (ORC) CHAIR

Hello Everyone,

When this year started, the 2020 ORC committee was busy finalizing their plans to host the conference in March and the 2021 ORC committee was busy planning for the following year. Little did we know what was in store for us. Instead of coming together in March, the ORC was cancelled and the future of the 2021 ORC was a mystery.

We are excited to share the news that we will be hosting the 2021 ORC virtually on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>. While we cannot be together in person, the entire ORC committee hope you will join us virtually.

This year's theme is:

## Ontario Regional Conference Virtually Carry the Vision

Our committee is busy planning and preparing for the first ever virtual ORC conference. We will be updating our website [aaorc.ca](http://aaorc.ca) with more information as the conference date approaches.

Our hope is to keep the spirit of the ORC alive until we can all meet again in person, whenever that might be.

Yours in Love and Service,

**Lisa W., Chair 2021**



## THE WORST CHRISTMAS EVER

My first Christmas in recovery was spent with a branch of the family that I especially loathe. The house was filled with top-shelf liquor for the holidays and the people inside the house all hated each other with a passion. In the past I would have floated through thoroughly pickled. But no more! I wasn't the boozy guest of yesteryear who could play nice under a thick layer of bourbon. That Christmas I was a played monster, every emotion and nerve sizzling right at the surface. I had no chill.

That was my first year of sobriety. I hadn't begun the Twelve Steps yet, but I was vigorously exploring my resentments in therapy. I had heard the word "trigger" so many times, but this holiday gathering was where I finally understood it viscerally. I was having fantasies of, not just grabbing a forty and chugging it straight from the bottle, but of smashing the neck of the bottle and pouring the liquor straight down my throat while also stabbing myself in the face with broken glass.

"What does that mean?" I asked my shrink, describing the dark fantasy after I'd safely returned from Xmas family hell. And that was the last time she had to explain triggers to me. I got it.

I am going through the steps with my sponsor and I understand resentment and how it can poison one's brain. The resentments that come with family are often the hardest to root out, and I'm still working on it. For now, for my sobriety, I keep the holidays very small and quiet. The pandemic has ruined a lot of things, but this might be the first time many of us know true peace and true happiness, when we don't have to clink glasses with drunk uncles, or nod politely at grandma's racist jokes.

A big part of sobriety is learning how to live in the world while fully present. What a revolting thought! I've found though, that forcing myself to be real in new and baffling situations just keeps making me a stronger person. I can handle things with ease that would have terrified me in the past.

My wish for everyone this holiday season is that you are able to go into it with courage, and also compassion, for yourself of course, but also for your idiot family.

As they say in Texas football: clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose. Ivy, [Sunnyside Group](#)



NAME	YEARS	DRY DATE	GROUP	CELEBRATION
John F.	30	Dec 1 1990	<a href="#">Erin Mills</a>	TBA
Patricia C.	35	Dec 2 1985	<a href="#">Prince Edward</a>	TBA
Fahad A.	1	Dec 17 2019	<a href="#">Erin Mills</a>	TBA



## Everything Drowns in the Mainstream

I miss my original A.A. group. It met at Mount Dennis United Church. I was being dried out at North Western Hospital for the second time when it was decided by powers greater than myself that I should be attending meetings. Intergroup was contacted and they sent my future sponsor Tom L. to escort me. I didn't want to go but nobody but me seemed troubled by that.

Tom and I sized each other up at the nurses station as the introductions were made. Tom told me years later that the head nurse had taken him aside before he met me and told him that I was truly nuts and that if I ran off he had to call the cops. He took it in stride.

The evening wasn't memorable. There was a short car ride and lots of handshakes in a very smoky room. I was pretty heavily medicated, so much so that I was seeing the world as if through a fish bowl, which at the time wasn't so bad.

At the end of the evening I was returned safe and sound to my room albeit heavily burdened with newcomer pamphlets and a copy of the Big Book they had pressed into my hands even after I protested that I only read fiction.

When Tom got back to the nurses station he took them aside and told them what he thought. He said that I was a full-blown drunk. Full of prunes and with high opinion of myself and a snappy line of patter. I might be a mystery to them but I wasn't to him. That was a gutsy thing for him to do.

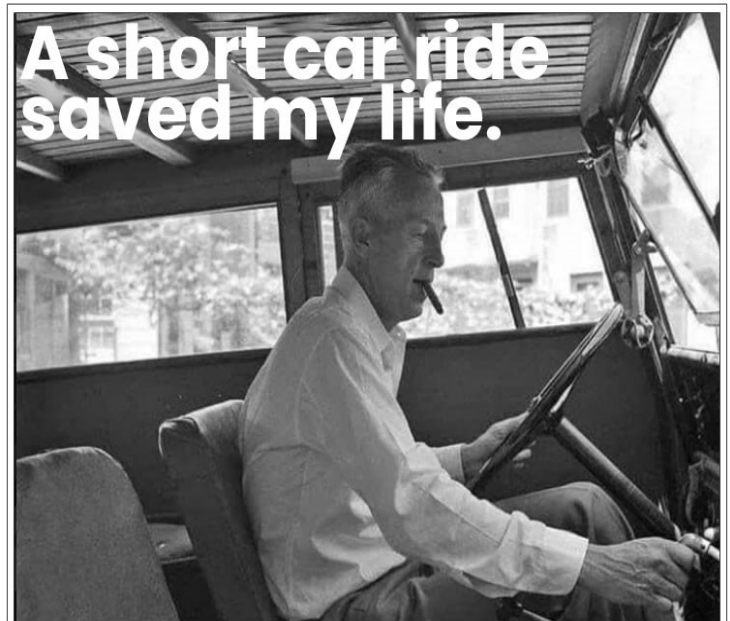
My doctor was soon an enthusiastic convert to this epiphany. He confronted me. He told me that is was a mistake to try and fool him and make him think that I was sicker than I really was. That was the end of my fish-bowl.

I have since functioned for decades without medication and have been reasonably happy, productive and well. It all could so easily have gone another way. The Mount Dennis Group no longer meets in that lovely little church on Guestville Ave. and Northwestern Hospital was just a hole in the ground the last time I drove by. Still I remember all those people and places fondly, because together they saved my life.

The experience of early recovery is different now. The world changed and we had to change with it.

That is why we live by spiritual principals in our fellowship. We have to. The world around us forces change upon us. Things we love and rely on come and go. Like live meetings and bad coffee and not being able to find a place to park. Who ever thought that we would come to miss all that?

Still we adapt and find a way but not without a few misty misgivings. We actually may be doing things better these days but what chance has a fact like that got for a fair hearing when an old drunk thinks about the past? David E.







Robert Holbrook Smith (August 8 1879 – November 16 1950)  
aka Dr. Bob,, shown here a young Dr. Bob

# DID YOU KNOW

that on Dec. 7, 1934 Bill W. decided to investigate the Oxford Group Mission at 246 E. 23rd St., NY? He showed up drunk with a drinking companion he found along the way (Alec the Finn)? Bill kept interrupting the service wanting to speak. On the verge of being ejected, Ebby came by & fed Bill a plate of beans. Bill later joined the penitents & drunkenly "testified" at the meeting.

that on Dec. 15, 1934 Ebby T. gave Bill W. a copy of William James book "The Variety of Religious Experience"? It deeply inspired Bill by revealing 3 key points for recovery: 1. Calamity or complete defeat in a vital area of life (or what we call "hitting bottom"). 2. Admission of defeat (or what we call acceptance). 3. Appeal to a higher power for help (or what we call "surrender"). These key points are also the basis for Steps 1, 2 & 3.

that on Dec. 18, 1934 Bill W. was discharged from Towns Hospital in NY & began working with drunks? He & Lois attended Oxford Group meetings with Ebby T., Shep C. & Rowland H. in Calvary Hall at Calvary House in NY on 4th Avenue.

that in Dec. 1940 Bill W. met Father Ed Dowling SJ, for the first time at the 24th St. Clubhouse in New York? Father Ed became Bill's spiritual advisor (spiritual sponsor) & helped start A.A. in St. Louis, MO.

that in Dec. 1936 Charles Towns offered Bill W. a very lucrative job at his hospital as a lay alcoholism therapist? After years of living a hand to mouth existence, Bill wanted it very much. The question was presented to the NY group meeting in Bill's home at 182 Clinton St. They rejected it & Bill complied with their decision. This was the emergence of the Tradition 2 principle of "God speaking in the group conscience is to be our final authority."

that in Dec. 1938 starting with Oxford Group principles and the idea of "plugging the holes an alcoholic might wiggle through" Bill W. begins writing the 12 Steps of A.A.? The first version of the 12 Steps was written at 182 Clinton St., NY. It took Bill about 30 minutes. The draft of the 12 Steps, as Bill wrote them that night, has been lost. An approximate reconstruction is recorded in the book "Pass It On" on pages 198 & 199.

that on Dec. 20, 1940 Rowland Hazard died? In 1931 Rowland (age 50) was concerned about his drinking & saw Dr. Carl Jung psychoanalyst in Switzerland. He was treated for about one year, got drunk again & returned for more treatment. Treated a 2nd time by Jung, Rowland was told that there was no medical or psychological hope for an alcoholic of his type; that his only hope was a vital spiritual or religious experience - in short a genuine conversion experience. Bill W. wrote that this was "the first chain of events that led to the founding of A.A.." Rowland sobered up in the Oxford Group in 1931 & was a prominent member of Calvary Episcopal Church in NYC (the Oxford Group US HQ).

Rowland & Cebra G. interceded with judge to accept responsibility for Ebby T. in August 1934. He helped Ebby find sobriety. Rowland remained a member of the Oxford Group (Moral Re-Armament). It is unclear whether he stayed sober or had relapses. Bill W. later wrote to Dr. Carl Jung on January 23, 1961, acknowledging his contribution to the A.A. movement.

that in Dec. 1950 Paramount changed title of its movie "Mr. & Mrs. Anonymous" to "Something to Live For" at A.A.'s request? Released in 1952, it dealt with the wonderful work being done by A.A..

that the December 1955 Grapevine carried a painting by volunteer illustrator Robert M. of a man on a bed being 12th Stepped by two members? The painting's title was "Came to Believe." In 1973, when the book "Came To Believe" was published, Grapevine editors changed the painting's name to "The Man On The Bed" to avoid confusion. Over the years, "The Man On The Bed" has become one of the most popular images in the A.A. Fellowship.

# WORD search

## STEP TWELVE

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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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@aaoronto.org](mailto:bettertimes@aaoronto.org)

## STEP TWELVE

H	I	Q	Y	P	A	F	G	A	B	Z	Y	K	X	D	E	H	Z	J	T
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Accept  
Action  
Affairs  
Alcoholic  
Awakening  
Believe  
Carry  
Courage  
Daily  
Devotion  
Experiences  
Fellow  
Honesty  
Joy  
Magnificence  
Message  
Newcomers  
Practice  
Principles  
Reward  
Satisfaction  
Serenity  
Share  
Spiritual  
Step  
Transformed  
Tolerance  
Twelve  
Unselfishness  
Wisdom  
Work

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**ALL MEDIA INQUIRIES ARE TO BE SENT TO THE OPERATING COMMITTEE CHAIR [oc.chair@aatoronto.org](mailto:oc.chair@aatoronto.org)**



# GROUP SPOTLIGHT

## BEACHES GROUP

On December 7, 2020 the [Beaches Group](#) will be 73 years in existence!!! The Beach group was started on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1947 by Wilf D. (dry date: Aug. 6, 1946) and Fred H. (dry date: April 13, 1946). The two members belonged to the "1170" Yonge Street meeting and felt that an A.A. group was needed in the area where they lived.

Back in those days, groups were named after the area in which they were located so the Beach group was a product of that practice. Some of the others were: [King-sway group](#), [North Toronto group](#), [Danforth group](#), [Oak-ville group](#) and the [Lakeshore group](#). In late 1977 the group changed its name to the Beaches group to reflect the name change of the area.

The group's first location for almost eleven years was at Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church on Queen Street East across from the old Woodbine Racetrack. The second location for almost 51 years was at Bellefair United Church on Queen Street East (east of Woodbine Avenue) opposite Kew Gardens.

The third location for 3 years and 4 months was at St. Aidan's Church on 70 Silver Birch Avenue, south of Queen Street East. The fourth location for 5 months on Saturday nights was at St. John Norway Church at 470 Woodbine Avenue, which is north of Kingston Road. For the last 6 years and 7 months the group has been meeting at the Beaches United Church at 140 Wineva Avenue, their fifth location.

The group has always held its open meeting on Tuesday nights at 8:30 pm. In April 1999 the time was changed to 8:00 pm. In July 2009 a rotating step/tradition discussion meeting was introduced on Tuesdays at 6:30 pm.



In early times, the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition basket was short of money to pay the rent. After the meeting, group members with some sobriety would take up a silent collection at the back of the room to be sure there was enough money to pay the rent. Today, the group contributes to the four entities of A.A.: GTA Intergroup, District 22, Area 83 and GSO.

Today, the Beaches group has 45 members. There are 19 ladies and 26 men. There is a lot of stability with varying lengths of sobriety in the group. Calmness, serenity and maturity are present. Members come from a large cross-section of life and with different views. There is great support for women. We welcome newcomers and visitors from other groups. Many members from groups in the area regularly attend the meeting.

Since March 24, 2020, due to COVID-19 the Beaches group has been holding only their rotating step/tradition Tuesday discussion meeting at 6:30 pm via Zoom.

**Meeting ID# 862 7242 4977 Password: A113bgHH98**

All A.A. members are invited to join us.

Eddy G. [Beaches Group](#)

