

BETTER TIMES

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



Two-Day Virtual Founders' Day Event June 13, 14 2020

Visit www.foundersday.org for further information

IN THE BOOK, ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS COMES OF AGE, IT STATES; "1935, JUNE 10: DR. BOB HAS HIS LAST DRINK. ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS FOUNDED."

A.A. had its beginnings in 1935 at Akron, Ohio, as the outcome of a meeting between Bill W., a New York stockbroker, and Dr. Bob S., an Akron surgeon. Both had been hopeless alcoholics.

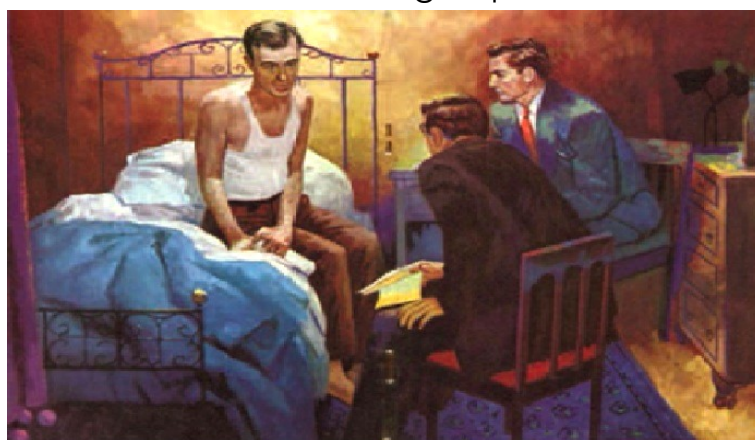
Dr. Bob's Oxford Group membership at Akron had not helped him enough to achieve sobriety. When Dr. Bob and Bill finally met, the effect on the doctor was immediate. This time, he found himself face to face with a fellow sufferer who had made good.

Bill emphasized that alcoholism was a malady of mind, emotions and body. This all-important fact he had learned from Dr. William D. Silkworth of Towns Hospital in New York, where Bill had often been a patient.

Though a physician, Dr. Bob had not known alcoholism to be a disease. Responding to Bill's convincing ideas, he soon got sober, never to drink again.

THE FOUNDING SPARK OF A.A. HAD BEEN STRUCK.

Both men immediately set to work with alcoholics at Akron's City Hospital, where one patient quickly achieved complete sobriety. Though the name Alcoholics Anonymous had not yet been coined, these three men actually made up the nucleus of the first A.A. group.



This full-color painting first appeared as a Grapevine center spread in the December 1955 issue. It proved so popular that four-color prints were made available separately. The artist, Robert M., was a volunteer illustrator for the Grapevine, and in 1956 he presented the painting to A.A. co-founder Bill W. In his thank you letter Bill wrote: "Your representation of 'The Man on the Bed' hangs in my studio at Bedford Hills. ...The whole heart and essence of A.A. can be seen just by looking at it."



GREATER TORONTO AREA
INTERGROUP

NOTICE

The Literature Department is now open

Tuesday through Friday 9am – 5 pm

for members needing the following:

- ✓ **Literature**
- ✓ **Medallions**
- ✓ **Shipping Requests for literature**
- ✓ **Literature order pick-up** (Tuesday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Literature & medallion orders can be made in the following ways:

- ✓ **By Phone**: orders can be placed over the phone by dialing **416-487-9865** (Literature Department direct line); ask for Helen (Lit. Department Manager).
- ✓ **By Email**: orders via email can be placed to **litdept@aatoronto.org**. There is a **medallion order form online** in addition to a **price list for literature items**.
- ✓ **In Person**: members can use the literature and medallion order forms provided located on the Reception table in the Reception/Phone Greeter Area at 234.

Payment for orders can be made in the following ways:

- Payment by credit card
- Payment by cheque
- Invoicing to your group
- **Payment by cash NOT accepted at this time**

The Phone Hotline 416-487-5591 is being forwarded remotely to phone volunteers, and is still in operation 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The administrative office hours are Monday through Thursday, 12 noon to 5 pm.
For administrative concerns, please call 416-487-8110 (Direct Line for Alexx, administrative assistant)

Alcoholics Anonymous is an international fellowship of people with a drinking problem and want help to do something about it.

Our fellowship is non-professional, self-supporting, all gender, multiracial and apolitical.

VIRTUAL INFO A.A. DAY 2020

SATURDAY June 27th 2020

Virtual door opens at 9 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Meet your Delegate & a General Service Office staff member

**MEET YOUR COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES!
FIND OUT ALL THE WAYS TO GET INVOLVED IN SERVICE!**



Zoom Meeting ID# 891 1155 9296

PASSWORD: Please send email to infoaaday@aatoronto.org or contact your General Service Rep. (GSR) or Intergroup Rep.



TOPICS OF INTEREST:

ACCESSIBILITY

ARCHIVES

CORRECTIONS

GRAPEVINE

PUBLIC INFORMATION

COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (CPC)

INTERGROUP: TWELFTH STEP, COMMUNICATION, BETTER TIMES,
WEBSITE

TREATMENT

SAFETY IN A.A.

SELF-SUPPORT

SERVICE

SPANISH PANEL

NEWCOMER

When asked by a friend to write a piece to the new-comer, I asked myself what were the parts of the program that stood out to me in the beginning, the aspects that kept me coming back. I know we are currently living in a wild reality, but let's be honest, when is the mind of the alcoholic or addict ever not a wild reality? Community can still be found, and though you may be physically alone, I promise you there is a rich world of alcoholics still available to you online and by phone.

I often share that in the beginning, it felt like my head was at war with itself. I had all the old, completely unmanageable thinking that was self-destructive, judgemental, and full of shame and guilt. Then, I had these new thoughts, the ones that said, "What if? What if this program could actually work?" What if I could actually change?" "What if my life actually matters?" So, a big part of coming, and eventually staying (after a pretty defiant first year), was trust. Learning how to trust in the process of the steps, a sponsor, service, a routine of new behaviours, and a fellowship that ran a way tighter ship than I did.

What I can say, from my own experience, is that this war of thoughts, the sick ones versus the healing ones, has changed dramatically over the years. My head now, more times than not, looks for either a solution or acceptance. Before, my default was catastrophe, drama and chaos. I had no idea how often I sought out chaos until there was less of it in my life. Essentially, that was all I knew for a very long time. I could not do better until I knew how to do better and was able to make a decision to do the work.

Thankfully, I am no longer just a slave to my thinking and emotions. Both of which I had no idea how to manage when I first came in. I had no idea the amount of energy I would free up in my mind, body, and spirit by not obsessing about drinking, drinking, and recovering from drinking. I cannot stress enough how important *action* is in this program. Whether in our "normal" world, or in the one we find ourselves in now. Right action will always be the answer when your mind cannot be trusted. The solution will be in the doing, not the thinking.

NEWCOMER *cont'd*

In my experience, the thinking followed with consistent actions over time. Of course, your mind plays a role here, but for now, for these earliest days and months, if you are like me, you will need all the breaks you can get from the endless mental chatter. Go to meetings, reach out for help, help others. Balance and consistency are key. I had spent years running away from myself and I will be forever grateful to this program for turning me around.

Ren F., [Birds of a Feather](#)

FIRST THINGS FIRST

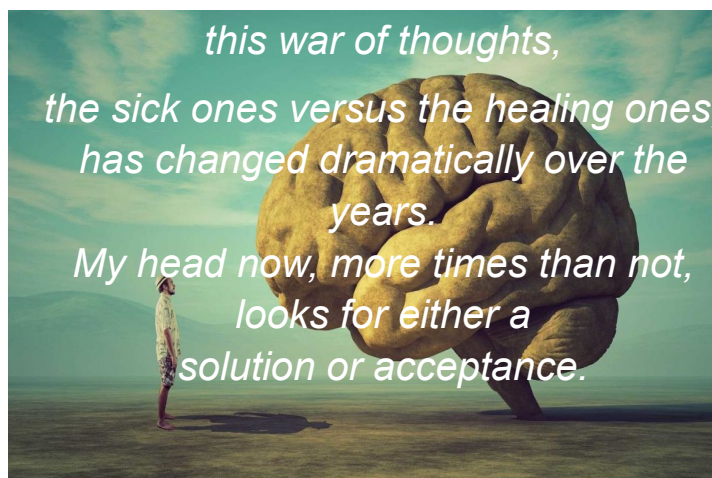
"We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.

To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book." These are the first lines of the first foreword to the first edition of the first printing of our first Big Book—sounds like our founders wanted us to know what first thing is first!

In six years, I've been to a lot of meetings in this city

and abroad where recovered alcoholics are carrying a strong message to those who are still suffering from the fatal disease called alcoholism. But I've also been to a lot of meetings where that message is not being carried, where it's getting distorted and diluted through things like philosophies, platitudes, war stories and opinions. As someone who is a real alcoholic, I can't stay sober on such things. Believe me, I've tried. And the saddest of all meetings: the one where the Big Book isn't even in the room.

"We didn't get sick overnight so we're not going to recover overnight." Ever hear that in a meeting? Our founders felt a little different: "Hence the two men set to work almost frantically upon alcoholics arriving in the ward of the Akron City Hospital." (emphasis added) .They didn't stall; they didn't tell the new-comer to go do a "90-in-90"; and they definitely didn't suggest spending 12 months working through 12 steps. They started helping alcoholics *immediately* because they knew that those who had finally gained the courage to walk into their first meeting



FIRST THINGS FIRST *cont'd*

—dying of a mental, physical and spiritual disease—
were now in the presence of a solution, found in our Big Book.

To prolong guiding them toward that solution would not only go against our primary purpose, to carry A.A.'s message to the alcoholic who still suffers, it would be a form of assisted suicide. They “begged” of us to be, “fearless and thorough from the very start,” not from 90 days in. The most invaluable lesson I will have ever learned in A.A. is the longer I put off working the steps, the sicker I get and the longer I postpone the opportunity to help the newcomer who needs me. There are bushels of newcomers waiting in the dark for someone like me to help walk them out of it.

From the chapter, “Working with Others”: “This is our *twelfth* suggestion: Carry THIS message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail. Remember they are very ill.” If you're a sick and suffering newcomer, go quickly find a sponsor who can teach you about our book; and if you're a sick and suffering sponsor, go quickly find a newcomer who can re-teach you about our book.

Matthew G., [Love and Tolerance Group](#)

ASHORE THE SUNSET BEACH

Throughout my time in this program, I have come to believe there is an undertow guiding force that I can choose to follow or resist. I compare my early sobriety to a surface of chaotic waves crashing up on a shore. I was the surface, raw nerved, extremely sensitive, and easily obsessed, with a natural will to crash and evaporate.

As time has gone on, and only through working the steps guided by a sponsor, I have come to see that I had only experienced the surface and nothing else. I had missed the other half of the equation. I had missed the undertow.

Call it the creative universe, the presence of something without words: nothing is something. Concealed from the naked eye, it's only when I would move deeper that I could feel the presence of this extremely powerful source.



ASHORE THE SUNSET BEACH *cont'd*

By seeking this power, by facing my fears, and letting go of the heavy rocks I carried, I would become one with the sea.

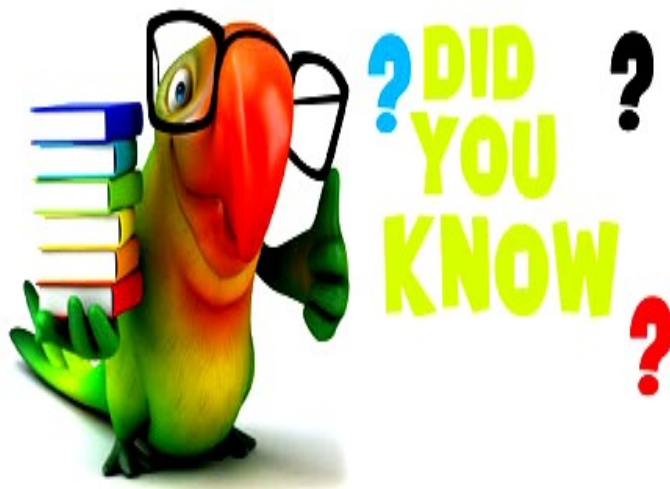
As I would seek the shore of a sunset beach, I did not realize I would need to go deeper before I could land ashore. Once I could clear the wreckage, and right the wrongs I had done to others, the undertow would calm, followed by the waves. I would suddenly realize that I naturally and calmly came ashore this sunset beach.

My feet hit the sand and it would take time to get used to its stillness. As I walked the sunset beach, I would look out over the calm waters and reflect on those past experiences. I would ponder what it was all for. The sunset beach was not the purpose. Suddenly the storm would come again and I would see a lost soul drowning twelve steps into the water.

I would gladly jump into the undertow to help guide this person to dry land. Once their feet were upon the shore, I went back in. Overconfident, I would challenge the storm and its waves. I would again be beat up and tired. Confused, I would start heading back and be met with another to guide me in. Once ashore, I would sit and ponder the sea's existence once again. Why is it there? A revelation occurred; I could only appreciate this sunset beach if I knew dark treacherous waters. And only then would I understand that they are two parts of the same thing. As I would go deeper, I would draw closer to the core. The deeper I would go, the closer to the creator I would feel and be. The closer I would be, the more I would understand. Everything has a purpose, whether I see it or not. I can be calm and observant to all things. I then can recite this prayer, “God grant me the eyes to see the way you see, to understand the way you understand, and to act and be as if you were me.”

Ross T., [Fledgling Society](#)

1. On June 10, 1935 Dr. Bob took his last drink? Founding date of A.A. in Akron, Ohio by A.A. co-founders Bill W. and Dr. Bob.
2. On June 11, 1935 Dr. Bob suggested that he and Bill start working with other alcoholics. They were unsuccessful in sobering up Eddie R., an "alcoholic atheist" and "able to produce a major crisis of some sort about every other day."
3. On June 28, 1935 Bill and Dr. Bob visited Bill D., at City Hospital in Akron, Ohio (the "Man on the Bed" and "Alcoholic # 3")? Bill D. was a prominent attorney in Akron and had been hospitalized 8 times in 1935 because of his drinking. Bill D.'s dry date is July 4th, 1935.
4. In June 1939 The New York Times reviewer writes that the Big Book is "more soundly based psychologically than any other treatment I have ever come upon?"
5. In June 1939 appearance of Morgan R. on Gabriel Heatter's radio program gives AA wide recognition? Before the show Morgan was kept under round-the-clock surveillance to make sure he didn't drink.
6. In June 1939 AA work spreads from Towns Hospital to asylums in Greystone, NJ and Rockland, NY?
7. In June 1940, 100 attend first meeting at first AA Clubhouse "open every day" at 334-1/2 West 24th St., NYC?
8. In June 1940, some San Quentin prisoners read the Big Book, decide they're alcoholics, and form A.A.'s first prison group?
9. In June 1941 Ruth Hock received a newspaper clipping of the Serenity Prayer from Jack C. from NY? It was printed in the obituary section of a June edition of the New York Herald Tribune. She printed the Serenity Prayer on a card and included it with replies to inquiries about AA?
10. In June 1944 Marty M. and her partner Priscilla discussed with Bill W. about printing an AA magazine? They were joined by Lois K., Chace H, Bud T. and Kay M. (known as the "6 ink stained wretches") and published the first issue of AA Grapevine in June. A 1-year subscription was \$1.50. It started as an 8-page newsletter for members in the NYC area and for GIs overseas. The GIs received it free.
11. On June 11, 1946 the North Toronto Group started in the home of Mac H? Today, 2nd oldest group in the GTA.
12. In June 1947 The Preamble written by Tom Y. was first printed in the Grapevine & was established as an A.A. introduction.
13. In June 1948, Dr. Bob's cancer was diagnosed as terminal? He closed his office & retired from practice so that he & Anne could live their last days together quietly. In his last year 1950, Dr. Bob fulfilled a life-long dream of obtaining a convertible automobile (a black Buick Roadmaster).
14. On June 1, 1949 Dr. Bob's wife Anne Ripley Smith died at St. Thomas Hospital in Akron? Sister Ignatia secretly baptized Anne (as an act of love) prior to her death. In a memorial GV article Bill W. said that Anne was "quite literally, the mother of our first group, Akron Number One."
15. In June 1949 Capt. Jack S. & other AA's create an AA Seaman's Club in NYC?
16. In June 1953 the book Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions (12 & 12) was published? Bill W. described work as, "This small volume is strictly a textbook which explains AA's 24 basic principles and their application, in detail and with great care." Betty L. & Tom P. helped Bill in writing the 12 & 12. Jack Alexander also helped with editing. Jack wrote an article on AA for the Saturday Evening Post which was published March 1941.



CONTACT ARCHIVIST EDDY G. 416-536-7536 TO DONATE A.A. ITEMS INCLUDING OLD GTA MEETING BOOKS.

WORD search

STEP SIX

We were entirely ready
to have God
remove all these defects
of character

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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.toronto.org *

REMOVING THOSE DEFECTS

Q N M K J E C I V R E S M O H C G G V X
D D K M D B W B B M S E N S E P X U R R
I I N O I T C A O J G J P M N W G S E A
C C J Z N I L T E X C D E P T O Q E V E
O G D B N P I Z W C O A Z M L S M F I F
N D S L B V Z P P G N F N V V Z E U E F
S K O E A W H B V N F A C W X S M L W O
C T J T V E Q N A O I K I V Z S O N Z V
I X I S Y I X D O I D H B L X B R E P I
E O G U C W T P I T E U T C E E I S G D
N J N A M N K O E A N D W F N R E S N S
C L I E P R M X M R T P X R V W S L I K
E O L R M G N Z V I I S U E K K P F N R
S C B B D I H Q H P A E D D E O A M A O
L O M C E H G D Z S L S N V P I U U E W
I R U A C J F S N N F Y I C T M E H L A
X R H H I E U F I I E T O H E W P S C I
V E B D S M I J G V C M J A Z I A C E H
X C T I I J R H I U T L S Y H A T R S E
F T Z H O W T T R Y K U D S O N T X U W
W I I W N I I T J B R P N N O U I Y O T
D V N I N U S N V E N O O I N C T T H V
F E S G T N H M S F I I S O B H U I G Y
W H W N O T W D R T S S I T R K D L R H
R I I C X B K I A N E T R N J E E A Z K
H T G I X H G L E F I W Q I B Z X R P G
Y Q S B S H E T N S D E S A E C H T B B
Y M G N T R A O O A N R G C Z W O U D H
R E Z O M V C P E B Q O A A N Z N E X X
Q W T U C B B Q R N G U A Q O X Q N E Q

STEP 6

INTO
ACTION
ATTITUDE
RELATIONSHIP
HUMBLING
EXPERIENCE
HOUSECLEANING
MEMORIES
FEAR
TENSION
CONFESSION
CONFIDENTIAL
FAITH
WORKS
INTUITIVE
RELIANCE
CONSCIENCE
INSPIRATION
RIGHT
DECISION
MOTIVATION
CONSTRUCTIVE
REVIEW
USEFULNESS
SERVICE
MOTIVES
CORRECTIVE
MEASURES
SIXTH
SENSE
POSITION
NEUTRALITY
CEASED
FIGHTING

* Opinions expressed in *BETTER TIMES* are those of the authors and don't necessarily reflect those of the

Greater Toronto Area A.A. Intergroup. The editorial staff reserve the right to edit submitted articles for length, content and grammar in accordance with layout and quality purposes.

Submit group news, medallions, other event notices to: communications@A.A.toronto.org

ALL MEDIA INQUIRIES ARE TO BE SENT TO THE OPERATING COMMITTEE CHAIR

oc.chair@A.A.toronto.org



NAME	YEARS	DRY DATE	GROUP
Em M.	5	May 29, 2015	Prince Edward Group
Jim A.	30	May 15, 1990	Erin Mills Group
Maryanne L.	20	May 28, 2000	St. Clements Group

GROUP SPOTLIGHT

Noon! The highest peak of the sun in the sky. A moment when almost every human and animal take a break to eat, relax, and pause for a moment in the sun. For most alcoholics though in the GTA west end, most head to the daily "nooner"

[Daily Reflections](#). Every day at 12:15pm, this is a favourite for good (young and old) old-timers, and newcomers alike!

Daily Reflections has always personally been a second home. In the early months of sobriety, with no job and lots of time to sit idle in the mind, Daily Reflections was a perfect meeting for me as a newcomer to AA, or for those looking for a meeting with decades of wisdom and sobriety behind it.

The meeting is a perfect balance of reading from the Daily Reflections book, a Step 1-3 room, a Steps 4-12 room, and a Big Book room. The variety covers all the various aspects of the program, and one can be guaranteed to walk away with a few bits of wisdom and tools to take into their daily affairs.

The "nooner" has special meaning in my life. Though it is not my current home group, it was the only meeting that I could rely on every day to be open during the day, and it kickstarted my journey in recovery.

The consistency and dedication of the group member is astounding, and the message of recovery and willingness to help and reach out to the newcomer remains stronger than ever. Even if I didn't have lunch, I could always be sure I'd get a good cup of coffee and a few cookies to tide me over until my next meal.

Perhaps the best piece of wisdom passed on to me from the old-timers in Daily Reflections, was the suggestion: "...just listen to what others have tried to help them stay sober, and maybe try doing the same and see if it helps...".

Other long-timers told me to do "the waltz" – Step 1, 2, 3 again and again, until I understood what it meant. It is gifts of wisdom like these that helped me to stay sober. Messages of recovery passed down from alcoholic to fellow alcoholic for rooms of the basement of St. Simon Litchfield's Church – the Daily Reflections (a.k.a. the nooner). I had my start in Daily Reflections, and today, approaching 4 years of continuous sobriety in June, it is my privilege to continue the 17-year legacy of the best noon meeting in the west end (in my opinion). As a truly grateful member of Alcoholics Anonymous, I only hope I can give back to the Daily Reflections meeting as much it has given me – a rebirth into a fantastic life.

Author Anonymous

