

# BETTER TIMES



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

## **ORC 2020**

### **Call for Volunteers!**

**The Ontario Regional Conference  
is in need of volunteers for service.**

**Please visit 'Volunteer' at  
AAORC.CA  
to sign up for a greeter shift.**

**Ask all your friends and your group  
to sign up for service!**

**IF YOU WANT  
WHAT WE HAVE**

**DON'T  
GIVE UP**

**YOU ARE  
NOT ALONE**

**YOU  
MATTER**

# WORD search

**GREATER TORONTO  
AREA INTERGROUP**  
234 Eglinton Ave. E. # 202  
Toronto, ON M4P 1K5  
416-487-5591  
[www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org)

## SUBMIT A BETTER TIMES ARTICLE!!

Please send us in your own words, your ideas, your journey experience, strength and hope 200-500 words to [bettertimes@aatoronto.org](mailto:bettertimes@aatoronto.org) \*

## STEP 2 *Hidden word will appear next month*

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E	V	A	S	L	A	U	G	H	S	B	E	S	P	F
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*Last month's hidden word:* **LIBERATION**

\* Opinions expressed in *BETTER TIMES* are those of the authors and don't necessarily reflect those of the Greater Toronto Area 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:  
[communicaions@aatoronto.org](mailto:communicaions@aatoronto.org)  
Letters for articles to the editor (200-500 words) for

**ADMIT  
CAME  
CONVINCED  
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NEWCOMER  
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REDUCED  
SAVAGE  
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WONT  
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GREATER  
LIVES  
MOMENT  
OPEN  
POWER  
SANITY  
SERIOUS  
TRULY**





## WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE FOR ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

### Pre-conference sharing allows true collective conscience

#### Pre-Conference Sharing Sessions

In the beginning, the headquarters of A.A. was staffed only by Bill W. and a dedicated secretary, providing services to the handful of A.A.'s trying to remain sober and carry the message. The heaviest of these responsibilities

was responding to thousands of pleas for help from individuals and groups navigating their way in the uncharted waters of sobriety. Through countless successes and innumerable errors, today almost 82 years have passed and we are over 2 million strong. As an organization we continue to actively search out opportunities to keep the message of recovery alive and available to those still suffering.

How have we come this far? The spiritual principles found in the Twelve Traditions have kept A.A. unified and flexible enough to adapt to the ever-changing landscape around us. The Twelve Concepts for World Service, written by Bill in 1962, outline this working relationship within our service structure. First and foremost among these guiding principles is Concept One: *Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.* The collective conscience of A.A. will show A.A.'s how to live and work together and carry this program outward and forward. The General Service Conference (GSC) is where A.A. groups can be heard through the voice of their area delegate. Our delegate, Rob M. from Oshawa, will take to the conference the deliberations, experiences, and collective conscience of all of Area 83.

The voice of every A.A. member should be heard and each one is equally important. Regardless of your home group, no one member carries more weight than another. Area 83 has so much to offer: we encompass much of southeastern Ontario and part of upper-state New York. We have very old groups in Toronto, small groups in hamlets; there are well-established groups, and some that are struggling to keep the doors open. We have groups in correctional facilities, six groups in Quebec, and a district dedicated to groups speaking only Spanish. Everyone's story and experiences are different, and thus all members in Area 83 have a perspective on GSC agenda topics that can enrich the collective conscience carried by our delegate to New York this coming April 19 to 25.

In preparation for the GSC, Area 83 is rolling out a new forum for discussion. Using a free online videoconferencing application, we will gather our collective ideas and opinions on the agenda topics that will be discussed at the 70<sup>th</sup> GSC.

There will be nine scheduled meetings between March 8 and 18 covering the topics assigned to the 13 committees meeting at the GSC. Chairs have been selected for these sharing sessions and logistics for carrying out the meetings are being tested.

In late February, the GSC agenda topics with background summaries will become available and will be e-mailed to members via their district committee member. This information will also be available on the Area 83 website. The background information that will be provided in advance of the online sessions should provide enough detail for all members to make informed decisions. Prior experience on a particular committee is not required. All members of Area 83 are invited to participate in any or all sharing sessions.

We have assigned two or three districts to each committee. Districts will receive agenda items and background summaries before the session for their assigned committee, and have a chance to prepare for discussion of their agenda items at the group level. It is hoped that giving districts informal responsibility for a certain committee will encourage more members to get involved.

The chair of the committee will go through each agenda item for their sharing session, giving a recap of the background summary, and then open it up for discussion. At the conclusion of discussion on each agenda item, a vote will be taken. A secretary will capture the essence of the discussion, and the voting results. A report on each session will be submitted to the delegate.

If you do not have a way to connect online, it is possible to dial in from a land-line phone. If you are unable to attend a particular session and want to have your voice heard, a questionnaire will be available for download and can be submitted directly to the delegate. We hope you will be a part of Area 83's collective voice in one or more of our pre-conference sharing sessions leading up to the GSC.

Go to [Area83aa.org](http://Area83aa.org) and click on the Pre-Conference Sharing Sessions logo for the schedule and more details on how to participate.

**Amy L., Area 83 Secretary**

# RICK'S LEGACY

God's POWER TO TRANSFORM

If you struggle with [Step 2](#) or [Step 3](#), let me tell you about my friend Rick B.

One night Rick called me and said he needed a meeting. When I picked him up he talked about how he was still struggling with believing in God and why is he in so much pain if there is a God. He said "if you're so powerful, show me, show me you f@#\$!n' p&\$#y!"

I was in utter shock and disbelief at the profanity that came out of his mouth and what he was saying. I asked him if he'd lost his mind. He told me he just can't do it, can't turn his will over, can't believe in something he can't see or hear or feel, can't believe in his power and wants him to prove it to him.

At this time I was driving southbound and I noticed a person get off the bus on the northbound lanes and begin to cross the lanes, coat hood up and not looking both ways. The person trotted to miss the car in front of me and watched as the car beside us hit her and the car behind him rear-ended him. The next thing we saw was her face high above us and she landed beside my car.

Rick like in a trance went straight to her. When I opened my door a woman driving northbound stopped got out of her car and asked me if everyone was ok. We looked at each other and embraced because we knew each other from the rooms. Together we walked over to the driver to comfort him, I had told Jonnie that it wasn't his fault she had j-walked and not looked both ways

He started to shake, he was going into shock. I looked back on the street to see where Rick was. There he was on his knees beside the woman speaking words only known to him.

Forty Five minutes later while giving my witness statement to the police officer, he got a call from the hospital that the woman had died.

The next night I got a text from Rick asking me to call him asap. He told me that right after his home group a man came up to him and asked if he knew who he was. Rick said no and the man said I am Mike, I was the driver of the car last night and this is my home group too. Mike and his wife wanted to meet me. The next day I met the driver of that car, a man I thought I'd never see again let alone a member of A.A.

How do the lives of four individual members of A.A. intersect on a busy road in a big city in such a tragic way? What does it mean? Why did it happen?

A month later we were told the toxicology report came back on the deceased woman and she had been "under the influence". Was she one of us? Had she never made it to the rooms?

## **Rick said to me "this isn't over"**

Rick went on to have a belief in a power greater than himself and a great relationship with his higher power. He walked in the spirit of the sunlight since that night on Winston Churchill Boulevard.

I do not understand the incident, the circumstances or what it means, none of us do.

Since then (November 30 2018) Rick has died of a massive heart attack. Rick was right, this isn't over, I write this account as testament to the power that lives and works all around us, in us and in other people.

Sometimes it is about our journey and sometimes we are witness to other people's journey their struggles and triumphs. Rick isn't with us any longer but the transformation from non-believer to believer is his legacy and I share it because it's not over!

**Mary M., Erin Mills Group**



# REFLECTIONS ON

## Step Two

In active alcoholism I had moments of clarity. In active recovery I've had moments of insanity.

When I first came across step two in early recovery, I followed the old formula because I wasn't able to do much else at the time. Came ... Came to ... Came to believe ...

Then I realized that step two was not about coming to believe in God, but coming to believe that something greater than myself could restore me to sanity. For me, insanity was not just doing the same thing over again expecting different results; it was doing the same thing over again—knowing what was going to happen—and doing it anyway. I knew what would happen but was powerless to “not do it.” The Big Book tells me that lack of power was my dilemma.

So step two is not just about coming to believe in something, but coming to believe that somewhere, outside of me and my willpower, is a source of power that can restore me to a right way of thinking ... and behaving.

In the beginning, I could only understand insanity in terms of the extreme lengths I sometimes went to get my “fix.” I remember standing at a bus stop in Saskatoon Saskatchewan in blowing snow, waiting to go downtown to the bar. Then I thought about some of the insane things I did while “under the influence.” Another time in Saskatoon, I was driving because the owner of the car was “too drunk to drive.” I hit a bridge at 105 kph.

There were times when I had moments of clarity, but they were few and far between. I was celebrating my birthday once, and somebody asked me if I wanted to get high and I refused.

My second time around, I actually lasted for 18 months. Then I was working on New Year's Eve at a steak house in Winnipeg Manitoba. After that crazy, busy night, the boss said, “help yourself.” I didn't even think about it. There was no “mental defense against the first drink.”

So, that kind of insanity infused my whole drinking career (which started at the age of 13 I might add). Most of the time, I never acted on those moments of clarity. I almost always acted on the moments of insanity.

That was a few 24 hours ago. Today, I almost never act on the moments of insanity. It doesn't mean that they don't come, it means that they don't come with the compelling power they once had. Sometimes I make the wrong decision and sometimes I make mistakes, but I don't get drunk or high over it. The obsession to drink has been gone a long time. Today one of the “Tenth Step Promises” has been fulfilled in my life. It's on page 84 of the Big Book: “For by this time sanity will have returned.” Thank you for my recovery.

**Norm C, Noon Rap Group, Toronto, ON**



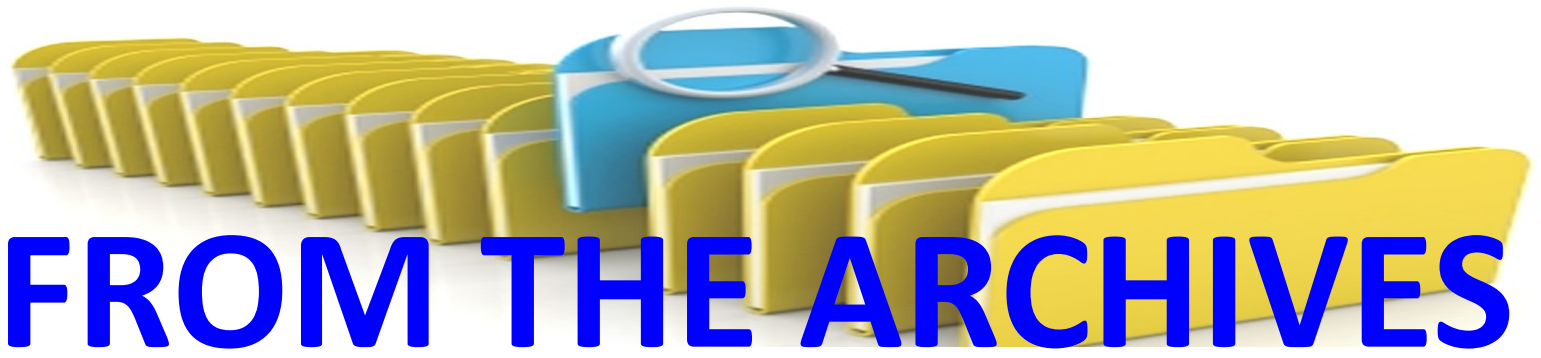
## JUST ANOTHER ALCOHOLIC

Two members walk in for the first time to an A.A. meeting and greet one another. Neither one knew it was the others' first time and didn't want to say they were newcomers.

Joe says to John, I don't belong here with these people. John replies, maybe we should stay, I didn't belong in the jail cell last night either and the coffee here is good. Joe replies yes I hear you, the ditch I woke up in this morning didn't feel much like home to me either.

When one alcoholic talks to another, even when you are new, the life you save could be your own.

**Donny M., A.A. Strength in Recovery**



# FROM THE ARCHIVES

- On Feb. 7 & 8, 1948 Bill W. & Lois came to Toronto. Bill spoke on Saturday at Central Technical School to an audience of 800 people in a closed meeting & on Sunday night to 1,400 people at an open meeting at the Tivoli Theatre on Richmond Street.
- On Feb. 26, 1948 the Lakeshore Group in Toronto started. Today they are 72 years old.
- On Feb. 1, 1987 Toronto Intergroup Offices moved from 272 Eglinton Avenue West to 234 Eglinton Avenue East Suite 502 in Toronto.
- In February 1938 John D. Rockefeller, Jr. is contacted, gives A.A. \$5,000.00, refuses to give more which saves A.A. from professionalism.
- In February 1939 Dr. Harry Tiebout became the 1<sup>st</sup> psychiatrist to endorse A.A. and use A.A. principles in his practice.
- In February 1939 Dr. Howard, a Montclair New Jersey psychiatrist, suggests swapping the "you musts" in the Big Book for "we ought"
- In February 1940 the 1<sup>st</sup> World Service Office (General Service Office) for A.A. opens at 30 Vesey Street in New York.
- In February 1940 the 1<sup>st</sup> A.A. Clubhouse opens at 334 ½ West 24<sup>th</sup> Street in New York.
- In February 1942 Bill W. and 7 other A.A.'s ask 60 rich friends of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. for money at a dinner at Union Club. They raise \$2,200
- In February 1942 Bill W. pays tribute to Ruth Hock, A.A.'s first secretary who 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.
- In February 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. right to use cars for 12<sup>th</sup> Step work in emergency cases.
- In February 1954 Bill W. declines the offer of honorary Doctor of Law degree from Yale University.
- In February 1959 A.A. granted Recording for the Blind permission to tape The Big Book.
- In February 1981 the first issue of "Markings" the AA Archives newsletter was published. "The function of archives is to give the Fellowship a sense of its own past and the opportunity to study it."
- On Feb. 17, 1969 the Liverpool Group started. Today they are 51 years old.
- On Feb. 5, 1986 the Fifth Tradition Group started. Today they are 34 years old.

**TO DONATE A.A. GTA ARCHIVAL ITEMS OR GTA MEETING BOOKS TO ARCHIVES  
PLEASE CONTACT THE GTA ARCHIVIST, EDDY G. at 416-536-7536.**





NAME	YEARS	DRY DATE	GROUP	CELEBRATION
Chris D.	1	Dec. 21 2018	<a href="#">Lighthouse Group</a>	Jan. 3 2020
Iggy D.	10	Dec. 29 2009	<a href="#">Prince Edward Group</a>	Jan. 6 2020
Joseph	1	Jan. 6 2019	<a href="#">Six Points Group</a>	Jan. 6 2020
Yolanda D.	1	Jan. 1 2019	<a href="#">Mount Royal Group</a>	Jan. 7 2020
Paul M.	15	Dec. 29 2004	<a href="#">Fifth Tradition Group</a>	Jan. 7 2020
Chris C.	10	Jan. 7 2010	<a href="#">Markland Wood Group</a>	Jan. 7 2020
Robert McG.	5	Dec. 31 2014	<a href="#">Lighthouse Group</a>	Jan. 10 2020
Deirdre P.	1	Jan. 1 2019	<a href="#">Erin Mills Group</a>	Jan. 13 2020
Lana W.	1	Dec. 25 2018	<a href="#">Mount Royal Group</a>	Jan. 14 2020
Caroline L.	1	Jan. 2 2019	<a href="#">Markland Wood Group</a>	Jan. 14 2020
Matthew T.	5	Dec. 26 2014	<a href="#">Crossroads Group</a>	Jan. 19 2020
Bryce N.	1	Jan. 11 2019	<a href="#">Gay Sober Men Group</a>	Jan. 23 2020
Andre P.	5		<a href="#">Sunnyside Group</a>	Jan. 23 2020
Blake H.	1	Jan. 7 2019	<a href="#">Erin Mills Group</a>	Jan. 27 2020
Stephanie B.	1	Jan. 24 2019	<a href="#">Golden Mile Group</a>	Jan. 29 2020
Lisa J.	1		<a href="#">The Beverly Hills Group</a>	Jan. 31 2020
Chris P.	1	Jan. 2 2019	<a href="#">King City Group</a>	Feb. 3 2020
Chris D.	5	Jan. 31 2015	<a href="#">Prince Edward Group</a>	Feb. 3 2020
Daryn G.	1	Jan. 12 2019	<a href="#">Crossroads Group</a>	Feb. 9 2020
Daryl H.	5	Jan. 25 2015	<a href="#">Bloordale Group</a>	Feb. 9 2020
Jen G.	5	Feb. 12 2015	<a href="#">Sisters in Sobriety</a>	Feb. 12 2020
Lorraine T.	20	Feb. 20 2000	<a href="#">Beaches Group</a>	Feb. 25 2020



## Celebrating Recovery Through the 12 Steps

JOINT DAY OF RECOVERY  
Al-Anon, Alateen, & AA Speakers

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 1, 2020

**NEW, LARGER VENUE!**  
Unifor Banquet Hall  
23 Regan Rd, Brampton

NE of McLaughlin Rd N and Bovaird Dr W  
Registration 8:30 am  
Program hours 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

**Tickets \$10 each/\$5 for Alateens**  
For tickets and information  
contact Eddie  
647-333-6415, eddie@jancon.ca

Potluck Lunch  
Door Prizes  
50/50  
Basket Raffle

PLEASE BRING A HOT OR COLD POTLUCK FOOD ITEM



## Young Peoples Meeting AA Bayview Group Sunday February 9th, 2020 8:00 p.m.

Please join the Bayview Group for an evening of sobriety as 5 young people share their experience, strength and hope.

After the meeting, please join us for fellowship & refreshments.

The location is 64 Hilda Avenue near the Finch Subway Station



## 24/7 Help Line (416) 487-5591 Twelfth Step Phone Training Sunday February 2nd 2020

11 to 4 p.m. @ 234 Elginton Toronto  
RSVP 416-487-5591 / 12step@aatoronto.org

Visit [www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org) service committees for volunteer opportunities



# A WOMEN'S GROUP:

## A Big Book Study, a Step Study and a Newcomers Meeting all-in-one

With my sponsor's direction, I made a major change in the first year of my sobriety. This change was contingent on a few agreements:

God and A.A. stay at the top of the list  
Join a home group, a women's group  
Join a step study

When I moved, I made sure I attended meetings, stayed in service, and worked the steps. Keeping A.A. at the top of my list was a blessing being in a new city. A.A. was the way I was able to stay sober, grounded and meet people with a similar way of living.

Joining [Sisters in Sobriety](#) met every requirement needed to keep my word with my sponsor and recover from alcoholism; a home group, a women's group and a step study.

Every meeting we break into three groups to reach the different needs of the recovering alcoholic, starting with the newcomer. We have a Big Book study in one room. In another room, we read from the Twelve and Twelve – going through a step each week with the provision to cover step 1 if it is needed and reading one tradition per month. There is a beginner's room where we read from the Big Book starting with the Doctor's Opinion.

Sisters share in service positions such as chairpersons, opening and closing duties, and are active within the GTA. Business meetings are held once a month.

We sometimes celebrate medallions upstairs in the beautiful sanctuary of St. Hilary's Church. We also welcome men for medallion celebrations as an option to the celebrant.

The stability and variety offered by Sisters has played a big part in my recovery. In the early days I was very self-conscious and didn't think people liked me or that I had anything in common with this group. I even told myself I should change home groups. But a little voice said, no, stay, you are exactly where you need to be. I can now attend with a smile on my face, happy to see familiar faces and new ones.

I told the person who 12-stepped me I couldn't have done this move to a new city without the support of A.A. He said, I could have, but I would have been a wrecking ball. I agree. I would have run myself back into the same wall of insanity wondering, how did I ever get here again?! Instead, by the grace of God, I too will be celebrating a 1 year medallion.

Having Sisters as my home group has kept me accountable. Engaging in service has helped me meet fellow Sisters and get over the obsessions of my mind that come in untreated alcoholism. Most importantly the consistency and variety at Sisters helped me get rigorously honest with myself and find greater levels of recovery.

With the steady support I found, I am happy to say I am sober today!

**Andrea B., Sisters in Sobriety**

