

# BETTER TIMES



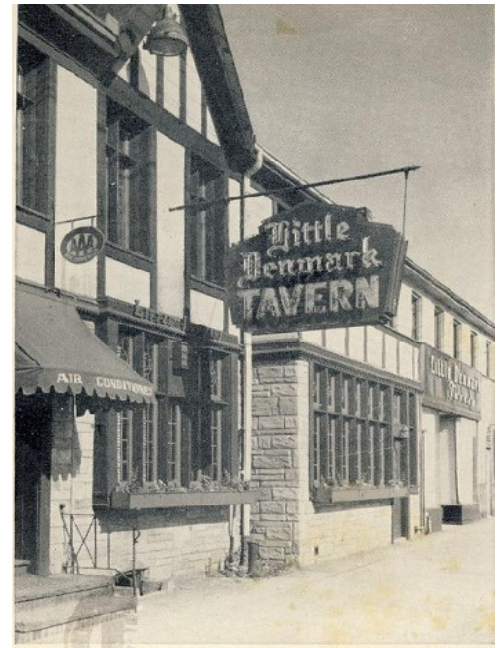
Produced monthly for A.A. members in the Greater Toronto Area January 2020

## HAPPY 77<sup>TH</sup> TORONTO A.A. BIRTHDAY

On Wednesday January 13<sup>th</sup> 1943 at 6:00 pm,  
the first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous took place in  
Toronto Ontario Canada at the  
Little Denmark Restaurant on Bay Street.

Present at the meeting were two non-alcoholics;  
Reverend George Little and Reverend Percy Price.

There were six alcoholics present;  
Tom E., Bruce M., Sam McC., Bus McT., Dorothy C.  
and Weems C.



The Famous Little Denmark Tavern



**We salute the first Greater Toronto Area  
Alcoholics Anonymous meeting attendees.**

**We thank all the A.A. giants who came before us for  
growing the A.A. fellowship in the GTA!**

Painting by Olaf S., Hadenuffyet Big Book Discussion Group



# WORD search



## 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) \*

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## STEP 1 *Hidden word will appear next month*

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

**Hidden Word:** \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

**Last Month's Word: REWARDS**

\* 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:  
[communications@aatoronto.org](mailto:communications@aatoronto.org)

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ADMIT  
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## WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE FOR ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

### The Delegate to New York needs feedback from the fellowship!

Seventy years ago, Bill W. turned the care and maintenance of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) over to the fellowship. Prior to that, the day-to-day minutia of the organization was left up to Bill W., Dr. Bob, and a few non-alcoholic trustees. With the alarming news that Dr. Bob was gravely ill, Bill realized that in order for the fellowship to survive, a succession plan was needed. It would become necessary that the Alcoholic Foundation, now called the General Service Board, establish a good working relationship with the fellowship.

Every Spring, 93 delegates representing the areas throughout the United States and Canada get together with the [General Service Office](#) staff and trustees for a week to discuss the business of A.A. This crucial annual event held in New York is called the [General Service Conference](#) (GSC). In April 1951, a meeting of 37 delegates, trustees and staff met for the first time to decide if they would accept full responsibility - present and future - for the General Services of Alcoholics Anonymous: our [Third Legacy](#). Having accepted the responsibility, 69 years later the GSC is still the epic business meeting for A.A.

Over the course of the year, each area's delegate has the opportunity to meet three or four times with the area committee, including district committee members and area subcommittee chairs to discuss A.A. matters. In our local [Area 83](#) Eastern Ontario International, the delegate is Rob M. from Oshawa, serving the second year in his two-year term. Area 83 extends from Oakville to Cornwall to Pembroke south, and includes a district in upper-state New York. While the delegate receives feedback from the fellowship all year long, and at area assemblies in March and October, the time between February and March is especially busy due to preparations for the GSC in April.

In mid-February, the delegate receives the agenda for the GSC and then the mad rush begins. The delegate and alternate delegate will participate in the [Ontario Delegate's Committee \(ODC\)](#) meeting, which is much like boot camp for Ontario's four delegates, preparing them for the GSC. The upcoming ODC will be held Feb. 28th to March 1st.

Following the ODC, Area 83 will roll out a new initiative: pre-conference agenda sharing sessions. These meetings will take place in March using Zoom videoconferencing. The sessions will serve as forums to discuss specific agenda topics that will be decided on at the GSC. Summaries of these exchanges will help the delegate understand the agenda topics in the context of experiences from all across Area 83. Finally, Area 83 has designated the Saturday Service Information Day of the spring assembly this coming March as a Preconference Assembly. The workshops on the Saturday will strive to create dialogue among the fellowship about the agenda topics for the GSC.

Even though much effort has been made over the years to create a good venue for communication in Area 83 regarding the GSC agenda topics, the results have regrettably been mediocre. When Bill W. turned over the responsibility of the fellowship, he was turning it over to all of us. Every one of us has a responsibility to be part of the GSC process.

We hope to see and hear from you in one of the pre-conference sessions. Every member of A.A. is welcome and encouraged to participate in these events. For a complete list and schedule, go to [Area83aa.org](#).

**Amy L., Area 83 Secretary**





Wednesday **Jan. 13, 1943** the 1<sup>st</sup> A.A. meeting took place in Canada at the Little Denmark Restaurant in Toronto, followed by a second meeting the following week on the 20th.

Thursday **Jan. 28, 1943** the 1<sup>st</sup> organized A.A. meeting took place at Metropolitan United Church in Toronto.

**Jan. 28, 1944** "1170 Yonge St." opened with meetings on Thursday evenings.

**Jan. 15, 1960** "1170 Yonge St. & 77 York St." closed and the offices moved to "2 Gerrard St. W."

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

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

**Jan. 1939** the book text and stories were compiled and 400 photo-litho copies were sent out to be reviewed.

**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 went on to start A.A. in Philadelphia and helped start A.A. in Baltimore.

**Jan. 1939** the size of the Alcoholic Foundation Board (today known as the General Service Board) increased from 5 to 7 Trustees (Non-Alcoholics still held the majority on the board). In December 1939 the Board Chair has been a non-alcoholic and has remained ever since. In 1966 the General Service Conference changed the Board Trustee ratio to 14 Class B (Boozers) alcoholic Trustees and 7 Class A (Amateurs) non-alcoholic Trustees.

**Jan. 1939** Dr. Bob states in a letter to Ruth Hock that A.A. had to "get away from the Oxford Group atmosphere".

**Jan. 1940** the Akron group moved meetings from Dr. Bob's house to King School in Akron, Ohio on Wednesday night (the first A.A. meeting not in a home).

**Jan. 23, 1961** Bill wrote a letter to Dr. Gustav Jung which acknowledged his contribution to the movement.

**Jan. 30, 1961** Dr. Jung replied to Bill's letter.

**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 in Miami Beach Florida. It was also his and Lois 53<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary.

**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.

**TO DONATE AA/GTA ARCHIVAL ITEMS TO THE GTA ARCHIVES PLEASE CONTACT THE GTA ARCHIVIST EDDY G. at 416-536-7536.**

**OLD GTA MEETING BOOKS ARE NEEDED FOR THE GTA ARCHIVES.**



# REIGNITING MY PASSION FOR A.A.

Conferences are a massively important part of my life and sobriety. Whenever A.A. starts to feel boring and predictable, I can always count on a good conference to get me fired up - they light the spark of gratitude and passion I have for the program. I like going to meetings more after a conference. I get more involved and engaged in A.A. which strengthens my sobriety. I am more excited about this year's ORC than any one I've gone to in the last 10 years!

When I moved back to Toronto, the ORC seemed like a weekend of regular A.A. meetings. I experienced so much fun and fellowship at A.A. events in the U.S., that the ORC seemed dull in comparison. This year's program finally has me excited because the program includes some of the most amazing parts of other major conferences.

This year there's more entertainment, a late-night Sex and Relationships panel, panels on Safety in A.A. and solid, entertaining speakers from across the globe.

[See more details on our website as they become available.](#)

I'm going to the ORC this year because there are things there that I can't experience anywhere else in A.A. I'm not going to get this at any meeting I go to. Going to my home group is never going to be this fun. I've learned that when I'm fired up and passionate in A.A., I enjoy going to meetings and doing the work to stay sober. Without these conferences making A.A. feel new again, I think I would either be drunk or a miserable AA member. In the past, I've gone to the ORC just because it was a really big event in my area. This year I am genuinely excited to show up all weekend long to see these new conference events, reconnect with all my friends from around the province and get fired up about the fellowship!

**Zack K. Tuesday Men's Solutions Group**

## ORC IF YOU WANT 2020 WHAT WE HAVE

**ONTARIO REGIONAL CONFERENCE      MARCH 20 – 22, 2020**

**Sheraton Centre Hotel, 123 Queen Street West, Toronto, ON**

Friday Night Stand-up  
Comedy with Jim M.

Saturday Night Dance!  
60's, 70's and beyond with



**Banquet Dinner with speaker  
Craig F. from Scotland**

Newcomer's Room with meetings  
starting Friday afternoon

Panel discussions include 'Safety in  
AA', 'Sex & Relationships'

**Al-Anon and Alateen programs and speakers throughout the weekend!**

**Visit [aaorc.ca](http://aaorc.ca) for information and registration**



# NEW YEAR - NEW YOU - NEW RECOVERY!



When we are rocketed into the fourth dimension as mentioned in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, our bodies, mind and spirit are healthy. I would like to describe some of the physical changes and experiences that can happen to our bodies when we take care of them.

Many of us have wrecked our bodies to the point we are regular attendees at various hospital emergency rooms. Stomach – heart – eyes – lungs – liver – kidney, are all impacted by us drinking alcoholically.

There are some gyms where the instructors are also people in recovery. Of course, check with your doctor before you embark on a program of physical activity.

Physical activity can take many shapes and does not have to look one certain way. It can be walking, running, biking, dancing, weight and strength training, yoga, tai chi, martial arts, crossfit, stretching and any other variety of movement. The goal is movement, and trying things that you have not done before, or haven't done in a while. Studies have shown that even 10 -20 minutes of activity 2-3 times a week can make significant impacts on your health and well-being.

Research has revealed that exercise has a significant impact on both your physical health recovery and overall.

Here's what happens to your body when you start to work on your physical recovery:

- \* **reduce cravings**
- \* **assist in recovery from mental illness**
- \* **return neurological function, including helping the brain return to pre-addiction and/or healthier levels of dopamine and serotonin production which are the neurotransmitters that manage our moods and happiness**
- \* **improved weight regulation**
- \* **improved sleep and reduction of sleep disturbances**
- \* **increased ability to tolerate stress and other mood disturbances**
- \* **reduction of compulsive reward patterns**
- \* **creation of new neural pathways**
- \* **improved self-esteem which can foster social engagement**
- \* **Interest in crucial life skills such as goal setting, discipline and self-determination**
- \* **improve physical health detriments caused, or linked to addiction.**

There is endless evidence about the benefits of exercise, but in particular, to us impacted by addiction. It can be a life changing addition to your recovery journey.

**Tom McC., Markland Wood Group**



**VOLUNTEER**

**24/7 Help Line (416) 487-5591**

**Twelfth Step Phone Training Sunday Jan. 5th 2020**

11 a.m. to 4 p.m. @ 234 Elginton Toronto

RSVP 416-487-5591 or [12step@aatoronto.org](mailto:12step@aatoronto.org)

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

# FAMILY FORWARD

**Everyday I am aware and accept who I am. I am a mother, a wife, a member of a family and I am a recovering alcoholic.**



My family was put through hell due to my drinking. I was verbally abusive, inattentive, shut down emotionally, isolated myself, and succumbed to crying jags and self destruction. I was a predictable sloppy binge drinker. All family gatherings ended with Mommy getting drunk, some even began that way.

It was my eldest child, who ultimately called me to take action regarding my “drinking problem”, that or he had the most affect on me. He was unequivocal that if I didn’t do something about my drinking he wanted nothing to do with me. I made a vague promise and went about my business. I obviously didn’t follow through and he was steadfast to his pledge.

My children are my everything at least that was what my head told me but my soul and heart only had one true committed relationship, booze. Alcohol never judged me, gave me courage, allowed me to feel good about myself, made me feel nothing. When truth came knocking via my son, my knees went out from under me. I was emotionally sick, I felt and saw my soul leave my body. My bottom had arrived. I was good for nothing.

How do you ask for forgiveness from those that are the most important people in your life? The answer for me was sobriety, love, patience and tolerance and a spiritual understanding and practice. I longed for my family to feel that I was stable and healthy and that we could in fact be a happy family. There was a lot of repair and rebuilding to be done and I set to.

On page 124 of the Big Book, Henry Ford says, “experience is the thing of supreme value in life. One has to be willing to turn the past to good account. We grow by our willingness to face and rectify errors and convert them into assets”. Alcoholics Anonymous, therapy, spiritual practice, good sponsorship, doing the steps, honesty, openness and willingness 24/7 gave me the ability to change myself.

My family saw my progress which then led them to feel and act toward me in a more trusting and healthy way. I had to be truthful about my defects of character and admit them. I made amends for wrongful and negative behaviors. The living amends was the biggest gift I gave my children. I was finally the Mom driving the kids home from dance nights and parties. I was up at night having constructive talks with my husband. My children were coming to me for advice and sharing their struggles and hopes and I was able to respond appropriately or not respond and just listen.

**My children are my everything at least that was what my head told me but my soul and heart only had one true committed relationship, BOOZE!**

Drunken family game night turned into just family game night. My eldest son asked me to go on a road trip to a Stanley Cup playoff game in Pittsburgh. My middle son is proud of me. My 20-year-old daughter holds my hand.

We recently celebrated a family event in Niagara Falls for the weekend. We went Zip lining and laser gunned 3D Zombies, ate in great restaurants. One of the best moments was when one of my children shared that they love that we have family traditions. I am grateful that we were able to create new ones.

I end this writing with two of my favorite quotes from the chapter [The Family Afterward of the Big Book](#).

“Joy at our release from a lifetime of frustration knew no bounds.” Pg. 129

“We have found nothing incompatible between a powerful spiritual experience and a life of sane and happy usefulness.” Pg. 130

**Unah G., The Hill Group**





# HOPE AFTER STEP ONE

The Big Book tells us that alcoholics drink because they are “restless, irritable and discontented.” (p. xxvi) That wasn’t me! I even drank when everything was hunky dory. I recall a time, back in the 1950s, arriving home from a joyous visit with my lovely girlfriend at a nearby college and not having drank a drop. I was as exuberantly happy that a young man might be! However, I became “boiled as an owl” that night before the bars closed. Happy or otherwise, there was a mental obses-



sion that decided when or if I would drink—the Big Book tells us: “Alcoholics have lost choice in the matter of drink.” (p. 24). So long as that demon (I refer to it as a drunken monkey) remains active in my noggin, I’m sure to drink again.

This episode took place during the 1950s when I still had sufficient willpower to choose to go home directly after ‘motel-time’ was announced at the bar. However, that was not to be the case as years passed. The Big Book tells us that real alcoholics have a **progressive**

physical condition (allergy) which destroys their ability to control how much they drink after they once start. During the 1960s, I became an avid attendee of Los Angeles theater where they offer cocktails during intermission. I had learned, through torturous experience, that if I drank just one of those tempting devils, I was doomed to think of little else till I got to the nearest bar. My expensive evening at the theater would be ruined! Positive proof that the good Dr. Silkworth rightly described the physical allergy. (p. xxviii)

So, I was powerless over alcohol both before and after my first drink, and though I have been sober for a fairly long time, if I imbibe just one shot of whisky this evening, I may not be able to stop drinking for several days. My physical allergy landed me in several drunk tanks throughout 28 years of inebriated living and more lost jobs for not showing up than I can remember. However, that doesn’t amount to a hill of beans so long as I don’t take that first drink—and this won’t be necessary so long as I remain in a “fit spiritual condition.” (p. 85) I trust God will keep me safe from that drunken monkey so long as I live in accordance with the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

**Bob S, Richmond, Indiana**



NAME	YEARS	DRY DATE	GROUP	CELEBRATION
Bill G.	5	Nov. 30 2014	<a href="#">Danforth Group</a>	Dec. 3 2019
Tristan J.	10	Dec. 4 2019	<a href="#">Anniversary Group</a>	Dec. 4 2019
Beverly W.	30	Nov. 30 1989	<a href="#">Aurora Discussion</a>	Dec. 8 2019
Virginia H.	25	Dec. 4 1994	<a href="#">Lakeshore Group</a>	Dec. 8 2019
Carlotta	1	Dec. 8 2018	<a href="#">Mount Royal Group</a>	Dec. 10 2019
Tom H.	10	Dec. 11 2009	<a href="#">Mount Royal Group</a>	Dec. 17 2019
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
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
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
Blake H.	1	Jan. 7 2019	<a href="#">Erin Mills Group</a>	Jan. 27 2020