

# BETTER TIMES



Produced monthly by AA members in the Greater Toronto Area

July 2019

## 84<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF



"A co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous. The birth of our Society dates from his first day of permanent sobriety, June 10, 1935.

To 1950, the year of his death, he carried the A.A. Message to more than 5,000 alcoholic men and women, and to all these he gave his medical services without thought of charge.

A.A. had its beginnings in 1935 at Akron, Ohio resulting from a meeting between Bill W., a New York stockbroker, and Dr. Bob S., an Akron surgeon. Both had been hopeless alcoholics. Prior to that time, Bill and Dr. Bob had each been in contact with the Oxford Group, a mostly non-alcoholic fellowship that emphasized universal spiritual values in daily living.

In that period, the Oxford Groups in America were headed by the noted Episcopal clergyman, Dr. Samuel Shoemaker. Under this spiritual influence, and with the help of an old-time friend, Ebby T., Bill had gotten sober and had then maintained his recovery by working with other alcoholics, though none of them had actually recovered. Meanwhile, 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.



In this prodigy of service, he was well assisted by Sister Ignatia at St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, Ohio, one of the greatest friends our Fellowship will ever know." Pg 171



# WORD search



## STEP SEVEN

### **GREATERTORONTOAREA INTERGROUP**

234 Eglinton Ave. E. Suite 202  
Toronto, ON M4P 1K5  
416-487-5591  
[www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org)

### **AA COMMITTEES**

**Accessibility:**  
[accessibility@aatoronto.org](mailto:accessibility@aatoronto.org)

**Archives:**  
[archives@aatoronto.org](mailto:archives@aatoronto.org)

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

**Correctional Facilities:**  
[corrections@aatoronto.org](mailto:corrections@aatoronto.org)

**Cooperation with Professional  
Community:**  
[cpc@aatoronto.org](mailto:cpc@aatoronto.org)

**Finance:**  
[finance@aatoronto.org](mailto:finance@aatoronto.org)

**Ontario Regional Conference:**  
[orc@aatoronto.org](mailto:orc@aatoronto.org)

**Public Information:**  
[pi@aatoronto.org](mailto:pi@aatoronto.org)

**12th Step:**  
[12step@aatoronto.org](mailto:12step@aatoronto.org)

**BETTER TIMES**  
[bettertimes@aatoronto.org](mailto:bettertimes@aatoronto.org)

**Communications Committee:**  
Mary M. Nina L. Aaron M.

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

### **HIDDEN WORD:**

— — — — —

**Answer will appear next month**

BELIEVE  
BLESSINGS  
CANNOT  
CHARACTER  
CONSIDER  
DEVELOP  
DISCLOSE  
FAITH  
FINAL  
FOUND  
HUMBLY  
LIVING  
NATURE  
PRACTICE  
PRECIOUS  
PRIDE  
PRINCIPLE  
PROMISE  
PURPOSE  
QUALITY  
REMOVE  
ROAD  
SCIENCE  
SECRETS  
SHORTCOM-  
INGS  
TIME  
VALUES  
WALKING  
WORKING

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, letters to the editor or articles to BETTER TIMES before the 7th of the month prior to the month of issue. Submissions should be 200 to 500 words and may be made online at [www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org) or email to [bettertimes@aatoronto.org](mailto:bettertimes@aatoronto.org).

# LETTING GO AND LETTING GOD - Steps 6 and 7



I made a desperate realization after sharing Step 5 with my sponsor, Carl. I had defects and shortcomings that were harmful to my sobriety, and I needed the willingness to allow God to remove them. This was not a superficial prayer, as many of mine had been, but sprung from my innermost self. I couldn't deny any of them because they were written right out in front of me, my watchful sponsor, and God. After Step 5, Page 76 of the big book tells us "then" and not "later" to do Step 6. The same page suggests that if necessary "we ask God to help us become willing." However, in my state of fear and despair, the plea to God wasn't necessary. I was already willing.

We are told to do Step 7 "when ready" and I certainly was! Carl helped the prayer by asking me direct questions: "Was I willing that God have all of me, good and bad?"

"Yes."

"Was I now ready to allow God to remove from me every single defect of character?"

"Yes."

I was told to pray that God provide strength, as I go out from here, to do his bidding; and I did. We had then completed Step 7.

The "Amen" at the end of the Step 7 Prayer had great significance. Amen is generally uttered at the end of a prayer or hymn, meaning so be it. But there was no "Amen" at the end of the Third Step Prayer, or in the many fourth step prayers, or the fifth and sixth step prayer.

Why?

Because we asked in Step 3 to be relieved of the Bondage of Self — but we didn't even know what that bondage was until we got to Step 7. Only then did we know what to ask for. Only then could we meaningfully say "Amen."

As a grand finale, Carl burned all my paperwork in front of me.

"Bob — there goes your past up in smoke," he said. "You have become a brand new different person than you were yesterday. You can now begin to be rid of the guilt of your past life. But, if you take just one shot of whiskey you go right back to where you started." I haven't **yet**.

*Robert S., Richmond IN*

## Step 6

This is where you let go of those behaviors and attitudes that are holding you back.

If positive behaviors and attitudes are learned, our interaction with the world will change for the better

This Step is about getting better. You will find yourself repeating the 6th step many times

Were  
ENTIRELY  
READY TO HAVE  
GOD  
remove  
ALL OF THESE  
DEFECTS  
of character

HUMBLY  
asked HIM  
TO REMOVE  
... our ...  
SHORTCOMINGS

## Step 7

By now we are able to see ourselves as we truly are, both the good and the bad

Many of our shortcomings are tied to our addiction therefore we are powerless to overcome them on our own

We comprehend the enormity of our Higher Power's ability to transform our lives

# AGENT 007



During WW2 the British Secret Service MI5 moved a number of its operations to Canada, specifically the Toronto area hoping that in so doing it would minimize its infiltration by German agents. The building it occupied still stands it is now the Marshall McLuhan School on the east side of Avenue Road, a few blocks north of Lawrence Avenue.

One of the more notable agents of the time was Mr. Ian Fleming, himself a dashing young Englishman who usually had a tale of adventure to recount. At this time Mr. Fleming was in fact writing a book in which the principal character was a very effective ladies man type of chap. He was in fact looking for a name for his character. We can well imagine our hero trench coat clad, smoking a pipe and walking his dog, scouring his imagination for a moniker for his fictional sleuth.

There stood in the vicinity a church named St. James of Bond he espied, and from there he hatched the name James Bond for his swash-buckling roguish agent.

I'm presuming the humour of naming his 007 after a church did not escape him, it certainly did not escape me.

It was at this point that Ian F. entered the program, that's actually not true, I just was checking to see if my readers were paying attention.

What is true however is that at some post war moment down the road, a meeting was formed and held at this church on Sunday nights and that group is called the James Bond group! It was a well attended meeting and well loved for many years.

Alas the church was torn down, the victim of gentrification. I don't think there is even a plaque recalling this historical trivia but the group survived and it meets to this day on Sundays at 8 p.m. at Holy Rosary parish hall located at 356 St Clair Avenue West.

Some say there have been sightings of a shadowy old man in a trench coat!

*Bailey B. Toronto ON*



## Internet Safety and Anonymity—remembering the roots of anonymity

This is why we see anonymity at the general public level as our chief protection against ourselves, the guardian of all our Traditions and the greatest symbol of self-sacrifice that we know.

Of course no A.A. need be anonymous to family, friends, or neighbors. Disclosure there is usually right and good. Nor is there any special danger when we speak at group or semi-public A.A. meetings, provided press reports reveal first names only.

But before the general public – press, radio, films, television and the like – the revelation of full names and pictures is the point of peril. This is the main escape hatch for the fearful destructive forces that still lie latent in us all. Here the lid can and must stay down.





# FROM THE ARCHIVES; did you know?

Eddy G. – GTA Archivist

that in July 1934 Ebby T. was approached, in Manchester, VT, by his friends Cebra G. & Shep C., who did considerable drinking with Ebby but were now abstaining from drinking? They informed Ebby of the Oxford Group in VT but Ebby was not quite ready yet to stop drinking.

that in July 1934 Bill W.'s 2<sup>nd</sup> admission to Towns Hospital (again paid by Lois's brother-in-law Dr. Leonard Strong)? Bill met Dr. Silkworth for the 1<sup>st</sup> time. Dr. Silkworth explained the obsession and the allergy of alcoholism to Bill. Bill started drinking again almost immediately upon discharge.

that in July 1934 Ernie G. sobered up (AA No. 4)? He eventually married Dr. Bob's daughter, Sue, in Sept. 1941. Ernie was unable to maintain continuous sobriety and their marriage was a disaster.

that on July 4, 1935 Akron, Ohio attorney Bill D. (man on the bed) leaves the hospital sober and becomes AA No. 3? Bill D. was hospitalized 8 times in 1935 for his drinking. It took 5 days before he would say that he could not control his drinking. Bill D. was Ohio's Panel 1 Delegate to the 1<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference in 1951.

that on July 15, 1938 in a letter to Messrs. Richardson, Chipman & Scott, of the Rockefeller Foundation, Bill invited them to his home on 182 Clinton St. NY for meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous? This was the first documented use of the name of the Fellowship.

that on July 18, 1938 Dr. Richards of John Hopkins, stated in a letter that Bill, at the time, was using the name Alcoholics Anonymous both as the working title of the book and as the name of the Fellowship?

that in July 1938 Dr. Silkworth wrote a letter of support for use in fundraising for the book? It was later incorporated into the Big Book chapter "The Doctor's Opinion." Dr. Esther Richards of Baltimore was the one who suggested to Bill W. to get a number one physician in the alcoholism field to write an introduction.

that on July 28-30, 1950 the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and 1<sup>st</sup> International Convention was held in Cleveland, Ohio in AA's 15<sup>th</sup> year with an est. 6,000 – 8,000 in attendance? Dr. Bob made a brief appearance at the Convention for his last talk. Part of his now famous short statement was "There are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis. One is the simplicity of our own program. Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind but have very little to do with our actual AA work. Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words love and service." Also the Twelve Traditions were adopted unanimously by standing vote by the attendees.

that on July 4-6, 1955 the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention was held in St. Louis? The Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity & Service were turned over to the AA membership by Bill and its old-timers? This was the first time the General Service Conference was held outside of New York. The Conference became the Guardian of the Traditions and voice of the group conscience of the entire Fellowship.

that in July 1955 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the Big Book "Alcoholics Anonymous" was published?

that in July 1962 Grapevine Editor Jack M. creates the cartoon strip Victor E., now an AA icon?

that on July 2-4, 1965 the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary International Convention was held in Toronto with about 12,000 in attendance? The Responsibility Declaration written by Al S. was introduced at the Convention and taken by the crowd from 21 countries. Bill W. asked the crowd to stand, hold hands and recite the Responsibility Declaration: I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there, and for that I am responsible.

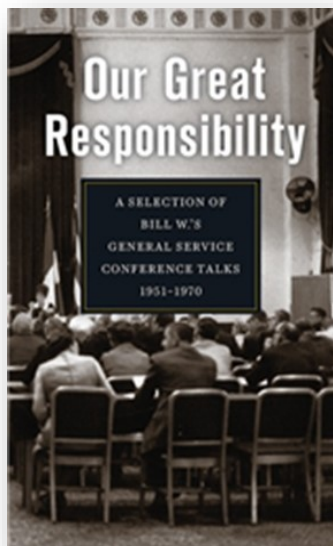
that in July 1982 non alcoholic Milton Maxwell becomes trustee emeritus on account of illness & non alcoholic Gordon Patrick becomes 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Chairman of the Board at GSO?

that on July 2-4, 1993 Celebration of 50<sup>th</sup> commencement of AA in Canada was held at the Metropolitan Toronto Convention



# GREATER TORONTO AREA INTERGROUP BOOKSTORE

Distribution of Conference-Approved Literature across the GTA. Check with your group's literature person or contact Helen in our bookstore: PH 416-487-9865 Email: [litdept@aatoronto.org](mailto:litdept@aatoronto.org)



A new book from AA World Services Inc. ***Our Great Responsibility***: compiles Bill W's General Service Conference talks from 1951 – 1970.

Bill W's talks in this book reflect years of his research efforts and committing that research to paper and recording his findings. A constant in this book is Bill's thoughts on the group conscience and the trusted servant, the underlying A.A. principles and the linkage between principles and personalities. As importantly he reflects on the importance of sometimes standing alone. This new book is now available at the GTA InterGroup bookstore!

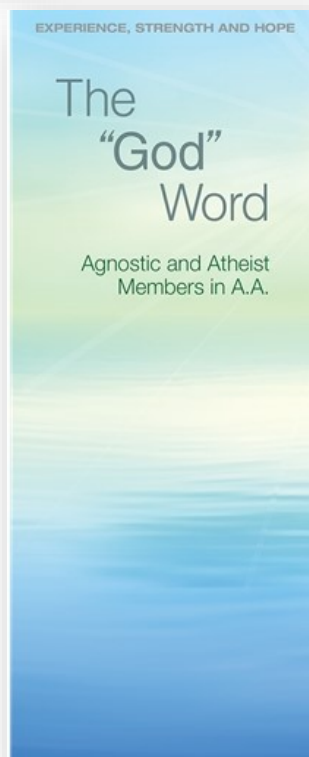


Ever hear "we are not a glum lot"? Well this new Grapevine publication ***Take Me To Your Sponsor*** proves it. Anyone can use a good laugh especially during those tough times in recovery when happy, joyous and free seems as distant as the moon in the sky! Different stages of recovery help us to laugh more and more at the things we used to do or think about that used to make us cry or cringe in fear and shame. Can you relate to another alcoholic? Then this humour-filled book is for you and it's available at the GTA InterGroup



This pamphlet contains the experiences of 12 women and men — all of whom are alcoholics coping with serious mental health issues — who have found sobriety and a new way of life in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Also included are the perspectives of five A.A. members with long-term sobriety who have worked closely as sponsors with alcoholics who have mental health issues, helping them to gain and maintain sobriety in A.A.



Experience, strength and hope shared by agnostic and atheist members of A.A., highlighting that there is room in the Fellowship for people of all shades of belief and non-belief.



# JULY 2019 MEDALLIONS

#	NAME	YEARS	DRY DATE	GROUP	MEDALLION
1	Glen L.	25	Jun 12 1994	King City	Jul 1 2019
2	Samantha F.	5	Jul 1 2014	Erin Mills	Jul 1 2019
3	Brian H.	20	Jun 25 1999	Erin Mills	Jul 8 2019
4	Robert L.	1		Beverly Hills	Jul 19 2019

## SAVE THE DATE!

**53RD ANNUAL DUNNVILLE A.A. CONVENTION & CAMP OUT**— Meetings under the BIG TENT! Rain or Shine!  
Friday, Saturday, Sunday September 6, 7, 8, 2019



**MISSISSAUGA FALL ROUND UP**  
SATURDAY OCTOBER 5TH 2019 9-3 pm  
Vic Johnson Community Centre in Streetsville

Faith  
is like  
WiFi



It's invisible,  
but it has the power  
to connect you  
to what you need.

If humans knew that there was a God, a supreme being, a higher power then there would be no need for faith. It would be called knowing. Faith is trust and a reliance in that higher power even though we don't know what's out there.

**Let your**  
*faith*  
**be**  
*bigger*  
**than your fear**

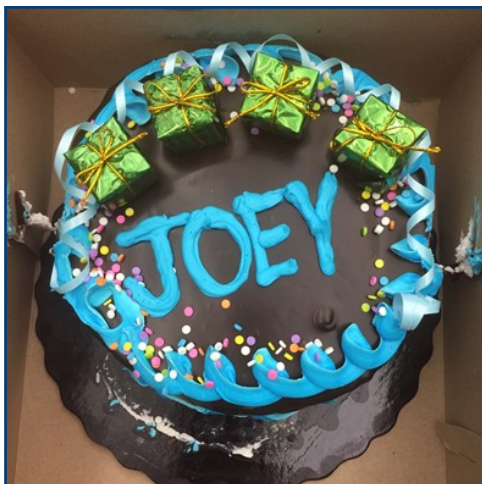
# Peel Youth Village service meeting presents first two-year medallion — This room is magic!

“At our first meeting, I remember Joey didn’t say anything, until close to the end. He puts up his hand and he asks if he can have Satan as his higher power,” says Phil L. He started the PYV service meeting when he was alt-treatment chair for District 6. “I thought about it for a second and said, ‘Yeah—whatever floats your boat.’”

Joey R. is picking up his two-year Youth Village’s first A.A. meeting four he only went to his first meeting because that he wasn’t really serious about a way to get kicked out.”

You can’t get kicked out. He sees a new person, like a better one,” says started writing a new story for his life, to an old one that had gone all

There are about 20 people packed celebration, including past and pre-supporters. The energy and emotion PYV provides transitional housing in to 30. Not all residents have a problem with the territory.



medallion tonight. He was at Peel years ago. Now he’s 19. He admits cause he was told he had to, and Satan: “I was thinking, maybe there’s

now how awesome that is. “I feel like Joey. He describes feeling that he’s instead of just adding a new chapter wrong.

into in the room for the medallion sent PYV residents, and other A.A. here is always like nowhere else. Mississauga for individuals aged 16 with alcohol, but it comes with

Joey is a fantastic example of what the PYV meeting has been able to accomplish in its four-year history: attracting hurt and untrusting young people to a program that offers hope. Joey’s an old-timer in the room, showing the newcomer that A.A. can be the basis of a repaired, normal, and productive life.

Phil chairs a lot of the meetings at PYV. His opening welcome has become a tradition with everyone drum-rolling a crescendo on the table. The drumming is most often led by Danielle L, Phil’s fiancé who (of course) he met at his home group. Although the next-door basketball court doesn’t close for another half hour, the shouting, thumping, and blasting music aren’t especially a distraction. It’s a rowdy meeting. The meeting format is decided week to week by group conscience, most often choosing discussion on wide-ranging topics.

There’s never a problem when people show up late or leave early. The only important thing is that people keep coming back—and they do. The meeting runs on a formula that has developed organically. When PYV approached District 6 back in 2014 with a request for a service meeting, no one was sure what that meeting would look like, or whether a meeting would work in the facility. All that the idea had going for it was how stoked Phil was over the opportunity to try putting it together.

“Running the meeting only reading from the Twelve and Twelve really wasn’t a go,” explains Phil, describing what was immediately apparent to him. “Then for a while we tried using the slogans as topics.” That didn’t work. At some meetings it was a near-impossible task just to keep any control of the room, taking almost the full meeting to get the 12 Steps read. It was all trial and error.

Patience and flexibility paid off. “We trimmed it back to bare bones and at this point it was pretty unorthodox,” says Phil. “I thought the A.A. police were going to come and get me.” Uncertain of how to go forward, he spoke to the Area 83 treatment chair asking for direction. “Don’t worry about it. Just go with it,” was the direction he received. The chair at the time was putting on a meeting in a mental health institution and suggested, in special situations, carrying the message in whatever form will keep people in the room should override everything else.

“There’s no way that meeting would have gone on for more than a month if we’d stuck to the traditional format,” said Phil. “I didn’t care how high the kids were,” he says, “and they got a sense that we cared about them and we didn’t judge.” Having established trust with a few key allies among the PYV residents, interest in the meeting began to spread. Joey was one of those early promoters, and Mackenzie A. was another.

Mackenzie is the speaker at Joey’s medallion. She was 16 at her first meeting. Today she has her own apartment and well over a year’s sobriety. In the early days, Mackenzie was popular around PYV and she was successful in badgering people and dragging them, no matter how high they were, out of their rooms to come to the meeting.

The meeting closes with Joey doing the chips. He gives a one-month to a young woman who arrived almost at the end of the meeting. Joey states that it’s often said in A.A. that a chip is neither a prize nor a reward: then everyone chimes in, “But at PYV we say that’s bull@#\$%!” This is another tradition. “At PYV chips are prizes!” That’s what keeps people coming back, and the miracles continue.

*Chris Z., Mississauga*