

BETTER TIMES



Produced monthly by AA members in the Greater Toronto Area

Jan. 2019

A large, stylized lightbulb is the central graphic. The bulb's glass part is a dark circle with a dotted white border. Inside this circle, the text "THE G.T.A. INTERGROUP INFORMATION EDITION" is written in a white, serif, all-caps font. The base of the lightbulb is a metallic-looking, textured grey shape with a large, bold, black question mark in the center.

THE G.T.A. INTERGROUP INFORMATION EDITION

Word search

GREATER TORONTO AREA INTERGROUP

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BETTER TIMES

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AMENDS
COMMITMENT
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INVENTORY
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RECOVERY
SPIRITUAL
STEPS

ANONYMOUS
FEARLESS
HONESTY
MEDALLION
PRAYER
SERVICE
SPONSEE
TRADITIONS

AWAKENING
GRATITUDE
HUMILITY
MEDITATION
PRINCIPLES
SOBRIETY
SPONSOR
WILLINGNESS

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 or emailed to bettertimes@aatoronto.org.

How do I evaluate my sobriety

When I drank, I was spending money on booze and other things.

Today I give at my group and do service to help the fellowship pay their bills, Inter-group and district are part of my life. When I give to my group, I support it and I am a part of it. It helps to pay the rent, the coffee, the insurance that my group has to pay if they want to hold a meeting at their location.

If I can't afford a book, the group helps me with a smile and then asks if I would like to make arrangements.

There are many ways to contribute in the 7th tradition, one of them is to be at service in the fellowship. It all starts at the group level and with a good sponsor.

When I came to the fellowship there were people who opened the doors and did the setting up, some were at the door greeting and introduced me to others as a newcomer to others and made feel comfortable to be there, one of them became my sponsor and still is after many 24 hours. This sponsor introduce me to the Steps and Traditions without charging me but taught me that my contribution to the group could be financial or by being a helping hand to my group, then he taught me that I can be at service at the district and support them as well.

With the years accumulating, I am still in service and very often going to the Inter-group office, I notice the phones manned by members that have more time than me or the same amount of time as me. Those members give at their groups but also at Intergroup and District, often they are the same who do those functions there as well.

When I support the Intergroup financially or doing volunteer work in different committees, I am transmitting the message of hope. There are many committees that need capable help, I think about the spirit of rotation and it is this time of the year that many rotate out and change positions.

So is the Better Times your monthly newsletter that gives information on the different activities of groups as well with the archives collaboration a brief history of groups celebrating their anniversaries. That publication need volunteers as Editor, Layout Editor as well the committee as a whole needs volunteers for the website, meeting booklets and online bookstore.

Thanks for your help and for considering stepping up to be of service.

I would like to wish everyone a sober Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!

YILS Bert J GTAI Chair

Medallions

● Jamie J	10	Open Hands	Jan 2
● Brenda F	1	Melrose	Jan 5
● John P	35	Bloordale	Jan 6
● Nancy M	1	New Life	Jan 8
● Dean C	30	Sobriety Plus	Jan 8
● Max B	30	Sobriety Plus	Jan 8
● Natasha F	1	Sisters in Sobriety	Jan 9
● Andrew K	25	Golden Mile	Jan 9
● Tracey C	5	New Anchor	Jan 10
● Adrienne B	1	Beaches	Jan 15
● Uldis V	10	Twelfth Tradition	Jan 16
● Kevin D	5	East York	Jan 29
● Shenel E	1	East York	Jan 29

Beginner's guide to Intergroup

This information is to help new group reps and inform the general AA membership in the GTA about Intergroup subcommittees and their roles and responsibilities in carrying the message. We hope that you will find it helpful, and to every member of AA in the GTA: you don't have to be a rep to join one of our subcommittees – anyone can volunteer!

Accessibility

accessibility@aatoronto.org

Think back to when you first admitted you were an alcoholic and attempted to get to your first meeting of AA. Now imagine yourself on that same day but unable to see the address of the meeting locations because you are blind, unable to know what people are sharing because you are deaf or hearing-impaired, or unable to attend a meeting as there are no sign language interpreters allowed at the meeting; unable to enter the meeting because there is no ramp for your assistive device (wheelchair), and no accessible washroom... These are some of the obstacles that disabled alcoholics face every day, and the reason why the Accessibility Committee was created. This committee works to make AA accessible to all alcoholics; not only the able-bodied.

We strive to raise awareness regarding this issue and ensure that meetings, service days, conferences, and all aspects of Alcoholics Anonymous are accessible to all alcoholics who wish to attend.

We provide literature in large print, Braille, CD, and in sign language with closed captioning (VHS). Our committee is involved in carrying the message to events outside of AA: People in Motion (Canada's largest national trade show highlighting services and equipment for the disabled), and Mayfest (Deaf Cultural Convention) just to name a few.

Illness and disability can happen to any one of us and therefore we must all strive to create access to AA for the disabled. Our committee meets the third Sunday every second month at 11 a.m. at 234.

Archives

archives@aatoronto.org

Purpose/Mission:

- receive, classify, index, and preserve all relevant AA materials from the GTA, Ontario and beyond and provide access of archival materials to those members who need them for group anniversaries, group histories, etc.
- maintain the Archives Display and the Archives Repository at 234
- record long time members' oral histories ("What was AA like back then?")
- host the annual GTA Archives Breakfast event (November)
- present Archives Displays at service days, group anniversaries, etc. We encourage volunteers willing to catalogue materials. This committee meets every second Friday of the month at 7 p.m. at 234.

Communications

communications@aatoronto.org

This committee is responsible for the following:

- *GTA Website: www.aatoronto.org Member volunteers (including the Web Servant) maintain the information on our local AA site, which includes the meeting listings, and calendar events for both subcommittees and medallion/ group anniversary/service day information, dates, and times. Service Information for local AA members is also available on the site. *GTAI Meeting Directory: this committee oversees the editing and generation of the Meeting Directory Booklet, produced twice a year.
- *Better Times Newsletter: produced monthly, Communications generates the Newsletter with the aid of an Editor-in-Chief and Layout Artist (AA volunteers). Content includes Group Pages, Archives articles, Editorial, medallion announcements, group anniversary announcements, and stories from members sharing their experience strength and hope on AA's Three Legacies. The Newsletter is member-generated content; we welcome members to submit their

stories of recovery to us! Content Deadline for the monthly publication is the 10th of each month.

Submissions for Newsletter: Please email the Editor at bettertimes@aatoronto.org Submissions for New Meetings/Meeting Updates: Please go to our website www.aatoronto.org and fill out the Meeting Change Form on the Home Page under 'Meetings'. This committee meets every second Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at 234.

Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC)

cpc@aatoronto.org

WITH WHOM DO WE COOPERATE?

- Family doctors or other health care professionals
- members of the clergy
- law enforcement or court officials -educators
- social workers
- an alcoholism or other counselor
- ANYONE who deals with problem drinkers in the course of their work

We are actively seeking ways to make contact with professional people and set up programs to increase the knowledge and the understanding of Alcoholics Anonymous. We believe that professionals are our best allies in getting the AA message to the still suffering alcoholic. We carry the message to professionals and to students attending professional schools in the community, helping them to understand how and why AA works. Members of CPC inform professionals and future professionals about AA: What we do, Where we are, What we can and cannot do. We attempt to establish better communication between AA's and professionals and to find simple, effective methods of cooperating without affiliating.

For AA members: we provide workshops for regional conventions, Area assemblies, District meetings, service information days, and set up information tables at District or Area conferences.

For our professional friends: we will explain how AA may be helpful to people served by professionals. We will be more than happy to attend a 'working' breakfast, luncheon, or dinner, provide AA literature and meeting information, or put on workshops on professional development days. We also participate in 3 or 4 professional international conferences a year that are held locally, so we are always looking for volunteers to help out at our display booth during these conferences, as many of these take place on weekdays and we sometimes have problems getting volunteers to cover the 'working hour' shifts. For students attending professional schools: for students studying medicine, nursing, law, psychology, teacher training, management, the ministry or any other course that is preparing the student for direct contact with people, we will set up workshops and provide literature that will better enable the student to gain an understanding of Alcoholics Anonymous. This committee meets every second Monday at 7 p.m. at 234.

Correctional Facilities

corrections@aatoronto.org

The Correctional Facilities Committee is responsible for supplying chairpersons, speakers, and literature for meetings at all correctional centres, jails, detention centres, probation centres, and similar institutions. This committee deals directly with the staff and personnel of correctional facilities who are responsible for alcoholics.

Going Inside Correctional Facilities: The fellowship of AA was in its seventh year when a pioneering warden at San Quentin Penitentiary asked nearby AAs to carry the message to alcoholics in the prison. He was heard to say "If the AA program will help just one man, I want to start it." GTA Intergroup formed the Correctional Facilities Committee back in 1973. Currently GTAI carries the message into Toronto South Detention, Toronto East Detention, and OCI.

To become a Correctional Volunteer requires minimum continuous sobriety of two years. Because we are entering highly restricted areas, there are application forms to be completed and submitted to the facility where the volunteer would like to carry the

message of recovery to our membership on the inside. A government background check is completed. The AA member is then required to attend one to two orientation meetings become acquainted with procedures and guidelines for the institution. Commitment-wise, it is suggested that our newly cleared members consider a minimum of once a month, and commit for a six-month period.

Bridging the Gap: this is a service opportunity whereby AA volunteers can commit to accompany a newly-released AA member to their first AA meeting on the outside, and get them acquainted with meeting times and locations in their area. This committee meets the first Wednesday every second month at 7 p.m. at 234.

Executive Committee

executivechair@aatoronto.org

The Executive Committee is composed of 10 members of AA; nine of whom are elected by the Intergroup Representatives of the AA groups from general AA membership in the Greater Toronto Area, including Intergroup Reps and/or Alternate Reps. To qualify to be a member of the Executive Committee, each candidate must have a minimum of two years of continuous sobriety.

Composition of this committee: 10 members, including the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and the Chair of the Finance Committee. The Past Chair serves on the committee in a non-voting capacity. The term of service for a member of the Executive Committee ('EC') may be as long as three years. The EC Chair may spend an additional number of months of service as an advisor to the Executive Committee (as Past Chair), or in other capacities (such as being a member of the committees organizing Information AA Day, or the Ontario Regional Conference). There are procedures in place to handle interim vacancies on the committee. Once members rotate off the EC, they may not come back to serve for a period of 24 months.

What Do They Do? The EC Chair facilitates the meetings of both the Executive Committee monthly meeting and the monthly General Meeting (Intergroup Floor). S/He is also automatically a voting member of all Intergroup service committees. When it is time for the Chair to rotate out, s/he automatically becomes the Liaison to the Ontario Regional Conference (ORC) committee.

Members of the EC also attend a quarterly meeting with the Districts, where members of each service 'arm' share information about current activities. Each member of the EC attends several committee meetings each month, serving as a committee liaison. This liaison role involves simply observing procedures and acting as a conduit of information in both directions. It could also include full participation in the committee's work (at the discretion of each committee). The number of committees served by EC members varies, but can range from one to three (or more) each month. During meetings of the Intergroup Floor, EC members in their liaison role can present reports on committees in the absence of the committee chair, either answering questions from Floor members promptly or taking queries back to the committee for a response from the committee chairperson at a later date.

At least one member of the EC is responsible for setting up the monthly General Meeting, seeing to it that all documents required are available to members, and coffee is made/ chairs are set up, etc. S/He is the Reception Coordinator (see Reception description in this document).

The EC appoints the chairpersons of all GTAI subcommittees (service committees), except those designated as 'District Committees': Corrections, Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC), Public Information (PI), and the Treatment Committee.

Finance Committee

finance@aatoronto.org

The Finance Subcommittee is responsible for:

- the financial soundness and well-being of the operations of the Intergroup Office ('234')
- the presentation to the EC for approval of a draft annual budget for the Intergroup Office, including recommendations regarding compensation for employees
- the presentation to GTA Intergroup for approval of an annual budget previously approved by the EC
- the presentation of monthly statements of income and expense and monthly balance sheets to GTA Intergroup
- the presentation of quarterly budget variance reports to GTA Intergroup
- making available, upon request, a yearly total of donations/commitments from individual groups for their records only

-obtaining reviewed or audited financial statements by independent external accountants

Five years of continuous sobriety and some business/accounting background are needed to serve on this subcommittee.

Grapevine Committee

This committee promotes the sales of Grapevine magazines ('Our Meeting in Print'), subscriptions, and other Grapevine materials. Committee members want to ensure that all AA groups and members have a good supply of Grapevine materials and magazines for sale at their individual groups. This committee hopes to establish Grapevine displays and representatives in every AA group in the GTA.

The committee also organizes displays at the Ontario Regional Conference, Information AA Day, conferences, workshops, round-ups, or group anniversaries.

This committee meets the fourth Thursday every second month at 7:30 p.m. at 234.

Information AA Day

This is a great service day held on a Saturday in the spring (usually late May) that has been taking place for more than 36 years and is a day for members to learn about service via committee workshops, in addition to having our Area 83 Delegate give a summary of their experience and information from the recent General Service Conference. Historically there has also been a talk given by a speaker from the General Service Office (GSO) in New York.

It is an event hosted by both GTA Intergroup and our 8 local service districts, which are as follows:

- District 02 (Malton)
- District 06 (Mississauga)
- District 10 (Toronto Central)
- District 12 (Toronto South West)
- District 14 (Toronto North)
- District 16 (Spanish-speaking)
- District 18 (Toronto East)
- District 22 (Scarborough)

The committee is usually comprised of District Committee Members (DCMs), Alternate DCMs, and Intergroup Operating Committee members.

Why it was started: it was originally created so that our Area 83 Delegate could give their

report when they returned from the General Service Conference in New York. The Conference is held in April. Info AA is usually held in May for this reason. The day starts off with an early bird meeting at 8:45 a.m. The service committees give presentations on their committee activities. There is a pot luck lunch. The Delegate gives their report and the speaker of the day is the 'View from GSO': a staff member from the General Service Office shares on how they got sober (all staff are alcoholics), how they came to work at GSO, and a visual/verbal tour of the office. Cost for the event is \$5.

Starting in September, this committee meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at 234.

Ontario Regional Conference

www.aaorc.ca (Registration) orcvolunteers@gmail.com (To volunteer) This yearly conference, held over three days in March each year, is an AA/Alanon event featuring local and North American speakers, panels, banquet with a main speaker (Saturday), and a sobriety countdown (Sunday). In 2019 the Conference will be held at the Sheraton Centre Toronto. Cost is \$35 for registration; banquet cost is \$80.

Volunteer Opportunities for the event include Greeters, Greeter Captains, Pre-Registration and Registration (see volunteer email above).

Public Information

pi@aatoronto.org
There is a lot of 'public' out there who do not have the 'information' that alcoholism is a disease and that there are over 2 million sober alcoholics in AA worldwide who were once at their wits end with lives that were falling apart.

PI uses literature, public presentations, media, and personal contact to reach out anywhere where people may gather or pass by.

Whether speaking to students at a school, or setting up an information table at a shopping mall or police-sponsored breakfast for the homeless in a park, or displaying pamphlets in a doctor's office...the list goes on.

We have provided Big Books to the Public Library system as well as public service announcements on television or newspapers.

Ultimately, however, 12th Step work is ca-

ried out by practising the principles of recovery in all our affairs. But setting an example, we can carry a message of hope that there is a better way to live for those who want it. But first they need to know it's available.

This committee every third Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at 234.

Self-Support

AA ought to be fully self-supporting. This requires the whole-hearted participation of every AA member. It isn't just about money; we need people for every service position there is, and for all the service positions we may create – based on need – in the future. Only by giving back without reservation do we get to watch the miracle of other's recoveries, and vouchsafe our own. That said, there is a place where money and spirituality meet, and that's in "the hat" as Bill W. once said in the Grapevine.

The Self-Support committee is committed the spreading awareness of what groups and individual members can do to fulfil the above.

This committee meets on the fourth Thursday every second month at 7:30 p.m. at 234.

Treatment

"Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail." -Alcoholics Anonymous, p.89

What better place to look for those still-suffering alcoholics than in a hospital or some other alcoholism treatment place? Since 1934, when a sober alcoholic named Bill W. kept trying to help drunks in Towns Hospital in New York City, sober AAs all over the world have been visiting alcoholics in such places. It is in this vein that the GTAI Treatment Committee engages in this service in the following ways:

- when allowed to do so, takes regular AA meetings into facilities within the GTA -encourages groups participation in this service by encouraging members to attend/help put on meetings in treatment facilities
- provides a liaison between treatment facilities meetings and groups on the outside
- arranges purchase/distribution of AA literature for these groups and meetings How can members get active? The committee is always looking for volunteer members to lend support to meetings in these facilities. You may

volunteer for our Bridging the Gap program, which provides temporary sponsors to individuals leaving the facility.

This committee meets on the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at 234.

Twelfth Step

12step@aatoronto.org

Twelfth Step work is front line work, carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic and their families. Those members who do the work understand they are saving lives; one drunk at a time. The mandate for the Twelfth Step Committee is to ensure that there is always someone there when the alcoholic finally reaches out. Requirements for service:

-1 year of continuous sobriety for phone lines and committee work

-2 years of continuous sobriety for 12 Step Volunteering and Greeter Captain

Phone Greeters: The phone lines at 234 are tended to by our volunteers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The office receives calls from everywhere asking for help and direction. Phones shifts are from 2-4 hours long and a phone shift commitment can be as little as once a month to once a week; even more for the enthusiastic! There is also a spares list for those who just wish to fill in when we come up short.

Twelfth Step Volunteer: This is for those members who want one-on-one contact with newcomers by speaking to them at length via phone or in person, and/or meeting face-to-face by getting them to their first meeting. Twelve-steppers assist by sharing their experience, strength and hope, helping the newcomer to understand what the AA program is all about.

Buddy List: there are those who can't get to a meeting due to illness (either home-bound or hospital-bound). This service is for those members who are willing to take the time to carry the message 'over the wire' via phone or visit.

Greeter Captain: A monthly commitment, we also need people to make sure the phone lines are manned 24-7. When someone can make a shift, the role of the monthly Greeter Captain is to use the Greeter Spares List to find replacements on short notice. They also keep the current greeter roster and spares list current and updated.

Twelfth Step Committee member: There's

always a need at the committee level to help keep things running smoothly. Training: Offered on the first Sunday of each month from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. If you are interested in training we request that you RSVP. You can do this by calling the office at 416-487-5591 and ask for the Phone Trainer's phone number.

This committee meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 7p.m. at 234.

Winter Season Open House

wsoh@aatoronto.org

The Winter Season Open House is an annual holiday tradition in Toronto, sponsored by Toronto Intergroup since 1944 and open to all. It is a fellowship event with a strong message for all alcoholics, whether they are suffering or recovering: "No matter who you are or what day of the year it is, when you come to AA and ask for help, you are no longer alone." Held on December 25 each year since 1944, the day offers AA and Alanon meetings, music, fellowship, and features a full turkey dinner with all the trimmings! The day is free to all and is supported by the community; friends and family of AA members are always welcome to attend and help out.

WSOH Committee consists of a Chairperson and committee members who have specific roles (i.e. Treasurer, event location liaison, meeting planners, food coordinator, greeter captain, etc.)

Contributions of any kind (food, turkeys, hams, desserts, helping to serve food/food prep the Dec.24, decorating Dec.24, clean up, coffee-making, etc.) are welcomed and encouraged.

As this is a seasonal event, committee meetings start in September (see website www.aatoronto.org for all monthly committee calendar for this and all monthly subcommittee meeting times).

Reception Centre

The Reception Centre is a table located at the front door at each monthly GTAI General Meeting, held on the last Tuesday of each month at 8 p.m. at Timothy Eaton Church, 230 St Clair Ave W, Toronto (in the Flora McRae auditorium). An Executive Committee member is there at the table to meet, greet, provide information, and direct Intergroup Reps to various sources of service information, in addition to monthly GTAI

Meeting Minutes. The table provides the following: Group Rep Sign-In: all Group Reps and/or their Alternates sign the Roll Call List provided. This attendance is recorded in the Minutes.

Copies of Minutes, Meeting Agenda, and Finance Reports: hard copies available at the table for Reps and other attendees so Reps can report this information to their groups.

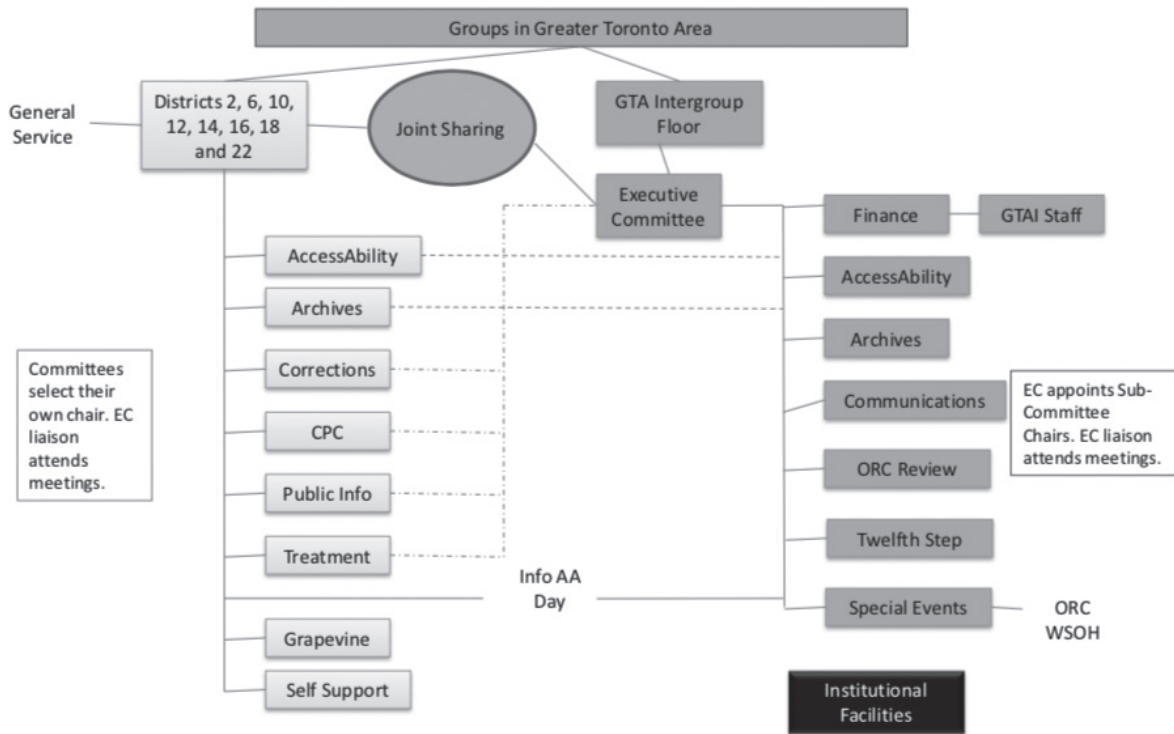
Subcommittee Meetings Calendar: this is a boardroom bookings sheet for each month, outlining the dates and times for monthly subcommittee meetings.

Event Flyers, Groups Anniversaries, Service Days, etc.: also available for Reps to bring back to their group secretary and/or to post on their group service bulletin board. Better Times Newsletter: hard copies of the monthly newsletter are available in the main meeting space (Flora McRae auditorium) for Reps to take back to their groups.

New Group Rep/Alternate Form: a green form that each new Rep, Alternate Rep, or District Liaison can fill out and submit to the Recording Secretary of the meeting. This ensures that the above members can receive announcements, bulletins, monthly minutes, etc., from Intergroup via email. GTAI Operating Procedures and Guidelines document: this document is a 'must' for all Reps. It outlines the 'ways and means' for conducting service and making decisions at the Intergroup level. The document also outlines how to make Motions, approach the Floor, how to vote, who can vote, etc. Hard copies of this document is made available to Reps at each Workshop Meeting, and are available online at www.aatoronto.org.

Please remember: Don't be afraid to ask questions! We understand that the process can be confusing at first (we've been there!) but we are willing to listen and help.

**Greater Toronto Area Intergroup Sub-Committee Structure
(as defined in P&G implemented in January, 2010)**



**ONTARIO
REGIONAL
CONFERENCE
of ALCOHOLICS
ANONYMOUS**

March 1 - 3, 2019

Sheraton Centre Hotel
123 Queen St. W, Toronto ON

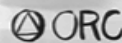
Register now at: www.aaorc.ca

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
please contact: orcvolunteers@gmail.com

SPEAKERS

Earl H. - Culver City, CA
Robert T. - Spruce Grove, AB
Geri B. - Vancouver Island, BC
Mary B. - Seattle WA (AI-Anon)

That's me. I drink like that



Pre-Registration closes Friday February 22, 2019

**Looking to challenge your
sponsor to a service duel?
Need a boost from the winter
blues?**

**Sign up for service by
volunteering at ORC 2019.
Quick greeter slots
available.**

Sign up at:

www.aaorc.ca/volunteer/

or via email

orcVolunteers@gmail.com