

BETTER TIMES

Produced monthly by AA members in the Greater Toronto Area

Oct. 2018

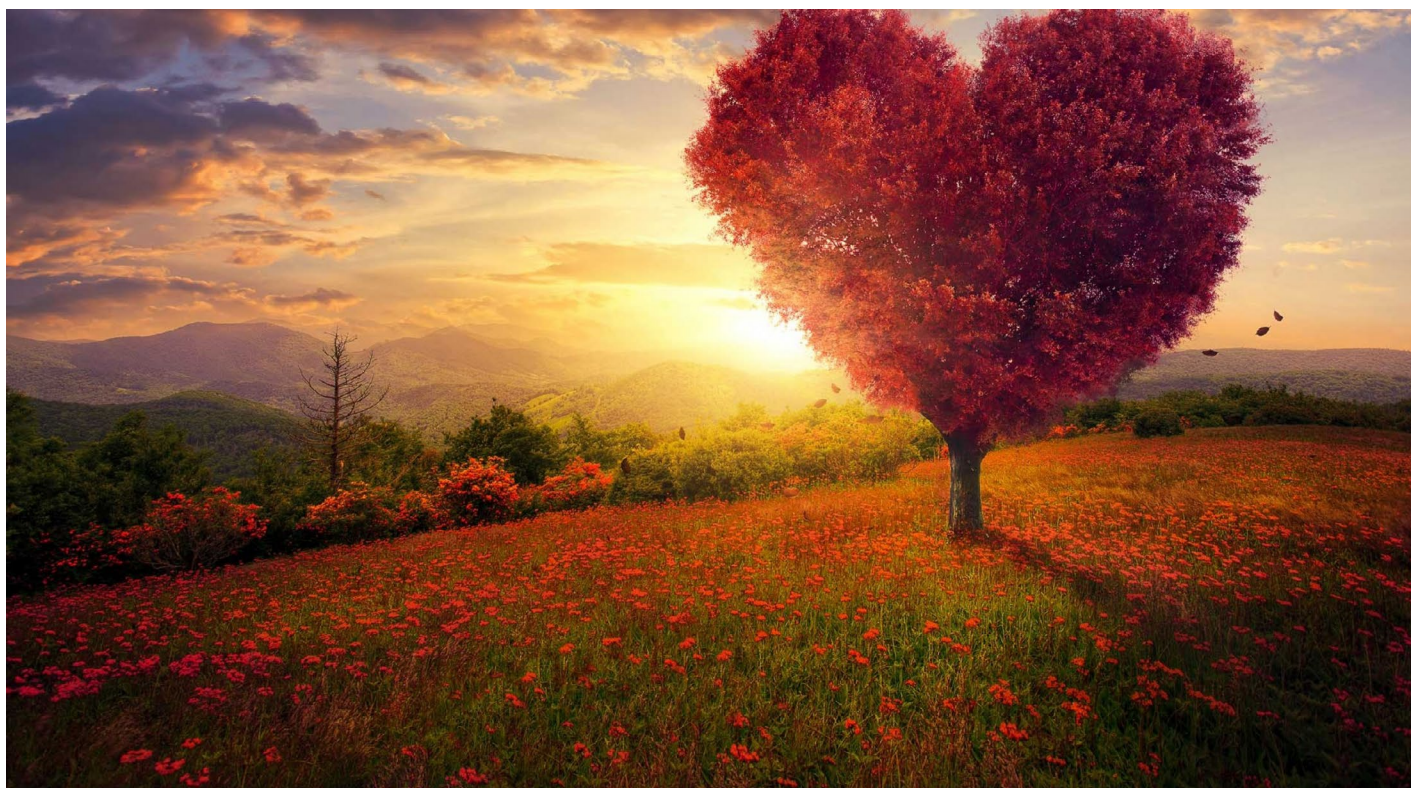


Attitude of Gratitude Issue



THE

Letter from the Editor



The first official recognition of an A.A. Gratitude Week, specifically designed to coincide with Thanksgiving week in the U.S. (Canada celebrates in October), occurred in 1956, when the Sixth General Service Conference approved the motion, stipulating that "this action be noted in the annual pre-Thanksgiving appeals to the groups for funds to help support A.A.'s worldwide services." Three years later, Bill urged in a letter, "Gratitude should go forward, rather than backward... if you carry the message to still others, you will be making the best possible repayment for the help given to you." (As Bill Sees It, p. 29). *Box 459© Vol. 46 No.5/ October - November 2000

When I was in elementary school I used to have a teacher that would have us all sit down on the carpet when she wanted to speak to us about something that we very serious and needed our undivided attention. She would wait patiently until we were all settled and begin...

"The time has come," the Walrus said,
"To talk of many things:
Of shoes--and ships--and sealing-wax--
Of cabbages--and kings--
And why the sea is boiling hot--
And whether pigs have wings."

This, of course, is a verse from Lewis Carroll's *The Walrus and The Carpenter* and by the time she got to the third line we were all reciting it as a class. I often think of that lovely memory when I am at my homegroup and we finish a meeting with the Serenity Prayer. It is a serious time of the meeting when we all bond together and repeat something that means a great deal to all of us. It is a centering moment when we are all just a group of drunks asking for help on our daily journey of sobriety.

When October arrives in Toronto "the time has come" to think about self-support and digging deeper into our pockets to keep our beloved program alive and thriving so that we can help

the next suffering alcoholic. You may ask how giving double or even triple what we normally throw into the basket can help ALL of A.A? Well, if all groups are operating under the GSO guidelines of Self-Support, a portion of the 7th goes to the group to "keep the lights on", another chunk goes to Intergroup, District and Area which support the regional communities within Ontario and the final chunk goes to the Head Office in NYC. Each alcoholic that contributes what they can at meetings is giving to the financial chain that keeps essential services like The Grapevine, salaries at GSO, book publishing, overhead costs, the ORC, websites and so much more operational.

Please remember as you read this that there is a very good chance that our program of recovery has not only saved your life but the lives of those sitting beside you at meetings and people that you love and care for. If the promises are coming true for you and you are able to give, please dig deep into your pockets and pay it forward!

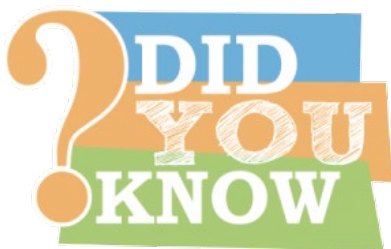
Yours in Love and Service,

Maija
Editor-in-Chief, Better Times

From the archives

Recent items donated to the GTA Archives
as reported by the GTA Archivist Eddy G.:

- Book marker prayer card, program (4 pages) & eulogy (4 pages) of Keith F. who passed away on July 29, 2018. He was 47 years sober, co-founder of the Young Peoples group in Kingston & was involved with the start of the Kingston Institutional AA Conference. He was a great example of AA and he will be sadly missed. Donated by Peter N. (Bayview group).
- Three AA Service Manuals combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service by Bill W. 2006-2007, 2004-2005 & 1998-1999 Editions. Donated by the Golden Mile group.
- 276 Cassette tapes of AA speakers from the GTA, Ontario & the US. The collection belonged to Jim B. from Dean (Sobriety Plus group).
- 382 Grapevines from the 50s, 60s 70s 80s 90s, 2001-2003 & 2017.
- All Around Ontario, March 1959 - a monthly bulletin of events of Alcoholics Anonymous. From David T. (Saturday Morning Westborough Big Book Discussion group in Ottawa). Donated by Glenn G. (East York group).
- Two CDs: Oral history of long-time member Jack A. (Pine Hills group), interviewed by Maire O'B. (past GTA Archivist). Donated by Ruth P. (Pine Hills group).



- On Oct. 3, 1945, the AA Grapevine was adopted as the national publication of AA with 3,000 subscribers.

- In late Oct. 1939, Akron, Ohio, alcoholic members withdrew from the Oxford Group and held meetings at Dr. Bob's house.

- On Oct. 23, 1949, New York area's first female member, Florence R., started drinking again, didn't recover and died by suicide.

34th Annual GTA Archives Breakfast

GTA Intergroup Archives Committee invites you to the 34th annual GTA Archives Breakfast on Sunday, November 4, at the Oasis Convention Centre, located at 1036 Lakeshore Rd. E. in Mississauga.

Coffee will be served at 9 a.m., followed by buffet breakfast at 10 a.m. The open meeting will begin at 11 a.m. This year, the guest speaker will be Dave F. from the Skyway Group in Burlington.

On August 6, 1981, Tommy H., then Alternate Delegate Eastern Ontario Area 83, convened a meeting on behalf of the Ontario Provincial Committee to discuss the development of an Archives Repository: a place to gather, preserve and protect our AA history. Present at the first meeting were Al B., Bob D., Whit H. and Neil McV.

The Sub-Committee Archives First Annual Breakfast Meeting was held on October 22, 1985, and present were Tommy H., Pat B., Orville G. and Don MacD.

The First Archives Breakfast took place on December 1, 1985, and the purpose was to attempt to raise funds for the Archives Committee and to do this without obtaining any funds which are earmarked for any other purpose.

The GTA Archives Breakfast celebrates the rich history of the Fellowship, acknowledges the dedication of those who have gone before us, to "Passing It On" and to bring awareness about archives.

We would like to thank you all for coming to this event and supporting it over the years. We hope you join us this year again.

Tickets are \$25 and are available from members of the GTA Archives Committee.

GTA Archives Committee

Medallions

● Ryan G.	5	New Anchor	Sept. 20
● Steve P.	20	Markland	Sept. 20
● Hayley W.	1	East York	Sept. 25
● Nevera W.	1	East York	Sept. 25
● Paul F.	1	Streetsville Action	Sept. 26
● Viv C.	30	Beaches	Oct. 2
● Nadine D.	35	Beaches	Oct. 9
● Ari H.	15	Beaches	Oct. 16
● Jim R.	25	Bloordale	Oct. 21
● Dennis B.	1	Sunday Night Steps	Oct. 28

Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix

“The first time I had to talk about finances at a district meeting when I was my area’s treasurer, a fellow in the back of the room yelled out: ‘Why in the world are you always talking about money when this is a spiritual program?’ The guy threw me and I didn’t know how to answer him.”

From its earliest beginnings, A.A. has always incurred expenses — whether it be the cost of a pot of coffee or the price of a place to meet. In the early days, these costs were often absorbed by individual A.A.s or nonalcoholic friends who offered their parlors and living rooms for A.A.s to meet in. However, as A.A. outgrew the generosity of these early friends and members, the Fellowship’s need for income became more and more apparent.

Bill W., A.A.’s co-founder, and some of the early A.A. members initially felt the only way for the Fellowship to survive was to solicit financial support from philanthropic institutions or individuals outside A.A. These “high rollers” could then supply the funds the Fellowship would need to carry out the vital Twelfth Step work the early A.A.s envisioned — to bankroll the army of paid missionaries, the chain of A.A. hospitals, and the library of books they were certain to write.

One potential A.A. patron, however, when approached by the pioneering members for money, instead helped to lay the groundwork for A.A.’s Tradition of self-support: “I am afraid that money will spoil this thing,” said John D. Rockefeller Jr., while at the same time endorsing the work of the fledgling Fellowship.

This marked a turning point in A.A. history, and, as the reality of Mr. Rockefeller’s statement sank in and A.A. members began to see the truth in the old cliché, “Who pays the piper calls the tune,” the seed of the Seventh Tradition took root. With the realization that A.A. must steer clear of outside contributions in order to maintain its autonomy and independence came the understanding that the money necessary for A.A.’s survival would have to come from individual A.A. members and groups. As Bill W. put it in 1957, “Our spiritual way of life is safe for future generations if, as a Society, we resist the temptation to receive money from the outside world. But this leaves us with a responsibility — one that every member ought to understand. We cannot skimp when the treasurer of our group passes the hat. Our groups, our areas, and A.A. as a whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and their bills are paid.

“When we meet and defeat the temptation to take large gifts, we are only being prudent. But when we are generous with the hat we give a token that we are grateful for our blessings and evidence that we are eager to share what we have found with all those who still suffer.” (The Language of the Heart, p. 221)

What it was like

In 1985, wine was poured in my coffee mug at breakfast and so my day began. This pattern went on for many years.

I did stop drinking for different periods of time but now I know that without the AA Fellowship, I couldn’t continue to abstain. The call to drink was stronger than the desire for sobriety. Rehab didn’t work because I was not doing it for myself. AA during those years was an intellectually obscure alternative. The time was never right for me to stop and stay stopped. I was always anxious and hiding my alcohol.

Alcohol dictated how my day would go and with whom I’d spend it. It always had to include another person who also drank as much as me. In hindsight, it was very scary because I could not fathom a life without alcohol. I was drinking and driving as we blindly tended to do in those days, before the ever-present marketing ads and the law finally took it seriously. I totalled five cars, yet lived to walk out the hospital emergency departments only by the grace of my Higher Power. I understood that only in reflection.

When I was in Montreal on a geographical cure, my friend Marion told me that she was disgusted by my drinking. This surprised me because I didn’t remember ever drinking in front of her and she is not an alcoholic. She was adamant about me going to an AA meeting that night of October 22, 2000, and would

accompany me. I was reluctant to go and argued that I had been to AA and disliked the concept. She insisted and so I acquiesced. I disliked the speaker but she thought he was amazing, which in hindsight we still find humorous.

I awoke the next morning to a lot of tears and made a call to an AA friend in Vancouver to ask if I could stay with her for awhile and if she would help me. I was somehow ready to accept life on life’s terms and learned to use the slogans to get me through the day.

Sobriety is a cherished gift that should not be taken for granted. I have learned that if I put anything before my sobriety, I will lose it. AA and service is paramount to keeping me sober and I wish the same for you.

Irma S., Toronto

How-to with a GTAI Web Servant

This month's issue of Better Times is all about self-support and gratitude for our continued ability to carry the message.

So how can you take action? It's easy!

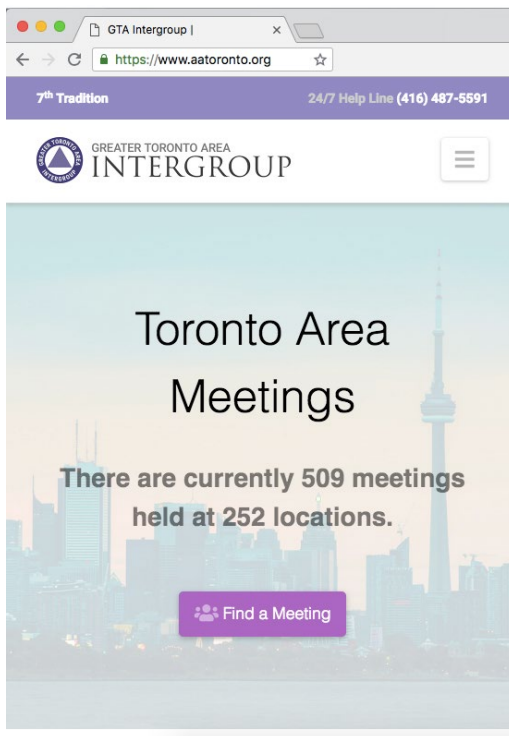
Go to www.aatoronto.org during Gratitude Month and look for the members donation button on the homepage. You don't need a PayPal account to use this system! If you donate more than \$20, you'll receive an income tax receipt because the GTAI is a registered charity.

During the rest of the year, you can still donate easily online, as long as you know what to look for. Because of our tradition of attraction rather than promotion and because of our 7th Tradition about self-support, we do not plaster the website with overt "donate here" messages.

Our primary purpose is to carry the message. Newcomers who are looking for where to find a meeting don't need to be overwhelmed with messages about sending money. That's why "find a meeting" is front and centre.

To donate online at any time, look close to the top left corner of the homepage and click on the words "7th Tradition." This is our discreet way of letting members donate to Intergroup – anytime and anywhere. We all benefit from the services provided through Intergroup and are grateful for any contributions that you can make.

**Anonymous and grateful member
of the Communications Committee**



Some Questions and Answers About A.A.'s Finances

Q What is a "prudent reserve"?

A Any suggested prudent reserve for a group should be dependent on local needs. A suggested prudent reserve for central offices, intergroups, and area committees could be one to 12 months' operating expenses, depending on local needs.

Q Does the General Service Office have a "prudent reserve"?

A In 1954 A.A.'s Board of Trustees established a reserve fund whose principal purpose is to provide the financial resources necessary to continue the essential services of G.S.O. and the Grapevine for up to a year in the event of an unexpected and substantial reduction in the normal revenues of the organization.

Q Is there a limit on how much an individual can contribute to G.S.O.?

A Yes. That limit is \$3,000 a year.

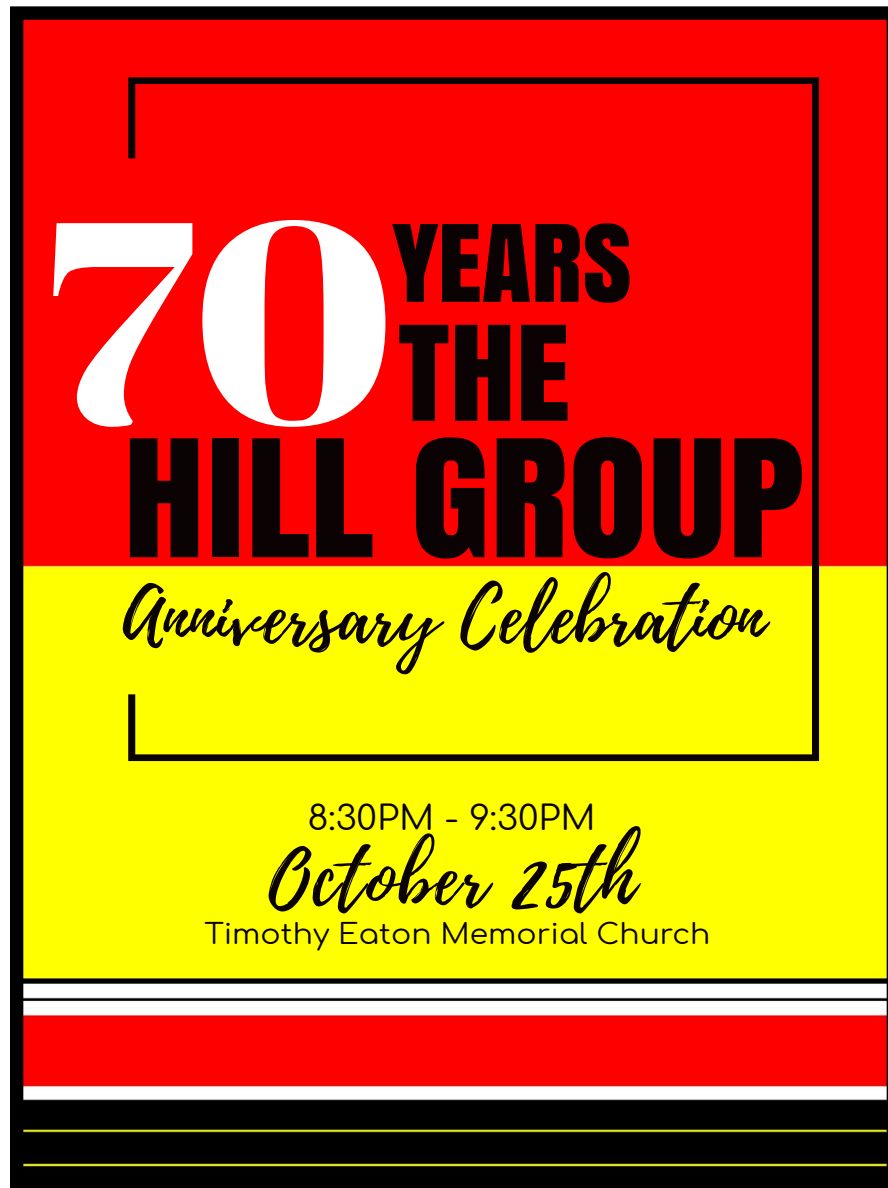
Q Can people leave money to A.A. in their wills?

A Bequests in wills are acceptable only from A.A. members on a one-time basis, and not in perpetuity. The limit is \$5,000.

Q Can a group have too much money?

A As stated in the long form of Tradition Seven, "We view with much concern those A.A. treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated A.A. purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority."

The A.A. World Services Board meets monthly and maintains direct control of income and expenditures



- Just one year before founding the Hill group, Colonel Goodwin traveled to New York and met with AA co-founder Bill W. to discuss ideas about the families of AA.
- In the 1950s, the Hill group served coffee and tea in china cups and meetings were attended by many Forest Hill residents, thus nicknaming the group "The Mink and Pearls Group."
- Established in 2009, the Hill group hosts a beginners meeting four times a year. All participants and speakers have under one year of sobriety. It's a great "remember when" moment and shows us how this program continues to touch the still suffering alcoholic.
- On October 5, 1948, 10 members of our fellowship gathered at Timothy Eaton Memorial Church for the very first Hill group meeting.
- In 1965, 17 years after founding the group, the Hill opened its Monday night closed meeting.
- Please join The Hill Group on October 25 at 8:30pm for a special celebration with a unique meeting format and fellowship followed by "mocktail" reception with coffee and hors d'oeuvres. All are Welcome!