

Beaches group celebrates 70 years



On Tuesday, December 12 at 8 p.m. the Beaches group will be celebrating 70 years at the Beaches United Church, 140 Wineva Ave. (east of Lee Ave., north of Queen St. E.). You are invited to join us in this special occasion.

The Beach group was started on December 7, 1947, by Wilf D. and Fred H. who belonged to the 1170 Yonge St. meeting and felt that an AA group was needed in the area where they lived.

The Beach group was an original group because when groups were started they were named after the area in which they were located. Some of the other original groups were: Kingsway group, North Toronto group, Danforth group, Oakville group and Lakeshore group.

In late 1977, the group changed its name to the Beaches Group to reflect the name change of the area.

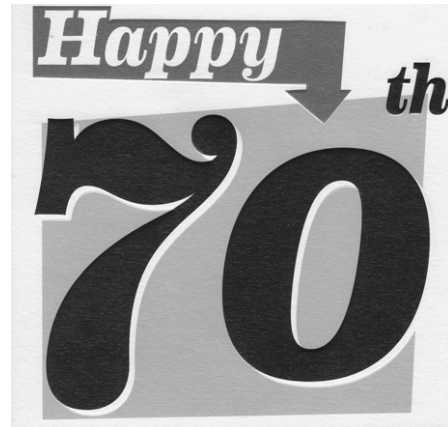
The group's first location for almost eleven years was at Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church on Queen St. E., across from the old Woodbine Race-track. The second location for almost fifty-one years was at Bellefair United Church on Queen St. E. (east of Woodbine Ave.), opposite Kew Gardens. The third location for three years and four

months was at St. Aidan's Church on 70 Silver Birch Ave. (south of Queen St. E.). The fourth location for five months (Saturday night) was at St. John Norway Church on 470 Woodbine Ave. (north of Kingston Rd.). The fifth and present location for the last three years and seven months has been at the Beaches United Church.

The group has always held its open meeting on Tuesday nights. The meeting used to start at 8:30 p.m. until the time was changed to 8 p.m. in April 1999. In July 2009, a rotating step and tradition discussion meeting on Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. was started.

At first, the 7th Tradition basket was short of money to pay the rent. After the meeting, group members with some sobriety would take up a silent collection at the back of the room. Today, the group contributes to the four entities of AA: GTA Intergroup, District 22, Area 83 & GSO.

Currently, the Beaches group has 80 members who come from a large cross-



section of life and with different views. There is a lot of stability, calmness, serenity, maturity and great support for women. We welcome newcomers and visitors from other groups.

The Beaches Group 70th Anniversary open meeting will be chaired by the longest sober member of the group. A special guest speaker will share their experience, strength and hope. Join us in this celebration on Tuesday, December 12. ☺

**Eddy G.
Beaches Group**



My near-death experience: Part I

By Kathleen M.

My apartment is a compact but comfortable two-bedroom on the ninth floor of a large building in Ottawa. My mother has been here for about a month but I'm not counting. She came to help look after my infant daughter because I was "distressed" for several months. I didn't know it then but the events that are about to take place over the next 36 hours would have a profound effect on the way I perceive my existence for the rest of my days.



Day 1: Saturday, 1991. 3:30 p.m. - "I feel glorious!" I'm having my third or maybe my fourth glass of white wine in a cheap but fancy-looking glass. Those guys working on that balcony probably think I'm hot. My inner mind-self is awake. "This outfit looks so sexy on me and it's fabulous!" I'm hollering and I am not aware of caring about anything but the intoxicated feeling. My inner mind-self fades away.

Day 2: Sunday, 1991. 5:30 a.m. - "Take these!" orders the large female officer. I'm vaguely aware that she is wearing an RCMP uniform. The pills were tiny and white and there was a bunch. Wow, she's giving me pills! My inner mind-self is joyful. I use the washroom because she tells me to and it doesn't occur to me to argue. When I'm finished I go look at myself in the mirror. What the hell? Oh no! What the... "What happened? What happened to me?" I ask the officer cautiously. My short, curly blond hair and my new clothes are covered in what appears to be green paint in the process of drying.

"Never mind, you don't need to worry about that right now." Oh, ok. My inner mind-self is worried. The cop takes me by the elbow and leads me down a corridor.

What the hell is happening? Where am I? Why is this cop here and where is she taking me? My heart is pounding and I can hear it in my head. My blood is racing through my veins and I feel pins and needles in my skin. What's going on? My inner mind-self is questioning but then fades away.

1:30 p.m. - The music is playing softly in the background and it is familiar but I can't remember its name. This is a fancy joint. I wonder why nobody's here. My inner mind-self is barely audible. It's foggy in this place but nobody's smoking and nobody's here. I'm on my second or maybe my third glass of white wine and I don't care about the glass. "You need to come with me now, your next flight is ready to leave," says a strange lady as she helps me to my feet. What...next flight? My inner mind-self is confused and fades away.

4:00 p.m. - The seat is uncomfortable and I don't want to sit still. I am angry. There is a lady beside me I don't know and something is wrong with her. The steward is taking her out of her seat and they take her down the aisle away from me. Her bag is at my feet and I look inside and see a bottle with large white chalk-like pills. I quickly open it and eat them all. "I want

to see the pilot!" I yell at the top of my lungs. "What the hell is going on? I want to see the pilot now!" I scream and then get up from my seat and kick the cockpit door twice before someone grabs me and plops me back in my seat securing my seatbelt. What the hell! My inner mind-self is freaking out, then quickly fades away.

4:45 p.m. - The plane has landed and is sitting on the tarmac. It doesn't seem at all strange to me that they tell me I can disembark first. This is weird. Where am I now? I am staggering down the corridor and then I see them. Darth Vader. Four of them all in black! I am terrified and adrenaline kicks in and I have super energy and I run. I run right through them and I am still running, running. It's getting brighter and I feel like I am floating, gone.

4:51 p.m. - I am floating, hovering at the tall ceiling of the airport. Below me and slightly to the right I can see someone who is me on the gurney. There are several people doing things to me. They appear to be yelling at each other but I don't hear anything. I notice the big space around me and that I am stuck. I can't get past the ceiling.

(Continued on page 3...)

masthead & wordsearch

BETTER TIMES is published monthly for AA members in the Greater Toronto Area.

234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 202
Toronto, Ontario M4P 1K5
Telephone: 416-487-5591
Fax: 416-487-5855
TTY: 416-487-5062
Email: bettertimes@aatoronto.org
Website: www.aatoronto.org

Editorial committee:

Chair - Chris C.
Editor-in-Chief - Maija P.
Assistant Editor - Jana S.
Secretary - Tim S.
Layout Editor - Lisa T.

Opinions expressed in BETTER TIMES are those of the authors and do not 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.

How to reach us:

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 by mail, fax or email. Only signed submissions with a means of contact will be accepted. Your anonymity will be protected. For subscriptions, please call Alex at 416-487-8110 or subscribe at www.aatoronto.org.

Call for submissions:

The BETTER TIMES publication strives to offer its readership the voice of the Toronto AA community. Your article submissions are a vital part of the BETTER TIMES publication and allow you to share your experience, strength and hope with your fellows.

Submissions should be between 200 and 500 words and may be made online at www.aatoronto.org or emailed to bettertimes@aatoronto.org

To contact the committees, please email:

Accessibility: accessibility@aatoronto.org
Archives: archives@aatoronto.org
BETTER TIMES: bettertimes@aatoronto.org
Communications: communications@aatoronto.org
Correctional Facilities: corrections@aatoronto.org

Cooperation with the Professional Community: cpc@aatoronto.org
Finance: financechair@aatoronto.org
Ontario Regional Conference: orc@aatoronto.org
Public Information: pi@aatoronto.org
12th Step: 12step@aatoronto.org

DON'T GET BAFFLED WORD SEARCH



- | | | | |
|------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| ALBERTA | MANITOBA | NOVA SCOTIA | VANCOUVER |
| BRITISH COLUMBIA | MAPLE LEAF | ONTARIO | VICTORIA |
| CARIBOU | MONTREAL | OTTAWA | WINNIPEG |
| EDMONTON | MOUNTIES | QUEBEC | YELLOWKNIFE |
| HOCKEY | NEW BRUNSWICK | TORONTO | YUKON |

sharing

Step 11 recovery

Once I stopped drinking, I suffered with my obsessive mind. It only took a few days for the physical craving for alcohol to subside but my obsessive mind took over, which is why I needed recovery. The best gift I have learned through my eight years in AA, is that no matter what problems I'm facing, the solution is always inside.

I used to medicate my thoughts away and ran from them. I was victimized by my obsessions. My recovery and eleventh step work has helped me learn how to deal with my obsessive mind. It's a daily journey to let go of my will and let my higher power be the master of my mind.

My thoughts are like wild monkeys, swinging from branches, jumping through trees. I fixate on and ruminate about myself or other people, places and things. This monkey mind runs riot, spinning my thoughts over and over, trying to fix or solve problems, fantasizing and dramatizing. It's wild and exhausting, cunning and baffling.

The past and the future often cause me

grief and anxiety. I experienced traumatizing events early in life: I witnessed a mass shooting and I was in a plane crash. I have suffered from abandonment trauma. I can feel haunted by fears when I am triggered by day-to-day events. Even when asleep, my dreams cause me anxiety so I often wake up feeling tired and miserable.

Practicing meditation helps me give myself over to my Higher Power's unconditional love. Prayer, or asking for help, calms and opens my mind to the Great Unknown. Surrendering this way brings me into the present moment, into today. Then I feel serene, free from my obsessive thoughts because I'm no longer alone. I have activated the Source of all Creativity to help me and I feel that power switching on like a light so everything looks brighter and, as if by magic, my monkey mind is calm and beautifully creative, ready to serve me.

Usually, I start my meditations asking my higher power for the willingness to be guided. I thank my higher power and ask for help to let go, relax and feel grateful.



I try to watch my thoughts without any attachment to them – as if lying on my back, watching the clouds in the sky.

I can pick and choose what works for me when I meditate. Repeating a mantra or a prayer out loud or internally gives me peace. I can focus on breathing, stretching in yoga positions or just lying back comfortably. Going for a walk and focusing on being in the moment fuse my spirit with the Great Outdoors.

I am grateful to be living a Spiritual life with tools I have learned in twelve step recovery, one day at a time. ☺

Holly S., Fellowship group

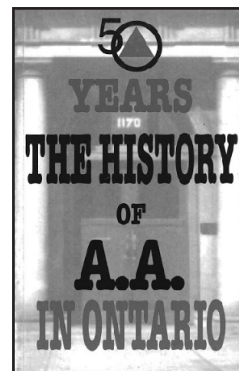
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE YOUR TORONTO AREA GROUP FEATURED IN AN UPCOMING ISSUE OF BETTER TIMES?

Contact us
bettertimes@aatoronto.org

MEDALLIONS

Paul W.	25	Sunnyside	Oct. 19
Joyce S.	35	St. Clement's	Oct. 25
Jill J.	25	Markland Wood	Oct. 26
Atul D.	5	Erin Mills	Oct. 30
Chloee B.	1	Richmond Hill	Nov. 3
Mert G.	5	Bloodale	Nov. 5
Tim K.	25	Richmond Hill	Nov. 10
Paulo M.	2	Streetsville Action	Nov. 15
Don H.	10	Richmond Hill	Nov. 17
John H.	25	Beaches	Nov. 21
Sue C.	10	Leslie	Nov. 25
Tommy T.	1	Leslie	Nov. 25
Steve I.	5	Leslie	Nov. 25
Mark J.	10	Leslie	Nov. 25
Tom P.	25	Leslie	Nov. 25
Cheryl A.	1	New Anchor	Nov. 30

Due to ongoing submissions, this list may not be current. For the latest information, please visit www.aatoronto.org



50 Years: The History of AA in Ontario is for sale at the Literature Department at 234 Eglinton Avenue for \$10.

This book was produced in 1993 by the Archives Committee of Toronto Intergroup, known today as the GTA Intergroup. It's a great gift to give to a member on their anniversary.

Archives Committee meetings are held on the second Friday of each month in the boardroom at the GTA Intergroup Office at 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 202, Toronto.

WANTED: Old books, brochures, flyers, photographs, CDs, DVDs and other materials from AA in Ontario. To donate AA and GTA archival items to the GTA Archives, please contact the GTA Archivist Eddy G. at 416-536-7536.

A message from the ORC

In 1995, I was just a few weeks into the program when a group of women I had met invited me to attend the Ontario Regional Conference (ORC). I had no idea what this was but gladly accepted – I was terribly lonely and was excited for the company. As I was still in a fog, I didn't know what to expect.

When I arrived at the ORC late Friday afternoon, I was overwhelmed by the number of people at the event. We started the meetings in the usual fashion, saying the Serenity Prayer, and ended the meeting holding hands and saying the Lord's Prayer. It was overwhelming, exciting, exhilarating and terrifying all at the same time.


At some point that weekend, Patti O. got up to share her experience strength and hope. At first, all I could see was how different she was from me – older (probably the same age I am now), with gray scraggly hair. And she was missing a few teeth.

At the beginning of her talk, she made a joke about drinking perfume and I was pretty much done. I wanted out! But as she continued to share, my ears opened up just enough to hear her story. She began sharing her experience with the 12 steps. I will never forget what she shared about Step 3. She said she didn't hang around with the people who debate who and what God is. She hangs around with the people who just do it – and how you do Step 3 is you do the rest of the steps.

I don't know why that penetrated my brain that day, but it did. And it became a cornerstone of my program.

Today, I think back on that time fondly. It is just one of reasons I love the ORC. Every year I have attended the ORC, there has been at least one speaker that has spoken to my heart and left a mark on me. This year, it is a privilege to be on the ORC and assist in putting on



this amazing conference. So that maybe someone else will hear a little gem that will help them on their sobriety journey. 

**Lisa W., Graphics Co-ordinator,
2018 ORC Committee**

Letter from the Editor

Greetings,

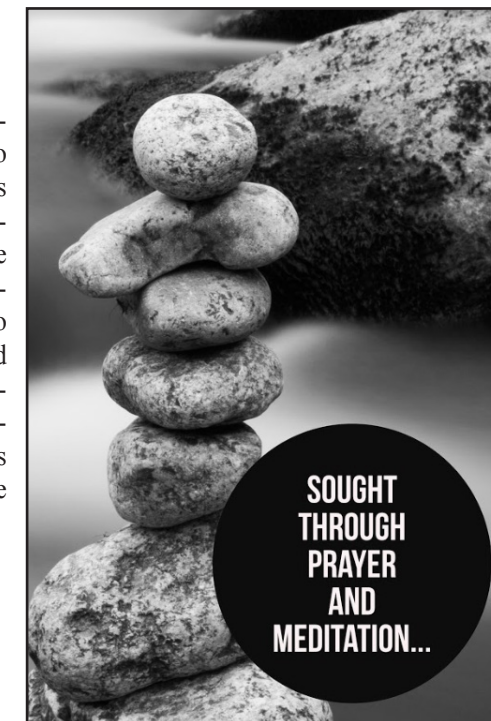
I hope you enjoyed last month's Gratitude edition (in colour!) and if you threw some extra change in the 7th basket to keep your group contributing to self-support and distributions down the triangle, we are grateful.

Holiday celebrations and candlelight are soon upon us so please go to www.aatoronto.org to submit your group's party details or send me an email at bettertimes@aatoronto.org and we will be sure to include it in the December issue!

November represents prayer, meditation, attraction, rather than promotion and personal

anonymity in step and tradition eleven. Constant contact with everything from my HP, to my home group, to my family and friends is very important to this alcoholic. I try to practice it every day. On a personal level, one must make every effort to preserve anonymity by not shouting recovery in program to the world and its many platforms but instead trying to lead by example in service, by sharing at meetings and participating in sponsorship. None of us are the face of Alcoholics Anonymous or AA PR representatives; we are just trying to stay sober.

Yours in love and service,
Maija, Editor-in-Chief



My near-death experience: Part I

(...continued from front page)

I am focused and watching them put pads on my chest. I see my body react with a jump when they shock me but nothing happens. They are preparing to do it again, and I am watching, gone.


5:35 p.m. - I am someplace else now. "Welcome back, Kathleen. We are going to have to pump your stomach." A strange nurse says to me. No way! My inner mind-self is hoping they will show pity on my sorry, sad state of affairs. "That hurt's! And it's been too long! Can't you just give me the charcoal?" I ask. The nurse agrees. Thank God.

My inner mind-self is beginning to feel relaxation. I begin drinking the charcoal and drift off in sedated sleep.

Day 3: Monday. 1991. 7:30 a.m. - Where am I? I feel like hell. Now what is happening? My inner mind-self is

screaming at me. I am in a wheelchair and an orderly man dressed in white is pushing me down a hallway, through a large set of doors. I lift my head to look around. My head weighs a ton! I have no strength. I see what appear to be medical personnel and I ask "Where am I?" The orderly says "Savannas Hospital Port St. Lucie, you are in Florida, USA" oh, what? My inner mind-self is confused and trying to force memory to come back but it's no use. My body is stiff and hurts everywhere and my arms have bandages from IV medicine being administered sometime that I can't recall. I painfully adjust myself in my wheelchair and sit up to examine myself further. Then I see it. "What happened to me? What is all this?" I demand from anyone who is listening.

My new clothes I was wearing on the balcony at my apartment are wrecked. There is what appears to be bright green coloured paint that has dried all over me. What...? Shit! Do I even want to know?

Do I care? My inner mind-self is upset and scared. "Nobody seems to know what happened. You were brought here in this condition. There is nothing in your records." Says the orderly and he passes me off to a nurse. The nurse says "You are here for treatment for dual-disorder and you will have to stay in this room for a week to detox. We will check on you every hour and take your vitals." Wow, how did this all happen? Who arranged this? Did I do this? My inner mind-self is trying to put it all together to make sense of it but cannot. I am bewildered by the events and nothing is clear so I decide to make myself comfortable in my room and try to sleep. I lay down on the single hospital bed. At least I am safe now. Nothing makes any sense and I don't want to think anymore. I just want to sleep. Just like that my inner mind-self shuts off and I peacefully sleep. 

To be continued in the next issue of BETTER TIMES.

concepts corner

Concept five

Throughout our world services structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.

Newcomers to AA’s General Service Conference are often surprised at the pains taken by the presiding officer to make sure the minority has a second opportunity to present its views. Even after extensive debate on an issue, followed by a vote in which a “substantial unanimity” is reached, those opposed are polled individually to see if they wish to speak further to their minority view. In fact, numerous instances can be cited in which this minority view is so compelling the Conference has then reversed itself.

This is AA’s “Right of Appeal” in action and Bill says the same principle should apply to meetings of our area committees, trustee committees and boards. On an issue of grave importance, the minority has the actual duty of presenting its views. This “Right of Appeal” recognizes that minorities frequently can be right; that even when they are in error they still perform a most valuable service when they compel a thorough-going debate on important issues. The well-heard minority, therefore, is our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority.

“Trusted servants,” according to Bill, “do for the groups what the groups cannot or should not do for themselves.” And in exercising their “Right of Decision” (see Concept III), trusted servants are almost always “a small but truly qualified minority” — whether in the form of area committees, staffs, boards or even the General Service Conference itself. It is incumbent upon them, therefore, in their own meetings, to pay special deference to the minority voice.

This Concept also warns us of “the tyranny of the majority” and points out that in A.A., a simple majority is seldom sufficient basis for a decision. That’s why we usually require at least a two-thirds majority. Lacking this, it is preferable to delay the decision; or in the case of an election following the “Third Legacy Procedure,” to “go to the hat.” (See Service Manual, Chapter I.)

The “Right of Appeal” also permits any person in the service structure, whether paid or volunteer, to petition for redress of a personal grievance. He or she can complain directly to the General Service Board, without prejudice or fear of reprisal. ⚠

*Copyright 1986 by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. All rights reserved.



*THE HILL HOLIDAY PARTY
THURSDAY
DECEMBER 14TH, 2017
8:30 - 9:30PM
SPECIAL MEETING FORMAT
FOLLOWED-BY
THEIR “FAMOUS”
POTLUCK BUFFET &
FELLOWSHIP
ALL ARE MOST WELCOME!*

info & events

ANNOUNCEMENTS

District 2 Annual Service Day
Saturday, November 4, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Church of Christ
750 Clark Boulevard, Brampton
Refreshments and lunch provided.

33rd Annual GTA Archives Breakfast
Sunday, November 5, 9 a.m.
Oasis Convention Centre
1036 Lakeshore Rd. E., Mississauga
Guest speaker: Don S., Bayview group
Tickets are \$25

Schomberg AA Discussion group celebrates five years!
Monday, November 6 at 7:30 p.m.
Saint Mary Magdalene Anglican Church
116 Church Street
(Wheelchair accessible)

Beverly Hills group celebrates 48 years of continuous service!
Friday, November 17, 8 p.m.
Greenborough Community Church
2000 Keele St., north of Eglinton Ave.
Food donations welcome

Church St. group: NEW HOURS
10:30 a.m. on Saturdays
(open speaker meeting)
10:30 a.m. on Sundays
(closed Steps 1, 2, 3 meeting)
The 519 Community Centre
519 Church Street

Lighthouse group: NEW HOURS
8 p.m. on Fridays
St. Peter’s Anglican Church
776 Brimley Road

Back to Basics at High Park group
High Park group is offering the Back to Basics program as part of their 8 p.m. Friday closed meetings.
Choose from Step 1, Step 2, Step 3, Steps 4-12 or Big Book discussions.
Chips for each month of sobriety in the first year given out at 8 p.m. Sunday open meetings.
St. John’s Anglican Church
288 Humberside Avenue

SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

73rd Annual Winter Season Open House is Monday, December 25
Snell Hall, St. James Centre, 65 Church Street, Toronto. North-west corner on St. James church property. Close to King subway station. Fully accessible.



All are welcome to attend, serve or enjoy the Winter Season Open House!

Service opportunities in the following areas:

Kitchen help, Food prepper,

Coffee station, Food server, Hall custodian

Greeter, Set-up, Tear-down,

Meeting support, Speaker

Pre-Event: Turkey cooker, Cookie baker (darren117@hotmail.com)

Those interested in applying for WSOH 2018 Chair are encouraged to take part this year!

Service needed within:

9:00-1:00 - December 24 Prep Day (rsvp preferred time/area - darren117@hotmail.com)

8:00 - 5:00 - December 25 Event Day (rsvp rsvp preferred time/area - darren117@hotmail.com)

Want to Contribute? The Better Times is always looking for content and would love to publish your stories! Your understanding of the Steps or Traditions, thoughts on the principles of the program or your stories of experience, strength and hope are most welcome!
Email your ideas to bettertimes@aatontario.org

