

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 - TBD
Secretary - Tim S.
Layout Editor - Lisa T.

Opinion expressed in BETTER TIMES are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Greater Toronto Area Intergroup. The editorial staff reserves 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

P	C	T	S	R	A	B	M	A	R	K	E	R	S
G	L	I	T	T	E	R	E	N	E	C	K	R	C
L	A	S	S	S	A	P	M	O	C	E	M	O	L
H	S	U	D	R	A	O	B	K	C	A	L	B	E
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M	J	O	U	R	N	A	L	N	O	A	A	N	A
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ERASER
CALCULATOR
CRAYONS
JOURNAL
SHARPENER
BLACKBOARD

GLITTER
GLUE STICK
PENCILS
MARKERS
COMPASS
SCISSORS

LUNCH BOX
HOMEWORK
BOOKS
PENS
BACKPACK

Fear and serenity

During active addiction, I felt alone and without hope. I had no faith in anyone, anything or any part of me to live normally. Going through each day with my selfish attitude and idea that nothing else mattered, only gave the darkness strength to remain present.

After 20 years, I came to a sudden realization that there must be another way for me to live. I slowly allowed my physical self to come into the rooms not being sure if my mind would follow. But after a few weeks of remaining active and attending meetings, it happened. I found a sponsor, got a Big Book and took action. I got myself into detox.

Immediately following those 14 days, I went straight into a 28-day treatment program. It was during these six weeks that my connection to MY Higher Power grew stronger. My belief that my Higher Power will do for me what I cannot do for myself, if only I would pray for what I need, was reaffirmed through the love, support and patience I was receiving through my wife, my sponsor, the fellowship from MY Higher Power. I am grateful to receive this and now live a life of honesty, open-mindedness, willingness, love, patience, tolerance and humility.

These two poems were written during my 28 days in treatment. I'll tell you this: FEAR

was written quite easily because it had been my closest friend for so many years. However, SERENITY was written over a period of five weeks because I had yet to fully understand what it meant or how it would feel. I suppose, SERENITY can be written in different words with each new day I surrender and live outside myself.

FEAR
I HAD A FEAR,
A FEAR THAT WAS ONCE LESS FAR,
AND OH SO VERY NEAR.
I ONCE HELD ONTO IT NEAR TO ME, VERY CLOSE.
IT WAS A FEAR, THAT OF WHICH I ALLOWED NO ONE TO KNOW.
I KEPT IT ALL, WITHIN MYSELF,
SHARED IT WITH NO ONE.
I KEPT IT HIDDEN,
HIGH AND DEEP UPON MY SHELF.
THIS FEAR I THOUGHT,
WAS IT THE ONLY THING REAL?
TO EVERYONE ELSE, I THOUGHT,
IT WAS NOT A BIG DEAL.
IT ANSWERED TO NOT JUST ONE NAME.
YET IT ANSWERED, EVEN WHEN NOT CALLED UPON, JUST THE SAME.
ALL IT EVER WANTED
WAS TO PLAY A DEADLY GAME.
NEVER ONCE DID IT GIVE ME A CHANCE,
TO WIN AT ALL COST, IT
WOULD KEEP ME DEEP IN A TRANCE.
IT WANTED TO PLAY A GAME,
TO PROVE FOR ME IT WAS THE BEST.
PLAY UNTIL MY DEATH,
FOR ME TO LAY NOT IN PEACE,
OR AT REST.

SERENITY
FREE OF THE CHAINS THAT BOUND MY SPIRIT,
I NOW FEEL LIKE THERE ARE NO LIMITS.
ONCE I FELT LIKE I WAS SURROUNDED BY DARKNESS,
UNTIL THE DAY CAME WHEN I SAW THE LIGHT,
THE LIGHT OF SUCH AMAZING BRIGHTNESS.
LOVE, PATIENCE AND TOLERANCE ARE PART OF WHAT FILL ME NOW,
THIS NEW WAY OF FEELING EACH TIME I BREATHE, OPEN MY EYES,
I CAN ONLY SCREAM WOW!
I SHARE MYSELF AND LET OTHERS IN WHEN THEY NEED A PLACE TO LET IT ALL OUT,
I STAY CONNECTED AND STAY AS MY TRUE SELF,
THIS IS WHAT LIVING IN THE LIGHT IS ALL ABOUT.
I FOUND THIS NEW WAY TO LIVE MY LIFE.
YES, IT WILL ON DAYS HAVE ITS MOMENTS:
SOME WILL BE A TREMENDOUS STRIFE,
OTHERS WILL SIMPLY FEEL LIKE I'M BEING CUT UP WITH A KNIFE.
IN TIMES LIKE THESE I SAY MY PRAYER,
TO THE POWER GREATER THAN ME,
BECAUSE THAT IS WHERE AND HOW I HAVE FOUND A WAY TO BE FREE.

Volunteering at the ORC

I love the Ontario Regional Conference (ORC). I was about four months sober at my first, sharing a room with my sisters and my Alateen nieces. It was fun and inspiring, overwhelming and heart-wrenching, and I loved every minute and swore I would always be part of it.

In 2005, I volunteered at the World Conference, greeting at the bottom of a busy escalator in red pants and a white T-shirt. We

were told to wear red and white so attendees would recognize us. I was proud and happy and overwhelmed (again) with gratitude.

In 2010, I started volunteering in the registration room, helping people fill in forms, typing up registrations, printing off badges and stuffing them in holders, directing the line-up and greeting. It was so much fun. The few hours of work flew by.

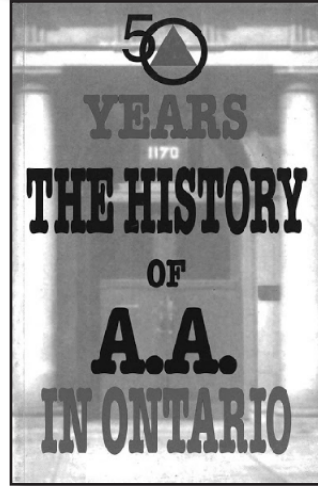
After a number of years, I was asked to put a crew together to cover a registration shift. As captain, my responsibility spread to recruit and manage volunteers who would stay on task in the face of hundreds of friendly and distracting AAs passing through the room, chattering, questioning and rushing off to the next meeting.

(continues on page 8...)

DID YOU KNOW... that in Sept. 1948, the Serenity Prayer was first printed in an issue of the Grapevine?

MEDALLIONS			
Eric S.	45	Markland Wood	Aug. 17
Jim H.	25	Hill Group	Aug. 17
Meredith N.	1	Beaches Group	Aug. 22
Hartley L.	5	Markland Wood	Aug. 24
Karyn P.	30	St. Clements	Aug. 30
Rebecca F.	5	Anniversary Group	Sept. 6
Lee-Anne M.	30	Hill Group	Sept. 7
Oleg S.	1	New Anchor Group	Sept. 7
Tammy S.	1	Sisters in Sobriety	Sept. 13
Kim P.	1	New Anchor Group	Sept. 14
Ben W.	55	Edwards Gardens	Sept. 15
Maryanne D.	1	Sisters in Sobriety	Sept. 27

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.



Back to the repository

with GTA Archivist Eddy G.

Recent items donated to the GTA Archives:

- One copy of The AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service by Bill W. 2014-2015 Edition. Donated by District 22 Scarborough.
- 309 flyers and programs from round-ups, conventions and conferences from 1980 to 2017 from the GTA and Ontario Areas. Donated by Jackie M., Mississauga Group.
- Two CDs: Oral History of Audrey G., Whitby Group, Oct. 25, 2007, and Oral History of Dorthea McL., Lighthouse Group, 2006. Donated by Gary C., Stonewall Group.
- Three prayer cards of Billy W. Wanstead Group, Fifth Tradition Group, who passed away on June 18, 2017, with 30 years of sobriety. Billy will be missed. Donated by Lynn E., Fifth Tradition Group.
- Two DVDs, celebration of life photos, prayer cards, AA talk and music concert of Darlene M., Streetsville Group, who passed away on Nov. 15, 2016 with 27 years of sobriety. Darlene will be missed.
- Two DVDs, prayer cards, photos & AA talk of Elaine H., Streetsville Group, who passed away on Nov. 22, 2016, with 22 years of sobriety. Elaine will be missed.
- Two DVDs, photos and AA talk of Randy B., Erin Mills Group, who passed away on July 4, 2015 with 33 years of sobriety. Randy will be missed.
- Two DVDs, photos and AA talk of Maureen N., Streetsville Group, who passed away with 49 years of sobriety. She will be missed. All eight DVDs were donated by Joan S., Streetsville Group.



TELEPHONE GREETERS
NEEDED

Phone training is now the first Sunday of every month.

To book an appointment, please call 416-487-5591 or contact the 12th Step Committee.

DID YOU KNOW... that in Sept. 1940, the Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease reviewed the AA Big Book and wrote that "of the inner meaning of alcoholism there is hardly a word"?

Letter from the Editor

"Oh, the times, they are a-changin'" – September is one of my favourite months of the year! There is an energy still lingering from summer but change is in air in the city, marking a metamorphosis for all.

Change is an interesting challenge for the alcoholic practising the principles in all affairs. Adjusting to the uncontrollable and sometimes uncomfortable – the kids going back to school, the weather changing, less daylight and more traffic – can be balanced by the thrill of the leaves changing, pride in our children's accomplishments, making a renewed acceptance to a service commitment or more meetings and possibly taking on a new sponsee. (September sees a spike in newcomer meeting attendance and treatment facility admissions.*)

* A.A. WorldService, 2003.



BETTER TIMES is looking for content and would love to publish your stories!
Please email your ideas to bettertimestimes@aatoronto.org

Our ninth month represents the themes of amendment in step 9 and trusted service in tradition 9.

"Clearing the wreckage of the past" and the freedom that is promised in a thorough step 9 brings a change in our behaviour and attitude. It really must because otherwise, amendments are just empty words and commitments, right?

Tradition 9 asks us to be guided by the spiritual principles of the program and be governed by no one person or hierarchy begging the question: "How will anything get done if no one is in charge?" Well, if we follow the rationale behind tradition 9, things get done with the election and selection of trusted servants like you.

Whether it is cleaning coffee cups, attending a district meeting as your group GSR or handing out medallions at a meeting, you have been trusted to do the job and do it to the best of your ability. We must stand back and watch you do it well!

How do these things apply in the life outside of the rooms? One could treat September (and all months, for that matter) as a time to step back, let the right folks do the job, honour your commitments and do what you say you are going to do. A tall but liberating order to be sure!

Yours in love and service,

Maija P.
Editor-in-Chief

Mississauga Fall Roundup

Itinerary:

- 8 a.m.: Registration & coffee
- 9 a.m.: Program starts
- 2:30 p.m.: Closing

Featured speakers:

- April B., AA from Rochester, NY
- Marie P., Al-Anon from Toronto, Ont.
- Wayne F., AA from Toronto, Hill Group
- Tommy T., AA from Staten Island, NY
- Alateen Speaker: TBA

50/50 draw tickets will be sold at the event. \$20 tickets include hot and cold buffet lunch, morning timbits, all-day coffee and tea.

For more information, please visit www.MississaugaFallRoundUp.org
Saturday, September 30, 2017
Vic Johnston Community Centre
335 Church Street, Mississauga
Plenty of free parking Accessible by transit
Close to Streetsville

DID YOU KNOW... that on Sept. 5, 1935. Hank P., New York Group's AA No.2, takes his last drink (story in Big Book "The Unbeliever")?

concepts corner

The right of decision

To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of AA – the conference, the general service board and its service corporations, staff, committees and executives – with a traditional right of decision.

What does the right of decision mean? Is it granted at all levels of service in my home group, my district and my area?

Our trusted servants are not just messengers. They have the right to decide how they will interpret and apply their own authority and responsibility to each particular matter as it arises. The fellowship must have trust in their trusted servants.

Does our delegate know our area's conscience on matters of importance to us?

For example, the area votes that a particular AA pamphlet is unnecessary. Our delegate has heard this, yet while at the general ser-

The Right of Decision




AT ALL LEVELS OF SERVICE

vice conference, hears information discussed that was not available to us or a debate that convinced them that the production of the pamphlet would benefit AA as a whole. Upon reflection, the delegate decides, using the right of decision, to vote for the production of the pamphlet. It is then incumbent upon the delegate to report back to the area why the decision was made to vote differently than how the area voted.

The right of decision also applies to the general service and intergroup representatives when they attend their monthly meetings.

Bill W. said that “our conference delegates are primarily the servants of AA as they should (...) cast their votes (...) according to the best dictates of their own judgment and conscience at that time.”

There are 12 spiritual principles for the 12 steps, 12 traditions and concepts. The spiritual principle for concept 3 is trust.

This concept can be practiced daily. We serve by acting on our conscience through our right of decision and we trust others when they exercise their right of decision. 

Joyce S., St. Clement's
Panel 65 delegate,
Area 83 Eastern Ontario

DID YOU KNOW?
that on Sept. 13, 1937, Florence R. is the first woman in AA in New York (story in Big Book “A Feminine Victory”)?

To the newcomer — Welcome to AA!


I came into AA at a younger age many moons ago but I didn't like what I heard and didn't stay in the program. I was a dry drunk for three years. “Dry drunk” means not drinking but exhibiting and living with the old behaviours that were not treated through participating in the program. Being miserable. I went out, which means I went back to drinking, and I was out for a long time. My life was one of despair and lack of faith. Finally, I was ready to return to AA.

In the last seven and a half years of sobriety, I've grown emotionally, mentally and spiritually. I now have many friends and attend meetings on a daily basis. I have found that living life on life's terms, that is, accepting what is, and living the spiritual life are crucial for sobriety. According to the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, the spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it.

Stick around is what I do. I help others where and when I can. Volunteering in service allows me to have responsibility and I get to know my fellow AAers better. If you are a woman, I recommend finding a women's meeting, so that you may feel more comfortable and at ease. It's important to participate and share, to find a sponsor who has what you'd like, and to KEEP COMING BACK! It gets so much better.

There will always be challenges. And there is always a new revelation of understanding and truth; we find it in the AA literature, in the way the program works and in the recovery process. That, you can count on. It's not the same thing over and over again – that's how it was being

an active alcoholic. Life is always new and inspiring, mainly because YOU ARE NO LONGER ALONE and your Higher Power loves you.

Giving yourself the chance to heal and recover is a great gift. Please stay. And KEEP COMING BACK! 

Sara



DID YOU KNOW... that on Sept. 21, 1938, Bill W. & Hank P. form Works Publishing Co. to raise money to write and publish Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's Big Book?

info & events

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rexdale United Group's 45th anniversary
Thursday, September 14 at 8 p.m.
St. Benedict's Church
2194 Kipling Avenue

Scarborough District 22 39th annual service day
MY SERVICE - MY SOBRIETY
Saturday, September 16, 2017
from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Oakridge Community Centre
63 Pharmacy Avenue
(East of Victoria Park station)
Free parking, fully accessible;
signers welcome.

Free lunch & coffee.
Guest speakers, panel & fellowship.
Information on A.A. service:
Accessibility • Archives • Corrections
Grapevine • Public information
Self-support • Treatment facilities
Co-op with professional community
Social gathering 8 p.m. to 12 a.m.

Tickets are \$10 from your group GSR

St. Clements Group's 65th Anniversary
Wednesday, September 20 at 8 p.m.
St. Clements Church
70 St Clements Avenue
(Yonge & Eglinton)

In service to Alcoholics Anonymous
& still-suffering Alcoholic
Main speaker • Finger foods
Commemorative cards
“We absolutely insist on enjoying life”

Danforth Group's 70th anniversary
September 28 at 8 p.m.
Holy Name Catholic Church
Gough Avenue
(on the Danforth, west of Pape Ave.)

West York Group's 60th Anniversary
Sunday, October 1 at 10:30 a.m.
Royal Canadian Legion
1050 Weston Rd.
(south of Eglinton)

DID YOU KNOW... that in Sept. 1938, Agnes, sister of Fitz M. (AA No. 8 & story in Big Book “Our Southern Friend”), lends Bill W. and Hank P. a thousand dollars to help get them through the Big Book project?

