

St. Clement's Group

Personal strength through group unity enthusiasm and energy are hallmarks of St. Clement's group, which is based in North Toronto and celebrated its 65th anniversary last month. Diversity of membership is one of the group's inherent strengths for newcomers or long-timers, young or old, seeking a sober and fulfilling way of life.

Early awareness

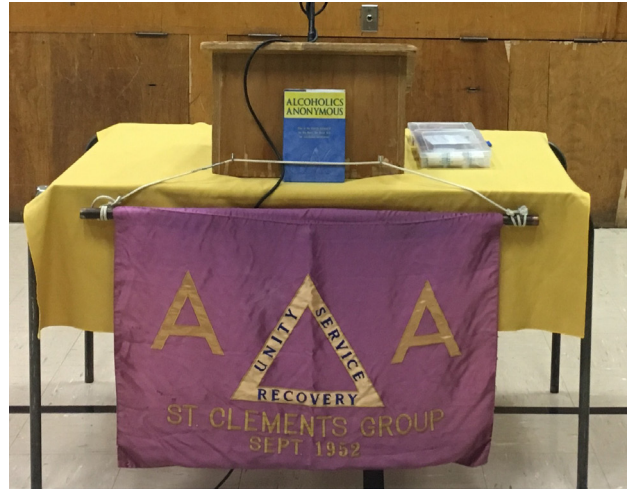
In 1952, the group was brought about by sharing over coffee in true fellowship fashion! With the input of long-timers, such as the late Al B., Joe C. and John D., St. Clement's was started to help meet the rapidly growing need for AA during the post-WWII era.

In the '50s and '60s, St. Clement's played an active role with Toronto Intergroup and the District in raising public awareness of the disastrous consequences of alcoholism. In those years, even government recognition was minimal: municipal recovery resources consisted of a handful of hospital emergency beds and a few charitable facilities. Toronto's first detox facility for alcoholics was opened on Knox Street in 1967 with the Fellowship assistance of Alcoholics Anonymous. Municipal funding for treating alcoholism was not forthcoming until 1973, enabling the provision of more treatment centres and recovery facilities around Toronto.

As St. Clement's membership grew, so did the meeting spaces, moving from the attic to the basement gymnasium and, later, to the current ground-floor auditorium. The support of St. Clement's church has been invaluable. In due course, it became apparent that a second meeting was needed on another night in the form of a closed discussion.

Unity and service

Personal recovery relies on AA unity and service, as expressed in our fellow-



ship's traditions. Accordingly, the success of any group may be gauged by its commitment to service and St. Clement's is a good example. Throughout its history, the group has never failed to focus on our primary purpose while welcoming a diverse range of alcoholics. Over the years, St. Clement's has welcomed men, women, members of the LGBTQ+ community, atheists, agnostics, young or old: all those seeking a secure haven of understanding for anyone who feels they may have a drinking problem.

St. Clement's members have played key roles in volunteering their energies to Toronto Intergroup and general service activities. In fact, members of St. Clement's convinced Toronto intergroup to accept the first LGBTQ-friendly meeting into the directory long before GSO produced the welcoming pamphlet.

Moreover, group events enhancing the spirit of joy and freedom for all members and their families have featured successes, such as the annual Christmas meetings, offering food, fellowship and festivity. These events often included a jovial Santa Claus in the shape of Rae C. Members opened their homes on New Year's eve, offering more laughter, food and festivity in the spirit of the fellowship. Coffee and companionship have

always been a feature of St. Clement's, along with personal hospitality.

Innovative yet secure

In the '70s and '80s, St. Clement's membership grew steadily. The group recognized periods of sobriety in the form of medallions and sobriety chips for eligible members. St. Clement's vitality is reflected in the group's innovations over past years. It was the first group in Toronto to introduce a shorter one-hour speaker format. Our monthly medallion night is a profound innovation; all milestones are celebrated on one night to recognize the power of AA and of the home group in personal sobriety – principles before personalities!

In this context and in the spirit of our fellowship, we applaud the success of St. Clement's throughout 65 years and happily look forward to the coming years of success (one day at a time!).

Anonymous

Meeting information

Wednesday at 8:00 p.m. - open
St. Clement's church
70 St Clement's Ave. (at Duplex Ave.
entrance at the south side of the church)

Monday at 8:00 p.m. - closed
Glenview Presbyterian church
1 Glenview Ave.



GRATITUDE MONTH ISSUE

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.
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 Alexx 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.

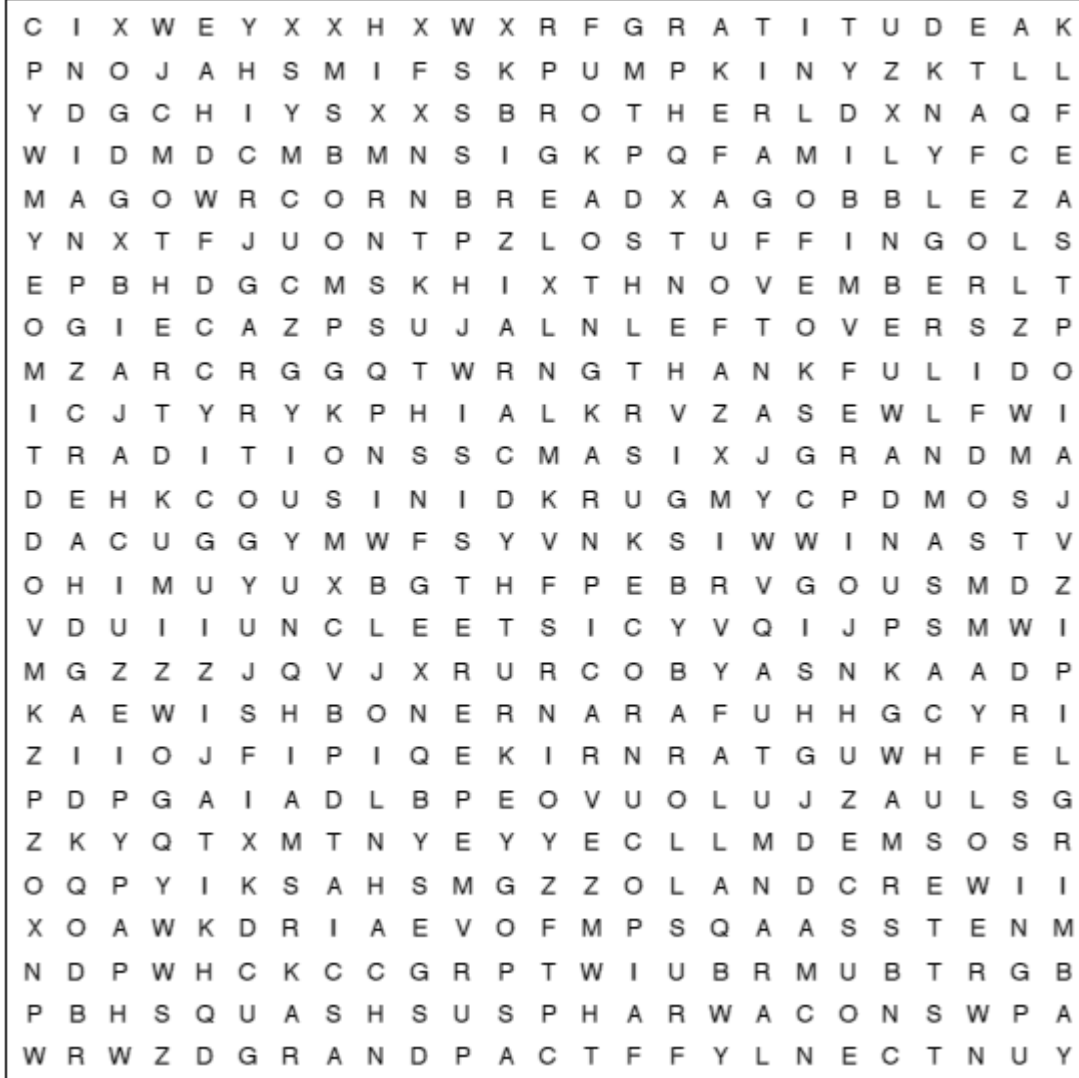
Submissions should be between 200 and 500 words and may be made online at www.aatoronto.org or emailed to bettertimes@aatoronto.org

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
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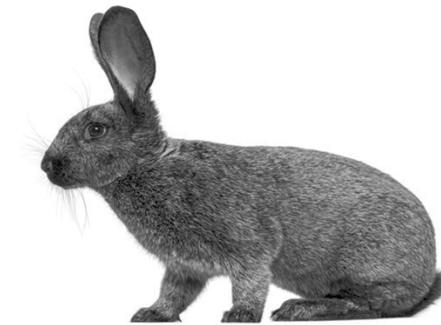
DON'T GET BAFFLED WORD SEARCH



Thanksgiving	pilgrim	pumpkin	turkey	dressing	cranberries
pilgrim	indian	autumn	pie	cornucopia	feast
mayflower	november	stuffing	rolls	cornbread	drumstick
gratitude	thankful	Massachusetts	Plymoth	squash	wishbone
yams	grandma	grandpa	uncle	aunt	cousin
family	mother	father	brother	sister	carve
gobbie	traditions	fall	leftovers	acorns	



My spiritual awakening



The Promises

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us--sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for

My name is John W. and I'm an AWESTRUCK alcoholic!

Now, why would I say that with some four years sobriety under my belt? That alone amazes me still and one day at a time, I hope to extend it. I would like to share some of my views on the spiritual aspect of recovery and the God word in my program.

The Big Book's step 3 offers some good insights to powers we don't understand but rely on daily. Such as electricity. Where does it come from? Spirituality for me now is knowing something bigger than me is there, whether I can see it clearly or not.

Most of us keep an open mind, conceptualizing our own image of a power to believe in and rely on, whether that's an old man sitting on a cloud, Brad Pitt with a beard or a magnificent ball of colourful light.

Early in my sobriety, I was walking home and saw a rabbit on the path just ahead of me. It was still and just looking straight at me. Apparently, they're all over Toronto but I had never seen one before. Perhaps, with all the ignorance and ugliness in my drinking life, the little critter had been avoiding me all those years.

I realized my new awareness and respectability was a heck of a lot better than when I was drinking in some of the finest establish-

ments back in the day. I mistakenly thought that people around me considered me to be intelligent and respected me, which gave me reason to be self-centred and selfish. I was helping them with my intellect and talent. But seeing that little rabbit, I finally came to my own awareness of something outside myself. I respected it and its survival for all those many years it went unseen.

That powerful source has been there all this time. And that's what keeps me coming back to the rooms of AA: for all the different walks of life, age ranges and our various depths of depravity that brought us together in our desperation, there's that mutual respect among most of us. And I think for the newcomer, the sceptic, the agnostic, that's what they're after too.

In my life, I'm seeing things happen that are way beyond what I was expecting and much more than I was willing to believe. It's tough to put it into words, like trying to describe a sunset to someone who cannot see. We so often try to describe the colours as best as we can. But if we look at the other attributes of a sunset – the warmth of the rays coming directly across the water, the gentleness of the breeze, the quietness of the animals suddenly – then the blind person could say "Ah, I see the sunset now, yes!"

John W., Primary Purpose

“ I knew I was an alcoholic by the way I felt sober. ”

Joe B., Alcoholics Anonymous

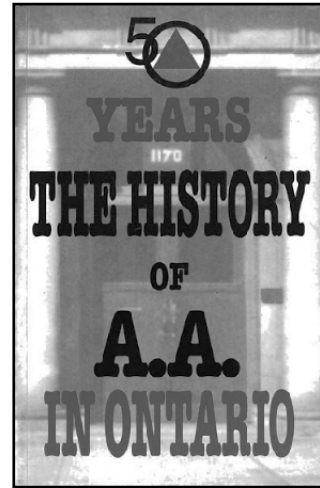
DID YOU KNOW... that on October 15, 1948, the Hill Group started at Timothy Eaton Memorial Church in Toronto?



MEDALLIONS

Ben W.	55	Thornclyff Park	Sept. 15
Loni B.	1	Keep It Simple	Sept. 17
Howie B.	35	Erin Mills	Sept. 18
Austin R.	25	The Twelve Steps	Sept. 20
Norma D.	1	Rexdale United	Sept. 21
Clark K.	5	Bayview	Sept. 24
Jim Y.	5	Erin Mills	Sept. 25
Maryanne D.	1	Sisters in Sobriety	Sept. 27
Tom M.	1	Leslie Group	Sept. 30
Rob R.	5	Leslie Group	Sept. 30
Linda J.	20	Leslie Group	Sept. 30
Anne. H.	30	K.F. Group	Sept. 30
Doug A.	10	King City	Oct. 2
Rosemary D.	20	Trial & Error Group	Oct. 4
Wally M.	30	Anniversary Group	Oct. 4
Mary M.	30	Sisters in Sobriety	Oct. 4
Patrick B.	10	Rexdale United	Oct. 5
Bill D.	20	Morning Discussion	Oct. 15
Nina L.	5	Sisters in Sobriety	Oct. 18
Joyce S.	35	St. Clement's	Oct. 25
Jill J.	25	Markland Wood	Oct. 26
Cloee B.	1	Richmond Hill Group	Nov. 3
Paolo M.	2	Streetsville Action Group	Nov. 15
Tommy T.	1	Leslie Group	Nov. 25
Steve I.	5	Leslie Group	Nov. 25
Sue C.	10	Leslie Group	Nov. 25
Mark J.	10	Leslie Group	Nov. 25
Tom P.	25	Leslie Group	Nov. 25

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 Grapevine, July 2017 donated by the Bloordale Group.

Corrections from last month's issue:

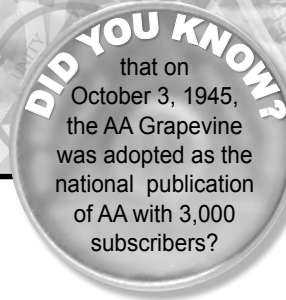
- Eight DVDs, two each of Darlene M., Elaine H., Randy B. and Maureen N. were donated by Joan S. who is a member of the Credit Valley Group, not the Streetsville Group.
- Maureen N. from Streetsville group is alive and well. Sadly, Darlene M., Elaine H. and Randy B. have passed away and with Maureen's name added to the list of names, it appeared as though Maureen had passed away as well. This was an error. I sincerely apologize for the two errors I made.

Eddy G., Archivist

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.

DID YOU KNOW... that between 1951 and 1963, the Assemblies took place during the ORC at the Royal York Hotel? All delegates and committees were elected here.



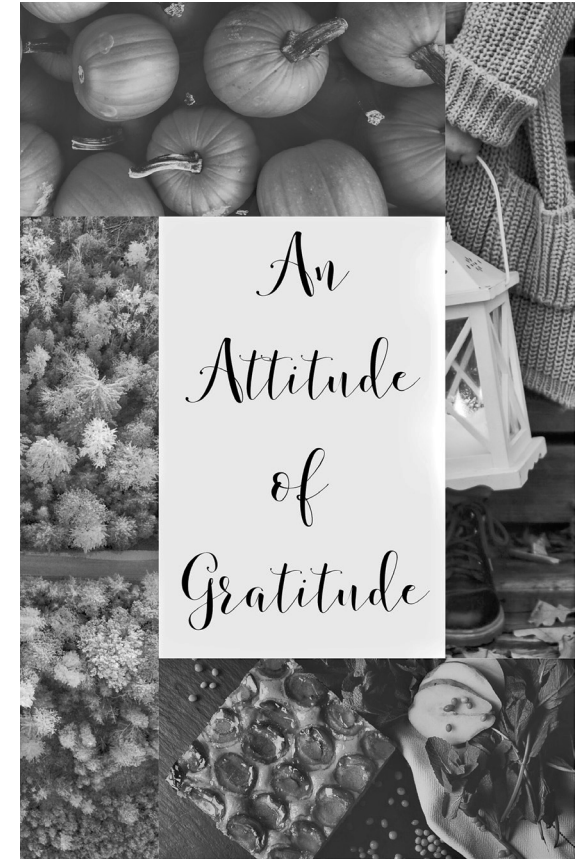
Letters from the Editors

Welcome to our October special edition of Better Times! This month, we splash out on a colour front page and dedicate the issue to one of the core principles of our program – Gratitude!

When I first came into the program and my sponsor asked me to start sending her gratitude lists every day, the idea was totally foreign to me. Sure, I “got” being thankful at Thanksgiving and being gracious when someone did something kind but did I really know how to be AND act grateful? Not in the least... After all, being in active alcoholism was “all about me!” How could I be grateful after what that this disease took from me: my job, my family & friends, my financial security, my health and my self-respect? Boy, did I have a lot to learn and I had a lot to show and practice out there in the world. I once read that “Gratitude can only be a way of life that is practised in action and deed.” Today, I must practice the principles of the program to open the door to humility and once that door is open even just a crack and on the most challenging of days, I can find many things to be grateful for.

In October, our 10th month of the year, step 10 says that “an honest regret for harms done, a genuine gratitude for blessings received and a willingness to try for better things tomorrow will be the permanent assets we shall seek.” Please enjoy our issue dedicated to Gratitude and the stories and quotes we have gathered to inspire you this month and through the year!

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



Suddenly autumn is upon us, Thanksgiving is around the corner (or past depending on when you've picked up this issue) and Gratitude Month at the Toronto Area Intergroup is here again. A lot of this issue talks about what gratitude means to individuals. I would like to take a moment to talk about what it means for an organization like this one. Do you know that local area Intergroups preceded the formation of General Service? They grew organically from need. That need still exists. We have a great website that shares information among the hundreds of groups here in the GTA. Our phone lines are active everyday with people looking for help in our Fellowship. Our Literature Department gets calls from all over Canada for supplies of books, pamphlets and medallions. The Archives keeps the histories of the activities of our groups, and roundups and conferences. All this activity provides lots of opportunities for service. Much of our work is done by members. But it is also done with capital. The funds raised in the annual Gratitude Month Campaign represent a significant proportion of the yearly operating budget.

“My part of the Seventh Tradition means so much more than just giving money to pay for the coffee...I can learn the principles of working out problems in my daily life by getting involved in the “business” of AA”. – Daily Reflections pg. 220. Our local Fellowship depends on local manpower and local capital to meet its obligations. To those groups and individuals who have contributed - a big thank-you! For those that still have to give check our website aatoronto.org to give online or check your mail for the yearly Gratitude Month flyer.

In Grateful Service,
Chris C. GTAI Communications Chair

DID YOU KNOW... that in October 1951, the Lasker Award was given to AA in San Francisco by the American Public Health association?

Concept Four

Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional “Right of Participation,” taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

The principle of “Right of Participation” is built into the General Service Conference through the Conference Charter. Voting members include delegates, trustees, directors and staff members of A.A. World Services (i.e., G.S.O.) and the A.A. Grapevine.

In the same way, the boards of these two operating entities include trustees, non-trustee directors, paid administrators and staff members as voting members.

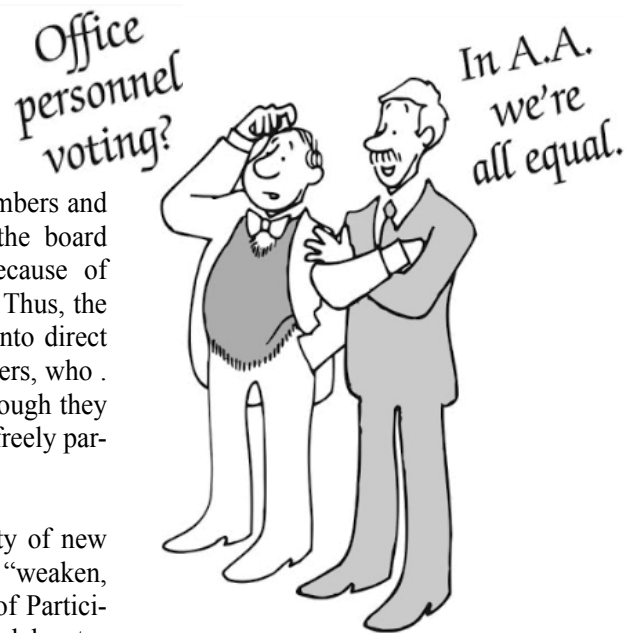
The chairperson of the General Service Board appoints non-trustee members to the standing committees to have the advantage of their expertise, and staff members serve as committee secretaries. “There are no ‘superiors,’ no ‘inferiors’ and no ‘advisers.’” New trustees on the General

Service Board and new directors of the A.A.W.S. and Grapevine boards are sometimes surprised to see paid executives, staff members and outside accountants attending the board meetings. They are invited because of A.A.’s “Right of Participation.” Thus, the trustees and directors “are put into direct communication with these workers, who . . . feel wanted and needed. Although they do not vote, these workers may freely participate.”

Bill warns against the possibility of new delegates or trustees trying to “weaken, modify or toss out” the “Right of Participation.” He cites arguments by delegates to take away the trustees’, directors’ and staff members’ vote at the Conference. “Certainly,” he says, “our trustees and service workers are not less conscientious, experienced and wise than the delegates.”

“It is vital,” he continues, “to preserve the traditional ‘Right of Participation’ in the face of every tendency to whittle it down.”

Finally, there is a spiritual reason for the “Right of Participation.” All of us desire



to belong. In A.A., no members are “second class.” The “Right of Participation” therefore reinforces Tradition Two, that no member is placed in “ultimate authority” over another. We perform our service tasks better “when we are sure we belong, when our ‘participation’ assures us we are truly the ‘trusted servants’ described in Tradition Two.”

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Ideas & Quotes on Gratitude

The first official recognition of an AA 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 AA’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.”

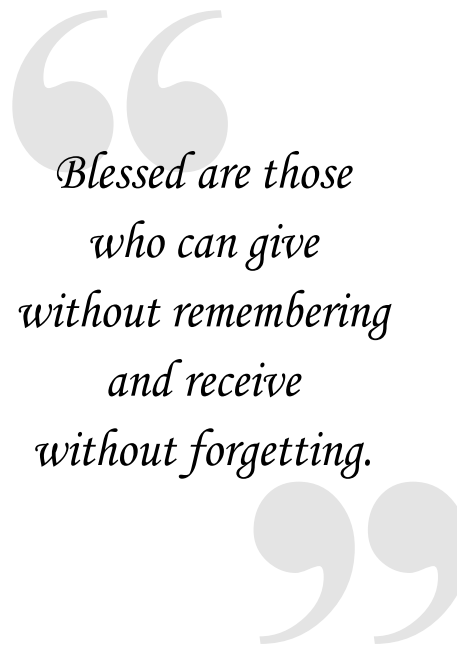
The following are just a few quotes submitted to us about gratitude:

“Gratitude means putting others first.”
Robert C.

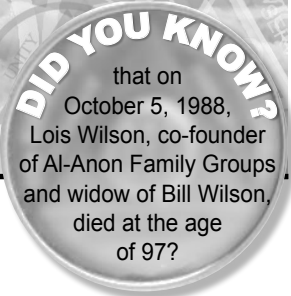
“I practice gratitude in my life by doing the next right thing as often as I can.”
Sarah J.

“Take on an attitude of gratitude!”
Anonymous

“Every day I send my sponsor a list of things I am grateful for and every day that list must look different from the day before!”
Wendell P.



(As Bill Sees It, p. 29). *Box 459© Vol. 46 No.5/ October - November 2000.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Anchor Group’s 40 anniversary
Thursday, October 26 at 8 p.m.
4130 Lawrence Avenue East

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)




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

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.



The Greater Toronto Area is fortunate to have over 500 meetings every week. These meetings come in all sizes, formats and even a few languages. To encourage all members of Alcoholics Anonymous to visit groups from all over the city in addition to their home group, we spotlight a meeting every issue.



- Could your group use a few more seats in the chairs?
- Are there opportunities for service?
- Is it a new group that we may not know about?

If so, please submit your request for a group feature to bettertimes@aatoronto.org and be sure to mention “Group spotlight request” in the subject line.