

# BETTER TIMES

## spotlight

### Rexdale United Group

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
that in Aug. 1942  
the AA Office in  
New York granted  
distribution rights  
for the Big Book  
to Dr. George  
Little?

Rexdale United Group is turning 45 on September 13. Its group anniversary celebration will be on Thursday, September 14 at 8 p.m. All are welcome!

#### What do you like about your home group? What makes it great for the newcomer?

You get a comfortable feeling at the door. You feel like you're at home. The newcomers get a great welcome at the door. Members are there to talk to them, provide them with literature and answer questions. Temporary sponsorship is also available.

#### What is the format of your closed and open meetings?

We read the step we are discussing that evening from the 12&12 and discuss that step one person after another in a circle. There is no cross-talking allowed. If there is someone there for their first time, we read step 1 and discuss it.

#### Are there opportunities for service?

We try to get members involved and fill all our service positions: Intergroup representative, General Service Rep-resentative, Alternate General Service Representative, Chair, Discussion Chair, Supplies, Coffee, Church liaison, Secre-tary and Treasurer.

#### Do you have to be a member of the group to get involved?

You don't have to be a member of the group to get involved in service. Partic-ipation by reading at the front and help with clean-up is encouraged.

#### Does the location have parking? Is it close to a subway station?

There is plenty of parking at the back of the church (St. Benedict Catholic Church, 2194 Kipling Ave). The 45 Kipling bus stops at Glenhorn Ave. near the front of the church and can be caught from the Kipling subway.



Produced monthly for A.A. members in the Greater Toronto Area

# BETTER TIMES

AUGUST  
2017



## Searching for the flag of the City of Akron

My name is Lee and I'm an alcoholic. I had the privilege of serving Alcoholics Anonymous as the Panel 58 Delegate from Area 07 - California Northern Interior.

Not too long after I first came into contact with A.A. in 1983 in Southern California, I began to travel back to Brazil, where I grew up, and attend meetings there.

In the early 2000s, having survived going back to drinking for a couple of years, I became very interested in general service and was shortly thereafter elected as GSR of my home group. As I continued on that path, I found myself traveling to Brazil a few times each year, often participating in general service events there. Over time, I have become an unofficial liaison between their general service structure and ours.

In the fall of 2010, I was attending an event there and I was asked if I might be able to obtain a flag of the City of Akron. At their various events, they have a custom of parading the flags of states and counties, along with the national flag and flags of A.A. and Al-Anon at the beginning and closing events. They told me in 2011, they would be celebrating 50 years since the arrival of A.A. in the state of Minas Gerais, in the city of Juiz de Fora, 200km north of Rio.

Upon my return to the U.S., I started off by searching the internet but fairly quickly realized that although such a flag existed, it was not available for purchase anywhere. My next thought was to call the central office in Akron and they suggested that I contact the City of Akron business office.

Following a number of phone calls to various city departments, I finally ended



Akron, Ohio - the birthplace of Alcoholics Anonymous.


up talking to the mayor's secretary. She asked that I send her an email describing why I was wanting the flag. This was turning into a public information effort. Although the mayor's office was aware of the meaning of Akron to A.A., they were not aware of the worldwide reach of A.A. today.

After a few more days, I heard back from the secretary, letting me know that the mayor was interested in helping us out. Not only did he send us a full-size flag, but he also included an official proclamation of June 10-12, 2011, as the days of the 50th anniversary of A.A. in Minas Gerais, Brazil.

In June 2011, when I travelled to Juiz de Fora for the anniversary celebration, I brought those items and presented them to the A.A. members there. I was given the privilege of carrying the flag of the city of Akron in the flag ceremony held during the event. Since then, the flag has been displayed at a number of other A.A. events in the state of Minas Gerais.

On June 9-11, 2017, I was invited to participate in a gathering of Area 33 in the city of São João del Rei in Minas Gerais. Towards the end of the event, I was approached and asked to share the story of how I obtained the flag of the

city of Akron, as the area had now decided to pass it along to the national archives of A.A. in Brazil. The presentation was made to Dr. Jaira Freixiela Adamczyk, class A trustee (non-alcoholic) and currently chairperson of the general service board of Alcoholics Anonymous in Brazil. There were about 250 A.A. members present, including the very first chair of the general service board in Brazil from 1983, Dr. José Nicolliello Viotti, now trustee Emeritus, Dr. Oscar Cox, another trustee Emeritus and many other past and current trustees, members of the general service board, GSRs, DCMs, area officers, delegates and Al-Anon participants. There was loud cheering from the members, knowing that now the flag would become part of the history of A.A. in Brazil.\*

Once again, I was reminded that no matter in what culture or language, the manifestations of alcoholism are the same and that is good news because it means that if we translate our literature into other languages, alcoholics anywhere can find a solution to their problem through the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. 

Lee from California

\* Please note that any names mentioned in full are those of non-alcoholic public trustees.



BETTER TIMES

# masthead & wordsearch

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

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**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. For subscriptions call Alexx at 416-487-8110 or subscribe at: [www.aatoronto.org](http://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 200-500 words, and may be made online at [www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org) or by emailing [bettertimes@aatoronto.org](mailto:bettertimes@aatoronto.org) directly.

For any inquiries or comments, please send your name and phone number to the Editor at [bettertimes@aatoronto.org](mailto:bettertimes@aatoronto.org). Your anonymity will be protected.

Yours in Service,  
The Better Times Staff.

**DON'T GET BAFFLED WORD SEARCH**

S Z I A I O C F W R E L A T I O N S B H  
U C D Y L M L E R Z G K C K K Z R X F S  
A M E N D S U G G B Z Q K F G W R S N B  
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R B O R P R J F I H T U U G F N D K W Z

AMENDS  
FORGIVENESS  
IRRITABLE  
KETTLE  
REFLECTION  
RESTITUTION  
TOSSPOT  
WILLING

AUGUST  
HARMED  
ISOLATION  
MISERLY  
RELATIONS  
SURVEYED  
TRIUMPHANT  
WRECKAGE

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BETTER TIMES

# sharing

**SCARBOROUGH DISTRICT 22 SERVICE DAY**

Are you new to sobriety or the district?? Are you looking to get involved in service at the district level or just looking for a fellowship event? Well, look no more. On Saturday September 16th we invite you to attend the 39TH ANNUAL SCARBOROUGH DISTRICT 22 SERVICE DAY: MY SERVICE – MY SOBRIETY. There will be panels, two great speakers and information on how to get active in AA Service. GREAT FREE LUNCH as well as FREE COFFEE. Doors open at 9:30AM and admission is free, and the day concludes at 3:30PM. After the day event, there is a dance from 8pm to midnight. All are welcome. Tickets for the evening are \$10 and are available from a District 22 GSR and will be available at the door. THERE WILL BE DOOR PRIZES! We look forward to seeing you!

**Oakridge Community Centre - 63 Pharmacy Avenue (East of Victoria Park Station)**

**Free Parking Available /Fully Accessible/Signers Welcome**

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](mailto:bettertimes@aatoronto.org) and be sure to mention "Group spotlight request" in the subject line.



## "I am Responsible ..."

**Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.**


I've been attending A.A. meetings for about 40 years. The first couple of years, I had little success. I was 12-stepped by various people and would not have kept coming if it weren't for them. They reached out to me when all hope was gone. They came to me in a men-tal hospital, psychiatric wards, on the streets and took me out of bootleggers. Eventually, I got sober and stayed sober for 10 years. Then, I went back out and when I came

back in, I noticed there was very little, if any, 12-stepping. I haven't heard it discussed at meetings or mentioned by speakers.

I've been back 15 years now and I do 12-step calls. My first sponsor told me to pay it forward and the Responsibility Pledge is my guide.

Seven years ago, I had a call from a drug dealer who had a customer with a drug and alcohol problem. No one would come to this woman, so I went. She called me many times over the next few

years. She got a year clean and sober and went back out. At one point, she tried to kill me. She is now coming up to five years sober in September and still calls me every day. I have discovered that it doesn't matter if the person I try to help doesn't succeed in staying sober. As long as I am still sober, it was a good call.

I had my 15-year medallion a couple months ago and my speaker was the same woman who calls me every day. 

**Gary S., Frontrunners**



# BETTER TIMES medallions & archive

## MEDALLIONS

Bryan T.	5	Agincourt Acorn	July 18
Joanna C.	1	Sisters in Sobriety	July 19
John S.	1	Agincourt Acorn	July 25
Barbara B.	10	East York Group	July 25
John L.	10	East York Group	July 25
Sebastian S.	10	East York Group	July 25
Victor M.	30	Beaches Group	July 25
Jean M.	40	St. Clemens	July 26
Amy S.	5	St. Clemens	July 26
Bob G.	1	Willowdale Group	July 27
Sam W.	1	Gay Sober Men	Aug. 3
Simon W.	5	Hill Group	Aug. 3
Jane E.	25	Traditional Group	Aug. 4
Dee G.	30	Steps to Serenity	Aug. 5
Bill V.	1	King City Group	Aug. 7
Chris C.	1	Beaches Group	Aug. 8
Joan S.	10	Credit Valley	Aug. 13
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. Clemens	Aug. 30
Lee-Anne M.	30	Hill Group	Sept. 7
Tammy S.	1	Sisters in Sobriety	Sept. 13
Maryanne D.	1	Sisters in Sobriety	Sept. 27

Due to ongoing submissions, this list may not be current. For the latest information, visit: [www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org)

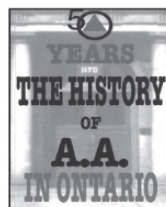
## I FOUND IT IN THE ARCHIVES

Archives Committee meetings are held on the 2nd Friday of each month in the boardroom at the GTA Intergroup Office at 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 202, Toronto.

## BACK TO THE REPOSITORY with GTA Archivist Eddy G. Recent items donated to the GTA Archives:

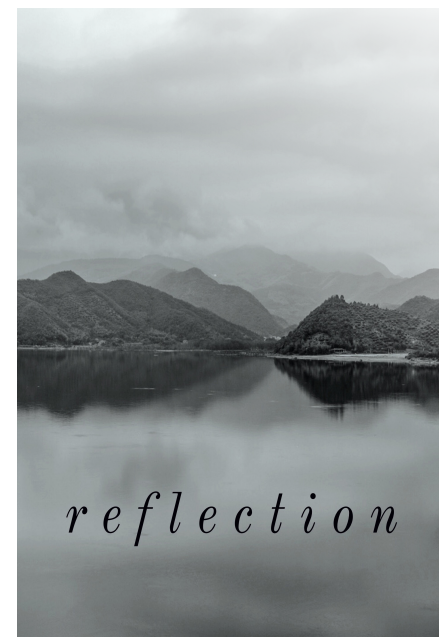
- Two copies of The AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service by Bill W. 1999-2000 Edition & 2002-2003 Edition. Donated by Saturday Morning Discussion Group.
- Four issues of Grapevines: Jan., Feb., March & April 2017. Donated by The Hill Group.
- Two issues of Grapevines: April & Aug. 2014. Donated by District 22.
- Two issues of Grapevines: July 2016 & May 2017. Donated by Rox Glen Traditional Group.
- One copy of Greater Vancouver and Surrounding Area Meeting Directory, Spring 2017. Donated by Steve S., Glenholme Group.
- Nine Mississauga Group members lists: no date, June 1984, Dec. 1985, May 1986, 1989, 1990, 1992, Sept. 1997, June 1999;
- 16 ORC programs: 1976, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1984 (2), 1995, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015;
- Eight ORC flyers: 1995, 2006, 2007, 2009 (2), 2013, 2014, 2015;
- One International Convention of AA Toronto 2005 program; and
- One Ontario Directory from March 1975 by Ontario General Service Committee. All donated by Jackie M., Mississauga Group.

**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.



# BETTER TIMES editorial

## Letter from the Editor



Greetings, my Fellow Alcoholics!

We, at Better Times, are hoping you are having a wonderful summer so far! It's August, the eighth month, representing reflection for our step and non-professional service "with a twist" for special workers for the tradition.

Lists have become a mainstay for me in sobriety. Not only do I need to write them regularly for my program in step 4 and 8, but I find with my squirrely brain that they come in handy all the time with overall manage-ability. As the promises tell us, life will get bigger in sobriety, with more juggling and more challenges, so accountability laid out clearly in front of me helps. "Remember When" is a step 8 slogan for me too! To amend, I must remember my past behaviour, reflect and then make a list.

Tradition 8 confirms that this is a pay-it-forward program without the cash. As it says in the 12&12, when we throw money in the pot with service and spirituality, it is a recipe for disaster. Money removes us from our primary purpose, except when we give to the 7th. That said, AA could not function without a full-time staff. Paid workers make the 12th step possible for us, alcoholics. The "what's in it for me" is the gift of staying sober but sometimes, we need paid assistance to make that happen.

We hope you are enjoying some of the new features like Concept Corner and our new ORC update column! As always, we welcome your stories and feedback!

Yours in love and service,

Maija P.  
Editor-in-Chief

## A.A. at your fingertips

Isn't it incredible how much our everyday lives have been simplified by innovations in digital technology? We use our smart-phones to make calls, take photos, watch movies, pay bills, play games, meet people and shop for nearly anything and anywhere in the world. And while some of us may take the convenience of mobile devices for granted, could you imagine Bill's and Dr Bob's reactions were they to learn that connecting the suffering alcoholic with the groups, resources and messages of Alcoholics Anonymous is now as simple as a press of a button? Here are three A.A. resources that are available at your fingertips:



**App:**  
**Meeting Guide**  
Developed and operated as an A.A. project by A.A. members, this app accesses your geographic location

and provides you with a list of closest meetings, noting their distance from you in kilometers and mapping the directions. Meeting Guide is available for download for free on the App Store and Google Play.



**Website:**  
**[www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org)**  
The GTA Intergroup website is a local means for A.A. members and the general public to get information

about Alcoholics Anonymous in the Greater Toronto Area, an up-to-date list of meeting times and locations, upcoming events and medallions, and even PDF versions of back issues of BETTER TIMES.



**Helpline:**  
**(416) 487-5591**  
The 24/7 telephone helpline services anyone who has a desire to stop drinking. It is staffed by volunteer

members of Alcoholics Anonymous who are happy to listen and answer any questions. You can also call the toll-free number at 1 (877) 404-5591 or the TTY number at (416) 928-2521. ☎

Lisa T., Church St. Group

## TELEPHONE GREETERS WANTED

**I am responsible.**

**When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.**

**And for that, I am responsible.**



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.

## OCTOBER IS GRATITUDE MONTH CONTEST!

SEEKING STORIES OF GRATITUDE...  
YOUR ESSAY COULD BE ON THE  
FRONT PAGE OF THE  
NOVEMBER ISSUE.  
EMAIL YOUR SUBMISSIONS TO  
[BETTERTIMES@AATORONTO.ORG](mailto:BETTERTIMES@AATORONTO.ORG)  
BY SEPTEMBER 20TH, 2017!!



# concepts corner

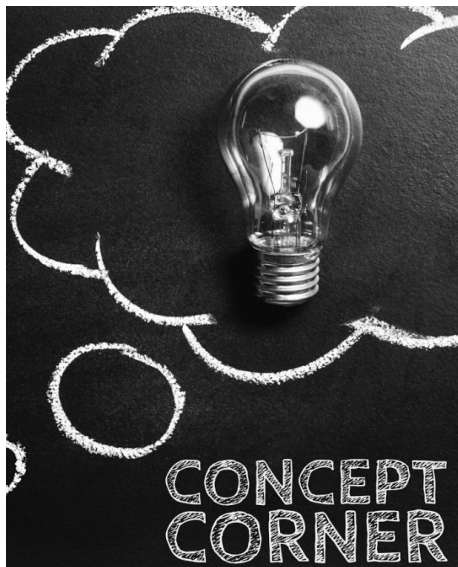
In this issue, we look at concept 2 from a contributor who has chosen to remain anonymous but has contributed a great deal of service outside the group level, both here in Toronto and as a "snowbird" down in Florida. Thank you!

**"We develop discipline in order to serve the group conscience by obeying it as a trusted servant. We do what god delegates to us through the group."**

This concept is all about discipline, delegation and focus in our own program in the rooms, serving with authority in our groups as per the group conscience (GC) regarding any decisions that lie therein when given a position. It means following the GC to the best of my ability and asking if I am not sure, attending business meetings and participating in them, not only with issues but with solutions, and continuously being of service in some capacity as long as I continue to stay sober.

While this sounds like a tall order, it really is not difficult. When we first get sober, we are encouraged to take on a service commitment, usually setting up chairs, making coffee or greeting at the door. This concept speaks to doing those things as the position is laid out in the GC and showing up every time (if I can't, I send someone in my place). As we gain some time in program, other positions become available outside the group level in the form of the GSR. That position, should I be honoured to take it, requires more time and attendance at district and area meetings. I must also show up to those and should any conference or meeting I attend require me to speak on behalf of the group, I am able to do so with authority as a trusted servant. Bill and Bob could not do everything when they got the ball rolling with our program so a structure was laid out as A.A. grew around the world to entrust delegates to assist in carrying the message and keeping God as the ultimate authority.

When I first be-came involved in general service some 20 years ago, I had



little understanding of how the traditions or concepts could stretch into "all my affairs." After all, were they not guidelines for the groups and world service? My service sponsor explained to me that the three legacies of recovery, unity and service (steps, tra-ditions and concepts) must all be consid-ered in a well-rounded program. So, for concept 2, I look at the discipline I take in my personal life so that I can serve the group as well. As an active drunk, I could not be relied upon for much of anything, except for being at the bar at 5:30 p.m. every night after work! I had to become a regular attendee at my home group, do what I said I was going to do, be willing to hand over the reigns to my Higher Power, sponsor and GC because I was truly unmanageable on my own. I had to let the legacies discipline my behaviour and say yes to any request A.A. asked of me.

So the next time you would rather skip a meeting or a service commitment because of nice weather or feeling under the weather, remember concept 2 and be accountable to the group. Just think of what would happen if everyone ignored the GC and of the chaos that would ensue!



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
that on Aug. 3, 1993  
Toronto Intergroup  
Offices at 234  
Eglinton Ave. E. moved  
down from 502 to 202?  
Done for financial  
reasons.

“THE CENTRAL CHARACTERISTIC OF THE SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE IS THAT IT GIVES THE RECIPIENT A NEW AND BETTER MOTIVATION OUT OF ALL PROPORTION TO ANY PROCESS OF DISCIPLINE, BELIEF OR FAITH.”

*Bill Wilson*



**Want to contribute?**

BETTER TIMES is always looking for content and would love to publish your stories!

Email your ideas to  
**bettertimes@aatoronto.org**

# info / events

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Glenhome Group has a new location as of Sept. 1**

Fairbanks United Church  
2746 Dufferin Street  
(at Wingold & Stayner)  
Fourth bus stop north of Eglinton St.  
Parking available at rear

**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.

Get a ticket from your group GSR for only \$10!

**Danforth Group's 70th anniversary**

Friday, September 28 at 8 p.m.  
Holy Name Catholic Church  
90 Gough Avenue  
(on the Danforth, west of Pape Ave.)

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
that on Aug. 2, 1939  
Dr. Bob & Sister Ignatia  
start work at St. Thomas  
Hospital in Akron? They  
treat 5,000 cases in the  
next 10 years.

The 75th Annual Ontario Regional Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous

## Road of Happy Destiny

**75 years of AA in Ontario**

**Speakers:**  
Polly P., Jacksonville, FL  
Charles C., Burbank, CA  
Ruth L., Montreal, QC

March 9 - 11, 2018  
Fairmont Royal York, Toronto

To register, sign up for email updates and see the latest news, visit:  
[www.aaorc.ca](http://www.aaorc.ca)

**THE TURNING POINT 2017**  
45th ANNUAL LAKESHORE DISTRICTS CONFERENCE  
AUG 11, 12, 13 2017

**GUEST SPEAKERS & PANELISTS  
POTLUCK LUNCH  
SATURDAY BANQUET DINNER  
SUNDAY 'SOBRIETY COUNTDOWN'**

**INFORMATION AND TICKETS**  
**ONLINE! LDC2017.WEEBLY.COM**  
**OR LAKESHORE INTERGROUP 905.728.1020**

**NEW VENUE!**  
**LVIV HALL, 38 LVIV BLVD, OSHAWA**  
**(JUST OFF SIMCOE, 1 BLOCK NORTH OF BLOOR)**

