

that on June 10, 1935 Dr. Bob took his last drink? AA was founded.

## **GSM** Group

The GTA is fortunate to have over 500 meetings every week. These meetings come in all sizes, all formats and even a few languages. In an effort to encourage all members of AA 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 folks 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 feature to bettertimes@aatoronto.org and be sure to use "Group Spotlight Request" in the subject line.

1) How many years has the group been active in Toronto? the meeting and the tickets are drawn after the speaker If new, since when?

Gay Sober Men is a new meeting started on April 13th 2017.

2) What do you like about your Home Group? What makes it great for the newcomer?

Gay Sober Men speaks to an underserved population and is designated for anyone with a burning desire. provides a forum for members to share their experiences, strength, and hope with other alcoholics living in the gay community. The experience of growing up as a gay man presents many unique challenges that more often than not contribute directly to our addiction issues; this group allows members to explore these aspects of their addiction, and provides a safe space to take the first steps in being honest with the people around them, and with themselves. The though we like to stress that everyone is welcome at our meeting. The group is great for the newcomer because of the strong focus on fellowship after the meeting. So much 5) Does the location have parking? Is it close to a subway so that we have created service positions to promote fellowship and welcoming the newcomer into our meeting. Our "Fellowship Coordinators" are responsible for rounding up people after the meeting and securing a dining location that can accommodate a large group.

#### 3) What is the format of your meeting?

The format of our Open meeting is a 15 minute speaker followed by a sharing style that rotates every week. As in the Big book our stories involve discussions of drugs as well as alcohol. We include "Popcorn Style" and "Speakers Choice" in our rotation. The second Thursday of the month we have started "Lottery Style" sharing (everyone receives a ticket at the beginning of the signs to the Friendship Room.

to see who gets to share) and the Fourth Thursday of the month we do "Tag" sharing, the speaker chooses the first person to share, and that person chooses the next person, and so on. Both of our newer formats have been hugely successful and create an exciting energy in the room! Of course no one is obligated to share and the last 5 minutes

4) Are there opportunities for service and if so, which? (Do you have to be a group member to participate?) There is the opportunity to be the chairperson for home group members- just attend the business meeting on the second Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm. There are also termed position (e.g. Treasurer, Secretary, etc.) opened to home group members. In terms of service positions for nonspecificity of the name acts as a hub for gay newcomers members arrive 15 minutes early or stay 15 minutes late to help with setup or tear down.

> station? The location has street parking and is right next to a bus stop and streetcar stop. It's about a 10 minute walk from either Sherbourne or College subway stations. The meeting is also wheelchair accessible through the back entrance, but it is suggested to arrive early as this wheelchair entrance must be closed 15 minutes after the meeting has begun.

> Gay Sober Men Group Thursday's @ 7:30 St. Luke's United Church 353 Sherbourne St. \*The southeast corner of Sherbourne & Carlton - follow

# **Produced Monthly for AA Members in the Greater Toronto Area**

### **A Phoenix In Phoenix**

When the words "My name is Donna and I am an to accept or dive into a solution which often appears as easy as saying "Yes, I am! Next..." alcoholic" emerged from my mouth for the first time I thought I was going to faint. I was 56 at the 6. Step six is not really that hard. time, a 'young' widow of 3 years and a grandmother to a precocious set of toddler twin boys. I am now So, how did you do? Any of these sound familiar? 62 years old and as I write this am watching my For me, I think once I reviewed these ideas, all were grandchildren's heads pop up and down out the true, I will admit it ... all true. Let me explain why window while they play on the trampoline in my backyard with their father, my son. Moments of all of the above are now considered "false" in my program. shocked joy happen to me quite a bit in sobriety, I am having one of them now. I nearly missed the 1. Step Six was easier for me when I listed the boat on any kind of serenity though for one very big defects I found in my 4th step, 4th column. Being reason that took me almost 2 years to realize. I was willing is a state of mind but I needed to know unwilling to see a few self-imposed misconceptions what I was dealing with and see it on paper. The first time, it was like going shopping for a 5 course about step six until I took another peek at it with a fresh determination and open mind. dinner without a list of ingredients. I was bound to forget something. Plus, if I had a defect to address it helped if I also listed an alternative option beside Upon reflection and searching for answers as to why

I was feeling unsettled when I got through my first round of steps, my defensiveness to acceptance I had mistakenly learned that sponsor and I think that I may have etc. manipulation, lying and trickery 2. Because I was desperate cruised through step six without fully 'taking' it. There is no shame I think that I had faith could be fun and often laughed in this in my humble opinion. I just because I could see proof at my 'witty' behaviour. needed to look harder when I went of happy people all around through the steps again because our me in the program working steps but I needed to be sure that I had a good solid literature clearly says that you don't take our steps step 3 practice in place - again and again. Regardless once but through a lifetime of work at this program. I believe that Step Six is often the called a forgotten of my pain and coping strategies to date, I needed to step alongside its partner step 7 for a few reasons. be sure there was another way. Let's do a little quiz to see if you may have felt the 3. I had mistakenly learned that manipulation, lying same way about this step as I did at first. Answer and trickery could be fun and often laughed at my true or false to the following statements: 'witty' behaviour. After some honesty, I realized that humour was a defence mechanism and the only one laughing sadly, was me. 1. Being bookended by the pen-to-paper/'talking it

out' steps of 4-5-8-9, Step 6 requires a more spiritual 4. "Returning home we find a place where we can be quiet for an hour, carefully reviewing what we have done. We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better. Taking this book down from our shelf we turn to the page which contains the twelve steps. Carefully reading the first five proposals we ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. Is our work solid so far? Are the stones properly in place? Have we skimped on the cement put into the foundation? Have we tried to make mortar without sand?" (Big Book .....continued on page 7

or philosophical approach and not written work of any kind. 2. There is a chance I may have lacked some faith that this step would work. 3. I was unwilling to admit that my defects of character as they stood were actually kind of fun at times and that if I let them go, I would be boring. 4. I did not read the last paragraph of page 75 of the Big Book and do the work clearly listed there as requested by my sponsor. 5. Like step two, six asks that you be ready or willing



it - irritability to patience,

## masthead & wordsearch

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

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Opinions expressed in BETTER TIMES are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Greater Toronto Area Intergroup. The editorial staff reserve the right to edit submitted articles for length, content and grammar in accordance with our lavout 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. For subscriptions 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 200-500 words, and may be made online at www.aatoronto.org or by emailing bettertimes@aatoronto.org directly

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

Yours in Service. The Better Times Staff.

#### TO CONTACT COMMITTEES PLEASE EMAIL

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DON'T GET BAFFLED WORD SEARCH

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

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Defect	Lifetime	Anger
Character	Behaviours	Envy
Primary	Satisfaction	Lust
Purpose	Righteous	Gluttony
Interprise	Gossip	Greed
Instincts	Rebellion	Pride

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

## HOW A FLOCK OF PIGEONS HELPED START AA.

on Taconic Avenue during the spring of 1934. You may recall that it was Ebby T. that carried his alcoholic solution to Bill W. in the early 1930s. Clarence S., the Cleveland Ebby's sprees brought about two slight brushes with the AA founder, is quoted as saying: "Bill might have scored the Manchester authorities; he was fined only five dollars on each touchdown, but it was Ebby who handed him the ball."Ebby occasion, but the small fines brought a warning that the third grew up under ideal circumstances; his brother was mayor of time would bring more severe consequences. Perhaps remorse Albany, NY, as was his uncle and grandfather in previous years. led to Ebby to follow his brother's urging to paint the huge family summer 'cottage' that summer. But not surprisingly, the There is even a park named after his family in his home town of task was too much for one person, so a professional helper was hired for added assistance and the job was finished quickly. He brother, Mayor Jack Thacher, was a candidate for NY State Governor when FDR became the President. Sadly, Ebby found must have felt a great sense of satisfaction - who wouldn't be himself repeatedly caught up in public drinking scrapes, not a proud of such a large accomplishment! There is no evidence good "look" for his political family; thus came the suggestion of this, but perhaps Ebby was celebrating with a little hooch that he leave Albany and take residence in their family summer when he noticed a flock of bothersome pigeons on the roof. home in the prestigious township of Manchester, Vermont. Out came his shotgun-and no doubt the neighbors, as well Ebby's frustrated family hoped that the relative tranquility of - when loud blasts shattered the tranquility of the calm and peaceful community.

the Manchester resort community would bring about at least some moderation of his drinking sprees, and it did - sort of. Ebby faced six months in Windsor Prison or the Brattleboro After a few months, Ebby joined a group who spent the entire Insane Asylum, but lucky for us, the judge released him to winter clearing the trails of the Green Mountains region. He the custody of millionaire Rowland H.Ebby eventually landed claimed to have drank two pints of gin on the first day, but in Calvary Mission in lower Manhattan. Being sober several when it ran out, Ebby got sober as a result of the lack of supply months, he gleefully carried his sober message to Bill W. on not the lack of demand. He spent the winter of 1932 at the a bleak November day of 1934and you know the rest of the age of 33 enjoying the rugged outdoor work. Upon return story. But don't forget the pigeons! to Manchester, Ebby continued to stay dry for a few more months; but soon thereafter his drinking bouts resumed while Bob S. living out of the furnished rooms of the large family residence



...continued from front page

of Alcoholics Anonymous, page 75) If this is not like hyenas in the backyard, with a firm believe that action with homework after step five, I don't know step six is one of the most difficult to take and what is. I need to look at this again. one that changed my life. I am a better mother, 5. I was willing alright but "Yes, I am! Next..." was grandmother, widow, neighbour, friend and fellow not enough. Not fully taking this step and saying because of it. I was ready to ask for the removal 'Sure am!', for me, was based in fear. I needed some of my defects and amend my past ones and I am Cowardly Lion type courage to do this step. grateful. I think I will go bounce on the trampoline 6. This stuff is hard. Full Stop. with the twins now.

I write this now, hearing my grandchildren laughing

that in June 1944 the AA Grapevine in New York was established?

Donna B., Phoenix, AZ.

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Sidrah A.	10	St. Clements	April 26	Mike D.	45	North Toronto	May 9	John W	40	St. Clements	May 31
Mike P.	20	Willowdale	April 27	Terry T.	40	North Toronto	May 9	Laura F	1	St. Clements	May 31
Rod McL.	35	Rexdale United	April 27	Sherry-Anne	L10	Erin Mills Mississauga	May 15	Louise M.	5	Markland Wood	June 1
Alex	1	Spiritual Kindergarten	April 28	Eddy G.	30	Beaches	May 16	Rosemary R	15	Willowdale	June 1
Joan	40	Half Century Group	April 30	Rich G.	10	Fifth Tradition	May 23	Manuel L.	25	Portuguese	June 15
Charlene S.	35	Keep It Simple	April 30	Laura M	25	Thornhill Group	May 24	George E	5	Willowdale	June 15
Ed H.	45	Pine Hills	May 1	Maureen K.	1	Willowdale	May 25	Jim V	5	New Anchor Group	June 22
Mike M	5	King City Group	May 1	Corinne S.	1	Willowdale	May 25	Anna Maria R	5	East York Group	June 27
Amanda S	5	King City Group	May 1	Cailin M	1	Spiritual Kindergarten	May 26	Paula D	25	Markland Wood	June 29
Audrey M.	20	Lakeshore	May 7	Jacqueline H	25	St. Clements	May 31				
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Due to ongoing submissions this list may not be current. For the latest information visit: www.aatoronto.org



**BACK TO THE REPOSITORY...** with GTA Archivist Eddy G. Archives Committee meetings are held on the 2nd Friday of each month in the boardroom at the GTA Intergroup Office, 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 202, Toronto.

75 Years of A.A. in Ontario Commemorative Booklet

The GTA (Greater Toronto Area) Archives Committee has been asked by the 2018 ORC Committee, to put together a small booklet to help celebrate the 75th anniversary of the start of A.A. in Ontario and the first ORC. We have been asked to include a brief description of how A.A. came to various cities across Ontario. Emails have been sent out to Area 83 Archives Chairs & DCM's and Archives Chairs & Archivists in Ontario asking if they would like to be included and to please tell us in a couple of paragraphs how A.A. came to your city. We need this by July 31, 2017.

RECENT ITEMS DONATED TO THE GTA ARCHIVES -1965 Club Seven Thirty membership card (730 Pape Ave.) & Basil Curtis from Toronto talk in 1972 on cassette tape donated by John F. (Hill Group).

#### TO DONATE AA/GTA ARCHIVAL ITEMS TO THE GTA ARCHIVES CONTACT THE GTA ARCHIVIST EDDY G. at 416-536-7536.

50 Years - The History of AA in Ontario is for sale at the Literature Department at 234 for \$10.00. This book was produced in 1993 by the Archives Committee of Toronto Intergroup (today GTA Intergroup). It's a great gift to give to a member on their anniversary.

#### Looking for a meeting on Pride Weekend? CLEAN SOBER AND PROUD

Located at Paul Kane Parkette, Wellesley St. East between Yonge and Church.

Please Check

PRIDETORONTO.COM

the PRIDETORONTO program,

the Clean, Sober and Proud Schedules



Friday; 8pm-9pm Open Meeting

Saturday; 10-11am Open meeting 11am-12pm Open meeting 4-5pm Open meeting 7pm-8pm Open meeting 8pm-9pm Open meeting

Sunday; 10-11am Open meeting 11am-12pm Open meeting



## A Letter from the Editor



June is also a month that reminds us of the willingness to hand our defects over to our HP. When I ventured out of my group's 123 Beginner's Room after my first year and began hearing Step 6's opening line more regularly, it made my blood boil. "THIS is the Step that separates the men from the boys."\* Harrumph - more of this sexist nonsense. But if I remember that our literature was written when the terror of two World Wars made this phrase top of mind and made perfect sense when many "boys" were asked to enlist, I can get past it - wheat and chaff or stuck and unstuck work too! What it means to me is that if I don't constantly take step six and the next also often "forgotten step" seven, I will be baffled when my behaviours and feelings don't change and my personal relationships don't improve. How can I amend my past behaviour if I am not willing to change it? It is a hard step for this hard wired alcoholic to take daily but so much easier than the alternative. It feels way better too.

I use Tradition Six's theme of focus a great deal as well to keep the sanity in check. You recall the line "the moment we saw that we had an answer for alcoholism, it was reasonable (or so it seemed at the time) for us to feel that we might have the answer to a lot of other things"?\*\* Bottom line is, I don't. Just like A.A. does not "allow" coffee companies to lend their name to our events even though it may "seem" logical, I must ALWAYS remember that my primary purpose is my sobriety and any agenda I put in front of that will be the thing that takes me out.

I am pleased and excited to announce a new feature that will be starting this month that we are calling "Concept Corner". We have three legacies in A.A. and each legacy comes with a list of guidelines - 12 Steps for our Recovery, 12 Traditions for our Unity and 12 Concepts for Service. Each month we will ask Toronto members familiar with the concepts, often learned when doing service in the district and area, to break them down for us... how fun! As always if you would like to contribute please email me at <u>bettertimes@aatoronto.org</u>

Yours in Love and Service, Maija P. Editor-in-Chief, Better Times

\*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 63. \*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 155.



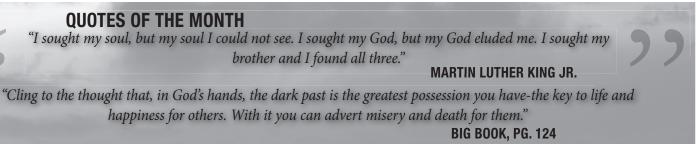
**QUOTES OF THE MONTH** 

Combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service was almost called "The Third Legacy Guide".

June is the month when summer officially starts, daylight graces us half the day, water everywhere

is just about perfect for taking a swim, it's time for sandals and shorts, tuning bikes and slowing down a bit to just enjoy a walk. Truly a perfect month really.

We would love to publish your stories. Your understanding of the steps, or traditions, Thoughts on the principles of the program, Your own personal stories of experience strength and hope. See page 2 sidebar for more details -Send them to us at bettertimes@aatoronto.org



# Concepts Corner The Twelve Concepts for World Service

Starting next month, Better Times is pleased to start a new feature called "Concept Corner". Each month we will outline the 12 Concepts of A.A. in numerical order through the summer of 2018. For those of you who may not be familiar with the 3rd Legacy, Service, as outlined in the annual General Service Manual and the appendix of the Big Book, the concepts are the foundations of how we take step 12 in our program, this is the place to get familiar! Our literature says that the concepts are "how Bill W. explained the spiritual principles that undergird A.A.'s structure and how the parts work together." We want to share that with you with some member contributions and illustrations!



Please contact us if you would like to write on a concept over the next year! bettertimes@aatoronto.org

As A.A. grew up, it began with the groups - first only a few, then hundreds and then thousands. Very early an Alcoholic Foundation, later renamed The General Service Board, was formed to be responsible for our affairs. And with Dr. Bob's death and Bill's facing up to his own mortality, a General Service Conference assumed the leadership which had fallen to the co-founders. Meanwhile, a tiny publishing operation and service office had grown in size and importance to the Fellowship, and a monthly journal, the A.A. Grapevine, was being published. Which of these entities was supposed to do what? Little wonder there was confusion! What was their relationship? Who was in charge? What were their responsibilities and what were their rights? Bill W. himself sometimes took part in the pulling and hauling that took place, and so he saw the need to "reduce to writing" his concepts of the "why" of the whole structure, the lessons to be drawn from experience, the relationships and, above all, the spiritual principles. As Bill set them down, the Twelve Concepts are a potpourri: Concepts III through V, IX and XII deal with spiritual principles; the remainder, though they have spiritual overtones, are devoted to describing the relationship of the various service entities and how they

work together.\* \* (http://www.aa.org/assets/en\_US/p-8\_thetwelveconetps.pdf permission per the copyright guidelines of A.A. GSO)



DISTRICT 18 & DISTRICT 22 PRESENTS: 12<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL EAST TORONTO **ARCHIVES BREAKFAST** SUNDAY JUNE 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017 **QSSIS BANQUET HALL** 

Let's see

how this works.

3474 KINGSTON RD. (Just West of Markham Rd.)

## AGENDA

9:00 am-10:00 am - Coffee & Fellowship 10:00 am-11:00 am - Buffet Breakfast 11:00 am-12:00 pm - Open Meeting 12:00 pm-12:30 pm - Prizes & Closing

AMPLE FREE PARKING AVAILABLE FULLY ACCESSIBLE & SIGNERS WELCOME

> TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE UNTIL WEDNESDAY MAY 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017

**TICKET PRICE \$20.00** 

TICKETS ARE NOT AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR

FOR MORE INFORMATION & TICKETS PLEASE CONTACT YOUR GSR OR Lynn E. 416-624-8098 Michael A. 416-456-6359 Tom S. 416-750-9026 416-277-4285 Iohn M.







ORC2018 announcement coming soon



## \*New hours for the Church Street Group Meetings\*

Please note that, \*as of July 8, 2017\*, the Saturday open meetings of the

Church Street Group will be held \*from 10:30 to 11:30 am\*.

The Sunday meetings hours do not change and remain 12:30 to 1:30 pm.