



Spotlight on...The Bloordale Group

The Bloordale Group - a gentle tapestry of healing for many a suffering alcoholic - celebrates 30 years of Recovery, Service, and Unity on October 5th, 2016.



The Bloordale Group saved my life: for one hour I was safe and had a haven in which like-minded people gathered and shared. For one hour I lost my fears and felt like I belonged. For one hour... I was no longer alone... So I kept coming back! Being a member of Bloordale is my personal honour and privilege. It's my pleasure to learn the history of my

home group, not just to educate myself but also to pass it on... So please join me for a little trip back in time...

Yvonne and Ted L. used to travel long distances to attend meetings at The Welcome Group, but Yvonne was getting tired of the drive and Ted's health was failing. They began to have meetings in their own home. It wasn't easy - it was never easy - but it got so much better that the group grew too big to stay there. Members began looking for places to rent, and they found Bloordale United Church as the place to lay their weary heads and call "home"!

The Bloordale Group was a spin-off from The Welcome Group, and members were so grateful for and blessed to have had The Welcome Group's love and support. On October 5th, 1986, Andy chaired The Bloordale Group's very first open meeting. Members in attendance at that first meeting included Yvonne & Ted L., Betty Ann & Andy C., John H., Bonnie & Len A., Earl B., Roy H., Robert H. (who recently celebrated 30 years of sobriety), Gerry P., Alex & Norma Jean.

It was held on a Sunday in the Church's gymnasium. Members held the meeting close to the kitchen, because the room echoed so much. In 1989, Roy.H. had acoustic panels installed in the gymnasium. Robert H., a faithful member who just celebrated 30 years of sobriety on July 10th 2016, donated the very first amplifier and made the podium that we currently use today. We were also fortunate to have D.A.R.E. (a government agency for the mentally challenged) create a banner for us. We used it for 25 years! Our current banner was made by Robert H.'s wife.

From the very beginning, Bloordale had A.A. Literature available, although the library became 'official' in 1989. The group began with Sunday open meetings, until one day four members travelled to London, Ontario, to a Big Book Group Study. They listened and learned and brought ideas back to the group. Robert H. chaired the first Monday Night Big Book Study.

Continued on Page 5

WOMEN IN RECOVERY & BETTER TIMES

Here at your Better Times we publish stories of recovery, struggle, and hope from AAs all over the GTA and beyond. We have had the pleasure of including many stories FROM women in recovery FOR women in recovery.

We would like to continue doing so.

If you are a woman in recovery in the GTA, please get in touch...we would be happy to publish your story.
bettertimes@aatoronto.org

masthead & service

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.

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.

Jobs & Notices...

- Volunteers are needed for both Phone Greeters (1 year of continuous sobriety and 1 phone training session required) and 12 Step List (especially women and speakers of languages other than English).

Phone training is now the first Sunday of every month - call the office at 234 or contact the 12-Step Committee to book an appointment.

- Access Ability Committee seeking members for a "Buddy List" for members who are homebound or otherwise can't access meetings.

- Correctional Facilities seeking people for "Bridging the Gap" program. Also, volunteers are required for the correctional facility in District 02. Toronto West also desperately needs volunteers; they have expanded to 'A' Tower with special needs and protective custody and hold meetings directly in the units. Donations of literature are also needed: soft-cover materials are accepted (no staples in the binding), as well as Grapevine donations (without staples).

**Check out the new aatoronto.org website.
Toronto meetings are also listed on the Meeting Guide app
- available for Android and iOS!**

Communications Committee is seeking volunteers for the following:

Helpers to assist with managing and updating the website.

The Communications Committee (Better Times, Website, etc.) continues to seek two or three dedicated members to help us carry the message of recovery in print and online. If interested, please email communications@aatoronto.org. We'd be delighted to welcome you!

ALSO:

We are no longer using the bteditor@aatoronto.org email address. Please send all correspondence to bettertimes@aatoronto.org. If you've sent any articles for consideration, comments, or questions to the old address, please resend.

ALSO:

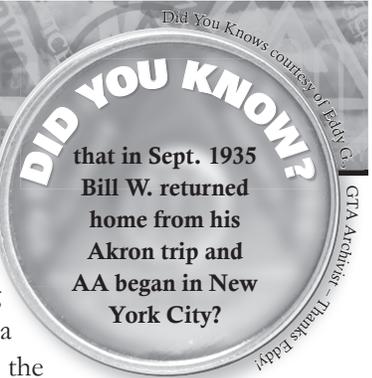
We are seeking a new Editor-in-Chief as of January 2017.
Please contact bteditor@aatoronto.org for more info!

Thank you!

TO CONTACT COMMITTEES PLEASE EMAIL:

Access Ability: accessability@aatoronto.org
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Twelfth Step: twelfthstep@aatoronto.org



Thoughts From the Editor's Desk

Joining committees and service bodies from the outset of my recovery has deepened not only my understanding and practice of the 12 Steps, but also the 12 Traditions. In the early years, I nurtured many a resentment and held on to judgments about my fellow members' actions and opinions, as expressed during business and committee meetings at group, area, and district levels. With the loving guidance of sponsors and more level-headed members, the journey on the road to acceptance, love, and tolerance - while bumpy - has been a most rewarding voyage.

Interestingly, often the most visceral reactions to others was triggered by a dislike for a certain quality or approach to life that was lurking subconsciously within my own self. As an

example, I remember reacting very strongly - not unlike a volcano or thunderstorm - to the controlling ways of my fellows. Only later, and after much soul-searching step work, did I see that it was my own over-controlling nature that I revolted against by casting the eye of awareness outward, rather than inward. I am grateful to these fine teachers, in addition to other 12 Step programs (such as CoDA, ACA, etc.) that have evolved out of AA over the years to address and transform deeper (some say core) behavioural and relationship patterns.

Marc S. - Editor-in-Chief (bettertimes@aatoronto.org)

Service Day — More Than Just Meetings

September is here with the cooling off of temperatures from the heat of summer, and people are generally starting to feel more invigorated. What better way of utilizing this new-found energy, than to recommit more deeply to service?

Scarborough District 22 will be hosting our 38th Annual Service Day, with the theme "More Than Just Meetings", on Saturday, September 17th at the Oakridge Community Centre, 63 Pharmacy Avenue, just 2 blocks east of the Victoria Park subway station. There is plenty of free parking, if you choose to bring a car, although bringing a sponsee might be better. It's a fully accessible venue. Free lunch and coffee will be provided.

There will be a series of panels outlining the different service arms through which the message of recovery is being carried to the still suffering alcoholic, such as Public Information, Treatment Facilities, Corrections, or Co-operation with the Professional Community. Self-Support and Access Ability are essential to the Service structure, as well as our monthly magazine, Grapevine, which is our meetings in print. Archives will broaden our historical perspective to more deeply understand where we came

from in order to be more effective in our 12th Step work.

There will be information display tables with free pamphlets available. There will also be a special presentation of the 12 Traditions Skit, a light hearted view of how through ignorance of these binding principles which keep our groups in harmony, erroneous assumptions can lead to mayhem and mischief, in spite of our best intentions.

For those younger members who might possibly have been spared those ten to fifteen years of literal hell that some of us with greying hair might have gone through, TOYPAA (Toronto Ontario Young People in AA) will do a short presentation about service, fun and fulfillment, from a youth perspective.

While the program outlined above is free, there will be a \$10 cover for the evening Social Gathering with DJ starting at 8 pm, running til midnite. The DJ will be happy to take requests - so, if there's a special tune you'd like to hear, let him know. Tickets will be available at the door and from Scarborough District 22 GSRs (Group Service Representatives).

Tom S. - Scarborough District 22 Service Day Chair & Alternate DCM

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"We should be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble without being servile or scraping. As God's people we stand on our feet; we don't crawl before anyone."

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 83

that on Sept. 5th
1935 Hank P. the
New York Group's
AA No. 2 (Story
in Big Book "The
Unbeliever") takes
his last drink?

North Toronto Group is 70!

NORTH TORONTO – LIKE DONALD TRUMP, GEORGE W. BUSH AND CHER – TURNS 70 THIS YEAR.

In March of 1946, the movie 'The Lost Weekend' – based on novelist Charles Jackson's spot-on account of five disastrous days in the life of an alcoholic - won four Academy Awards, including Best Picture. It may or may not be coincidence that the first activities of what would become the North Toronto Group of Alcoholics Anonymous began that month, or that by the time fall arrived in 1946, North Toronto would be established as one of the earliest AA groups in the city. This year, like many other products of the post-World War II Baby Boom, the North Toronto group will celebrate its 70th birthday. The anniversary will be held Oct. 4th at a regular open meeting and party that starts at 8 pm. All are welcome!

In almost every respect, the world has changed hugely in the last seven decades. But while presidential contender Donald Trump, former U.S. president George W. Bush, entertainers Sylvester Stallone, Cher and Dolly Parton – all of whom turn 70 this year - show the unavoidable consequences of time's passing, North Toronto carries on in 2016 much as it did in 1946. NT long-timer Ron S. says, "I was lucky enough to have joined while some of the original members were still around. Mac H. was one of the original members of the group. He informed me that some people who attended the meeting at City Hall decided to hold a discussion meeting on Friday nights in people's homes in March of '46 (in what was then still the Village of North Toronto). This was not a group just a meeting."

By Mac's account, Ron recalled, a few of the early members felt that "an open meeting was needed so the wives could join them." In those days, AA members were mostly men. At North Toronto, alcoholism was already recognized as a family disease and a large contingent of spouses faithfully attended Tuesday night open meetings – if for no other reason than to ensure that their mates had made it.

Mac, who lived on Lytton Blvd. and who had hosted those first informal gatherings, phoned St. George's United Church to ask if a meeting could be held there. Rev. John Short had already heard from some American colleagues

about the AA phenomenon in the U.S. "We've been waiting for you," he said. All the minister wanted to know was how many people to expect.

North Toronto's first official meeting was held at St. George's in October 1946. And except for a short time at another church while their home was being renovated, that's where the NT group has remained.

For some time after its inception, only the Tuesday night open meeting constituted the North Toronto Group. Friday night discussion meetings continued on a less formal basis, but those eventually moved to the church as well. Ron S. reports that Marg M. was North Toronto's first new member when the group set up shop at St. George's (known as Eglinton-St. George's since a merger of parishes). "Her dry date was one week after the first meeting," he said, "and when Toronto Intergroup was formed she became the first secretary." When she passed away, Marg had 45 years of sobriety.

Over the last seven decades, North Toronto has - as groups do - waxed and waned in membership. But the one enduring fact is that it has always been there. Anniversary meetings are special occasions, during which we remember our obligation to AA members who came before us and think of the responsibility to those yet to arrive.

Heather T. was only a few months sober when she spoke at North Toronto's 60th anniversary in 2006. "I was really nervous," she says. She told a man and woman sitting next to her that she had been asked to speak and was trembling at the prospect. They recommended she say a prayer. "And I did say a prayer, sitting right there," she recalls. "Really, I think it's what saved me." Heather has been a faithful member of North Toronto ever since and is active in planning this year's celebration. "When you find a miracle, you know, you're pretty grateful."

As the late Alex H. once said, when he washed up at North Toronto in the early 1960s, ready at last to follow the path of those who had gone before, "The people there didn't ask me who I was, or what I had, or where I came from. They took me in." Just as generations of AAs from North Toronto have been doing at the church at Lytton Blvd. and Duplex Ave. for 70 years.

- Jim C., North Toronto Group

that on Sept. 13,
1937 Florence
R. (story in Big
Book "A Feminine
Victory") is the first
female AA in
New York?

Farewell to a Dear Friend

A wonderful lady came into my life when she returned from Australia and moved to Pickering - eventually moving into a Retirement Lodge in Scarborough and becoming a member of the Lighthouse Group. The Lighthouse Group presented her with her 60-year Medallion and a plaque at her retirement home, as she was very ill at that time. She had a strong powerful message along with an extensive knowledge of A.A....

Farewell to a Dear Friend Dorothea McLennan

I first met Dorothea when she returned to Canada from Australia in 2002. On the 14th of March of this year she celebrated 60 years of sobriety and would have turned 91 years of age on September 25th. On the 8th of April, Dorothea succumbed to cancer.

She was a member of the Lighthouse Group; she always

had a wonderful message and I never tired of hearing her talk about her adventures in the A.A. programme. She spoke of the first time she met Bill Wilson at the Montreal Convention and of her travels in Australia - starting a new group or talking to someone in trouble about our A.A. program. Her message was uplifting and funny all at the same time, and she always left you feeling good.

When asked if she had any advice for the newcomer, Dorothea would reply, "DON'T DRINK AND DON'T DIE... and... keep going to your meetings." Thank you for the knowledge, Dorothea, and for the many wonderful memories. God Bless.

- Eleanor W., Liverpool Group

Friendly Group Marks 65 Years

On October 8th, 1951, the first meeting of the Friendly Group was held at the United Church at the corner of King St. W. and Dunn Ave. The group had a few different locations in the early years but has settled down at the St. Vincent de Paul R.C. Church on Roncesvalles Ave. No one is sure of the exact dates of all the moves. On October 17th, the group will mark 65 years of continuous service.

On January 3rd, 1948, Mel R. got sober in AA and became a member of the Sunnyside Group, which he left after two years to become a founding member of the Friendly Group. Mel was a widely recognized member of the group for 40 years. His leisurely guidance made the group a popular place to be on Monday nights in the West End.

The Friendly Group has always had a strong commitment to service, and the group's focus on tradition five

- passing on the gift of sobriety to the newcomer - has made the Friendly Group a welcome place of refuge for the suffering alcoholic. It is somewhere we can learn about ourselves and how to make the necessary changes in our lives to achieve sobriety and serenity.

We owe thanks to all the longtime members who have kept the group solid and who have inspired new blood to come into the loving embrace of AA and keep coming back.

We welcome everyone to help us celebrate this 65-year milestone on October 17th at the St. Vincent de Paul R.C. Church, 263 Roncesvalles Ave. at High Park Blvd.

Come for the meeting and stay for friendly fellowship, coffee, and a potluck meal with us.

The Bloordale Group Continued from Page 1

In the meantime, in a small room across the hall, members had been gathering on Wednesday nights for a step study discussion meeting. In the beginning, it wasn't listed under The Bloordale Group's name. This was done due to a fear of failure, and the group couldn't afford to pay rent for another room. So Roy H. decided to pay for this room, out of his own pocket, for 8 months. Incredible! In less than 2 years, Bloordale went from one meeting a week to three.

We are definitely not a glum lot - one Christmas, Jimmy O. dressed up as Santa Claus to bring some Christmas cheer to the group! We love one another and always welcome the newcomer. I believe that is partially why I love Bloordale so much. Thirty years of wisdom, strength, faith, and hope have kept Bloordale alive and well. This group prays that our doors will remain open for another 30 years! Thanking you all - past, present, and future members of AA - for my sobriety.

- Gord H., Bloordale Group

archives & announcements

Scarborough District 22
38th Annual Service Day

MORE THAN JUST MEETINGS

Saturday September 17th, 2016

9:30 am to 4:00 pm

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

Ample Free Parking Available
Fully Accessible & Signers Welcome

FREE LUNCH & COFFEE

**GUEST SPEAKERS, PANELS & FELLOWSHIP
Special Presentation - 12 Traditions Skit**

Information on How to Get Active in AA Service

Access Ability o Archives o Corrections o Grapevine
Co-operation with the Professional Community
Public Information o Self-Support o Treatment Facilities

In the evening we will be hosting a
SOCIAL GATHERING WITH DJ

8:00 pm - 12:00 am

Tickets \$10.00 - Available From Your Group GSR

Mississauga Fall Round Up

"The Road to Recovery"

Saturday October 1st 2016

in the
BANQUET HALL
of the

Vic Johnston Community Centre
335 Church Street, Mississauga ON

- Plenty of free parking
- Close to Streetsville GO
- Accessible by Transit

- 8 AM - Registration & Coffee
- 9 AM - Program Starts
- 2:30 PM - Closing

Tickets - \$20 includes Hot and Cold Buffet Lunch,
Morning Timbits, Coffee and Tea all day

Featured Speakers:

Marsha S. - AA - from Austin, Texas

Jonathan S. - AA - from Austin, Texas

John B. - AA - from Ajax, ON.

Pat H. - Alanon - from North Toronto Group

Alateen Speaker: TBA

50/50 draw tickets will be sold at the event

For more information, visit our website

www.MississaugaFallRoundUp.org

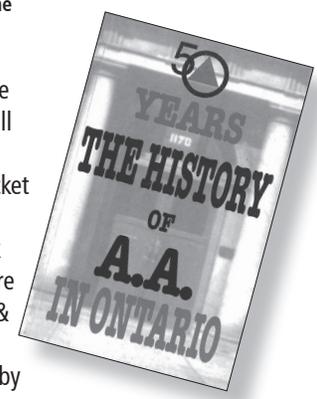


I FOUND IT IN THE ARCHIVES

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.

- 180 cassette tapes (mostly GTA speakers from 1969-2006) belonged to Joe B. (Royal York Group) who recorded speakers at the Sunday Morning Men's Meeting submitted By Tom C. (Sunnyside Group). Joe who had 33 yrs passed away last month and he will be missed.
- Longtime member Randy F. (Longbranch Group) items: Language of the Heart w/signatures on 25 yrs of sobriety, 2- 12x12 pocket size soft cover w/notes & Molly W. name, 12x12 hardcover w/Bill C. name, Came to Believe w/ Frank W. name, Living Sober, The Sermon On The Mountain, Stools and Bottles w/Frank W., Gordon H., Kay H. names, Our Devilish Alcoholic Personalities w/ Frank W. name, The Search For Serenity & How to Achieve It w/ Randy F. name, 19 cassette tape (some local speakers- John S. Lakeshore Group, Bev T. London, Davie T. Oshawa, Bill W., Gene D., Chuck C., Jack B.) donated by Laura C. (Start Today Group) - June 2014 & Jan. 2015.
- ORC 1994 original hand painted artwork poster, 4- Road To Recovery ORC Posters, 1- photo Road To Recovery Poster donated by Brian W. (Rox Glen Traditional Group) who was the ORC 1994 Graphics Coordinator.



TO DONATE AA/GTA ARCHIVAL ITEMS TO THE GTA ARCHIVES PLEASE 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.

... and please don't forget ...

Old GTA meeting books are needed for the GTA Archives.

announcements

PAST / UPCOMING MEDALLIONS

Robert H.	5	Bloordale Group	July 5	July 10	Harold S.	30	East York Group	Aug 26	Aug 30
Paul F.	20	Maple Group	July 1	July 12	Tammy S.	5	Reaching Out Group	Aug 30	Aug 30
Sarah H.	1	Sisters In Sobriety	July 10	July 13	Heather H.	25	Anniversary Group	Aug 18	Aug 31
Martin R.	10	Danforth Group	Jul 21	Jul 13	Carolyn B.	15	Sunnyside Group	Aug 19	Sep 1
Ellen S.	1	New Anchor Group	Jul 11	Jul 14	Chris T.	1	Six Points Group	Sep 5	Sep 12
John L.	5	Mississauga Group	July 12	July 17	Debe M.	10	New Anchor Group	Sep 1	Sep 15
Mike C.	15	Beverly Hills Group	July 17	July 22	Ron T.	5	New Anchor Group	Sep 19	Sep 22
Roger B.	5	East York Group	Jul 19	Jul 26	Edward A.	10	Lakeshore Group	Sep 19	Sep 25
Selena P.	5	East York Group	Jul 2	Jul 26	Christopher J.	5	Sunnyside Group	Sep 15	Sep 25
Sarabjit S.	50		Jul 5	Jul 29	Karyn H.	25	New Life Group	Sep 1	Sep 27
Anthony D.	1	The Hill Group	July 27	Aug 4					
Dorothy C.	55	Danforth Group	Aug 2	Aug 4					
Paul K.	5	New Anchor Group	Aug 18	Aug 18					
Marie B.	1	Anniversary Group	Aug 23	Aug 24					

IN THE LISTINGS, THE FIRST DATE IS THE SOBRIETY DATE, THE SECOND IS THE DATE OF THE MEDALLION CELEBRATION

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

TORONTO WOMEN IN RECOVERY ROUND UP | 2016

One woman to thousands

A full day of speakers and panels to help women in AA in their sobriety

saturday
september **17**

9am - 5pm

doors open at 8:30am

Neighbourhood Unitarian
Universalist Congregation

79 Hiawatha Rd, Toronto

(South of Gerrard St E, 4 blocks East of Coxwell Ave)

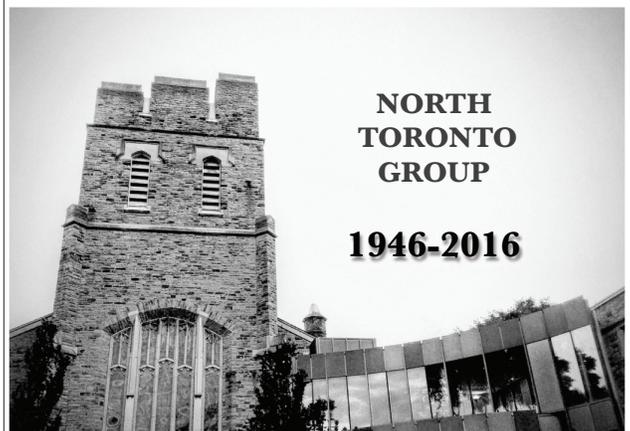
\$15 (Includes pot-luck lunch
and coffee, tea & water)

There will be limited tickets available at the door

For more information, tickets or to volunteer contact:

info@torontowomeninrecovery.com

CELEBRATING 70 YEARS EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH and HOPE



**NORTH
TORONTO
GROUP**

1946-2016

Tuesday October 4th 2016 at 8:00pm

Eglinton - St. George's United Church

35 Lytton Boulevard (corner of Duplex Avenue)

Other Announcements

NEW MEETING!!!

OPEN BIG BOOK DISCUSSION
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
1875 Sheppard Ave W.
(between Keele & Jane)
MONDAYS at 7:30 pm

First Annual Toronto
Women in Recovery Round-Up
See info on this page.
We are still looking for volunteers,
please email us at
info@torontowomeninrecovery.com

Fun in the Sun Round-Up
Saturday, Sept 16th from 11am to 7pm

The Fun Times Aren't Over

Hi, I'm Mike and I'm an alcoholic.

I've always had a hard time feeling comfortable in social gatherings. I've felt like I don't belong or am simply out of place, with thoughts such as, "what am I doing here?" and "no one is talking to me" floating around in my head. Drinking at least gave me something to do with my hands and when I took a sip, I felt like I was 'doing something'. But this just made me drink a lot, very quickly, because I didn't know what to say to people and I felt so uncomfortable standing alone. So I used to get very drunk, very fast when I would 'sip' drinks to act like I was doing something.

One evening, I was with some friends who were taking me to a house party. It was early, and we were just going to drop by briefly at someone's apartment before we went to the main party on Church Street. Once again, I felt out of place and kept sipping on the hard lemonade - I drank a couple of bottles before we left! When we got to the main party my head was already spinning, so my friends left me in the bedroom where everyone was storing their coats to sit down by the window. They had the window open and the safety screen out to let the fresh air in. I stuck my head through the window and tried not to feel sick. By then all the booze I drank hit me and I started to throw up, out of the window onto the sidewalk below.

I thought to myself, "At least they can't see me throw-

ing up!" and I sat like that for the entire evening. Every once in awhile I would vomit, and sometimes people would be walking below. I started to play a game in my head of hitting or not hitting them. I thought this was all perfectly acceptable, as I wasn't getting sick inside the apartment. I thought no one knew I was sick! Later I learned that my friends got a lot of flack from the hosts for bringing me; I had left a streak on the side of the building.

When I started going to AA, I thought all the 'fun times' were over and that my life was going to be filled with boring meetings since I couldn't drink anymore. I didn't know how to have fun without alcohol since I felt so insecure and unsure about myself. AA surprised me because I've been learning how to like myself, which makes it easier to not feel so out of place when around other people. Today, I can have fun and laugh and go to parties and talk to people. Sober.

In recovery, I don't ever have to worry about doing stupid things when drunk. Through working the Steps, the program is teaching me how to be a different person - funny, relaxed and social - the type of person I thought I could only be when drinking.

For that, I'm grateful.

DID YOU KNOW?

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

