



HOW is How We Heal Women in Recovery

Last week, I was a witness to much suffering: a dear friend learned her illness had taken a turn for the worse, a new friend shared the story of a tragic motorcycle accident that left him permanently disabled, and many of us suffered as a profoundly disturbed individual wreaked havoc and death in a nightclub in Orlando. Around the world and close to home, reminders

of our woundedness and capacity to wound left me asking why, why, WHY? In another time, I would have drowned the question in a bottle.

On Saturday, instead, I went to an AA meeting, and together we spoke the Serenity Prayer. Women and men stood and read How it Works, the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and the poem Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. Then a man, sober just over one year, stood and bravely shared his experience, strength and hope. In the summer heat, touched by his truth, we shared our own sorrow and joy; anger, shame and guilt; grace and gratitude. We received one another's honesty without judgement, with deep acceptance and consolation. In these rooms we heal, and learn again something we may have 'known' but forgotten: our immature selves demand answers to WHY?!!!, and our adult selves understand (stand under in humility) that



we live in the HOW: honesty, openness and willingness.

We may never stop asking why, but healing and recovery — LIVING — happens in the HOW. We have choice, and our choices matter. As we accept that we may never know why, and yet do not turn away from our responsibility to participate in this world with honesty, openness and willingness, we are given strength to create new experiences of healing and recovery, for ourselves and with others. AA is a 'we' program,

as my sponsor often reminds me. We are co-creators of reality. What kind of world do we want to live in? Let us be that kind of person: fiercely

compassionate, resolutely honest, resiliently forgiving, and deeply loving.

— Julie L., St. Clement's

“ In the summer heat, touched by his truth, ”
we shared our own sorrow and joy; anger,
shame and guilt; grace and gratitude.

CARRY THE MESSAGE!

Would you like YOUR Home Group featured in Better Times?

Contact us at bettertimes@aatoronto.org

masthead & service

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

234 Eglinton Avenue East,
Suite 202, Toronto, ON M4P 1K5
Telephone: 416-487-5591
Fax: 416-487-5855
TTY: 416-487-5062
Email:
bettertimes@aatoronto.org
Web: www.aatoronto.org

Editorial Committee:

Jeff D. (Chair)
Marc S. (Editor-in-Chief)
Julie L. (Assistant Editor)
Chris C. (Secretary)
Seán D. (Layout)
Peter B. (Circulation)

Opinions expressed in **BETTER TIMES** are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Greater Toronto Area Intergrupp.

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).

The monthly schedule is now a four-week rotation for the evening shifts on a day of the month, as opposed to the previous method of the evening schedule being on a date each month.

New Phone Training program began May 5th! New trainees will be given the training session by appointment only.

- 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).

It's still a work in progress...but 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.

Thank you!

TO CONTACT COMMITTEES PLEASE EMAIL:

Access Ability: accessability@aatoronto.org
Archives: archives@aatoronto.org
Communications: communications@aatoronto.org
bettertimes@aatoronto.org
Correctional Facilities: corrections@aatoronto.org

Cooperation with the Professional Community: cpc@aatoronto.org
Finance: finances@aatoronto.org
Ontario Regional Conference: orc@aatoronto.org
Public Information: publicinfo@aatoronto.org
Twelfth Step: twelfthstep@aatoronto.org

editorial & sharing

Thoughts From the Editor's Desk

At the opposite end of the spectrum from humility, lie the delusions of self-importance, arrogance, and false pride. These defects of character have been expressed in my active alcoholism, as well as in recovery when I lack awareness or the willingness to surrender and change. The world only seemed to revolve around me. My imagination would run wild with fantasy arguments, imagined criticisms from others, and merciless judgments of my (as well as others') real or perceived failings.

Thankfully, our program offers us a way out of the warped perceptions of where we fit in the Universe. This "right-sized" awareness comes over time, as we continually take inventory

and shine a light on the manifestations of self that block us from our loving Higher Power (in whatever form that takes). While resentments, fears, dishonesty, inconsideration, and other shortcomings still crop up, we are comforted in the knowledge that they are less frequent, less potent, and more easily surrendered with practice.

At the same time, we are encouraged by our sponsors, friends, and the literature to make different choices, finding new and healthier ways to be in this world, one day at a time.

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



The East Toronto Archives Breakfast...Wrap

The 11th annual East Toronto Archives Breakfast, co-sponsored by Districts 18 and 22, was celebrated on Sunday, June 5th, and on behalf of the committee I would like to tell you about it.

It was a wonderful event of fun and fellowship as 91 members sat down to a delicious breakfast, and I will give you a rundown of what happened although I would also like to share some of my reflections on the event.

Our format involves fellowship, a fabulous speaker, a sobriety countdown, raffle and door prizes as well as several fascinating display tables including Grapevine and interesting archival material with an emphasis on AA history in Districts 18 and 22.

Sobriety length ranged from a long-timer of 54 years to a newcomer of two months.

The speaker, Sean McC, of the Welcome group, delivered a powerful AA message and from my perspective the theme of his message was the "gift of sobriety."

Most of us in AA have often meditated with gratitude upon life itself as a precious gift and our sobriety is the source or root of all that is good in our lives.

As I reflected upon my own sobriety, I imagined it as a gift that comes wrapped in the Twelve Steps and Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. By following the AA Way of Life, I am able to unwrap that precious gift and in doing so transform my life.

AA events like the East Toronto Archives Breakfast (ETAB) allow me to meet and interact with some of the most agreeable and wonderful people in the world. Together we create a fabulous world greater than anything I ever imagined when I spent Sundays hung-over, drunk, or getting drunk - and lonely, oh, so terribly lonely.

Thank you, everyone who came to this event. For me, it was another highlight in an AA life of highlights. I'll see you next year.

- Ed H, ETAB Committee

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

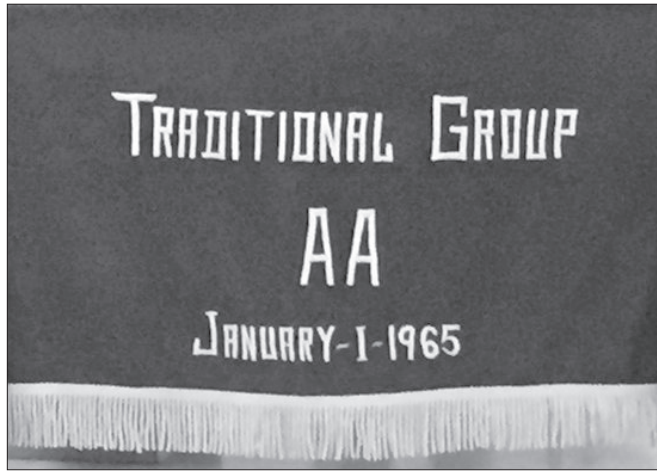
Taking Step Seven was for many of us the greatest act of authentic humility we have ever been asked to commit: to transfer control of our recovery to God...

...according to the Twelve and Twelve, humility is a clear recognition of who we are followed by a sincere attempt to become what we could be. That is, humility is seeing ourselves as we actually are, good and bad, strong and weak, and acting authentically on those truths.

A HUNGER FOR HEALING, P. 116

spotlight on

The Traditional Group



The Traditional Group of Alcoholics Anonymous was formed on January 1, 1965 by Bob W., Bill B., and Al B., all now deceased. As far as we know, they all died sober. The founders, members of the Willowdale Group, thought that there was a need for another group in the Willowdale area. The name "Traditional" was chosen, tongue in cheek, as it had been a tradition of the founders to start their weekend drinking on Friday night, the night chosen for open meetings of the new Group. Now they had a new tradition for Friday nights!

Bruce R. was present at the first meeting of the Group, although he would not achieve sobriety until October 2, 1969. He Kept Coming Back! He has now celebrated 46 years of sobriety and remains a stalwart member of the Group, seldom missing a meeting. He is an inspiration to newer members of the Group and a testament to the effectiveness of the AA program.

The Group has, from the beginning, held two meetings per week, an open meeting at 8:00 p.m. on Friday nights with a speaker and a closed meeting at 8:00 on Wednesday nights. The Wednesday closed meeting has, over the years, been a Twelve Step Meeting or a Three Step Meeting. In 2015, when the format was a three step meeting, it was decided to hold two meetings on Wednesday nights, both at 8:00, a Twelve Step Meeting and a Three Step One-Two-Three Meeting which may have a topic for discussion. This covers the needs and desires of all members of the Group.

When the Group was founded, meetings were held in Yorkminster United Church (affectionately known as "The A Frame") at Yonge St. and Highway 401. In July, 1983, the Group was notified that that church property

was to be sold and in early 1984 the Group moved to St. John's Anglican Church, York Mills, where it still meets.

The Group's table cover, pictured above, was made by a friend of Bob W. and the slogans boards used by the Group were created by the late Kathy W., a member of the Group.

In the early years, everyone smoked and the women all used cigarette holders and wore hats at meetings. How things have changed!

There has been one spinoff from the Group, the Glenholme Group started by Joe C. which meets in St. Thomas Aquinas church on Glenholme Avenue.

The Group currently has about 25 registered members and, as is the case with most other groups, the numbers have fluctuated both up and down over the years. For instance, in January, 1984, the Group had 43 registered members and in May, 2009, 20 members.

Besides Bruce R., the Group has several members with over 20 years of sobriety: Larry O. with 42 years, Betty P. with 28 years, Colin W. with 28 years, Theresa R. with 28 years, Don R. with 22 years and Stan G. with 21 years.



One of the great traditions of the Traditional Group is our post meeting fellowship with coffee, sandwiches and other snacks available following all Friday open meetings. This tradition dates back to

the Group's days in the "A Frame" when the highway (the nearby 401) was friendlier to hitch hikers. A meal or a sandwich for the road was an added attraction to meetings for those chasing the geographic cure. For birthdays and other special occasions, salads, hot food and desserts are added to the food table.

St. John's, where the Group meets, has an elevator and is wheelchair accessible, is only a short, but steep, walk up the hill from the York Mills subway station, has ample free parking, and is located in a large pastoral setting, with walkways and mature trees. Perfect for Serenity. A relatively small group, Traditional prides itself on being friendly and welcoming to all.

DID YOU KNOW?
that on July 3, 1955
in St. Louis
The Three Legacies of Recovery,
Unity & Service were turned over
to the AA movement
by its oldtimers?

What's In It For Me?

After many years of being around the program, the main concept that I've taken away is that I suffer from a disease, a disease of self-centredness. In every relationship, from the most intimate to the most superficial, from my mom to the grocery store clerk, I am always thinking 'what's in it for me?' This theme of being the centre of the universe has been present my entire life and has never served anyone. No matter how many ways I've tried to change or alter it, the outcome was always hurt feelings and negative consequences. All my fears, resentments and envy stem from the self-centredness and preoccupation with myself, and a lack of interest in what's going on with the rest of the people on earth.

The clear indication of how I'm doing with my program or how active my disease is can be seen in how I carry myself in public. If I'm walking down the street and everyone is 'in my way', then I know I need to up my game: go to a meeting, call my sponsor, be of service. The scariest place for me to be on any day, in any given moment is inside my own head. The only way I've found to stop overthinking and get out of my self-centredness is to think of others, and be of service, whether that means volunteering in my community, taking an AA com-

mitment or even opening a door for someone.

The program of AA is incredibly simple: I need to get out of the centre of the universe and help others, take care of my side of the street and maintain contact with a higher power. I've always complicated the program by over-analyzing: overthinking God, inventories, amends, meditation, sponsorship. It was only after I was able to stop fighting these concepts that I was able to implement a selfless attitude into my daily life and consequently have some contented sobriety.

In reality, I just need to get out of my head, and not concern myself with anyone else's opinion of God, or worry about whether my inventory is good enough, or if I will ever be able to make these amends. Instead, I need to focus on not drinking and thinking about what I can bring to life instead of what I can get out of it, and then my day goes well.

So if my sobriety is contingent on my spiritual condition, then I need to maintain mine because I see two choices for me: make things right with the Universe or die drunk.

– Neil H.

DID YOU KNOW?
that on July 2-4, 1965
the 30th Anniversary
International Convention
was held in Toronto
with about 12,000 in
attendance?

Step Seven Wordsearch

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

Find the hidden word with the letters left over after completing this puzzle. Email your answer to bettertimes@aatoronto.org or wait until next month's Better Times, we will publish it there.

ABLE	HITTER	PRIDE
BUSH	HUMAN	PURPOSE
CALM	HUMBLY	QUALITY
CHANCE	IDEA	REMOVE
CONCERN	INSIGHT	SECURITY
DEEPEN	INSTINCT	SEVEN
DESIRE	LEAGUE	SHARE
DEVELOP	LIFE	SHORTCOMING
DISCLOSE	OBLIVION	SURELY
DREAM	PAUSE	THEORY
FAITH	PINCH	
HIGHER	POWER	

Hidden Word:

Last Month's Hidden Word: CHARACTER

archives & announcements

Woodstock's 35TH Annual Alcoholics Anonymous

Marathon of Unity Convention

August 19, 20, 21, 2016

Unifor/CAW Hall, 126 Beale St., Woodstock, Ontario, N4S 6X5

NO REGISTRATION
7th Tradition (Donation) Only!

Friday, August 19

5:00pm - Doors Open, Fellowship & Coffee
6:15pm - Opening Ceremonies
6:30pm - Al-Anon Speaker: Jason M., Bradford, ON
8:00pm - A.A. Speaker: Alison R., Sparta, ON

Sunday, August 21

8:30am - Breakfast
(on site)
\$3.50 per person



Saturday, August 20

9:00am - A.A. Speaker: Yvonne L., Hamilton, ON
11:00am - A.A. Speaker: Sandi W., Oakville, ON
Lunch Break
1:30pm - Al-Anon: Diane S., London, ON
3:00pm - A.A. Speaker: Jeff L., St. Marys, ON

10:30am - A.A. Speaker: Pete L.,
Spruce Grove, Alberta

Closing Ceremonies

Soda, Water, Fries, Hamburgers, Hotdogs available
between speakers, at lunchtime
Coffee ~ all day ~ (7th Tradition donation)

5:00pm - Beef Barbeque Dinner (on site)

Adults: \$14.00
Children 12
& Under: \$5.00



7:00pm - A.A. & Al-Anon Countdown to Sobriety
Followed by:

A.A. Speaker: Benny McC., Manzanillo, Mexico

9:00pm - Enjoy the rest of your evening!!

For more information contact:

Lee K., Chairperson
519-535-5919
leekostis@live.com

A.A. Oxford Website
www.oxfordaa.com
(click on Events)

Local Telephone Answering Service 519-438-1122



20th Annual Mississauga Fall Round Up



“The Road To Recovery”

Vic Johnston Community Centre
335 Church St., Streetsville ON
Saturday, October 1, 2016

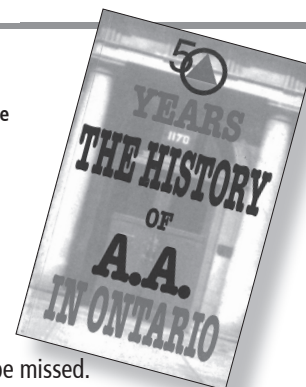
**I FOUND IT IN
THE ARCHIVES**

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.

Recent items donated to the GTA Archives:

- Foundation 33 Group Serenity Prayer Placard (32" x 19" w) donated by Sal C. (Trial & Error Group).
- Two Kingsway Group Receipt books: Library (July 13/1994 - Jan. 26/2000, May 19/2004)
Library (June 9/2004 - May 16/2007) with group name on the receipt.
- 8 Kingsway Group Printed Pamphlets w/ 60th Anniversary Flyers. Donated by the Kingsway Group.
- 3 Prayer Cards Bob McC. 55yrs sober (40 yrs Sunnyside Grp, 15 yrs Little Oak Group) passed away Sat. May 28, 2016. He will be missed.
- 11th Annual East Toronto Archives Breakfast Agenda Booklet. Donated by the Committee.



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 MEDALLIONS

Marcie N.	1	Bloordale Group	June 1	June 5
Peter G.	20	Royal York Group		June 7
Frances K.	1	Place to Share Group	June 11	June 11
Leana M.	5	Markland Wood Group	June 11	June 16
Nat S.	10	Bloordale Group	June 16	June 19
Jeff N.	15	Friendly Group	June 19	June 20
Daisy P.	20	Sisters In Sobriety	June 22	June 22
Jeff D.	5	Welcome Group		June 26
Harry N.	40	Fellowship Group	June 10	June 27
Philip J.	30	Last Chance Group		June 28
Helder D.	5	Last Chance Group		June 28
Dale	50	Royal York Group		June 28
Renata P.	1	Sisters In Sobriety	June 29	June 29
Angela S.	1	Markland Wood Group	June 25	June 30

UPCOMING MEDALLIONS

Dara Z.	25	King City Group	Apr 17	July 4
Heather S.	1	King City Group	June 18	July 4
Robert H.	5	Bloordale Group	July 5	July 10
Paul F.	20	Maple Group	July 1	July 12
Sarah H.	1	Sisters In Sobriety	July 10	July 13
John L.	5	Mississauga Group	July 12	July 17
Mike C.	15	Beverly Hills Group	July 17	July 22
Anthony D.	1	The Hill Group	July 27	Aug 4
Dorothy C.	55	Danforth Group	Aug 2	Aug 4
Marie B.	1	Anniversary Group	Aug 23	Aug 24
Heather H.	25	Anniversary Group	Aug 18	Aug 31

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

Smudge No Grudge

Birds of a Feather

AA Round-Up

Saturday, August 20, 2016

9 am - 5 pm

Native Canadian Centre
of Toronto

16 Spadina Road, Toronto

AA in Toronto Did You Know?

On July 2-4, 1993 Celebration of 50th
commencement of AA in Canada
was held at the Metropolitan Toronto
Convention Centre with about
6,000 in attendance?

On June 30 - July 3, 2005 the 70th
Anniversary International
Convention was held in Toronto
with over 44,000 in attendance?
1st city to get it twice.

sharing

God As My Friend

Hello, I'm your friend James, and I'm an alcoholic. I would like to share with you a most wonderful experience I am having with a friend.

After I had been sober a couple of years, I came to see that I had other items which belonged to my Step 1 List: gambling, promiscuous behaviour, excessive emotional highs, and cutting. All of these amounted to the triggering of a very potent physical response, which was chemical in nature.

The reality was that I was intoxicating myself from the inside - what the professionals now term as "the inner pharmacy." This left my sobriety on shaky ground after more than five years sober. I would need to give up any activity which significantly altered my healthy state of being and would serve to divert my attention away from a clear, calm sense of self.

I decided to commit to a journey of increasing self-awareness, abstaining from all behaviours that were intoxicating to me, which could lead me back to drinking. I needed to turn away from the very temporary satisfaction of outward comfort and distraction, to a life of sustained serenity that comes only with inner peace and healing.

Quieting and calming down to raw inner awareness was like entering a deep, dark uncharted cave - very frightening. I knew I could not do this alone, and that no other person could go on this journey with me. I would need continuous guidance, the strength and the power to follow through, so I finally had to face my ultimate fear of God.

The punishing "gonna getcha" God that I had been raised with was never going to cut it. So one night, through mild and amazingly peaceful tears, I came to the Universe and simply said, "You are so enormous and I am so small. But I can no longer function with this distinction. I need your continuous power and guidance. Equally, I need you and I to be the best of friends. Please, can this happen, and please will you walk with me to my own centre, to the peace, healing, and nurture that I so desperately need."

I wish I could say that from that moment on, my life was forever changed for the better. Looking back, it actually has been. But this, like any other relationship, has continued to grow with time and commitment. I continue to discover that the more I trust and take hold of this friendship, the better I can see that my best friend ever already has.



**DO YOU KNOW YOUR GROUP HISTORY? IS IT WRITTEN OUT ON PAPER?
IF NOT, ASK YOUR GROUP LONGTIME MEMBER(S) IF THEY WOULD ANSWER THE GROUP
HISTORY QUESTIONS BELOW AND SUBMIT A COPY TO THE GTA ARCHIVES.**

- ☐ What was the founding date of the group: if unsure, when do you think the founding date was?
- ☐ What was the group's name when it was formed? Why was the name chosen?
- ☐ Has the group's name changed over the years? If so, when did it change and why?
- ☐ How did the group get started? Who were the founders of the group? (If uncertain, who may have started the group?)
- ☐ Were there any spin-offs of your group? Was your group created as a spin-off? What group did it spin-off from?
- ☐ When the group started, how often were meetings held? Has this changed over the years?
- ☐ What was the format of the meeting (open, closed, discussion, speaker, etc.)? Has this changed over the years?
- ☐ Any item(s) made by a group member(s) that is used at the meeting? (i.e. table cover, slogans, slogan board, wooden steps, book holders, painted pictures etc.) If so, who made them and in what year?
- ☐ Does the group hold social or special AA related activities? (i.e. holiday parties, candlelite meetings, picnics etc.)
- ☐ During the group's history has their location, date and time changed? If so, please list. (month/day/year)
- ☐ How many members are in the group today?
- ☐ Has there been an increase or decrease of group members over the years? Please describe.
- ☐ Does the group have any links with Al-Anon or Alateen? If so, what are they and when did they start?
- ☐ Does the group have any customs, traditions or interesting anecdotes? If so, will you share them?