



INFO AA Day

*The GTA Intergroup and the General Service Districts of the GTA present the 36th Annual Information AA Day on **Saturday, May 30, 2015**. This year's event will be held at the **519 Church Street Community Centre**. This year's theme is "Inside the Circle Through Service".*

Very often we hear fellow members share that service in Alcoholics Anonymous has helped them stay within AA and enrich their sobriety. Information AA Day is a day where one can get a taste of service beyond one's home group.

It's a day to learn about AA's general service structure, find out about the various sub-committees, and join discussions on how the Intergroups work with the General Service Districts. Our Area's Delegate will also be reporting on what happened at the General Service Conference.

There will be an opportunity to hear from Toronto Young People in AA (TOYPAA), as well as the chance to ask questions using the Ask-It-Basket. We have also invited a guest from the General Service Office in New York to share their experience, strength and hope.

Tickets to the event are \$5.00, which also includes a potluck lunch. You are welcome to bring items to add to the table. Tickets are available from your Intergroup Representatives, General Service Representatives or at the door.

Doors open at 8am. *We are looking forward to this year's event and hope to see you all there.*

Yours In Love and Service, The 2015 Information AA Day Committee

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

The only really happy people are those who have learned how to serve.

Albert Schweitzer

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 10th 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 bteditor@aatoronto.org. Your anonymity will be protected.

Yours in Service,
The Better Times Staff.



WE NEED YOU ... for 12 Step and Phone Service!

- 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!
- Corrections Committee seeking people who have been involved with "Bridging the Gap" program
- Twelfth Step Committee seeking members
- Winter Season Open House seeking ideas for wheelchair accessible venue for 2015
- The following service positions with GTA Intergroup Sub-Committees are available to members of AA in the Greater Toronto Area:
Phone Greeters – Archives Committee – Twelfth Step Committee – Communications – Public Information Committee – Treatment Facilities Committee – Corrections – Finance
Please see www.aatoronto.org for more information & the next committee meeting.
- The 12 Step Committee is looking for members, a master scheduler, greeter captains and a secretary. Anyone interested can apply through the website and go to the 12 step committee page or contact Fred at twelfthstep@aatoronto.org or call 647-624-7286.

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Twelfth Step: twelfthstep@aatoronto.org

editorial & service

Thoughts From the Editor's Desk

Thank you for your contributions, feedback, and suggestions for Better Times. We continue to look for ways to better carry messages of experience, strength, and hope from our members in and around the GTA. Along with our new features, "Spotlight" and monthly "Wordsearch", we continue to share your experiences on a step each month. We have heard mixed responses about last month's cover - from shouts of elation to consternation, praise to criticism. It was in no way our intention to offend anyone or be disrespectful. The cover of the April edition was meant to highlight the impact the ORC had on members of our Fellowship (along with our sister Fellowships - Al-Anon and Alateen), both young and old. The quotes reflected the passion, energy, and

inspiration felt by everyone from Alateen to long-time AA members. We invited everyone to contribute. We did not want to print certain exact words spoken (as we thought they might offend), but wanted to capture the enthusiasm of the youth experience, particularly of newcomers. The language was conveyed not as profanity, but as the normative and common language of many of our members. I apologize on behalf of the editing team that the cover offended anyone.

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



12 Step Service - Not A Burden

"... the dark past is the greatest possession you have - the key to life and happiness for others. With it you can avert death and misery for them." (AA, Fourth Edition, p. 124)

The first time I went to an AA meeting, about eight years ago, someone approached me and gave me his phone number. He became my first sponsor. He was staying sober by thinking of what he could do for others, of what he could pack into the stream of life, rather than thinking of himself (to paraphrase page 86 of the Big Book).

It occurred to me later that it wasn't just my sponsor-to-be: everyone who had a role in that meeting, from the people who started it decades ago, to the people who simply showed up that day, did service. They made it possible for me to get sober, learn to live life on life's terms, and then give back by doing service myself.

I am not simply giving back. I am doing service, selflessly, in order to stay alive myself. Some might say that it's the paradox of AA: I am selfless by being selfish, which allows me to continue being selfless, and so on. I prefer to think of this as aligning my will with the will of my higher power, something step 3 in the 12 and 12 discusses. That is the correct use of will, I am told, and I can operate along those lines all I want.

Today, service is the core of my recovery. I didn't always realize it, but today I recognize that service keeps me sober, alive and sometimes even serene.

At the most obvious level, when I sponsor other alcoholics I'm continuing the tradition that set AA in motion when Ebby shared his story with Bill, and then when Bill shared his story with Dr. Bob. When I share my story with sponsees, and help them work through the steps, I am continuing a tradition that defines AA.

But I am also doing service when I just show up at meetings. I am doing service when I talk to newcomers at meetings. I am doing service when I help set up a meeting, or take on a position within the group. I am doing service when I get involved at the area or group level, answer phones, or assist with the ORC, roundups, and other special events. I am doing service when I listen to someone's fifth, when I take their calls, read their texts and emails, and meet for coffee. I am doing service when I carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic in detoxes, hospitals, other institutions, and daily life.

Though our program is built on the triangle of Unity, Recovery and Service, it turns out that service is the glue that holds it together. There is no Unity without meetings, and there are no meetings without members doing service. After I work the first 11 steps, I'm told that I can't keep what I don't give away, that I must give freely of what I find, so Step 12 is all about service.

I was delighted to discover on this journey, however, that service is not a burden. It is primarily a great joy. "Though they knew they must help other alcoholics if they would remain sober, that motive became secondary. It was transcended by the happiness they found in giving themselves for others. They shared their homes, their slender resources and gladly devoted spare hours to fellow-sufferers." (AA, Fourth Edition, p. 159)

Jim S., Midtown Group

Midtown Group Then ... and Now

DID YOU KNOW?
that on
Sept. 9, 1982,
Joint Sharing Meetings
with six DCM's & the
Operating Committee
were started?

Mid Town met on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the church on Walmer Road, just up from Bloor when I first came in, and I've heard there was a different location years before that. Who knows where? It was the second meeting

I ever attended more than 22 years ago and I have been in regular attendance ever since. They let me join as a member 8 or 9 years ago. The 15-year medallion was coming up, so the temporary sponsor of 15 years asked me where I intended to take it and I said at my home group.

"You haven't been there in years," he said. "What's the meeting you attend most regularly?"

"Mid Town," I laughed.

"Well then that's where you should celebrate. Go ask them if they'll let you join and what you need to do to get your medallion." Sponsors.

There was a great core of guys there that I knew from regular attendance.

They just said to come to a business meeting and that'll make me a member. Easy as that. No hoops. They even got a cake for me. Like the Annex itself, it was a very informal and welcoming group. In fact, everyone was welcome if you had a desire to stop drinking.

Tuesdays had Steps 1, 2 and 3 in the gymnasium upstairs, Steps 4 to 12 in the smaller side room with the piano... for the more advanced alcoholic. Kinda "meat & potatoes" when I first came in... and there were always coffee & cookies that someone set up. I always looked forward to the open speaker meeting on Thursdays. One of those Thursday nights at about 3 or 4 months in recovery, one of the more senior members of the group at the time asked me to speak, true to the ad hoc informality. Despite the dread-of-speaking-terror we have all experienced, I managed to do the service requested. And even returned the next week without a grudge!

The Mid Town was kept really simple & no-nonsense. Just your basic AA Group, all welcome. I think the chairing of the Tuesday step rooms was left ad hoc... there was never any kind of formal itinerary or list of chairpersons. Someone would pick up the book and brief format sheet and we'd get going. Very informal. Greeters? Just the usual AA handshake any member might extend to an unfamiliar face along with old friends and regular members.

Don't really remember why we moved from Walmer... The church raised the rent? The post-meeting alcoholic throng on the Dalton St. side of the church was too large, noisy and smoky? Doesn't matter. Suddenly we

were right on Bloor and a whole host of new faces eventually appeared.

After a rather heated group business meeting a few years ago, one of those core guys from the old Walmer church that had helped with the challenges of locating and moving our group to its new location was walking towards me on the sidewalk outside. I could tell he was looking for a sympathetic ear, and by the steam coming from his ears that he'd been out-voted on some important procedural issue or other. There's been lots of voting. Just as he got close and was about to speak I said, "Isn't it wonderful how we can sit back and enjoy seeing what these kids are gonna make of this meeting?"

Like all of us, I can always lose serenity and sometimes the Higher Power. So a visit to the old Walmer Road Mid Town in my memory or a visit to its current location just down the street @ 427 Bloor always helps me find it, usually when speaking with or listening to a newcomer. Like any Anonymous Alcoholic's Meeting anywhere in the world, it's the safest four walls we can be in.

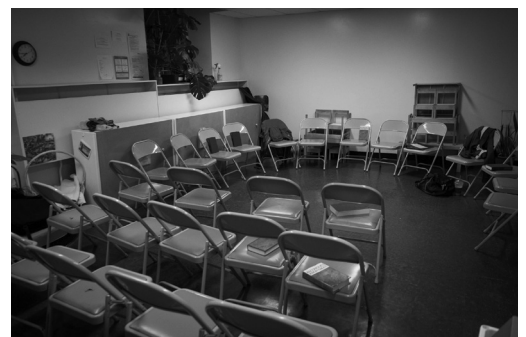
- Jan H., Midtown Group

I joined Midtown in the fall of 2010 and have been an active member since that time. When I joined, the core active members of the group were largely older (predominantly white) men and another couple of women (two others that come to mind). I had been informed that the group had semi-recently moved from its Walmer Road location and had changed its meeting schedule to Sunday and Monday nights. Due to the change in location and meeting times, the group apparently had shrunk a bit, although I cannot attest to this as I don't recall ever attending the Midtown Group while it was located on Walmer.

I had been warned that there were mostly men in attendance and that other meetings would be better for me to attend so that I could connect with sober women. When I joined Midtown, there were still not a lot of women, however, I had just over four years of sobriety and was able to welcome women and create a safe space for them at the meetings.

At that time, the group membership was quite small (business meetings having only about 10 to 15 people maximum at each) and apparently the reason was that the rotation of service positions was not very frequent. The newer members and I began to request that we do regular elections so that we could get involved in service. We also requested that written descriptions of service positions be disclosed so that we could take them up and fulfill our duties. At the time, positions and knowledge of their duties were not openly shared.

Slowly but surely the group membership began to grow. More women, young people, people with diverse cultural backgrounds, and members of the LGBT community began to join the Midtown Group.



Continued on next page ...

archives & word search

**I FOUND IT IN
THE ARCHIVES**

BACK TO THE REPOSITORY... with GTA Archivist Eddy G.
Come and join us in this rewarding aspect of AA service.

**ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THE HISTORY OF AA
AND ARE YOU WILLING TO BE TRAINED?
HELP IS CURRENTLY NEEDED TO CATALOG MATERIAL.**

Contact the GTA Intergroup Office by phone or by email.

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 don't forget...

Old GTA meeting books are needed for the GTA Archives.



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.

ABSOLUTE | ACCOMPLISH | AGREE | AVERAGE
BAFFLED | BEGIN | BELIEVE | CAMARADERIE | CONTROL
DECISION | DETAIL | DOUBT | FIERCE | GRACE
HONEST | HUMAN | IDEAL | IGNORANCE | LIQUOR
OBLIVION | OCCUPATION | PERSUADE | PROSPECT
RECOVERED | RESCUE | SHIPWRECK | SUFFER | USEFUL

Hidden word:

Last Month's Answer: FELLOWSHIP

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

Continued from previous page ...

We have had two group inventories (facilitated by a non-group member using the questions in the AA group pamphlet) in order to create space for discussion of important matters (important issues/ideas for change were brought back to the group business meeting to be voted upon).

Currently, group business meetings attract between 30 and 40 members and we have an active and vibrant group membership. We have created new service positions and also have descriptions of service positions so that knowledge is transmitted freely and easily.

We have an open speaker meeting on Sunday nights and a closed discussion on Monday nights with two rooms: a Big Book room and a Twelve-and-Twelve room (on the last Monday of every month we read a story in the Big Book room and a tradition in the Twelve-and-Twelve room).

Several of the few core group members that were at Midtown when I joined have left the group. There seemed to be a need for change at Midtown that included more freedom of information and spirit of rotation that perhaps did not sit well with them, or perhaps they felt the need to move onto other groups. Unfortunately, it was not always clear. In my opinion, we now have elder statesmen at the group instead of bleeding deacons (as suggested in the Traditions in the Twelve-and-Twelve) and I am grateful that we still have members at the group with long time sobriety.

Overall, I love being a member of the Midtown group. We have a lovely mix of people from all different backgrounds and life experiences who are hell bent on enjoying life and are into the Steps, Traditions, and Service.

– Sarah O., Midtown Group

Making A Decision

I make great decisions. I mean who choses to come into AA because they have been on the fast track to success? In fact my decisions have been so epic that when I was 23 years old I went into the program - at least I thought I did.

Like many of us, I came into the rooms because I thought my problem was alcohol and drugs. I was making a very good income, I drove a 2-seat German sports car, people at work were admiring me, even jealous of me. Behind the facade, I was living in fear - fear of money, fear of women, fear of failure, and fear of the success. But I thought, and continued to think, my problem was with alcohol and drugs.

MY fantastic decision making ability continued even after I came in, because I decided that the program was too hard. So I decided that the program was meetings and not steps. I came into the rooms unable to be at peace with life, and though I was sharing and talking and at times even looked happy, I wasn't. I now know that I thought I was in the program, but in fact I was only in the fellowship.

Years like this continued; I was practising "sodriety". I was dry, thinking I was sober. My world got worse. Finally, I came to believe that if my life was based on the decisions I made, and I wasn't happy, that maybe, just maybe I needed to look at those twelve steps. Living a life working the program is so different from just being in the fellowship.

Truly, the Ninth Step Promises have come true. I now have friendships based on altruism. I don't want to use anyone. I have people coming to me for help. I made amends to a childhood abuser and felt a wave of serenity wash over me. I made amends for things I have taken - time, money, energy - and can now look people in the

eye. I now take total responsibility for screwing up as a father, son, brother, and husband.

Now that I'm almost four years sober and at peace with my life, I don't live in shame and have deep meaningful friendships with healthy people. I now have sponsees and many of them have sponsees too. These are all things I can take no responsibility for. It's due to me working the program and not just the Fellowship. Anyone who wishes to connect it would be my honour to chat.

- Alex B., Prince George Group Hamilton, Ontario

DID YOU KNOW?
that Bill W.
introduced the
Responsibility Declaration
at the 1965
International Convention
in Toronto?

10th Annual East Toronto Archives Breakfast

Ten years is a long time in AA, whether measuring the lifespan of personal sobriety or the lifespan of an annual AA event. On June 7th we will be sitting down to celebrate one of these important markers at the 10th anniversary of the East Toronto Archives Breakfast, affectionately known as ETAB and we'd like to see you there!

In the summer of 2004, the Archives Committee of Scarborough District 22 was born. The sub-committee chair of the day, Matti H, thought that it would be a good idea to promote archives within the district with an annual breakfast. He and two other members of the committee, Eddy G & Ed H went to work planning the event.

ETAB-1, as it was called, was held on Sunday, May 28, 2006, at Embers Restaurant in Scarborough. The affair was chaired by Larry W of the Lighthouse Group while the speakers were Dorothy McL, Twelve Traditions, and Ron D, Bellamy.

In year number two, District 18 joined and the two districts have co-sponsored the East Toronto Archives Breakfast from that day forth and things have only gotten better with each passing year.

If I may be allowed an indulgence, I will quote from our 2007 Better Times article: "Are you ready for some mathematics? Don't panic! Don't panic! It's a simple formula: Fellowship + Service + AA Members = FUN!"

With display tables you can take a walk through the past, present, and future. It's an important reminder "of how far we have come. Knowledge of our past helps ensure that our original message of recovery, unity, and service will continue undiluted and true." (A.A. Archives)

Of course, it's also simply a morning of fun, fellowship, and great food. Please come and enjoy the day. We hope to see you on June 7th!

- Ed H.



announcements



PAST MEDALLIONS

Maria A.	1	Lansing Group	April 4
Paul M.	10	Parkway Group	April 6
Chris M.	5	Parkway Group	April 6
Wayne K.	25	Golden Mile Group	April 8
Shane P.	15	Rexdale United	April 9
Mary M.	1	New Anchor Group	April 9
Jeff S.	1	Scarborough Group	April 10
Jason S.	1	New Anchor Group	April 23
Dave A.	10	Lakeshore	April 26

UPCOMING MEDALLIONS

Don B.	10	East York Group	April 28
Orion A.	20	Little Denmark Traditional	April 28
Ken L.	1	Rexdale United	April 30
Jim B.	35	Morning Discussion	May 2
Kay F.	35	Kipling Group	May 7
Clara O.	5	Keep It Simple Group	May 10
Tim C.	30	Mississauga group	May 10
Carole V.	5	Sunnyside Group	May 14
Tim L.	1	Scarborough Group	May 15
Paul C.	1	Bloordale Group	May 17
Norman T.	35	Kingsway Group	May 20
Peter B.	15	Keep It Simple Group	May 24

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ **50th Annual Niagara Blossomtime Convention**
May 1 at 4pm to May 3 at 1pm
Double Tree Hotel, Niagara Falls, Ontario

■ 36th Annual District 82 Victoria/Haliburton Conference

May 2nd 2015 at 10am

*The Victoria Park Armoury,
210 Kent St. W., Lindsay, Ontario*

Full day includes complimentary lunch and catered banquet for \$25.00.

Conference only including complimentary lunch is \$10.00

For ticket information please email
36thdist82conf@gmail.com or call Glen B. at
705-464-9237.

■ May 9

**A Place Of Hope
Four Year Group Anniversary**
7:30 pm

■ May 11

**Bellamy Group
35 Year Group Anniversary**
8 pm

Come and help celebrate Bellamy's 35th anniversary! Looking forward to re-connecting with the original members and hear their story of recovery.

■ May 30

Information A.A. Day
8am-4pm

■ June 7

**10th Annual
East Toronto Archives Breakfast**
9am-12:30pm

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

Phone Greeter Training

will take place on

Saturday, May 9, 2015 and **Sunday, May 17, 2015**
10:30 am and **1:30 pm**

at

234 Eglinton Ave. East, Suite 202

Sunnyside Group

My name is Peter M of the Sunnyside group. I am currently working on a project with to compile a detailed history of the Sunnyside group. We have been able to get information on the group from 1965 onward. Our goal is to get information about the group prior 1965. So this is a plea to former Sunnyside members and current AA members to dig deep into those memory files and help if they can. We are looking for member's names, places where meetings were held and even founding member information. If there are stories, or pictures that would be fantastic. Please take a trip with us down memory lane and help keep our legacy alive.

Peter M. – sunnysidegsr@gmail.com

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Service includes practicing love, tolerance, patience and willingness, especially listening and keeping an open mind in all our affairs. We are required to give of ourselves in service to others without expecting any 'payback' or recovering anything in return for A.A. service.

51st Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001



My Secrets Kept Me Sick – My Experience with Step 5

I am 50, I am divorced, and I am an alcoholic. The truth is hard to accept; admitting this is difficult. Everything I do now is hard, because it is not my choice - it is what I have to do to stay sober and to stay alive. When I first walked into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous, it was with a lot of fear and skepticism. I didn't know what to think of the fellowship. Was it a religious cult? How did it work? What about these 12 Steps people keep talking about?

I was told to go to a meeting everyday, get a sponsor, join a group, start working on the 12 Steps, and start doing service. I struggled with everything; it was all overwhelming. I prayed for a miracle, a cure. If I took a break for a year, surely I would be ok after that. If I stopped taking my anti-depressants, it wouldn't affect me as much. A pill will come on the market...anything besides AA and its promises.

I went to meetings...that's all I did. I wanted to do my steps, but I couldn't do the 5th Step. I didn't trust anybody. My ex-husband had lied and cheated throughout our entire 18 years together. Most of my friends - I discovered they weren't really friends and had betrayed my trust - were the ones he had been lying about and cheating with!!!! How would I ever trust anyone, especially a complete stranger, with the deepest, darkest, most humiliating experiences of my whole life.

Well, I did it because I didn't have a choice. After sitting in back rows of meetings for about a year, trying to do it my way, not getting a sponsor, not joining a group, not doing service, I relapsed and it was serious. My beliefs were delusional: I wasn't special and it didn't get better. In fact, it got a hell of a lot worse. I was scared

I might die and I was desperate. I needed help, and I would do anything I was told, even if it meant 'Admitting to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.'

After a week at a treatment centre in detox, I got back to meetings, searching frantically for someone I thought I could trust, someone with a lot of sobriety. I was seeking a person who at one time felt like me, but most of all who wouldn't judge!!!!

It was difficult to write and read on paper my shameful history. Then came the time to share with my sponsor my truths and unleash the demons from within. Shockingly to me, my sponsor wasn't appalled, she was very supportive. I felt such relief. I felt lighter and free. I was told to be gentle with myself, to forgive myself and PRAY. And I did. Amen.

I can't remember the day it happened - I didn't see a vision or a white light, but I felt different. It was summer, and I realized the obsession was gone. I no longer thought about alcohol and drinking all day, everyday. I wasn't walking around feeling sorry for myself that I couldn't go sit on a patio and have a drink. That to me was a miracle. My Higher Power was with me. I was no longer a victim crying, "Poor me, I can never drink again."

I now wake up feeling grateful every morning, feeling a combination of humility and serenity - a healing tranquility. My sobriety now has meaning. There is something cleansing about the 5th Step, and it gave me a renewed soul. For that I am grateful.

- Karen W., The Hill

Scrambled Ego? Sunnyside Up!

My group recently saw me mark one year of sobriety. It took me 14 months to achieve that. "There was a lot of people at your medallion, you must be really popular," somebody said. My hat size swelled until I realized I had not done it alone. "I just go to a lot of meetings so I know a lot of people." I stood up to accept the mark of my sobriety simply to show that the Program works. It was a humbling experience.

I have learned much from our elegant design for living this past year - first of all, I am an alcoholic. From the collective wisdom of these rooms, the support of others and learning from their experiences, strength and hope, I stay sober.

I grew up in a military family, moving from Maine to California, to Texas to Nebraska, always the new kid in the trailer park, trying to fit in, but saying "hello" and shortly thereafter, "good-bye". But here in the Program, it's "Hello!" and "Keep coming back!" Alcoholics Anonymous has given something I can trust, something I can depend on. I have found a home.

Sunnyside is my home group. They stretch me like a pizza. It's

the first place I interpreted the slogans, attended a business meeting and chaired a meeting. I do service, "Faith without action is dead." My background is theatre, so setting up is "staging for the show". It gives me a sense of place. "Places ladies and gentlemen!"

In the Big Book chapter "How It Works", the word "self", or derivatives thereof, appear 30 times. I was reminded of this after I accepted a medallion from my poor long-suffering sponsor. Over and over I had rehearsed the things I wanted to say: acknowledge my family, members of my church, and those who had received chips, and express my gratitude for the support of my brothers and sisters in the Program. To me this program is a finishing school for relationships - with God, self, and others.

About two minutes before my sponsor called me forward to accept my medallion, my mind went blank. I flubbed, fumbled and stuttered. Afterwards, someone charitably noted that I was short and to the point. My my my - it was a truly humbling experience.

- Connie H., Sunnyside Group