

BETTER TIMES

SEPTEMBER 2023

PRODUCED MONTHLY FOR AA MEMBERS IN THE GREATER TORONTO AREA

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2024 Ontario Regional Conference Announcement
- September Medallions
- District 22 Service Information Day

BETTER TIMES is published monthly for AA members in the Greater Toronto Area.
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How To Reach Us
Submit Group News, medallions, event notices, letters to the editor and articles to Better Times, before the 10th of the month prior to month of issue by email to bettertimes@aatoronto.org or contact Alexx at 416-487-8110

The 12 Step Committee is looking for Assistant Greeter Coordinator(s) to assist in the preparation of greeter schedules, respond to questions from greeters, and liaise with the 12-Step chair.

Experienced helpline greeters, computer literate, comfortable using Microsoft Office (mostly Word and Excel), gmail, text messaging and Google drive are preferred candidates.

As this position can be time consuming, it may be best suited to retired members or members holding part-time jobs.

Interested candidates are asked to apply to: greetercoordinator@aatoronto.org, attention Lise R.

The Importance of Service work in a Treatment Facility – Walter Y.

I feel a little strange saying it, but I have, thanks to my HP and this Fellowship, been around for a lot of single days at a time. The most important and fulfilling work for me has been the outreach or as we call it, the 12th step work in which I have been privileged to take part.

Often, it felt right for me to be more passive, to rely on the requests for sponsorship, on friends who knew I was sober and needed what AA has to offer. Now I have to ask myself what opportunities I might have missed, to help another suffering alcoholic and to grow spiritually.

By the time the newcomer has walked through the door, some level of Step One acceptance or desperation has shown up. And for whatever reason, AA was the choice made.

This isn't the case in the treatment centre. We can't assume that all their work is 12 Step oriented. Nor is it always a choice to be in treatment at all. Many of us end up there because of family, company insurance plans or judicial order.

Offering meetings within the centre may be the only contact with AA.

How many times has someone shared in a meeting that they had finished

treatment and, having no contacts, no phone numbers, or fellowship safety net, went back out and spent years before getting into the rooms? How many do we know of who have died because of it?

One of the miracles of my sobriety has been the opportunities I have had to take a meeting into treatment centres on a regular basis. To be honest, I was dragged by a sponsor at the time. It was uncomfortable to find myself back in the kind of place my alcoholism had sent me to. I didn't enjoy it at all, I went back though, and by the third time, I was hooked. I could go into the nitty gritty of it, I could be more honest (I don't know why, but it was my truth). I was able to relate to these guys and some became sponsees, some ended up greeting me at other meetings and the sense of camaraderie was palpable.

The post Covid landscape has changed, new relationships with the centres need to be forged. That's true. However the need out there for the Message of Hope that we can bring has not changed. It is essential, the amazing need for reciprocal energy offered by AA. This is how we grow in service.

September Blues – Ari H.

Since I was a youngster, like clockwork, I would get sad in September.

Maybe it was going back to school. Or, saying goodbye to the warmth and light. Drinking in my teens I wasn't awake to the beauty and didn't take advantage of it.

I got sober just before 20.

At meetings, I laughed uncontrollably, fell asleep and made others nervous.

But, I was determined to do the work and wake up.

One of my fondest memories came after doing the steps with my late sponsor, Doug R.

I was walking to St. Clements, saw the sun and had the realization...I never had to drink again. I was filled with emotion and gratitude. I was blessed to experience the sunlight of the spirit. cont'd on page 4

2024

ONTARIO REGIONAL CONFERENCE



Many years ago, when I was just a few weeks into the program, a group of women I had met invited me to attend the Ontario Regional Conference (ORC).

I had no idea what this was but gladly accepted – I was terribly lonely and was excited for the company. As I was still in a fog, I didn't know what to expect.

When I arrived at the Sheraton Hotel late Friday afternoon after work I was overwhelmed by the number of people at the ORC. We started the meetings in the usual fashion, saying the Serenity Prayer, and ended the meeting holding hands and saying the Lord's Prayer. It was overwhelming, exciting, exhilarating and terrifying all at the same time.

That first year, I heard a speaker who had a huge impact on me as I was starting my journey in sobriety. Over the years, I have heard many speakers who have touched my heart. Whether it's hearing amazing speakers, seeing old friends & making new friends or going to the banquet & dance, the ORC has always been a highlight of my year.

This year, it is a privilege to be the Chair of ORC. The 2024 committee has been busy planning and preparing for the conference.

The theme for the 2024 conference is "A New Freedom." Since I walked into these rooms many years ago, the promises have come true for me & I have been given a new freedom and a new life along with the tools to help me live that life.

Registration will open in September.

Visit our website, aaorc.ca, & sign up for our e-newsletter to be one of the first to be notified when registration opens.

Lisa W., Chair, 2024 ORC

*If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know **A New Freedom** and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.*

Vision of Hope Turns 30

The Vision of Hope Group is celebrating 30 years! The group was formally established on August 5, 1993, when it was registered with GSO in New York.

The names of the people who started this group are a bit vague, but it was likely Francis because he was instrumental in starting this group at its original home at Square One (SQ1).

At that time SQ1 had, besides an LCBO store, a multi-denominational chapel, where a meeting was held every Saturday at 1:30. The group flourished and started a Service meeting at the Westminster United Church located at the corner of Rathburn and Tomken. But things at SQ1 changed, and the group had to move around 1999 or 2000.

St. Mary's Catholic Ukrainian Church on Cawthra Road became the next home, and the meeting was moved to Thursdays at 1:30. The group did well, and even roundups were held at this location. People like Art, Jeff, and later Dan and Rod were instrumental. When the group had to move again around 2015, it was Jeff who found a spot at the Salvation Army – further south on Cawthra Road. The service meeting at the Westminster church also flourished and Dan ("Big Book Bandana Dan") became instrumental in setting it up.

When he passed away, Donna took over his role until Covid, shook things up. Donnie became instrumental in setting up a Tuesday service meeting at the same location. Rod became instrumental in running the Thursday Vision of Hope meeting by filling in for Jeff when he went on vacation for the summer of 2018. When Jeff never returned, Rod and a few others kept the Thursday meeting going.

In 2020, Covid shut down a lot of meetings including Vision of Hope and the Westminster service meeting. It was not until November 2022 that attempts to revive the Vision of Hope were made. First, at the Salvation Army location on Cawthra Road, which had become very busy.

Attendance was initially low and it was decided to move to the Westminster Church – which has ample parking on a quieter street. The church is also happy to support an AA group in its building, and frequently refers to AA as "an essential service", which it is.

After 30 years the Vision of Hope is flourishing again at the location of its old service meeting!

BB, DD, RR

haveyouheard

DISTRICT 22 SERVICE INFORMATION DAY

"A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action.

We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die."

-Service Manual, p. 5

Your District 22 Service Information Day (SID) Planning Committee are not a 'glum lot', but we do take our roles as 'trusted servants' seriously.

Here's the blunt truth folks: What we really, really want for this year's annual event is to see some new faces (perhaps newcomers but also hopefully some with 'contented sobriety')—whomever is Out There in District 22 and may not currently be involved in service at the home group or district level. Or perhaps you might be wishing to return to service or learn a new skill. Along the way, you may be longing to expand your network of friends within the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Whatever your reason(s), please consider responding to our challenge to YOU: bring a friend, bring your Sponsee(s), bring your Sponsor, tag along with your home group's GSR or Alt GSR...Come out for this FREE day of fellowship as we share some of our local stories [about how service complements and supports our recovery program(s)]. Enjoy a cup of coffee, contribute to the Pot Luck lunch. Have some laughs and be inspired along the way. Visit our Committee displays to learn more about the various opportunities available to you in service. A special feature offered at this year's SID event is a Sponsor/Sponsee panel, featuring Ruth P (with 50+ years of sobriety and service wisdom to share!) We'll top off the daytime event by chuckling and reflecting on issues raised during the highly entertaining Anonymity Skit. (Just remember...we are alcoholics in recovery (not actors) and we're not afraid to have a good laugh at ourselves!)

By doing all of the above, you can enter our draw for a door prize!

Following the day of info sharing, you can kick back and shake your (sober) booty at the evening's social event. (Tickets for that are \$10 and available through your home group GSR.) The entire day/evening event will be held once again at the Oakridge Community Centre, 63 Pharmacy Avenue, (2 blocks east of Victoria Park subway station,) with plenty of on-site (FREE) parking. The Centre is also fully wheelchair accessible.

Still have questions about this event?

- Contact Joe A (Alternate DCM/OPAAT) adcmdistrict22@gmail.com
- Text your potluck contributions to Lynn E (Kitchen Co-ord/5th Tradition) 416 624 8098.
- Want ticket(s) for the evening Social? Contact your home group's GSR.



Scarborough District 22 presents –
45 Years of Service: A Labour of Love

OAKRIDGE COMMUNITY CENTRE
(63 Pharmacy Ave, Scarborough, ON M1L 4S9)

Saturday Sept 23, 2023

Doors Open at 9am. Event 10am to 3pm

- Free Refreshments
- Potluck Lunch
- Evening Social
- Accessible & Free Parking

During the day—participants will hear from District Officers, Subcommittee Chairs & a Speaker.

Psssttt...It's a lot more fun if you bring a friend, bring your sponsor, bring a sponsee, ...to enjoy the day with you!



Evening Social
7pm-11:30pm
Tickets \$10
Available through your home group's GSR or other members from the Planning Committee.

Events Lined Up:
-Sponsor & Sponsee Panel
-Anonymity Skit

SEPTEMBER MEDALLIONS

Sherri G 10yrs. Anniversary Group September 5
Mike B 1yr. Friendly Group September 23
Roger L 30yrs. Welcome Group September 24
Cam B 10yrs. Deer Park Group September 25
Lisa S 15yrs. Anniversary Group September 28

SEPTEMBER COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES – Tues. Sept. 5, 7 p.m. ID: 883 8002 9737 PW: 950392
- ARCHIVES – Fri. Sept. 8 at 7 p.m. ID: 841 5376 9412 PW: 018851
- IT SUBCOMMITTEE – Tues. Sept. 12 at 8 p.m. ID: 865 3323 7756 PW: 936637
- TWELFTH STEP – Wed. Sept. 13 at 7 p.m. ID: 813 0646 6967 PW: 572531
- WINTER SEASON OPEN HOUSE 2023 – Sun. Sept. 17 9:30 a.m. – 11 a.m., In-Person at: Bloordale United Church, 4258 Bloor St. West, Etobicoke – Room 14
- ACCESSIBILITIES – Sun. Sept. 17 at 11 a.m. ID: 824 8962 1874 PW: 799763
- COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (CPC) + PUBLIC INFORMATION Mon. Sept. 18 at 7 p.m. ID: 854 7547 0291 PW: 002060
- COMMUNICATIONS – Tues. Sept. 19 at 7 p.m. (tentative: cc.chair@aatoronto.org) ID: 857 4633 2916 PW: 602471
- TREATMENT – Thurs. Sept. 21 at 7 p.m. ID: 852 4845 3096 PW: 570285
- INFORMATION AA DAY 2023 – Mon. Sept. 25 at 7 p.m. ID: 811 8277 5978 PW: 587553
- SELF-SUPPORT – Thurs. Sept. 28 at 6:30 p.m. ID: 820 9238 0206 PW: 319853
- WINTER SEASON VIRTUAL ALKATHON 2023 – TBA – ID: 810 4747 2912 PW: 727922
winterseasonvirtualalkathon@aatoronto.org

Vic Johnson Community Centre
335 Church Street,
Mississauga ON

MISSISSAUGA FALL ROUND UP

30 | SEPT | 2023
Registration @ 8am

Tickets \$25
Non-refundable!
Advance Tickets ONLY!

Featured Speakers
Olis S. – AA – North Carolina
Jimmy A. – AA – New Jersey
Jay H. – AA – Oshawa, Ontario
Margret W. – Al-Anon – Stoney Creek, Ontario
Gabrielle H. – Alateen – Hamilton, Ontario



Great Speakers
AA, AI – Anon & Alateen Speakers



Delicious Food
Morning Timbits!
Hot & Cold Lunch Buffet
Coffee & Tea served ALL DAY!



50/50 Tickets
50/50 draw tickets will be sold at the event!!!

Plenty of Parking | Close to Streetsville GO | Accessible by Transit

For more information and updates, visit our website
www.MississaugaFallRoundUp.org

ARCHIVES CORNER

Mother of AA

Anne S. was called the 'mother of AA' with good reason. She was not only loved by recovered alcoholics but by the wives and family members who suffered silently in the background.

One wife wrote movingly of Anne after their meeting.

"When I first heard of the wives meeting together, I thought, I'll be damned if I want to hang around with a bunch of drunks with their broken-down haggard wives. I felt so bitter and resentful inside. I felt like it was his problem and I didn't want to be going to someone else's home. I was hesitant, fearful but then again, if it would stop the drinking, I would do it for that. I certainly didn't need anyone's help! Strangely enough, when Anne extended her hand at the door and said "Come in, dear", my heart nearly melted. She was as gracious, as friendly, as charming as any woman I had ever met or known."

That love of Anne's changed things. She knew how to handle the wife of an alcoholic. She knew the days and nights full of despair, the poverty-stricken effort to keep up appearances, the unsatisfactory blending of shabbiness and pride. Every meeting with a newcomer was a fresh experience. She greeted strangers and listened for their names. Next time she'd be able to call them by name.

In those early days most people didn't have telephones. Anne handed out a little address book and told us "All our homes are open to you. Drop in any time." And they did.

Anne Smith hated to wear a new dress. She would say, "I hate to wear a new dress. So many people will be there who can't afford a new one. I hate to embarrass them." It was that bigness of heart, this continual thinking of others that enabled Anne to shape a formless group into what was eventually to become the foundation for A.A. in Akron.

Bernadette M
King City Group

TO DONATE AA/GTA ARCHIVAL ITEMS TO THE
GTA ARCHIVES PLEASE CONTACT THE GTA
ARCHIVIST EDDY G. at 416-536-7536.
OLD GTA MEETING BOOKS ARE NEEDED FOR THE
GTA ARCHIVES.

September Blues - Cont'd

Now approaching my 40th birthday, AA has gifted me a life I couldn't have dreamed of when I came in.

Isn't the summer the best time to focus on the fellowship and be of service?

The sun is dishing out love. I need less sleep, and I'm full of energy. Time to give back! What a gift to spend more time connecting and helping.

I want to thank those who have come before me. They had the courage to believe in their own power. They made the sacrifices to be responsible. Something I often forget?

Half the deal is showing up. Come early, stay late, get better, rinse and repeat.

DID YOU KNOW?

1. On Sept. 13, 1937 Florence R. (story in 1st edition Big Book "A Feminine Victory") is the first female AA in New York. She helped Fitz M. start Washington Group. She returned to drinking in 1949. One night Fitz was called to identify her body at the Washington Morgue. She committed suicide.
2. In the Sept. 1948 issue of the Grapevine, the Serenity Prayer was first printed & became a vital part of AA.
3. In Sept. 1973 Archives was established at General Service Office (GSO) in New York & Nell Wing, one of Bill's earliest secretaries became the first archivist.
4. On Sept. 1938 Fitz M. (AA No. 8 & story in Big Book "Our Southern Friend") sister Agnes lent Bill W. & Hank P. \$1,000.00 to help get them through the Big Book project.
5. From Sept. 1956 to Dec. 1956 & Feb. 1957 AA's popular slogan plaques were published in five Grapevine issues. Four slogans are from the Big Book: "But for the Grace of God" is from the chapter "There is a Solution" (pg 25). "Easy Does It", "First Things First" & "Live and Let Live" are from the chapter "The Family Afterward" (pg 135). "Live and Let Live" is also found in the chapter "To Wives" (pg 118). The slogan "Think, Think, Think" is a bit of a mystery. Some say it originated in Cleveland in the mid-1940's; however, its actual source is unknown.

GTA Groups/Meetings started in September

1. Sept. 27, 1947- Danforth Group
2. Sept. 23, 1952- St. Clements Group
3. Sept. 29, 1957- West York Group
4. Sept. 17, 1964- Long Branch Group
5. Sept. 23, 1973- Heron Park Sunday Morning Open Meeting
6. Sept. 13, 1974- Rexdale United Group
7. Sept. 15, 1975- Fifth Wheel Group
8. Sept. 11, 1978- Deer Park Group
9. Sept. 6, 1979- Stepping Stones Group
10. Sept. 17, 1983- Frontrunner's Group
11. Sept. 16, 1990- Sunday Scarborough Group
12. Sept. 17, 2007- Prince Edward Group
13. Sept. 24, 2009- Beyond Belief Group
14. Sept. 7, 2010- We Agnostics Group
15. Sept. 25, 2013- Sisters In Sobriety Group