

# BETTER TIMES

August 2023  
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**OLD GTA MEETING BOOKS ARE NEEDED FOR THE GTA ARCHIVES.**

## Remembrance "Things We Cannot Change" – David N.

Friday July 7th 2023, was a very sad day for Alcoholics Anonymous, as one of its long time AA service mentors, David N., passed away in London, Ontario  
 David N. started his sobriety on January 14th 1976, with the Anniversary Home Group in Scarborough and in recent years with the St. Jude's Home Group in London Ontario.  
 Remember When is the lifeline of an alcoholic's journey, as we surely meet some of us, as we trudge the *Road of Happy Destiny*.  
 How many alcoholics remember their first steps through the doors of AA, each meeting had a new friend, ready to shake our hands in AA fellowship.

At the Anniversary Group in Scarborough, a very gracious, humorous gentleman, would greet newcomers with a solid handshake, and a smile that would generate instant chemistry. That member's name was David N., who with a heart of gold, and a gracious smile, projected an honest, happy, joyous, and free life by working his AA program.  
 David enjoyed his personal life, his professional career as Captain Advertising, and his AA program one day at a time.  
 He was an example that the Promises on page 83 and 84 from

the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous can happen by believing and working the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous  
 This past January, 2023 the GTA Intergroup's Communications Committee, asked David to rejoin the Better Times Newsletter Committee, as the Better Times Cartoonist, an AA Service commitment, David held from 2001, for 15 years.  
 David was elated, and in his own words said, "Thank you! I would be happy and proud to join the Communications Committee and contribute my talents to it." In gratitude & service, David N., St. Jude's Group in London Ont.  
 David took the commitment with passion, by submitting a brand new ORC cartoon, that was unfortunately never seen by AA members until now.  
 AA members who met our good friend David N., have a lasting memory of his experience, strength and hope. David will be sadly missed, although his legacy will always be remembered.

Remember When's from his fellow AA members,  
*Valerie L (Anniversary Group Member)*  
 "I remember Dave N. as a gentle soul with a calm and kind face...sitting across this relative newcomer in the Anniversary Group's Big Book Discussion group, affectionately known as 'Wayne's World'. Every Saturday, I found myself across the kitchen table from Dave, sipping our morning coffees like kindred spirits, as if we'd known one another for decades.  
 Dave patiently answered my myriad of questions, offering with humility, his stories of sobriety and what tools from our fellowship helped him most. I felt safe with Dave. He taught me what kindness looks like.

When Dave moved away to London, he wanted to somehow

stay connected with us at the Anniversary Group. He'd visit when in town. He even offered to print off our name tags for new members, using the same publisher format that we'd used for others over the years. He wanted everyone to feel welcomed and recognized. He will be missed.

I hope he finds a kitchen meeting Up There and is reunited with some old AA friends from years gone by!"

*Jade S (Anniversary Group Member)*

Dave and I were in an AA play together for one of the Anniversary Group's anniversaries. He played "Slick" and I played "Moneybags." We would refer to each other as such when we talked.

Dave always had jokes on hand, I was in awe of how he could remember them. Dave was artistic and did up the Anniversary Group's name tags.

I cried tonight at our meeting when I heard of his passing. I am saddened by this for sure. Dave always had a smile with a twinkle in his eyes. He was a kind, gentleman...he will be missed.

*Athena N. A friend of Bill & Bob*

I met Dave and Helen over a decade ago. I remembered when

I used to go to Chartwell Group, he mentioned that he was a cartoon artist.

I asked him if he would make me business cards for my cleaning business at the time. He was sweet, helpful and I always felt welcomed in their home. He then hired me to clean his condo.

I remember breaking an ornament on his stove and he didn't make a fuss about it. This was my first client. David N.'s life affected mine, today on being sober. He was a huge example of sobriety. Lots of love to you up there Dave. I wish you were still here. But it's God's choice. I

thought of you often and wish I kept in touch.

*Dave S. St. Jude's Home Group, London Ontario*

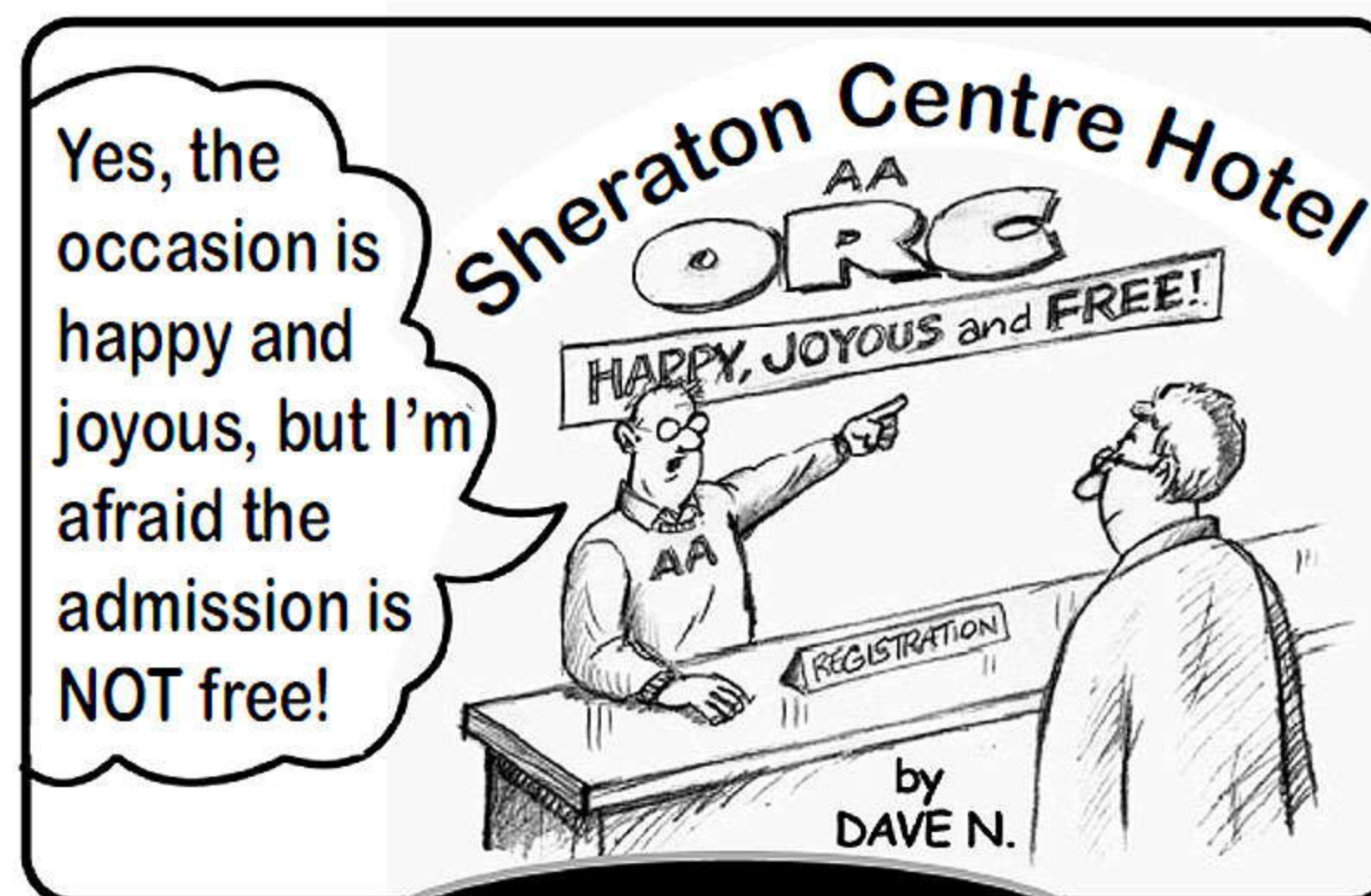
The members of Dave's home group, St. Jude's in London, are deeply saddened by his passing, however we are all truly grateful for the time we had him in our lives. Dave was special! He always arrived with a smile and a joke or two to share. His voice was calming and his sharing was deep, heartfelt and helpful to so many. His sponsees had a very strong connection with Dave and they considered Dave a great friend.

There were times when he was in significant pain but you would never know it by his joyful presence. We have lost a great member and a good friend to many. God bless him and keep him close.

*Jim A (Area 86)*

I have been asked to reflect on the passing of one Toronto's AA pillar Dave N. Dave was my sponsor for many years, and I would ask many questions. His standard answer was always "Go read *As Bill Sees it*." After a while I would refer to that book as *As Dave Sees it*. He possessed many fine attributes, tolerance, patience and humour to name but a few. Traits worthy of emulation.

### Humour At The ORC



Idea Submitted by AUSTIN R.



# 11<sup>th</sup> Step Picnic

## A Remember When

In July 2000, Rick S. Trial & Error Group, Steve E. Kingsway Group, John B. Kipling Group and Barb Q, Friendly Group formed the 11th Step Picnic Committee, which was held annually, every August at a picnic site permit on Toronto's Centre Island. The annual 11th Step Picnic ran from the year 2000 to 2012, with new AA committee members joining each year.

A barbecue with boiled corn, throwing the Frisbee, great fellowship and 3 AA meetings and 1 AI anon meeting was a great way to spend a summer day with fellow members, guests and family.

When we walk into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous for the first time, we are overwhelmed by fear, upset, anger, with little knowledge of direction on how to proceed.

Early days of sobriety are intimidating. Fellow members suggest that we find a group, a sponsor and get active.

Ten days into sobriety, this alcoholic's eyes focused on an August 2005 Better Times article. Volunteers required for the 11th Step Picnic committee, please contact Barb Q. Friendly Group. Ironically our first 11th Step Picnic Committee was held at a Patio bar on Bloor Street W near Jane, a bar that three weeks earlier, was a good evening of drinking for this alcoholic.

That evening was a lot different, one hour of committee talk, coffee, and club soda. What a pleasure watching seven committee members working their AA 12 Step program together and accepting my participation so readily. At the last committee meeting, I heard the words "Marvyn the committee would like you to Chair the 1st AA Picnic Meeting."

My initial reaction was 'Are they kidding, if they are not, is 33 days of sobriety enough!' Valuable Lesson #1: When asked to perform an AA task, "Yes" is a good answer!

The picnic chair task presented an opportunity to introduce an AA speaker for

the first time. Gayle (arrived by kayak) came to the Centre Island picnic and delivered a spiritual talk.

(Ironically my last binge a month previous was a Dinner cruise boat "River Gambler" on Lake Ontario.) *cont'd on next page, top right!*

### Remembrance "Things We Cannot Change" – David N. *continued*

Humour was always present, as we all remember from his many cartoons in "Better Times". It was always interesting, sometimes shocking to see a graphic depiction of something that I or another sponsee of his (Austin Powerless) had said in passing. Austin and I were known as Dave's Brat's at the Anniversary Group in Scarborough.

One of my fondest AA memories was at my 15 year medallion at St Andrews. At the pre-medallion meal, my parents met my AA parents Dave and his lovely wife Helen. All four became instant friends.

The last time I met up with Dave was at last year's Woodstock round up. I spent the day reflecting and getting caught up since we had both moved away from Toronto.

So farewell my dear friend, Captain Advertising. Thanks for all you have done for me and countless others in some many different ways. You were a true power of example, in and out of the rooms. Till we meet again.

*AA Friends of David N*



## 55 Years of AA Service – Mississauga Group

The Mississauga Group is living proof of the importance of archives and of keeping accurate records for those of us who value AA history. The first meeting of the Mississauga Group, an open meeting, was held on Sunday June 23rd, 1968 at St. Hilary's Anglican Church Hurontario Street/North Service Road, Mississauga.

*by Mississauga Group co founders Bruce P. and Len A.*

The Mississauga Group has continued to hold meetings every Friday night 8:30 pm, a Closed Discussion meeting, and Sunday night 8:00 pm an Open Speaker meeting.

At the Mississauga Group, newcomers are immediately welcomed with a beginners package, explained the difference between an open and closed meeting, the importance of becoming a member of a Home Group and are given instant support on how they can start their new journey of sobriety.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic the Mississauga Group has continued to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic, by holding separate Friday and Sunday night zoom meetings, with live meetings, starting up again on November 6, 2022.

Each year, the Mississauga Group AA members hold AA service positions within the Home Group, GSR & Alternate, Intergroup Rep & Alternate, Group Treasurer, Group Secretary, Literature Librarian, Chairperson Coordinator, Church Liaison, Business meeting chair, and Supplies Chair. Many Mississauga Group members have taken on roles at Area 83, District 06 and the Greater Toronto Area Intergroup.

Members of the Mississauga Group have been instrumental in passing on the AA message by chairing service meetings at the Cawthra Shelter, and other facilities.

We, the members of the Mississauga Group, feel privileged to be one of the oldest groups in Mississauga-District 06 area comprising almost a million Mississauga residents.

A debt of gratitude is owed to our higher power, for the blessings of longevity and the opportunity to pass on the AA message. Some of the fruits of carrying the AA message have come from longtime members, who have since passed, John W, Nancy R. Jackie M., Ed L., and Phil G., just to name a few.

Upcoming Special meetings of the Mississauga Group are scheduled on Sunday June 25th., a 55 Year Mississauga Group Anniversary Zoom Meeting chaired by our long time member Bill M who has asked Bob C. a past 1984 Mississauga Group member to be the main speaker, as well as a separate 55 year Mississauga Group live Anniversary meeting at St. Hilary's Anglican Church, including Louis C. celebrating his 10 years of continuous sobriety.

Sunday night July 16th at 8:00 PM will be a very special live meeting of the Mississauga Group St. Hilary's Church as John G. will be celebrating 30 years of continuous sobriety.

We look forward to seeing all Mississauga Group current attendees, other AA members, and friends at our upcoming 2023 summer zoom and live meetings.

*Mississauga Group Members*



# Principles Before Personalities

Charles M, was my sponsor from shortly after he received his 25 year medallion in 2000, until he passed into the spirit world on September 18, 2008.

I asked him to be my sponsor because I knew he had been a lawyer as well as having earned a Master's of Divinity degree, As an alcoholic, I was always interested in the underlying angles of how things operated.

Even though I had eight years of sobriety, Charles had me go through the Big Book and do the Steps, keeping his keen legal mind and eye focused on what the words said and not what one thought, they said

That was helpful as I was able to focus on the exact nature of my wrongs. My searching and fearless moral inventory had shown me that my score card had read zero. When drinking I had not cared about anybody else but myself.

Together and with God's care, the layers of justification were dismantled and fear was removed. After all, we still continued to remain in daily contact by phone and enjoyed weekly face-to-face sit-downs.

Charles said that the only thing that a person could do on his own was drink. For everything else, you need to be involved with others in recovery. He summed up the essence of the program with the first two words of Step One "We admitted..."

He said that it was a "we" program and "admitting" meant to be honest

With such clarity of perspective, Charles spoke of practising rigorous honesty. He believed that we could apply principle to the ideal, that we may not have an absolute monopoly on the "Truth", but by willing to keep an open mind as we learned more, we could continually transform and grow..

Though in his senior year his youthful bounce was somewhat modified. Charles still determinedly made his way to newcomers to offer his encouragement and phone number. He said the only thing longer than a grave was a rut.

Charles was a power of example in letting go of the concerns of this world. He has accepted his limitations fully and has moved into completeness and fulfillment in the embrace of The One who originally said that "you are needed, wanted and loved."

**Tom S.**

## haveyouheard

### Upcoming Medallions:

Susan O	10	Fifth Tradition Group	August 1
Bill R	35	Anniversary Group	August 2
Rick R	1	Friendly Group	August 7
Paul D	45	Golden Mile Group	August 14
Brian P	1	Friendly Group	August 14
Louis R	35	Fifth Tradition Group	August 22
Josh M	1	Friendly Group	August 28
Deidre B	40	Rexdale Group	August 31

### Upcoming Committee Meetings

Tuesday August 1st, 7:00 PM **Communications Committee**

Online Meeting 850 5256 7237 PW 984555

Tuesday August 1st, 8:00 PM **Joint Sharing Meeting**

Online Meeting 876 1966 6130 PW 222732

Wednesday August 2nd, 7:30 PM **Correctional Facilities**

Online Meeting 883 8002 9737 PW 950392

Tuesday August 8th, 8:00 PM **IT Committee**

Online Meeting 865 3323 7756 PW 936637

Wednesday August 9th, 7:00 PM **Twelfth Step Committee**

Online Meeting 813 0646 6967 PW 572531

Friday August 11th, 7:00 PM **Archives Committee**

Online Meeting 841 5376 9412 PW 018851

## 11<sup>th</sup> Step Picnic cont'd

No Longer Alone, Keep an Open Mind, Keep it Simple, Easy Does it But Do It were slogans that had an impact, after a first day of AA service.

August 2012 was the last year the 11th Step Picnic Committee attempted to hold the annual 11th Step Picnic, the day before the picnic, a decision was made to cancel the picnic because of threatening rain.

Three committee members Steve E Kingsway Group, Tyler A Credit Valley Group and this alcoholic decided to go to the picnic site anyway, as we were announcing AA meetings in our awareness material.

We set up a tent and waited and 5 AA members, 2 Al anon Members and a guest showed up. Under the tent in the pouring rain we had an hour, Step 1-topic meeting. As we exited the tent the sun came through the clouds, a Spiritual way to end a dozen years of the 11th Step Picnic

*Yours in the Spirit of Love and Service,  
Marvyn W, Mississauga Group*

## A Love Story

Dr. Bob and Anne Ripley married in 1915 after a lengthy seventeen year courtship. Theirs was a love story of great depth. Separated by their careers, they kept up constant written communication over the years. She, a school teacher, wanted him to get his medical career established and even more so, his drinking under control. He eventually brought her to Akron, Ohio as a new bride to their new home on Ardmore Avenue. Years later, they would welcome a son, Smitty, and eventually adopt a daughter, Sue. They were a typical family of the '30's and '40's. Except for Dr. Bob's secret drinking problem.

In our beloved AA book, 'Dr. Bob and the Good old Timers,' the thread of their engaging relationship is woven. Sometimes Anne would 'scold' her errant husband when he was disabled with his uncontrolled drinking. He disliked her being annoyed with him. Their children write in their book 'Children of the Healer' that their parents never raised their voices to each other despite the hardships during Bob's drinking days. In sobriety, theirs was a tender affection that defied all odds.

Dr. Bob's medical background gave him an understanding of the illness alcoholics suffered. He lived the program of recovery that he and Bill W. constructed on a day by day experience. His generosity and kindness coupled with his wife compassion and love was often the tipping point in a newcomer's recovery. The Smith's experienced poverty. It took years for Dr. Bob to reclaim any type of respectable income for his family because his work with alcoholics took precedence over regular patients. In one instance as narrated in the book, Dr. Bob and his family are sitting down to supper when visitors from Cleveland drop by. They are welcomed and invited to share supper which is bread, milk and sugar.

Dr. Bob was lost when Anne passed away in June of 1949. She had heart problems and a failed cataract surgery which made her visually impaired and her final days very difficult. He himself was struggling with prostate cancer during her illnesses and finally succumbed to his own sickness in November of 1950.

Dr Bob was a truly humble man. When the suggestion was made that a monument be erected in honour of he and Anne, he just grinned and said to Bill W. 'God bless them. They mean well. But let's just get buried like other folks.' And true to his word, neither he nor Anne has any word of AA on their tombstone. It was the final self-effacement of a truly great man.

*Bernadette M*



# DID YOU KNOW?

**1. On Aug. 8, 1879** AA's Co-founder Dr. Bob (Robert Holbrook Smith) was born in St. Johnsbury, Vermont. Dr Bob took his last drink on June 10th, 1935 which is the founding date of AA in Akron, Ohio by AA co-founders Bill W. & Dr. Bob. He was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 1948, last appearance, talk at 1st International Convention 1950 in Cleveland, Ohio. He died on November 16, 1950 of cancer with 15 years of sobriety.

**2. In Aug. 1934** Bill's third admission to Towns Hospital in NYC (again paid by Dr. Leonard Strong who was married to Bill's sister Dorothy). Dr. Silkworth pronounced Bill a hopeless drunk & told Lois that Bill would have to be committed. Bill left the hospital a deeply frightened man & sheer terror kept him sober. He found a little work on Wall St. which began to restore his badly shattered confidence.

**3. In Aug. 1934** Cebra G. & Shep C. vacationed at Rowland H.'s house in Vermont & learned that Ebby T. might be committed to the Brattleboro Retreat Asylum for the insane. In July 1934, Ebby was approached in Manchester, VT. by his friends Cebra & Shep. Both were Oxford Group members who did considerable drinking with Ebby but were abstaining from drinking. They informed Ebby of the Oxford Group in VT. but Ebby was not quite ready yet to stop drinking.

Rowland H. and Cebra G. attended Ebby's trial & persuaded a Vermont court to parole Ebby T. into their custody. The presiding judge was Cebra's father Collins G. Ebby had met Rowland only shortly before. Later, in the fall, Rowland took Ebby to NYC where he sobered up with the help of the Oxford Group at the Calvary Episcopal Mission. Sam Shoemaker was the rector at the Calvary Church which was the Oxford Group U.S. headquarters. In late November 1934, Ebby heard about Bill's drinking problem & phoned Lois who invited him over for dinner. Ebby visited Bill & shared his recovery experience in the Oxford Group. Ebby later returned with Shep C. & they both spoke to Bill about the Oxford Group. Lois recalled Ebby visited several times, once staying for dinner.

**4. In Aug. 1934** Ebby T. Bill W.'s school friend & sponsor, sobered up for 2 years.

**5. In Aug. 1935** Bill W. returned to NYC from Akron and he sought out alcoholics at the Calvary Mission & Towns Hospital.

Meetings were held at Bill & Lois' house at 182 Clinton St. on Tuesday nights. The house also became a halfway house of sorts.

**6. On Aug. 26, 1936** Frank Buchman & the Oxford Group experienced a public relations disaster. A NY World Telegram article by William H Birnie quoted Buchman as saying, "I thank heaven for a man like Adolph Hitler, who built a front-line of defense against the anti-Christ of Communism." Although taken out of context, it plagued Buchman's reputation for years & marked the beginning of the decline of the Oxford Group. Over time Bill was criticized by the NY Oxford Group members for working only with alcoholics. In Akron, T Henry & Clarence Williams were also criticized by Oxford Group members who did not support their efforts with alcoholics. The Oxford Group was out to save the world & sought out famous public figures to join their ranks for the publicity it would generate. Bill simply was out to save alcoholics.

**7. In Aug. 1937** Bill & Lois stopped attending Oxford Group meetings & the NY AA's separated from the Oxford Group. This was the beginning of AA separating itself from outside affiliation & set the groundwork for what would later become Tradition 6. The Akron group remained affiliated with the Oxford Group for two more years.

**8. In Aug. 1938** the Alcoholic Foundation was created as a charitable trust with a board of 5 Trustees (3 non-alcoholics & 2 alcoholics). The trust indenture document specified that non-alcoholic board Trustees were to make up a majority. The terms "Class A" & "Class B" Trustees were used to distinguish between non-alcoholic & alcoholic board members. Class A Trustees were Willard Richardson (who proposed the Foundation), Frank Amos (Secretary & Treasurer) & attorney John Wood (a friend of Frank Amos). One of the challenges facing Wood in preparing the original Trust Agreement document was legally defining the difference between an alcoholic & non-alcoholic. Class B Trustees were Dr. Bob & NY member Bill R. who was the first Chairman of the Board (the actual title used at the time & up until 1955, was President). Bill R. whose Big Book story is "A Business Man's Recovery" returned to drinking & had to resign in February 1939. An advisory committee to the board was also established consisting of A. Leroy Chipman, Bill W., Albert L. Scott & Hank P.

**9. On Aug. 2, 1939** Dr. Bob & Sister Ignatia start work at St. Thomas Hospital in Akron. It was the first religious institution to open its doors to AA & later had a full wing dedicated to alcoholism treatment. The NY group had a similar arrangement with the Knickerbocker Hospital in NY City.

On Aug. 16, Sister Ignatia who was in charge of admissions arranged for the first AA admission, Walter B., at the request of Dr. Bob. Walter notorious alcoholic & regular consumer paregoric (over the counter) opiate Sister Ignatia labelled problem acute gastritis & put him in the flower room. Dr. Bob & Sister Ignatia treat 5,000 cases in the next 10 years.

**10. In Aug. 1941** Clarence S. founder of AA in Cleveland, joined with Abby G. & other Cleveland members to help start AA's first Central Office (see Dr. Bob & the Good Oldtimers book pg 202). Bill W. also credits the Cleveland Central Office with introducing the principle of rotation to AA. There is reasonable debate over whether Cleveland or Chicago should be recognized as AA's first Central Office. In AA Comes of Age book pg 23, Bill discusses Chicago AA following Jack Alexander's Saturday Evening Post article & notes "This was AA's first organized local service centre, the forerunner of the many Intergroup Associations we maintain in large cities nowadays."

**11. In Aug. 1942** the AA Office in New York granted distribution rights for the Big Book to Dr. George Little. Dr. Little formally transferred these rights to the Toronto AA Club on Sept. 22, 1944.

**12. In Aug. 1945** the Grapevine carried Bill W.'s first Traditions essay titled "Modesty One Plank for Good Public Relations."

It began a 5-year campaign for the Traditions & General Service Conference. In the prior month's Grapevine there was an article about the Washingtonians. Bill used this article to begin his essay commentaries.

**13. In Aug 1947** GV Traditions essay titled "Last Seven Years Have Made AA Self-Supporting" Bill wrote "Ten years ago the Trustees set aside, out of AA book funds, a sum which enabled my wife & me to pay off the mortgage on our home & make some needed improvements. The Foundation (today the General Service Board) also granted Dr. Bob & me, each a royalty of 10% on the book Alcoholics Anonymous, our only income from AA sources. We are both very comfortable & deeply grateful."

**14. On Aug. 16, 1948** a permanent secretary, Marg Meek, a member of the North Toronto Group was hired for the Central Committee (today GTA Intergroup) in Toronto. The office was at 331 Bay St. Marg held the position for 25 years.

**15. In Aug. 1950** Dr. Bob gave Bill W. his endorsement of the idea for the General Service Conference.

**16. In Aug. 1956** British radio commentator Gerald Heard introduced Bill W. to Aldous Huxley & British psychiatrists Humphrey Osmond & Abram Hoffer who were working with schizophrenic & alcoholic patients in Saskatchewan, Canada. Bill joined with Heard & Huxley & first took LSD in California on August 29. At the time, LSD was thought to have psycho therapeutic potential. Osmond & Hoffer's intent was to induce an experience similar to the DT's in hopes it might shock alcoholics away from alcohol. Among those invited to experiment with LSD (and who accepted) were Nell Wing, Father Ed Dowling, Sam Shoemaker & Lois W. Marty M & Helen W. participated in NY under medical supervision by a psychiatrist from Roosevelt Hospital. There were repercussions within AA. Lois was a reluctant participant. Hoffer & Osmond did research that later influenced Bill, in December 1966, to eagerly embrace a campaign to promote vitamin B3 (niacin) therapy. It also created Traditions issues within the Fellowship.

**17. On Aug. 2-4, 1968** the 11th International Conference of Young People in AA (ICYPAA) was held at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto.

**18. On Aug. 6, 1981** the 1st meeting of the Archives Committee was set up by representatives from Ontario Provincial Committee (OPC) the four Areas in Ontario & Toronto Intergroup. In 1991 Toronto Intergroup became the sole sponsor of the Archives Committee.

**19. On Aug. 18-21, 1988** the 1st Canadian National AA Convention was held in Halifax in an attempt to make it a regular 5 year Canadian event. Did not work out too well. Two 7th Traditions had to be requested in order to make it pay for itself.

**20. On Aug. 3, 1993** Toronto Intergroup Offices at 234 Eglinton Ave. E. moved down from 502 to 202. Done for financial reasons. Money was short at Intergroup & the smaller space lowered the rent substantially.

## Groups/Meetings that began in August:

August 10, 1958 Lawrence Plaza Group

August 1, 1961 Oshawa Friendship Group

August 1965 Alderwood Discussion Meeting

August 3, 1978 Oshawa Thursday Noon Hour Meeting

August 15, 1982 Eglinton Park Group

August 5, 1993 Vision of Hope (Mississauga)