

THE JUNE ISSUE

AA has a simple program that works. One alcoholic helping another. In this issue, we highlight submitted stories that demonstrate how our fellowship has helped GTA AA members stop drinking and stay sober.

SHARE YOUR STORY



Please scan the QR Code or tap this box and you will be directed to our anonymous content submission page.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- I Am Grateful To AA And The People In It.
- Where is God When We Are Struggling?
- Archives Corner
- .. And Much More!

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

234 Eglinton Ave East, Suite

#202, Toronto M4P 1K5

Telephone Number –

Literature Department 416-

487-9865

Email

bettertimes@aatoronto.org

Editorial Committee

Ted D. Communications

Chair

Alice N. Better Times Editor

Ken M. BT Writer

Latifa A Graphics & Layout

Imran R. Distributions

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, event notices,

letters to the editor and

articles to Better Times by

the 10th of the current

month for publication in an

upcoming issue by email to

bettertimes@aatoronto.org

CARRYING THE MESSAGE OF AA BEYOND BORDERS

My name is Alma and I am an alcoholic. I am also the GSR of Credit Valley Group in Mississauga. My sober date is March 19, 2011.

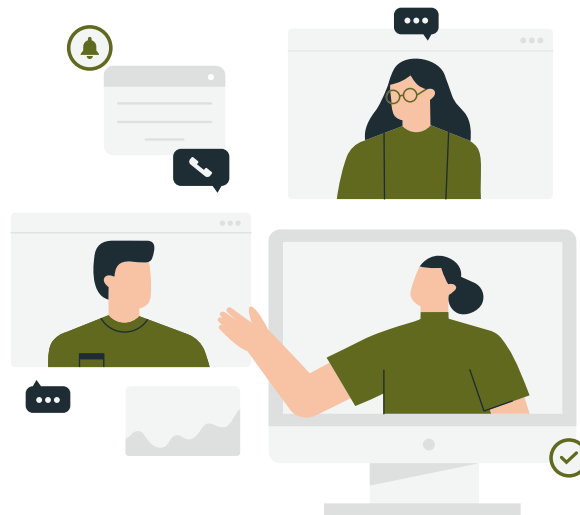
Up to March 15, 2020 I was floating happily in the fourth dimension of existence as described by Bill W. on p. 8 of the Big Book.

Every single night, I would tell my dog Lucky, "Lucky, I am going to my meeting because this is where I belong." Same words, same face, same intonation. He would look at me, shrink his shoulders and cuddle on his orange couch.

But when Covid hit, I was promptly teleported into a fifth dimension of existence as not described by Bill W. My new reality now involved zooming not only in Toronto but all over the world. I had to pinch myself daily. I could board any space ship I wanted.

Lucky attended all my meetings and personally met over 10,000 alcoholics and their pets.

My biggest joy was being able to join my Home AA group "New Life" in Sofia Bulgaria. Every day at noon I was able to spend one hour with my fellows overseas. I have been living on the hyphen between Bulgaria and Canada for 27 years prior to the pandemic.



I never had all my precious people in the same place at the same time. But not so anymore! One of the pandemic's blessings for me was Zoom.

Bulgaria's AA Fellowship is a much younger fellowship. It was only too logical to connect my two home groups virtually. My friend L. S. suggested that I invite Canadian speakers to share their experience, strength and hope at open meetings in Sofia. And we started this "new series".

There was one unprecedented time when my friend T.A. was asked to return TWICE to speak because one hour was simply not enough!

The interpretation takes away some precious time, of course. But I must happily report that every single time we experienced some serious quantum jumping. Both the speaker and their audience.

Cont'd on pg. 2

I AM GRATEFUL TO AA AND THE PEOPLE IN IT

My dry date is January 24, 2017.

I came into the program one week before the breakup of another relationship; which in retrospect is kind of funny. That relationship, and my desire to save it, was the very reason I came into the program. I was not getting sober for me; I was going to prove I could be responsible for her, to prove I was worthy of her company. Her leaving turned out to be a huge favour for me.

I knew about AA as a kid. My father attended for about 2 years. I recall going to some family type meetings, the kids went down the hall to a playroom, the mothers, (from what I recall), went into the wives' room and the dads all went to a meeting in the big hall. Then we all got together after in the big hall to celebrate something. I had no idea what.

Anyway, when my partner left, I was forced to make a choice. Stay in the program for my own good or say, screw it, go back out and do what I want. Work alone and drink alone and be alone till I die.

But was that drunken, screwed up version of me and the lifestyle that went with it really what I wanted?

Cont'd on pg. 2

I Am Grateful To AA And The People In It - cont'd from pg. 1

My first sponsor, Tim D., said it plainly to me; I could stay and try to heal myself or go out and continue committing a slow suicide.

I argued that point. I was not trying to kill myself, quickly or slowly. All he did was respond with a simple sentence, "maybe not yet." Then he reminded me what had brought me into the rooms in the first place.

My first marriage ended badly in 2012, and I went on to start my final 5-year bender.

It started with the quick acquisition of a new partner, who partied harder than me. We were having a great time, until she had a life-threatening medical issue that saw her in the hospital for 2 months, in 2015. When she got out, she needed constant help and care as she recovered at home for more than a year. Because of this illness, she lost a good deal of memory, in particular, how we had come to be a couple.

As she recovered, she came to feel like our life together was a mistake and she started removing herself from my life. I responded by going deeper into my alcoholism and substance abuse.

Near the end of our time together, she was away from me again, with family. I was alone and drunk and contemplating my future, or lack of it, because I knew she was leaving me. I could feel it.

I had the means and the motive one night to finish the job. I was sitting on the couch at home, alone, holding a large bottle of narcotics, a large bottle of scotch, and no real desire to live. Then by some miracle, (my higher power?), I passed out before the decision to use these things could be made.

When I woke up, I was consciously afraid to die, for the first time in a very long time. I still held the two bottles. I realized that this had to end one way or another, and I actually chose the other.

I knew I had to get help, and I knew where to get help. A friend at my workplace, a member in AA, had been 12-stepping me for a very long time. So, I dropped the two bottles on the floor, stumbled to bed and when I woke up the next day, thanks to Allah, I remembered the mental anguish of the night before.

I went to work, found my friend, and admitted I needed help. After more than 35 years of active addiction, that was the start of my recovery.

After I joined the program, and had made amends to my mother, she shared that the two years my dad had been in the program were among the best she recalled in her marriage.

It has been an amazing 7 years. I look forward to more every morning when I wake up and I am grateful to AA and the people in it who have guided me, by the grace of Allah.

-Steve P. Bloordale Group

WHERE IS GOD WHEN WE ARE STRUGGLING?

Where is God when I am struggling? Where is he when I am going through trials and tribulations that never seem to end? Where is God when my heart is broken and it aches for peace?

Though we may call God by different names, I am sure that many of us have asked ourselves these very questions at some point in our lives.

When we have accomplished something or overcome an obstacle, we often point to God. But God is just as likely to be found in our trials and tribulations.

He is there when we cry out in anger at the unfairness of life.

It has been written that anger tells us that something is wrong with an injustice or some unfairness. Even the bible (Ephesians 4:26) states that there is nothing wrong with expressing anger "as long as we don't sin." And that we are to take that anger and do something positive about that unfairness. As a matter of fact, unexpressed anger can be detrimental to one's health.

Cont'd on pg. 4



Carrying the Message of AA Beyond Borders - cont'd from pg. 1

It was exhilarating, profoundly intimate and cosmic-international.

AA at its best.

What is better than to connect one alcoholic with another?

So the Internet became the Chief Assistant to my Higher Power in the pandemic. It is granting us the opportunity to carry the message of AA beyond any borders, both linguistic and geographical. It is boundless. It is amplified and resonates in a world like no other.

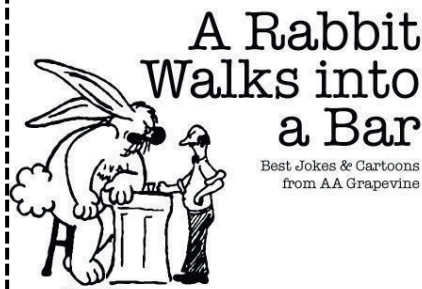
When I joined AA in 2011 I felt immediately that I had landed on another planet. A "firm bedrock" was finally under my feet. Its population spoke the Language of the Heart and its citizens were the finest hooligans I have ever met.

Today the bond and the influence are stronger than ever.

Our Planet AA is in orbit and if by the Grace of God you happen to land on it, please stay. Don't fly away because you have just landed in Heaven on Earth.

- Alma C.

GRAPEVINE BOOK OF THE MONTH



With chapters that cover topics from "The Drinking Life" to "Life in AA" readers will find plenty to laugh about.



Scan this QR code to access [more](#) "Better Times" issues!



Originally Published: July 2015

GTAI/DISTRICT - JUNE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Accessibilities - Sun. June 16 – 11 a.m.

ID: 824 8962 1874 - PW: 799763

Archives - Fri. June 14 – 7 p.m.

ID: 841 5376 9412 - PW: 018851

Communications - Tues. June 18 – 8 p.m.

ID: 850 5256 7237 - PW: 984555

CPC/PI - Mon. June 17 – 7 p.m.

ID: 854 7547 0291 - PW: 002060

Correctional Facilities - June 04 – 7 p.m.

ID: 883 8002 9737 - PW: 950392

Self-Support - Meets every other month.

Next Meeting: July 25 - 6:30 pm

ID: 820 9238 0206 - PW: 319853

Treatment - June 16th - 4pm

ID: 868 2207 4860 - PW: 787289

Twelfth Step - Wed. June 12 – 7 p.m.

ID: 813 0646 6967 - PW: 572531

IT Subcommittee - Tues. June 11 - 7 p.m.

ID: 814 0942 9019 - PW: 379691

Information AA Day - Mon. June 24 - 7 p.m.

ID: 811 8277 5978 - PW: 587553

LIVING SOBER WORD SEARCH

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

PRAYER
RESPONSIBILITY
COMPASSION
SERVICE
MEDITATION
BALANCE
MEETINGS
SURRENDER
LOVE
HAPPY
ACCEPTANCE
SPONSORSHIP
TOLERANCE

JUNE MEDALLIONS

Marilyn R., Willowdale Shepherd Group, 40 Years, June 6th

Ivy H., Black River Group, 30 years, Celebration date: June 7th at 8p.m.

Tyler L., Bloordale group, 1 year, June 13th

Emile CA., Anniversary Group, 45 years, June 17th Celebration Date: June 19th, 7:00 p.m.

Paula H., Fellowship Group, 1 year, Celebration Date: June 24, 8PM

IS THERE AN UPCOMING MEDALLION?

Please send your medallion details to

bettertimes@aatoronto.org

in the format of:

name - homegroup - year(s) of sobriety - medallion date

Kindly note that Better Times only publishes the first year of continuous sobriety birthday celebrations or every subsequent 5th year of continuous sobriety (i.e. 1, 5, 10, 15, 20...)

ARCHIVES CORNER

Did you Know ?

On June 10, 1935 Dr. Bob took his last drink. AA marks this date as the founding date of AA in Akron, Ohio by AA co-founders Bill W. & Dr. Bob. In his Big Book story Dr. Bob describes his 3-day binge at an American Medical Association (AMA) Meeting in Atlantic City, NJ. On returning to Akron, Bill helped him through three days of sobering up to prepare for a scheduled surgery. Dr. Bob had his last drink on the day of the surgery outside Akron City Hospital.

On June 28, 1935 Bill W., Dr. Bob & Eddie R. visited Bill D. the "Man on the Bed" whose Big Book Story is "Alcoholics Anonymous Number Three" at City Hospital in Akron, Ohio. Bill D., a prominent attorney in Akron was hospitalized 8 times in 1935 for of his drinking. It took five days before he would admit he could not control his drinking. On Independence Day July 4, he checked out of the hospital never to drink again. Akron's Group #1 (AA's first group) marks its beginning as the date that Bill D. left the hospital. Although he is anonymously discussed in the Big Book chapter "A Vision for You" Bill D.'s personal story did not appear in either the original manuscript or the 1st Edition Big Book. The reasons are not clear. Bill W. went to Akron to personally record Bill D.'s story for inclusion in the 2nd Edition Big Book published in 1955.

In June 1944 Marty M. and her partner Priscilla P. discussed with Bill W. about printing an AA magazine. They were joined by Lois K., Chace H, Abbott "Bud" T. and Kay M. & were known as the "six ink stained wretches." June, Volume 1, No. 1 Grapevine was published.

In June 1947 The "AA Preamble" first appeared in the June Grapevine. Written by Tom Y., the Grapevine's first editor (& Class B Trustee in 1949), it was based on the forward to the first edition of the Big Book. Today, it is a common reading at the beginning of many AA meetings. That is how, over time, it came to be called the "AA Preamble."

In June 1948 Dr. Bob's cancer was diagnosed as terminal. He closed his office & retired from practice so that he & Anne could live their last days together quietly. In his last year 1950, Dr. Bob fulfilled a life-long dream of obtaining a convertible automobile (a black Buick Road-master).

On June 30th - July 2nd, 2005 The 70th Anniversary & 12th International Convention convened in Toronto, Canada. Estimated attendance was 44,000. The theme was "I am Responsible." It was the same as the theme of the 1965 International Convention that was held in Toronto. Toronto is the only city to host the Convention twice. On Friday evening, attendees filed into the stadium for the flag ceremony. 90 AA members carried to the stage the flags of nations represented at the convention. When the flags from Mongolia, Cuba & People's Republic of China took the stage, the crowd went wild. It was the first time these countries were represented. As each flag bearer appeared on stage, the title "Alcoholics Anonymous" on the large Big Book model changed to one of 52 languages. In appreciation of Warden Clinton Duffy, the 25th millionth copy of the Big Book was given to Warden Jill Brown of San Quentin "on behalf of all the correctional facilities & their inmate populations where the AA message of hope is welcomed. In 1942, Warden Clinton Duffy of San Quentin pioneered the first AA group behind prison walls. The 2005 International Convention also commemorated the 50th Anniversary of Bill W. turning over the operation of the Fellowship to the Conference in 1955 in St. Louis.

Greater Toronto Area Groups That Started in June

- June 11, 1946 - North Toronto Group
- June 17, 1953 - Scarborough Group
- June 6, 1958 - Silverbirch Group
- June 23, 1968 - Mississauga Group
- June 23, 1990 - Thursday East End Group
- June 22, 1995 - Streetsville Saint Andrews Group
- June 27, 2009 - Dry On Danforth Group
- June 1, 2010 - Love and Tolerance Group

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

Where Is God When We Are Struggling? - cont'd from pg. 2

When anxiety and depression set in, God is there telling us that our human spirits or souls are in need of maturing.

It is a lot of work to do some soul searching and self introspection. Many of us refuse to take up the challenge. American psychiatrist Dr. M. Scott Peck, M.D. makes a compelling case of this in his classic best seller "The Road Less Traveled."

God is also there when people reach out to us in our time of need. These people can be our friends, our neighbors, even strangers.

God's reach is extended to the point that we extend ourselves and become helpful.

Perhaps at this time, it would be wise to ask ourselves who we have hurt by our silence.

God is there when we swallow our pride and practice humility. And God is definitely there when we admit that we are wrong.

God is there when we see beyond our prejudices and realize that everyone has good qualities.

We are not that different. And people who we think are different are really not the enemy. Though our views may be different, our needs and wants are basically the same. We are only enemies in our own minds. Diversity makes life interesting. If we were all the same, our lives would be boring!

Finally, God is there, when in the sight of hatred, we advocate for love and forgiveness.

Buddha states: "Hatred does not cease by hatred. But only by love; this is the eternal rule."

God is at the cornerstone of everything. It is by cultivating a personal relationship with God "as we understand Him" - through the good and the bad - that we can get back to some form of sanity (Steps 2 & 3).

What we are one day, may not be who we will be the next day. It's called growth - maturing.

It's the price we pay for being human.

- Ken M.