

THE AUGUST ISSUE

As the temperatures continue to rise, it is imperative that we continue to do the work necessary to maintain our sobriety. In this August issue, we explore different ways in which one can stay plugged in.

SHARE YOUR STORY



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

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

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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

LIVING ONE DAY AT A TIME

I don't remember my first drink in 1977. I was about 6 years old. I also don't remember what my last drink was on September 1 2012.

But what I do remember is the immediate event after each drink.

When I was six, I was with my parents at an outdoor family party that had music. My dad was a drummer in a band. I remember him drinking this cloudy looking mix with a tall straw. He was so happy and was having a great time. So I decided to sneak a sip and drink it.

The next thing I remember was feeling dizzy and falling to the ground. But it was not from getting drunk.

My dad had hit me across the face because I had drank the alcohol. I remember my mother yelling at him. This incident would become my first resentment that lasted until 2017 - which was when he passed away.

My life was an average dysfunctional family of immigrant parents living in Jane and Finch in the 70s and 80s. My parents didn't know any better. They abused us physically, emotionally and mentally out of fear, and what at the time seemed normal. Not by today's standards. I graduated high school, did some technical college and went to work.

From 1990 to 2009 my life was unmanageable and delegated by John Barleycorne and friends. Broken marriages, loss of jobs, broken relationships, criminal activities, tickets, theft, emotional and physical distress, and a multitude of other events. I would leave a trail of chaos, broken hearts and misery with anyone I came into contact with.

On January 7th 2002, after a weekend run with booze and drugs, I felt depleted of all my sanity, spirituality and mental inhibitions. I went to St. Jane Frances church that evening and prayed to the statue of St. Jane. That was the elementary school I had attended in the 1980s at the Jane and Sheppard area. I broke down, cried and begged God to help me. And so on that week, the road to recovery began.

From 2002 to 2008 I was in and out of AA, relapsing every 3 to 6 months. But I kept coming back. I never gave up. Life did get better, yes. I stopped substance abuse in 2008. I had gone to rehab twice in 2002 and it did help a lot. But still, the urge and obsession was stronger than ever.

I got married in 2011 and soon after, my wife got pregnant with our first child. She had seen me drink a handful of times and she gave me an ultimatum. Stop or she would leave me.

I also became very sick in the summer of 2012. But by the grace of God, on September 1 2012 at my brother in law's wedding, I had my last drink and cigarettes.

I stopped coming to AA for 11 years. My family, work, children, mom and God became my higher power. I was raised catholic - so believing in God was already a blessing.

I started coming back to AA this past February because I am not working full time and I have time on my hands.

I also have progressive health issues. So my friends suggested that I go to meetings to get out of my depression, anxieties and fears over my health issues.

Perhaps I could also help another fellow alcoholic.

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THE 12TH STEP CALL



A Twelfth Step Call is when two AA members make physical contact - in person - with an alcoholic. Often times a desperate drunk.

A 12 Step Call is when a Twelfth Step Phone Greeter asks a 416-487-5591 caller, "Would you like to have an AA member(s) come to see you, and talk to you about the program of Alcoholics Anonymous and how the AA program could help you to stop drinking?" If the answer is "Yes", the Phone Greeter completes a Twelfth Step Call Blue Form.

Desperate Alcoholic's traits:

- bloodshot eyes
- hands shaking so violently that they cannot hold a bottle of booze
- throwing up
- drinking their last bottle of Jack Daniels, traditional booze, Listerine, cough syrup, or in my case (19 years ago) multiple bottles of B&G Cuvee Speciale Rouge
- not able to attempt to go an In Person AA Closed or Open meeting because of physical inability and sickness

We cannot stop making 12 Step Calls because members of AA think it is too dangerous.

The 12 Step In Person Calls are not for every AA member - it is for the AA member who believes in the above picture "Man on the Bed".

The 12 Step Caller needs a Blue Form issued from a Twelfth Step Phone Greeter in order to call up the alcoholic and say "We, two alcoholics, would like to come over to meet with you tonight. What would be a good time for you?"

The 12 Step Call:

- We introduce ourselves as Alcoholics
- We give the alcoholic an opportunity to share their situation
- We share with the alcoholic, our story, how we joined Alcoholics Anonymous, and how we work the AA program - one day at a time - to achieve another day of not picking up the first drink

We then ask our new friend, if they have a willingness to stop drinking. If the answer is "Yes", we hand them a copy of the Big Book with an AA handshake, our contact information, and ask them to read the first 164 pages. And if they have any questions to please give us a call, or the Phone Greeter at 416-487-5591 on the front page of the Meeting Booklet.

We leave all 12 Step Calls with a copy of GTA Intergroup Meeting Directory Booklet and GSO approved Information outlining meetings in their immediate area that they may want to attend.

Let us remember, every time two AA members successfully complete an In Person 12 Step Call, the alcoholic has an opportunity to understand the meaning of the word 'hope' to stop drinking. And the two alcoholics working the 12 Step Call are able to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

-Marvyn W., Mississauga Group

Living One Day At A Time - cont'd from pg. 1

Today I have no desire to drink or alter my state of mind. I have two beautiful children, a wonderful spouse, honourable in laws and family. My best friends are also all from AA. Over the past 22 years, we have seen many come and go, and many stay as well.

Life is not easy being sober, but there are always solutions. One day at a time.

-Nino K.

LEAN INTO SERVICE

The GTA Intergroup operates a 24 hour Helpline. Whenever anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, the Twelfth Step Committee wants the hand of AA to always be there.

URGENT CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Twelfth Step Committee is creating a new phone greeter shift. We are looking for volunteers who:

- Are willing and able to answer the 24/7 AA Toronto Helpline phones from 9:00 PM to 1:00 AM
- Can commit to 1 or 2 shifts per month

This volunteer position requires one year of sobriety and we will provide all the training. If you are interested in this incredibly rewarding work, please send an email to: 12step@aatoronto.org.

GRAPEVINE BOOK OF THE MONTH



AA members share moving experiences about the importance and joys of belonging to an AA group.



Scan this QR code to access [more](https://www.bettertimes.org) "Better Times" issues!

Scarborough District 22 Service Day: Enrich Your Recovery Through Service

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2024

Carrying the message: that's the essence of our program, and it's the theme of our Service Day this year. So if you're looking to get started in service or add another dimension to your sobriety, we invite you to come hang out with us for the afternoon!

What is Service Day?

This is a chance for anyone in District 22 to learn more about the awesome service opportunities available to you at the District level.

We've got some great short presentations lined up from our service committees discussing opportunities in:

- Accessibility
- Archives
- Grapevine
- Corrections
- Treatment
- Self Support
- Intergroup Liaison
- CPC
- Public Information



And all you newcomers (and sponsors) won't want to miss our dynamic Newcomers In Service Panel!

We've also got a fantastic guest speaker, Rob F., your Area 83 Corrections Chair to close us out.

Coffee, tea and snacks will be served!

Who Should Attend?

This event is a don't miss for:

- Newcomers who want to find out more about district level service
- Anyone who wants to learn how service can compliment their recovery
- Folks who want to learn new skills
- Members who want to expand their network within the fellowship

When and Where?

We'll see you on Saturday September 21 from 1-4 pm at the Oakridge Community Centre, located at 63 Pharmacy Avenue. The Centre is located just two blocks east of Victoria Park subway station, with plenty of on site parking.

Find Out More

If you've still got questions, please contact Joe A (Alternate DCM/OPAAT) adcmdistrict22@gmail.com

-James H., GSR New Anchor Scarborough

GTAI/DISTRICT - AUGUST SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Accessibilities - Sun. August 18 – 11 a.m.

ID: 824 8962 1874 - PW: 799763

Archives - Fri. August 09 – 7 p.m.

ID: 841 5376 9412 - PW: 018851

Communications - Tues. August 20 – 8 p.m.

ID: 850 5256 7237 - PW: 984555

CPC/PI - Mon. August 19 – 7 p.m.

ID: 854 7547 0291 - PW: 002060

Correctional Facilities - August 06 – 7 p.m.

ID: 883 8002 9737 - PW: 950392

Self-Support - Meets every other month.

Next Meeting: September 19 - 6:30 pm

ID: 820 9238 0206 - PW: 319853

Treatment - August 18 - 4pm

ID: 868 2207 4860 - PW: 787289

Twelfth Step - Wed. August 14 10 – 7 p.m.

ID: 813 0646 6967 - PW: 572531

IT Subcommittee - Tues. August 13 - 7 p.m.

ID: 814 0942 9019 - PW: 379691

Information AA Day - Mon. August 26 - 7 p.m.

ID: 811 8277 5978 - PW: 587553

AUGUST MEDALLIONS

Bart H., Mount Albert Group, 40 years, August 6, 8-9 p.m.

Teresa U., Grace Noon Group (Grace United Church), 10 years, Dry Date: August 8, 2014

Doug C., Saturday Morning Discussion, 30 years, August 10

Peter G., Anniversary Group (Scarborough), 30 years, Dry Date: August 15, 1994, Medallion Date: September 18th, 2024

Doreen K., Erin Mills Group, 30 years, August 19

Josh C., Port Credit Group, 1 year, August 24

Alana S., Newmarket Group, 5 years, August 26

Jill B., Erin Mills Group, 10 years, August 26

Justin P., Port Credit Group, 1 year, August 31

Ken S., Grace Noon Group (Grace United Church), 40 years, Dry Date: August 31, 1984

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 August 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 became the founding date of AA in Akron, Ohio by AA co-founders Bill W. & Dr. Bob. He was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 1948, and he died on November 16, 1950 from cancer with 15 years of sobriety.

In August 1934, Bill W. had his 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.

In August 1935, Bill W. returned to NYC from Akron and began to look for alcoholics at the Calvary Mission & Towns Hospital. Meetings were held at Bill & Lois's house at 182 Clinton St. on Tuesday nights. The house also became a halfway house of sorts.

In August 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 and set the groundwork for what would later become Tradition 6. The Akron group remained affiliated with the Oxford Group for two more years.

In August 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-alcoholics & 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.

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 Bill W. also credits the Cleveland Central Office with introducing the principle of rotation to AA.

In August 1950, Dr. Bob gave Bill W. his endorsement of the idea for the General Service Conference.

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

On August 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.

Greater Toronto Area Groups That Started 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 4, 1984 - Mount Albert Group
- August 5, 1993 - Vision of Hope (Mississauga)

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.

WANT YOUR A.A. GTA GROUP TO BE FEATURED IN BETTER TIMES?

The entire structure of A.A. depends upon the participation and conscience of the individual groups.

As Bill said, "Realization dawns on each member that he is but a small part of a great whole... He learns that the clamor of desires and ambitions within him must be silenced whenever these could damage the group. It becomes plain that the group must survive or the individual will not."

As stated in our traditions, each group functions independently, except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole. Because of our fellowship's unique structure, each group is as unique as a thumbprint, and its approaches to carrying the message of sobriety can vary not just from group to group but from region to region.

And that is why Better Times would like to highlight as many AA groups within the GTA as possible.

Here are some things you can write about:

- What was the founding date of the group? if unsure, when do you think the founding date was?
- What was the group's name when it was formed? Why was the name chosen?
- Has the group's name changed over the years? If so, when did it change and why?
- How did the group get started? Who were the founders of the group? (If uncertain, who may have started the group?)
- Were there any spin-offs of your group? Was your group created as a spin-off? What group did it spin-off from?
- When the group started, how often were meetings held? Has this changed over the years?
- What was the format of the meeting (open, closed, discussion, speaker, etc.)? Has this changed over the years?
- During the group's history has their location, date and time changed?
- How many members are in the group today?
- Has there been an increase or decrease of group members over the years?
- Does the group have any customs, traditions or interesting anecdotes?

Please send your submissions via email to bettertimes@aatoronto.org. Please keep all submissions between 300-500 words.

We look forward to highlighting your group!