

THE OCTOBER ISSUE

October is Gratitude and Service Month. It's our annual reminder that without service within our AA community, the gratitude that many of us experience and enjoy today will not come to light. We also shine a spotlight on Tradition 7 which states that 'Every AA Group must be fully self supporting declining outside contributions.' Highlights of this year's Gratitude Campaign Literature are in this issue. Please consider making a contribution to Intergroup today.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- We Don't Have To Drink To Die From Alcoholism
- I Am Responsible (Annual Gratitude Campaign)
- A Goodbye To John Barleycorn
- ... And Much More!

I AM RESPONSIBLE

Here it is again. October - Gratitude Month; our pleasant reminder to give.

Doesn't it always seem like everybody wants something? Retail stores want to add to your bill on behalf of a charity. Food banks are looking for help to feed those in need. And now, Alcoholics Anonymous is asking for a yearly top up.

I contribute funds to the 7th tradition at every meeting, shouldn't that be enough? You would think so but what if it isn't? What do we do then?

I remember being broke, living paycheck to paycheck to keep my addiction alive. We are now being asked to give back both time and money, what I once used to fuel my addiction. But how do I measure what's enough? I've come to realize that is a balance which we must find from within.

Where possible, giving a bit more from our pocketbooks during October keeps the program - as a whole - running efficiently and effectively.

We're lucky that we don't need a lot - but not a lot doesn't mean none at all. To put it into perspective, we do need money to function. Groups pay rent for facilities, insurance, the costs of coffee and cookies, literature, chips, and many other operational expenses.

Sometimes, group funds accumulate, and these funds are forwarded to our AA district. The service the districts provide is outstanding. They help out new and existing groups when necessary. I know a group that had two floods in thirteen years. Everything was wiped out. Their district provided books and literature to get them back on their feet.

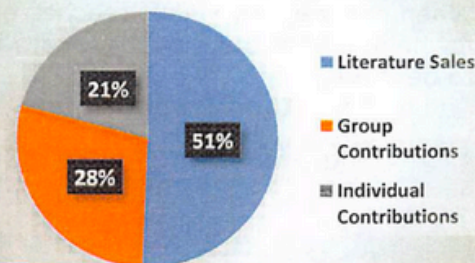
Therefore, after careful re-consideration, I've decided that I'll be giving back. Because I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that, I am responsible.

- Ann Marie, Six Points

Facts & Figures

GTA Intergroup Income: Sources and Expenditures

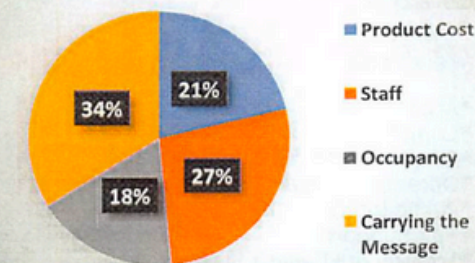
2023 Income Sources



Income for the Year 2023

Literature Sales	\$166,527
Group Contributions	\$94,080
Individual Contributions	\$68,363
Total Income Sources	\$328,970

2023 Expenditures



Expenses for the Year 2023

Product Cost	\$63,831
Staff	\$81,707
Occupancy Cost (Rent)	\$53,072
Carrying the Message	\$101,591
Total Expenditures	\$300,201

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

Lori C. Better Times Editor
Alice N. Asst. Editor (Temp)
Ann Marie B. Coordinator
Ken M. 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

Ways to contribute to our Annual Gratitude Campaign:

- **Interact e-Transfer:** contributions@aatoronto.org
- **Cheque *Money Order *Credit Card Payment *Monthly**(see below):

Please accept my contribution of \$ _____ (max. donation of \$5000.00)

Please **Check One Option** Below:

- ☐ I have enclosed a **cheque or money order** payable to 'Toronto Intergroup'
- ☐ I want to **contribute MONTHLY** (signature below/void cheque authorizes this)

☐ Charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard Signature: _____

Card #: _____ Exp. Date: _____ CVD (3-digit#on back of card): _____

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Unit: _____ Address: _____ City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

(Contributions rec'd after Dec 31 will receive a tax receipt for the upcoming year) Questions? ltdent@aatoronto.org

TAX RECEIPTS: check one option:
☐ I DO NOT need a tax receipt
☐ I NEED a tax receipt mailed to me
☐ I NEED a tax receipt emailed to me
Tax receipts sent out in FEBRUARY 2025



We buried him yesterday. The County Coroner had published the required notices for next of kin and nobody had claimed the body. It was just myself and his sponsor, no preacher even, the county doesn't pay for those.

Not much of send-off, and not the one David had asked for. A cheap coffin, a backhoe dug a hole, and that was it - another old AA gone.

He had been sober over 20 years and in AA over 30, a stern and rigid man who tried to soften his edges and never could.

He was a loner, a fringe-er, an isolated man at the edge of life's good things. He hung in there... and in the end hung himself. I don't know why; I can't know.

I know there had been a diagnosis of senile dementia, and I know that the doctor had added cancer to the list. But, I've seen AAs deal with such things before... I don't know why David decided he couldn't.

It isn't the first time I've been through this in Alcoholics Anonymous. I've known several over the years who just up and walked out life's door one day. Sober, but not happy. Sober, but not at peace. Sober, but they died of alcoholism.

Our disease doesn't need us to drink in order to kill us. I wish more folks knew that, and appreciated it.

Alcoholism is the only disease that is entirely capable of fighting back, of taking care of itself, and of emerging in new places and new forms when it isn't properly treated. That's because of the spiritual malady.

Most people think that has something to do with prayer or with God. It doesn't. It has to do with 'our spirit'... that force which animates, motivates and propels us.

As an alcoholic, my spirit is ill. It is flawed. My character, or basic nature, doesn't work right.

At its root, it is a fundamental and irresolvable insecurity... a hole that can't ever be filled.

It is an instinct run rampant, a desperate need for acceptance and love that cannot be met. It hurts. It fills one with fear. The selfishness and self-centeredness of the alcoholic lies here... we are totally preoccupied with what is going on with ourselves on the inside.

The slings and arrows of experience warped by this need drive us to the fringe, and the voices of the committee in our head keep us there.

We are obsessed with ourselves, and from this condition of mind... the insanity of feelings gone haywire, we become self-medicators eventually.

We discover alcohol or something else... and the stuff quiets the voices, provides the relief we've never been able to find in any other way. It isn't any wonder we drink, or drug, the way we do.

And some of us don't develop an addiction... in attempting to meet these crying demands of our spirit become ill, we develop other malformations of behavior, and suffer in a hundred different ways.

God broke David's obsession to drink. But, I don't think David ever truly understood his disease. I say that because I watched him struggle with those old unresolved issues of his heart for years.

His rigidity, coldness, aloofness, isolation and difficulty with other people were a reflection of the pain in his heart... of the disease of alcoholism gone deep inside, and still active.

Alcoholism didn't need David to drink in order to continue trying to kill him, and in the end... it succeeded. In the end, instead of self abandoned... David abandoned hope... and discovered a bitter end.

Our recovery from alcoholism through the Steps must be a three-fold process. It is not one dimensional. When we say, in AA, that we have a triangle... recovery, unity, service... we mean it.

-Bernadette M., King City Group

ADDICTION

Addiction is a funny thing
You never know what it can bring

Addiction works in different ways
Goes up and down throughout your days

You ask yourself, how could this be
Addiction does these things to me?

Addiction is a fight you win
With courage and strength from within

- Sandra D., Kingsway Group

GRAPHICS & LAYOUT SUPPORT NEEDED

The Better Times (BT), which is responsible for producing AA Toronto's monthly newsletter, is in urgent need of a Graphics and Layout Specialist Volunteer.

REQUIRED SKILLS & QUALIFICATIONS

- At least 6 months of continuous sobriety.
- Experience (academic or professional) with design software such as Canva, Illustrator or Photoshop.
- Creative and collaborative.
- Can commit to laying out at least 6 issues over the course of 1 year.

Most of our work is done online and via email, and we will provide all the training. If you are interested in this incredibly rewarding work, please send an email to: bettertimes@aatoronto.org

GRAPEVINE BOOK OF THE MONTH



A brand-new collection of stories from AA members about the joys and challenges of working the program's Twelve Steps of Recovery.



Scan this QR code to access more
"Better Times" issues!

TORONTO GRATITUDE ROUNDUP

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR SATURDAY, OCTOBER 05, 2024



What is the Gratitude RoundUp?

The Toronto Gratitude Roundup is an Alcoholics Anonymous Conference with Al-Anon participation. It started as a dinner more than 40 years ago by a group of AA members who wished to celebrate their sobriety with other LGBTQ2+ members. We are based on AA's 12 steps and 12 traditions and also welcome members of other 12 step fellowships. Our purpose is to come together to strengthen our sobriety and to celebrate unity, recovery and service.

2024 Theme: Building Blocks of Recovery

Registration Details:

Location - St. Volodymyr Institute, 620 Spadina Ave, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2H4 CA.

There are a few parking spots available behind the facility as well as some metered parking on Spadina Ave.

Ticket - \$35 (Includes all conference workshops and speakers)

Buy your ticket online here: <https://gratitude.ticketspice.com/gratitude-2024>

Contact Us:

The Gratitude Committee is always happy to hear from you. Share your questions, comments, or thoughts with us. Please allow up to 48 hours for us to reply to your email.

Email: gratitudepromotion@gmail.com

GTAI/DISTRICT - OCTOBER SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Accessibilities - Sun. Oct. 20 - 11 a.m.

ID: 824 8962 1874 - PW: 799763

Archives - Fri. Oct. 11 - 7 p.m.

ID: 841 5376 9412 - PW: 018851

Communications - Tues. Oct. 15 - 8 p.m.

ID: 850 5256 7237 - PW: 984555

CPC/PI - Mon. Oct. 21 - 7 p.m.

ID: 854 7547 0291 - PW: 002060

Correctional Facilities - Oct 01 - 7 p.m.

ID: 883 8002 9737 - PW: 950392

Self-Support - Meets every other month.

Next Meeting: November 28 - 6:30 pm

ID: 820 9238 0206 - PW: 319853

Treatment - Oct. 20 - 4pm

ID: 868 2207 4860 - PW: 787289

Twelfth Step - Wed. Oct. 09 - 7 p.m.

ID: 813 0646 6967 - PW: 572531

IT Subcommittee - Tues. Oct. 08 - 7 p.m.

ID: 814 0942 9019 - PW: 379691

Information AA Day - Mon. Oct. 28 - 7 p.m.

ID: 811 8277 5978 - PW: 587553

OCTOBER MEDALLIONS

Darrell H., Six Points Group, 35 years, October 01, 1989

Jenna, Six Points Group, 1 year, October 06,

Sergio SFG., Friendly Group, 1 year, October 12, 2023

Mariam M., Grace Noon (Grace United Church), 30 years, October 24, 1994

Dan S., Start Today Group, 10 years, October 31, 2014

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...)

THE 40TH ANNUAL GTA ARCHIVES BREAKFAST

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2024



BLOORDALE UNITED CHURCH
4258 Bloor Street West
(West of The West Mall)

Agenda

- 9:00 - 10:00 - Coffee & Fellowship
- 10:00 - 11:00 - Buffet Breakfast
- 11:00 - 12:00 - Open Meeting
- 12:00 - 12:30 - Closing

Registration Details

Tickets - \$35

More information:

Glenn - GTAI Archives Committee Chair
(647) 572 5687



ARCHIVES CORNER

Did you Know ?

On October 20 1928, Bill made a pledge in the family Bible by writing, "To my beloved wife that has endured so much, let this stand as evidence to you that I have finished with drink forever." On Thanksgiving, Bill wrote another pledge in the family Bible stating, "My strength is renewed a thousand fold in my love for you." In January 1929, Bill signed yet another pledge in the family Bible saying, "To tell you once more that I am finished with it. I love you." On wrote 30, 1930, Bill wrote his last promise to stop drinking in the family Bible: "Finally and for a lifetime, thank God for your love." After that he gave up making promises in despair.

On October 29 1929 (Black Tuesday), the Stock Market in NY City crashed leaving Bill W. broke & \$60,000 in debt (\$800,000 today). Soon after, Bill's friend, Dick Johnson, offered him a job in Montreal, Canada with Greenshields & Co. By Christmas, Bill & Lois were in living lavishly in Montreal in a luxury furnished Glen Eagles apartment on Cotes des Neiges, in Mount Royal overlooking the city. They had a brand new Packard automobile & membership in the Lachute Country Club. Less than 10 months later, Bill was fired due to his drinking & fighting in the country club. In December 1930, after a binge by Bill that started in Montreal & took him into Vermont, Lois went to get Bill. They returned to Lois' parents home at 182 Clinton St., NY.

On October 1937, Dr. Bob & Bill W. met again in Akron. They counted 40 sober members, with half of them having been sober for two years. It was a remarkable success story since all the sober members had previously been declared hopeless.

On Oct. 23, 1949, New York area's first female member, Florence R., started drinking again. Bill knew her husband from Wall Street and was the first female drunk that stayed at Bill's house. She helped Fitz M. start the Washington Group. Her story is in 1st Edition of Big Book under "Feminine Victory." Florence R. never recovered and ended up committing suicide.

In October 1959, Gratitude Month was started with the intention of requesting financial support for Toronto Intergroup from members of the Toronto Fellowship.

In Oct. 1988, "The Language of the Heart" was published by the AA Grapevine. It contained Grapevine essays that Bill had written to explain the Traditions to the membership and much more.

On October 5 1988, Lois Wilson, widow of Bill Wilson and co-founder of Al-Anon Family Groups, died at the age of 97. Her contributions to the AA & Al-Anon Fellowships entitle her to be considered as a co-founder of both. Michael Alexander, past Board Chairman, wrote, "Many AA's today feel their lives are owned to Lois as well as Bill, Dr. Bob & Anne S." Lois got engaged to Bill in fall of 1915 and married Bill on January 24, 1918. Bill passed away on January 24th 1971, on their 53rd wedding anniversary.

Greater Toronto Area Groups That Started in October

- Oct. 15, 1948 - Hill Group
- Oct. 8, 1951 - Friendly Group
- Oct. 3, 1963 - Don Mills Group
- Oct. 13, 1965 - Anniversary Group
- Oct. 1, 1968 - The New Life Group
- Oct. 18, 1968 - Parkway Group
- Oct. 8, 1970 - Chartwell Group
- Oct. 15, 1970 - Markland Wood Group
- Oct. 15, 1975 - Brampton New Life Group
- Oct. 20, 1977 - New Anchor Group
- Oct. 10, 1983 - Melrose Group
- Oct. 16, 1983 - Acceptance Group-Oshawa
- Oct. 23, 1983 - Glenholme Group
- Oct. 5, 1986 - Bloordale Group
- Oct. 21, 1987 - Scarborough Thursday Noon Meeting
- Oct. 1988 - A Place to Share Group (Women's)
- Oct. 25, 1998 - Principals Before Personalities
- Oct. 28, 1993 - Living Sober Group-Thornhill
- Oct. 6, 2002 - Scarboro Monday Noon Meeting
- Oct. 25, 2013 - Sisters In Sobriety Group
- Oct. 8, 2016 - Ajax Freethinkers

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.

A GOODBYE TO JOHN BARLEYCORN



Dear John,

You have been with me since I was a teenager and I loved you so much I let all my responsibilities slide.

When my son ran away because of you, I didn't care because I loved you more.

When my mother died you were there to help me get through it. When my brother died because of you I thought about breaking it off but my love for you won out. As the years went by my love for you grew so much that I dumped my family, friends and everybody else that I had known.

Finally it was just you and I left and I couldn't have been happier. Like any marriage we had our ups and downs, but eventually the downs grew more and more until finally I couldn't handle you anymore. My love for you started to dwindle until there was no love left at all.

So I think it is now time to part ways and see if I can rebuild my life with a New Love, myself, my family and new friends.

-Gayle B.



Originally Published in the March 2015 Issue of Better Times

SHARE YOUR STORY



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