

## APRIL 2025 Fellowship

When a new face enters the room, what is your approach? The new face could be a Newcomer or a Long Timer; Both should be welcomed equally - Fellowship.

### 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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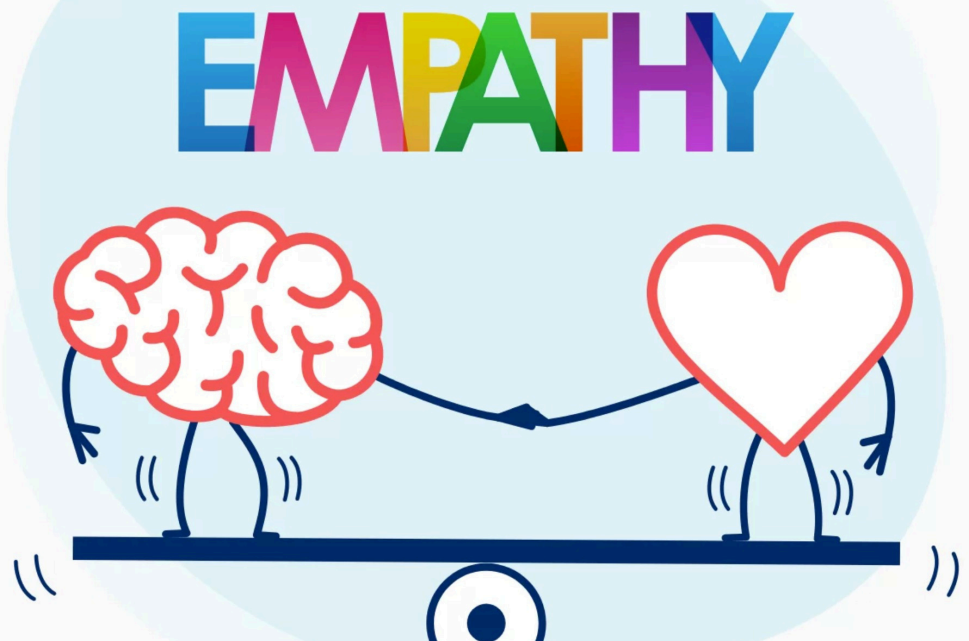
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### How To Reach Us

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](mailto:bettertimes@aatoronto.org)  
or contact Alex at 416-487-8110

## ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS TAUGHT ME TO ACT WITH EMPATHY



I first got sober. I was desperate for help, and I needed it quickly – i.e. the same day- so I took the first bed that was offered. I was a drunk of the middle-aged, white collar professional kind. I came from a nice house in a nice neighborhood. The detox was not a soft landing: I remember the shell-shock of having staff members search through my bags and distrust every word from my mouth. I had never felt so small and humiliated. They took my cell phone and sent me to my bed, telling me to stay there until I was told to move. The only thing missing was an orange jumpsuit. I felt like an inmate.

During that first night, the woman in the next bed was in intense withdrawal, complete with intense diarrhea. She was in horrendous pain. I was in alcohol withdrawal myself. I lay in my bed shaking, sobbing and wondering how the hell I ended up there. I was assigned kitchen duty the next morning. I couldn't eat yet – still in withdrawal- so I stayed in the kitchen drying dishes with this guy who was enthusiastic about the food – he said it was so much better than in prison. My anxiety grew.

It became clear that many of my fellow detoxees usually lived on the street – having a bed and meals was a reprieve from their everyday lives.

I did not feel like I belonged. My brain was screaming, “HOW DID I GET HERE?” Then came my first AA meeting. We read from the Big Book. We shared. And everything changed because I heard my housemates expressing my pain. My loneliness. My fear. I remember that I couldn't breathe because I was so stunned. In this strange facility where I felt completely out of place, everything fell into place. I had found my people. No one except people in the rooms understand this unique kinship. It makes me smile now to know that this blessing was discovered by two white guys in the 1930s – more people who I would have sworn I had nothing in common with.

I have found in sobriety that normies often ask what others in the rooms “are like”. My standard response goes something like, “Teachers. Ex cons. Lawyers. Retired folks. Cleaners. Accountants. Waiters. Professors. Stay at home parents. Salespeople. Construction workers. Piano tuners.”

I then go on to tell them that there is every imaginable kind of person in the rooms. Even, occasionally, someone who is still drunk. The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking. In the 12 and 12, it's clear the early members of our fellowship struggled intensely with living out Tradition 3, at first excluding “low bottom” drunks. But when they faced their hypocrisy, they also embraced the true nature of alcoholism: No one is barred from becoming an alcoholic, so no one should be barred from recovery. The 12 Steps work for anyone who works them.



## 20<sup>th</sup> Annual East Toronto Archives Breakfast

**Sunday April 27, 2025**

### QSSIS Banquet Hall

3474 Kingston Rd  
(just west of Markham Rd)

free parking, fully accessible  
and ASL interpreters welcome

**\$35** advance tickets  
until April 23, 2025  
tickets not available at the door



### PROGRAM

**9- 10 am**  
COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP

**10- 11 am**  
BUFFET BREAKFAST

**11-12 pm**  
SPEAKER MEETING  
Ed H. Pine Hills Group (53 years)  
Sobriety Date: February 9, 1972

**12 pm-**  
Prizes & Closing

For more information & tickets  
Please contact your GSR or

Bert J. 647-622-6127  
Eddy G. 416-536-7536  
Lynn E. 416-624-8098  
John M. 416-277-4285

### 20th Anniversary - East Toronto Archives Breakfast - Sunday, April 27, 2025

Everyone is welcome to attend the 20th Anniversary of the East Toronto Archives Breakfast. It's a ticketed event, where \$35 gains access to breakfast, door prizes, including literature such as Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers, archives displays about current and past histories of groups in Scarborough and East York, and an open speaker meeting.

Please join us at Q-ssis Banquet Hall, 3474 Kingston Rd, Scarborough, ON, M1M 1R5, on Sunday April 27, 2025. Doors open at 9am for coffee & fellowship. Breakfast begins at 10am. **The open meeting commences at 11am, with our guest speaker, a member of 53 years' experience in Alcoholics Anonymous sharing from the podium.** The venue is one bus from the TTC's Warden Station.

There's a Recovery Countdown, where it's been customary for the longtimer in the room to gift a piece of AA literature, usually a Big Book, to the newcomer. Catch up with friends and maybe make some new ones at the buffet line. There's a memorial moment where attendees can call out the name and home group of those members who have passed on since last year's breakfast. It's a simple yet kind gesture to honour those who have played but a small part of a great whole.

**No tickets will be available at the door**, so please reach out to the GSRs in both Districts 18 and 22 to get one in advance. Eddy G and John M also have tickets, and they can be reached at [egesicki@rogers.com](mailto:egesicki@rogers.com) and [johnmay1954@gmail.com](mailto:johnmay1954@gmail.com)

Coffee will be brewing. It might be just the right day to celebrate and be part of the ongoing history of Alcoholics Anonymous in the east end.

Thank you,  
Joe A

### Alcoholics Anonymous Taught me to act with empathy cont'd from pg. 1

The detox facility had a second floor that you "graduated to" once you were out of withdrawal. It had a lovely reading room. I remember the afternoon I cracked the Big Book open. It was a gorgeous day; the room glowed with sunshine, and I was curled up on a comfy couch. Like many of us, I started reading and could hardly stop. This man from the 1930s felt like me! He drank like me, he thought like me, he acted like me. I sat there flooded with sunlight, inside and out: I had started to see what it meant to no longer be alone.

A few hours later, another detoxee joined me in the room. She was a sex worker; she lived mostly on the streets. She was tiny and looked pretty rough - her teeth had been kicked out by cops. (I also looked terrible, but in a different way. I was bloated from booze, bruised all over from falling while drunk and was recovering from a broken ankle that I got from one of those falls.) The only other thing we seemed to have in common was that we were the same age.

I had some nail polish, and she asked if she could use it. We started talking while painting our toenails. I was blabbing, spitting out the thoughts that were coming at me fast and furiously, overcome with having seen myself in this big blue book. She had been in and out of the rooms for a while, and she listened to me, then she told me her story. Although her path was different from mine, again, she expressed feelings that were all too familiar. All of a sudden, we had a lot in common.

I learned so much from her. About my addiction and recovery. It was the beginning of the other side of the blessing that is Tradition 3: the many souls and experiences it brings together in the rooms. Because it's not just that anyone can come in - it's also that anyone can help someone else recover.

About a year after meeting my nail-painting buddy, on another beautiful day, I was sitting on some rocks at the end of a Toronto park that sticks into Lake Ontario. I could see the CN Tower and all the office towers. I was suddenly struck by the thought that everyone in and around those buildings - all the business people, office cleaners, accountants, fast food workers, lawyers, TTC workers - every single individual was walking around carrying a burden no one else could see.

I was starting to experience yet another blessing that grows out of Tradition 3 - this great mosaic of people who start with nothing in common except addiction grow into individuals who can see beyond themselves and their own problems. When we work with other alcoholics, when we're honest and vulnerable with each other, a huge window opens: we start to truly see other humans for who they are.

I believe I had empathy before I got sober, but AA taught me to act with empathy. In AA, we are invested in our common recovery. When we first come in, we are served by people who see us as desperate, battered and broken. They love us until we can love ourselves. And then, in time, we return the favor to newcomers.

Because the only way we can keep this great gift that we have received is to continuously give it to anyone who says, "I'm an alcoholic. I need help."

- Sally R., The Melrose Group







**Saturday May 3, 2025**  
**Storrington Lion's Club**  
 2992 Princess Rd.  
 (Battersea Rd)

**Tickets \$ 20.00**  
 (also available at the door)

Doors open at 9 am for Registration  
 10 am - 3 pm

#### Speakers

JAY A. TORONTO  
 ERIC H. BARRIE  
 PAT B. KINGSTON

**BBQ Lunch** - Hamburgers, hotdogs and salads

**Sobriety Countdown**

**50/50 Draw**

Tickets available from:

Mike N. 613-539-8112  
 Randy S. 613-985-4873  
 Steve W. 613-893-3280  
 Pat L. 613-888-9205



Josh S. 613-893-4895  
 Steve B. 613-532-1057  
 Joel F. 613-572-4041  
 Michelle T. 613-561-2967

## INFORMATION AA DAY – BIRDS OF A FEATHER – MAY 24th 2025

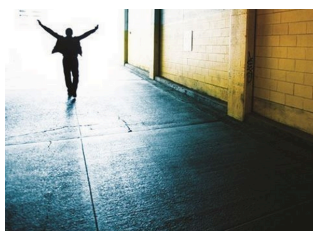
On May 24th those interested in service outside their group will gather to listen to members who carry the message of AA service, inside and outside the fellowship.

**Meeting: 9 am – 3 pm - Birds of A Feather Group, Native Canadian Centre  
 Toronto, 16 Spadina Road**

**Cost \$10.00 per person – Potluck Lunch - Parking available at The Green P lot  
 (across the street)**

Our delegate Amy L. (who attended the General Service Conference in New York with other delegates from North America), will share news about changes being implemented to improve our communication both within and outside AA. A guest speaker will attend sharing their personal and service journey in the fellowship. I have attended many Information AA Days, I am still amazed at how much work service people do. I have been involved with service for many years and met some interesting and very dedicated people. Service has enhanced my sobriety. So please come out and join us on the 24th of May so you too may learn about service and help to carry the message. John M. Danforth Group

## GRAPEVINE BOOK OF THE MONTH



**NO MATTER WHAT**  
 DEALING WITH ADVERSITY IN SOBRIETY

*Stories from AA Grapevine*

All recovering alcoholics have had to deal with adversity throughout sobriety...a serious illness, an ugly divorce, the death of a child, the loss of a house to fire or to the bank. Despite the fear, pain or self-pity we are in when these tragedies strike, drinking is not an option. The stories in this book show how AA members use the tools of the program and embrace the Fellowship to deal with tough issues.

<https://www.aagrapevine.org/store/no-matter-what-dealing-adversity-sobriety?>

-Imran R. Grapevine

## GTAI/DISTRICT - APRIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

**Accessibilities** - TBA

**ID: 824 8962 1874 - PW: 799763**

**Archives** - Fri. Apr. 11 – 7 p.m.

**ID: 841 5376 9412 - PW: 018851**

**Communications** - Tues. Apr. 15 – 8 p.m.

**ID: 850 5256 7237 - PW: 984555**

**CPC/PI** - Mon. Apr. 21 – 7 p.m.

**ID: 854 7547 0291 - PW: 002060**

**Correctional Facilities** - Tues. Apr. 01 – 7 p.m.

**ID: 883 8002 9737 - PW: 950392**

**Self-Support** - Meets every other month.

Next Meeting: TBA

**ID: 820 9238 0206 - PW: 319853**

**Treatment** - Sun. Apr. 20 - 4pm

**ID: 868 2207 4860 - PW: 787289**

**Twelfth Step** - Wed. Apr. 09 – 7 p.m.

**ID: 813 0646 6967 - PW: 572531**

**IT Subcommittee** - Mon. Apr. 07 - 7 p.m.

**ID: 814 0942 9019 - PW: 379691**

**Information AA Day** Mon. Apr. 28 - 7 p.m.

**ID: 811 827 5978 - PW: 587553**

## SHARE YOUR STORY

**CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR BETTER TIMES' SPRING ISSUES**



Clocks Have Changed - More Daylight - Do you have any tips for staying sober in the early spring?

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



## Answer the Call Become a 12 Stepper



### What is a 12 Stepper?

When our Help Line receives a call that needs more attention, Phone Greeters reach out to our 12 Stepper List. 12 Steppers are Volunteers who follow up with those seeking sobriety.

- ✓ Return a call to someone seeking help.
- ✓ Answer questions and provide support.
- ✓ Connect in person at a meeting or for a coffee.
- ✓ Bring a meeting to a homebound alcoholic.



Click on the QR code

✉ 12step.chair@aastoronto.org for more information.

♥ Be the voice of encouragement for someone who needs it.  
 Join us in carrying the message!



# ARCHIVES CORNER

## Did you Know .... ?

**In April 1933**, beer became legal & Dr. Bob went through a "beer experiment." Soon, he was drinking over a case a day fortified with liquor. In his Big Book story, Dr. Bob says that this was when he began in the Oxford Group, participating in it for over two years before meeting Bill W.

**In April 1935**, discouraged at having no success in sobering up other alcoholics, Bill came close to giving up on his efforts. However, his wife Lois reminded him that HE was staying sober because of his working with others. Bill W. talked with Dr. Silkworth, who advised him to stop preaching about his "hot flash" experience and hit the alcoholic hard with the medical view on alcoholism. Dr. Silkworth advised Bill to break down the strong egos of alcoholics by telling them about the obsession that condemned them to drink and the allergy that condemned them to go mad or die. It would then be so much easier to get them to accept the spiritual solution.

**In April 1937**, Ebby T., who brought the message to Bill W., got drunk after 2 years and 7 months of sobriety. It began an on-again, off-again pattern of drinking & sobriety that would stay with Ebby.

**In April 1938**, the writing of the Big Book began at the business office of NY member Hank P. (story in 1st Edition Big Book "Unbeliever") at Honors Dealers, 17 William St., Newark, NJ. Bill W. wrote draft outlines on legal pads & spontaneously dictated the expanded text to Ruth Hock, who was then the Honors Dealer Secretary. Each week, Bill would read the drafts to those who met at his home at 182 Clinton St, Brooklyn, NY. Edited copies were sent to Dr. Bob & the Akron members for further review & editing. As they worked their way through the chapters, NY & Akron members also wrote personal stories to be included in the book.

**On April 4, 1939**, the first edition of Alcoholics Anonymous was first published. 4,730 copies were published at \$3.50 a copy. The printer, Edward Blackwell of Cornwall Press, was told to use the thickest paper in his shop. The large, bulky volume became known as the Big Book. Bill W. later wrote that the idea was to convince the alcoholic he was getting his money's worth. Ray C. (whose Big Book story is "An Artist's Concept") designed the "circus color" dust jacket. The book had 8 Roman & 400 Arabic numbered pages. "The Doctor's Opinion" started on page 1, and the basic text ended at page 179 (not 164).

**On April 11, 1939**, at age 35, Marty M., whose Big Book story is "Women Suffer Too," attended her first meeting at 182 Clinton St., NY. The prior 15 months, she was a charity patient at Bellevue Hospital in NYC & the Blythewood Sanitarium in Greenwich, CT, under the care of Dr. Harry Tiebout. Tiebout gave her a copy of the Big Book manuscript & arranged for her to go to the meeting. On returning to Blythewood, she told fellow patient Gennie C, "We are not alone." Marty later established an AA Group in the Sanitarium. Relapsed early on & again in 1959. She is sometimes called the first female AA member. She is not. There was Florence R. (story in 1st edition Big Book "A Feminine Victory", 12th Stepped by Lois Wilson, relapsed & died in 1943), Sylvia K. (story in 2nd Edition, Big Book "The Keys to the Kingdom", arrived in Akron, Ohio AA in 1939, returned to Chicago & got sober on Sept. 13, 1939, died in 1974 with 35 yrs. & credited having longest uninterrupted sobriety any woman in AA), Ethel M. (story in 2nd Edition Big Book "From Farm to City", 1st woman in Akron, Ohio, sobriety date May 8, 1941, stayed sober her entire life). Ethel spoke at the Ontario Regional Conference (ORC) in 1953.

**On April 25, 1939**, Morgan R. a former advertising man, asylum patient & friend of radio-man Gabriel Heatter, appeared on Heatter's 9PM program "We the People." Morgan told his story & made a pitch for the Big Book. Prior to the broadcast, Bill W. & others raised \$500 to mail 20,000 post cards to physicians about the broadcast. There were only twelve replies.

**On April 26, 1939**, the Bank foreclosed on Bill & Lois's Brooklyn home at 182 Clinton St. It began an almost 2-year period of moving from house to house & staying with friends. They stayed with Hank P. in Monclair, NJ, the first of 54 moves (by Lois Wilson's count) they would make before buying Stepping Stones in Bedford Hills, NY in 1941.

## Greater Toronto Area Groups That Started in April

**April 2, 2011** - A Place of Hope Meeting  
**April 4, 2009** - Saturday Night Main Street Meeting  
**April 6, 2007** - Leslie Group  
**April 9, 1956** - Pine Hills Group  
**April 10, 1997** - 12 Tradition Group in Pickering  
**April 12, 1992** - Back to Basics Group in Richmond Hill

**April 13, 2017** - Gay Sober Men Group  
**April 19, 1992** - Meadowvale Fellowship Group  
**April 21, 1957** - Welcome Group  
**April 24, 1949** - Toronto Sunday Morning Men's Meeting

## APRIL MEDALLIONS

**Juan P.**, Erin Mills Group, 1 yr, **Apr. 07**  
**Penny L.**, Woodbridge Group, 10 Yrs., **Apr. 10**  
**Megan S.**, Six Points Group, 1 yr, **Apr. 14**  
**Maria M.**, Brampton Recovery Group, 15 yrs, **Apr. 16**  
**George L.**, Erin Mills Group, 25 yrs, **Apr. 21**

## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

**Mathew P.**, Woodbridge Group, 2 yrs, **Apr. 03**  
**Max K.**, Friendly Group, 3 yrs, **Apr. 05**  
**David H.**, Friendly Group, 15 yrs, **Apr. 10**  
**Patti S.**, Melrose Group, 40 yrs, **Apr. 27**  
(Medallion: May 17)

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



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

## IS THERE AN UPCOMING MEDALLION?

Please send your medallion details to [bettertimes@aatoronto.org](mailto: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...)

## GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS

### PORT CREDIT GROUP

Effective April 1st, 2025

Zoom Meeting  
MOVED TO Tuesday at 8:00 P.M.

### In-person meeting REMAINS the same

Thursday @ 8:00 P.M.  
Trinity Anglican Church  
26 Stavebank Rd.  
Mississauga, ON L5G 2T5