

## February 2026 Greeters are Important

If you are looking for service work, extend your hand as a Door Greeter. Attend your home group's monthly business meeting and sign up.

### SHARE YOUR STORY



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BETTER TIMES is published monthly for AA members in the Greater Toronto Area.  
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## MY JOURNEY SO FAR



My name is Dan. I am an alcoholic in recovery. I am a member of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). I stopped drinking on October 31, 2014, while receiving last rites, and in a medically induced coma. I did not choose to quit drinking, nor did I have a desire to stop, but by the Grace of God, I have not had a drink since. I achieved 9 months of abstinence before grudgingly walking into an AA meeting. There I learned about my disease. I learned about alcoholism. And I learned about sobriety. I learned all of this from people I didn't like and didn't want to be with. I started my recovery with rare appearances at nearby meetings, but my attendance became more frequent and soon became daily.

In 2023, I was dismissed from my job due to a slowdown in business. I was nearing retirement, and I was treated with respect and kindness by my company and my boss. My boss was fully aware of my ongoing recovery and had requested my assistance during my tenure there in helping other employees suffering from substance use disorders. He suggested I talk to an acquaintance of his who worked at an Addiction Recovery Centre. He thought I might be of great value in a position there. I took his advice and contacted the Centre, and went for a friendly interview. I was told an employment condition was certification in the field of addictions from a recognized post-secondary institution. Also in 2023, I suffered some medical issues and required major surgery in May 2024. While in recovery from the surgery, I decided to pursue further education.

Preparing to re-enter academic life was a tedious process. I had to obtain and submit transcripts from over 40 years ago. One of the universities (Ryerson) no longer exists and has become Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU). By 2025, I was enrolled and prepared to commence classes in Addictions and Mental Health at Humber College, which then became Humber Polytechnic. During the orientation class, we were asked to introduce ourselves. I happened to be the first person, and out of habit, I said "Hello. I'm Dan, and I am an alcoholic." I bowed my head, feeling like an idiot, and when the next person introduced themselves and said "hi, I'm Paul", I shouted out "Hi Paul", as we do in AA. As it turned out, in a class of about 120, 3 men also announced they were alcoholics, and 2 women who were in the AA program kept their anonymity. School was interesting and informative, and I found the other students to be quite accepting and kind toward me. The professors and instructors were equally kind and supportive. I participated in class. I was happy to help other students when I could. My attendance was exemplary except for occasional absences for medical appointments for myself or my elderly mother. 40 years earlier, my attendance at university was dismal. Because of my drinking, it took me 9 years to earn my 4-year degree.

The first few weeks of school, I tried to fit in. I had to learn how to navigate a website called MyHumber and another called Blackboard. Blackboard was used to register for courses and set up a class schedule. I had never heard of "Blackboard", nor did I know how to use it. It seemed everyone else had no problem with it, and I was lost. My son, who had attended Humber 10 years prior, had never heard of Blackboard, so he was of no help. I was attending classes for the first few weeks without being officially registered. Finally, after asking a few questions and getting some assistance, I was able to get properly registered. I found that many of the students had bachelor's degrees in social sciences and health studies. They were familiar with the host of acronyms being thrown around in the lectures common to these fields of study, but uncommon to a civil engineer. I knew what ICU stood for (intensive care unit) because I had been in one, and I knew what OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) was because I had known some people who had OCD. Other than that, medical and psychological acronyms were foreign to me. Consequently, I had to raise my hand and stop class to inquire about many acronyms, such as ADHD, DBT and CBT stood for and meant something to some, while others knew exactly what they meant. That was a bit embarrassing, but necessary for me to know. A life lesson that I have learned is that if you don't ask questions, you won't get answers. Of course, others in the same boat would probably just Google things. Even though I shouldn't care, I still had the feeling that others thought I was stupid. On the day of the first midterm, I was unaware we even had a test that day; however, I was able to get a 92%. Others did not do as well. I achieved high marks over the first two semesters.

Another obstacle I faced coming into the course was that because of many years in AA. I was preconditioned to believe only in 12-step programs. Even though one of the slogans and teachings of AA is to "keep an open mind", when it comes to things like harm reduction or controlled drinking, most AA people are contemptuous of these ideas. AA is a program of total abstinence. I had to be open-minded enough to listen, learn, and accept what I was being taught. I could not simply be dismissive of these concepts, or I certainly would have failed my studies. What I learned and came to accept is that opinions like Harm Reduction are not intended to achieve sobriety. The intention is to keep those not yet ready to change alive long enough to become ready and willing to change. A quote that I heard in class is that "Change will happen when the fear of change becomes less than the fear of staying the same." In the 3rd semester, we had to do a Placement in an approved job field, and we had to attain 280 hours between September and mid-December. We all searched for appropriate placements. Many had already found jobs while I was still preparing my résumé and cover letters. I had sent out several résumés when all of a sudden I was offered a placement job at a recovery centre that I had not even applied for. I accepted the position immediately. During our placements, most, if not all of us, were unpaid volunteers at our placement settings. We also had a class online every two weeks in which we had to do presentations about our placements. Individual students, after describing their job setting, would pose a question to the class regarding their jobs. These were online classes.

# My Journey so Far - Continued

Some students had difficulty relating to their patients or clients. This is perfectly understandable. Most of the class did not have lived experience, nor did they have experience in group discussions, one-on-one discussions, or many social skills required when dealing with people with addictions or mental health problems. This is where some believe that just being educated in the field is simply not enough. As an alcoholic, I can honestly say I can be dismissive and contemptuous of those trying to treat me with only the knowledge they have gained from a book or a classroom. In my placement setting, every member of the staff was in recovery. The range of recovery was from a year and a half to 41 years. I recently came across a meme that said, "Don't let anyone who hasn't been in your shoes tell you how to tie your laces." In my opinion, no amount of study and counselling experience can compare to the experience of suffering long-term self-destruction and suffering followed by years of recovery in group settings. I know and understand the way an alcoholic or addict's mind works. I remember the pain, self-hatred, despair and frustration. I can relate on a personal level to those who have had enough and are wishing to change. I understand being "sick and tired of being sick and tired." I believe the success in recovery is the result of one alcoholic talking to another alcoholic.

In summary, once I seemed to be on a steady footing in my recovery, some of my AA mentors suggested it was time for me to start sponsoring people. I didn't look for sponsee's, but I suspect some people were directed to me. When I was approached, I laid down certain guidelines and agreed to be a sponsor. I have been told that helping others helps keep me sober. So far so good. I also freely share advice regarding recovery to anyone who asks. I warn them that I do not have all the answers. I just know what has worked for me.

I decided to study addictions and mental health to pursue and expand on who I might help. I believe with academic training and lived experience. I can be a valuable asset to those who are suffering and wish to change their lives.

I've been there and done that.

- Dan S. - Start Today

## Ontario Regional Conference (ORC) History

**Wed. January 13, 1943, at 6 p.m.** 1<sup>st</sup> continuous meeting of AA was held in Toronto at the Little Denmark Restaurant on Bay St. Present at this dinner meeting were two non-alcoholics - Rev. Dr. George Little and Rev. Percy Price and six alcoholics - Tom E., Bruce M., Sam McC., Bus McT., Dorothy C. & Weems C.

**Thurs, December 16, 1943,** the First AA Banquet was held at the Royal York Hotel with 80 people present.

The Conference is the continuing celebration of the anniversary of the commencement of AA in Toronto, ON., Canada. Before 1950, celebrations were held each year at various locations. 1170 Yonge St. & the Knights of Columbus Hall on Sherbourne St. were used a number of times. The words "regional" and "conference" were not necessarily used in the announcements.

**The Progression of the name of the Ontario Regional Conference can be seen from the programs:**

- 1950: The A.A. Conference
- 1951: The Regional Conference
- 1952: The Ontario A.A. Conference
- 1953: The Ontario Regional Conference

**March 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 1951** - The Ontario Regional Conference was held at the Royal York Hotel. Bill Wilson came to speak and gave a real pitch for his proposed General Service Conference. It was unanimously accepted by those in attendance from the State of New York, the State of Pennsylvania and the Province of Ontario. In the new scheme of things, the two states and the province of Ontario became entities unto themselves after adopting Bill Wilson's plan for the Third Legacy. It now became necessary to elect a delegate for all of Ontario to attend the General Service Conference to be held in New York the following month, April 1951. Adam C. from the Friday-Young Group in Toronto was elected as Ontario's first delegate who served on Panel 1 (1951-1952). In 1953, he was unanimously chosen as the first Canadian to serve on the Board of Trustees from January 1953 until April 1957.

The huge task of establishing areas and districts throughout the Province of Ontario to fit into these new A.A. plans was in the hands of Adam C. on his return from the Conference in New York. During his first year in office, with the capable and dedicated help of his committee, they got this job done, in spite of the enormity of it all, and most of what was accomplished then remains in place today.

**October or November 1957-** Western Ontario Convention held in London. Leander John Joseph G. (Panel # 8) was elected as the first delegate of the West Area.

**1958** - The Ontario Area was divided into 2 areas - the West and the East/North.

From the date the 2<sup>nd</sup> area came into existence, a Committee came into existence, which has continued under different names until the present:

**1958** - The Ontario Committee - General Service Conference

**1964** - The Ontario General Service Committee

**1980** - The Ontario Provincial Committee

**1990** - The Ontario Delegates Committee

It has consisted of the Delegates and the Alternates. At times, it had a Secretary, a Treasurer, and other committee members such as Public Information and Institutions.

**1963** - Ontario was divided into 3 areas - East, West & North.

**1967** - Ontario was divided into 4 areas - East, West, North West & North East.

**1964 Fall** - 1<sup>st</sup> Assembly for Eastern Ontario held outside Toronto. Alf McG. from Ottawa was elected delegate at Belleville.

The Ontario Regional Conference was sponsored from the start by all groups in Ontario. With the passage of time and growth, many parts of the province began to have their own conferences. From **1951 until 1963**, delegates were elected at the Ontario Regional Conference; the first Western Ontario Delegate was elected in London in 1957. Gradually, the original purpose for this conference eroded, though it continued to be sponsored by Toronto Intergroup and the Ontario General Service Committee, whose name changed to Ontario Provincial Committee in 1981.

In **1991**, the name of this Committee changed to the Ontario Delegates Committee, at which time the areas around the province withdrew their support, and the sole sponsor became Toronto Intergroup.

By 1993, Ontario A.A. functions with the assistance and service support of about 18 Intergroups.

### Locations of the ORC:

**1943:** Royal York Hotel

**1944-1945:** 1170 Yonge St.

**1946-1947:** Columbus Hall

**1948:** Central Technical School & Tivoli Theatre

**1949:** 1170: Yonge St. & Columbus Hall

**1950:** Royal York Hotel & Jarvis Collegiate

**1951-1979:** Royal York Hotel

**1980-1989:** Harbour Castle Hilton

**1990-1996:** Sheraton Hotel

**1997-2011:** Royal York Hotel

**2012:** Harbour Castle Hilton

**2013-2018:** Royal York Hotel

**2019:** Sheraton Hotel

**2020:** Sheraton Hotel- Cancelled due to Covid-19 outbreak.

**2021-2022:** Virtual Online

**2023-present:** Sheraton Hotel

### ORC Tidbits Over the Years

**1946:** Clarence S., founder of AA in Cleveland, spoke.

**1948:** Bill & Lois Wilson were speakers.

**1951:** Bill & Lois Wilson present & 1<sup>st</sup> Delegate of Ontario is elected.

**1952:** Sat. Night Chair- Ont. General Service & Sun. Banquet Chair-Central Committee Chair.

**1953:** Bill D. from Akron, Ohio, AA #3, "Man on the Bed" spoke. Also, Ethel M. from Akron, Ohio, 1<sup>st</sup> lady in Akron to get sober, spoke.

**1957:** 1<sup>st</sup> time the Friday Night conference is held.

**1959:** First Program to be numbered #10 should have been #17.

**1960:** Registration- single \$9.50, double \$13.50

**1962:** Strike at Royal York Hotel. Friday Night have an Alkathon, Saturday Night 1<sup>st</sup> Dance.

**1963:** Friday 1<sup>st</sup> Open Meeting.

**1964:** 1<sup>st</sup> Theme "Sobriety in Action."

**1965:** ORC was not held; instead, the International Convention of AA in Toronto was held. More than 10,000 attendees. The theme was "I Am Responsible," & the Responsibility Declaration is recited at the conclusion of the gathering.

**1969:** 1<sup>st</sup> time Banquet is chaired by ORC Chair.

**1972:** The banquet is changed from Sunday to Saturday evening.

**1978:** All Canadian Speakers.

**1980:** 1st year at new location (Harbour Castle), 1st time ORC lost money (\$19,000 for coffee) on account of providing free coffee throughout the weekend.

**1981:** 1st time women chaired, Rita O. Hill Group.

**1986:** 1st talent night, Friday after the speaker.

**1987:** 1st time at two hotels- Harbour Castle & King Edward.

**1993:** ORC not held, 50th Anniversary of AA in Canada held at the Metro Convention Centre. Approx. 7,000 attendees.

**1994:** In addition to the ticket price, 2x 7th Tradition was taken.

**1995:** Downscaled expenses.

**1997:** 1st time the Chair Percy H. passes away in December. 1998 Chair Brian B., Welcome Group steps in.

**2005:** ORC was not held; instead, the International Convention of AA in Toronto was held. First time a city hosted the convention twice. More than 44,000 attendees. The theme was "I Am Responsible," reprising the 1965 theme.

**2020:** ORC was cancelled due to Covid-19 outbreak.

**2021-2022:** Two years, the ORC was held virtually online.

**2023:** ORC was back in person at the Sheraton Hotel. The budget was scaled down, estimated at 2200 attendees. 2600 attended. Theme "Keep Coming Back!"

## GTAI/DISTRICT - FEBRUARY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

**Accessibilities** - TBA

ID: 824 8962 1874 - PW: 799763

**Archives** - Fri. Feb. 13, 7 p.m.

ID: 841 5376 9412 - PW: 018851

**Communications** - Tues. Feb. 17, 8 p.m.

ID: 850 5256 7237 - PW: 984555

**CPC/PI** - Tues. Feb. 24, 7 p.m.

ID: 854 7547 0291 - PW: 002060

**Correctional Facilities** - Tues. Feb. 03, 7 p.m.

ID: 883 8002 9737 - PW: 950392

**Self-Support** - Tues. Feb. 03, 6:30 p.m.

ID: 897 3620 8895 - PW: 162629

**Treatment** - Sun. Feb. 15, 4 p.m.

ID: 868 2207 4860 - PW: 787289

**Twelfth Step** - Tues. Feb. 10, 7 p.m.

ID: 813 0646 6967 - PW: 572531

**IT Subcommittee** - Mon. Feb. 02, 7 p.m.

ID: 814 0942 9019 - PW: 379691

**Information AA Day** - TBA

ID: 811 827 5978 - PW: 587553

## ONTARIO REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS w/ AL-ANON & ALATEEN

# A REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE

MARCH 20-22, 2026

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Ontario Regional Conference 2026

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### A.A Speakers

Billy N. Florida  
Juanita W. Ohio  
Paul McQ. New York  
Tom & Cheryl T. New York  
Yvonne S. California

### Al-Anon Main Speaker

Marti P. Arkansas

### Family Panel

Diane & Mike A. Nashville

General Admission: \$60  
Banquet Tickets: \$120  
Hotel Rooms: \$255/night + tax  
(Alateen General Admission: \$5)

Sheraton Centre Hotel  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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### February Medallions

Greg H. - Brampton Recovery Group, 10 Years, Feb. 04, 2026

### Group Announcements & Events

#### New Group - Spirit of Hope

Church of the Holy Spirit of Peace - 1170 Tynegrove Road, Mississauga, ON., L4W 3B2  
Thursday 7:30 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.; Doors open at 7:00 P.M. Enter through the doors close to the parking lot.

<https://www.aatoronto.org/meetings/spirit-of-hope/>

#### Celebrating Recovery Through the 12 Steps

February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026 - 8:30 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Dreams Convention Centre - 75 Hedgedale Rd., Brampton, ON., L6T 5P3

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/celebrating-recovery-through-the-12-steps-stories-of-hope-triumph-tickets>

Event Details: "Speakers from AA and Al-Anon invite an audience of more than 100 fellows into the Heart of their recovery stories."

## GRAPEVINE

<https://www.aagrapevine.org/>

srsltid=AfmBOoq6pkYTdz8fon1zHN2LOutD9zXR8hSGTn77kxjYbi\_gBNuUppdy

### 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...)



# ONE NIGHT A MONTH

## OVERNIGHT PHONE GREETERS



Use the QR Code  
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Any questions?? Reach out to  
[12step.chair@aatoronto.org](mailto:12step.chair@aatoronto.org)

# ARCHIVES CORNER – DID YOU KNOW?

On **Feb. 1, 1938**, William Richardson asked Frank Amos to visit Akron, Ohio & make a report on the young Fellowship of alcoholics. Amos' report was detailed & quite favourable. It highlighted Dr. Bob's financial situation & suggested actions that should be taken to help him. Richardson sent Amos' report to John D. Rockefeller Jr., urging a donation of \$5,000.00 a year for one or possibly two years. On March 17, 1938, Rockefeller replied to Richardson that it was contrary to the policy of his philanthropies to fully fund a charitable enterprise unless it was decided to carry it indefinitely. Rockefeller declined to donate for the second year but provided \$5,000.00 to be held in a fund in the Riverside Church treasury. Much of the fund was used to assist Dr. Bob by paying off the mortgage on his home. The remainder provided Bill & Dr. Bob (who were both in very difficult financial straits) with \$120.00 a month so that they could continue to dedicate themselves full-time to the Fellowship.

In **February 1939**, Tom Uzzell completed a prepublication manuscript reduced in size from the original (supposedly by paring the wording in the personal stories). Estimates of how many pages he pared from the raw manuscript vary widely. At this point, the manuscript consisted of 164 pages that included 20 of the 29 planned stories. 400 "photo-litho" copies were sent out for review. Bill W. reputedly labelled the manuscript title as "Alcoholics (sic) Anonymous" & each copy was stamped "Loan Copy" to protect the coming copyright. Bill credited NY member Joe W. for getting the NY group to favour the name & "Alcoholics Anonymous" for the book.

In **February 1939**, Dr. Harry Tiebout became the 1<sup>st</sup> psychiatrist to endorse AA and use AA principles in his practice. In summer 1944, Bill began twice-a-week treatment with Dr. Tiebout for debilitating episodes of depression. Some members were outraged & castigated Bill for "not working the program", "secretly drinking", & "pill taking". Bill endured the attacks in silence.

On **Feb. 8, 1940**, John D. Rockefeller Jr. held a dinner for AA at the Union League Club in NY City. 75 out of 400 invited guests attended. Nelson Rockefeller hosted in the absence of his ill father. The dinner produced much favourable national publicity for AA & raised \$2,200.00 from the attendees (\$1,000.00 from Rockefeller). Rockefeller & his dinner guests continued to contribute about \$3,000.00 a year up to 1945 when they were asked to stop. The Alcoholic Foundation (today called General Service Board) received the donations as well as income from sales of the Big Book.

In **February 1940**, the Alcoholic Foundation office moved from 17 William St., Newark, NJ, to 30 Vessey St., Room 703, in New York City. Its mailing address was 658 Church St. Annex Post Office. Ruth Hock became AA's first national Secretary.

In **1942**, Alcoholic Foundation Board Trustee A. LeRoy Chipman asked John D. Rockefeller Jr. & his 1940 dinner guests for a loan of \$8,500.00 to buy back the remaining outstanding shares of Works Publishing stock. Rockefeller lent \$4,000.00, his son Nelson \$500.00 & the other dinner guests lent \$4,000.00 at 3% interest. By acquiring all the outstanding shares, it ensured that complete ownership of the Big Book would be held in trust for the entire AA Fellowship.

In **February 1943**, during WW11 gasoline rationing, the Office of Price Admin. recognizes the "importance and social significance of the work done by AA" and granted AA the right to use cars for 12<sup>th</sup> Step works in emergency cases.

On **Feb. 2, 1954**, Bill W. declined an honorary Doctorate from Yale University.

In **February 1959**, AA granted Recording for the Blind permission to tape The Big Book.

In **February 1981**, the first issue of "Markings," the AA Archives newsletter, was published. "The function of archives is to give the Fellowship a sense of its own past and the opportunity to study it."

On **Feb. 1, 1987**, Toronto Intergroup Offices moved from 272 Eglinton Ave. W. to 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 502.

## **GTA Groups started in February:**

Feb. 22, 1948 - Lakeshore Group  
Feb. 1962 - Newmarket Group  
Feb. 23, 1963 - Birds of the Feather Group  
Feb. 17, 1969 - Liverpool Group  
Feb. 20, 1974 - Kennedy Park Group  
Feb. 18, 1980 - Start Today Group  
Feb. 11, 1983 - Fellowship Group  
Feb. 14, 1983 - Streetsville Action Group  
Feb. 5, 1986 - Fifth Tradition Group  
Feb. 11, 2015 - Beyond Belief Group (Mississauga)  
Feb. 11, 2015 - Newmarket Freethinkers Group

-Eddy G., GTA Archivist

**TO DONATE AA/GTA ARCHIVAL ITEMS TO THE GTA ARCHIVES PLEASE CONTACT THE GTA ARCHIVIST.**

**EDDY G. at 416-536-7536.**

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



## **SHARE YOUR STORY**

**CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR BETTER TIMES'**

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