

MARCH 2026 Ontario Regional Conference

The ORC always has volunteer positions available. Reach out and offer a few hours of your day while attending the ORC.

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

- Deb & Bill K. “Love and the ORC”.
- Become a 12 Stepper.
- 2026 ORC.
- ...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

Communications Chair: Vivien C.
Better Times Editor: Lori C.
Graphics & Layout: Latifa A
Communication Liaison: Raj P.

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, before the 10th of the month prior to month of issue by email to bettertimes@aatoronto.org or contact Alex at 416-487-8110

LOVE AND THE ORC



Some couples honeymoon on a beach; we honeymooned at the Ontario Regional Conference - and it changed our marriage forever.

If there is one line in A.A. literature that captures the story of my marriage to Bill, it is this: “God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.” Neither of us came into the program knowing how to build a healthy relationship, let alone a marriage. We had both been disastrously married before - Bill twice! We also got sober young: Bill in 1977 at the age of 21, and I followed in 1983 at 26. Independently, we each embraced Alcoholics Anonymous and fell in love with this way of life. Then, one evening in 1984, we both walked into the Thornhill Group, our eyes met, and, in A.A. fashion, much to the chagrin of the long-timers, we fell in love with one another.

This year we celebrate 40 years of marriage, and our commitment to A.A. has never been stronger - or more rewarding.

The Ontario Regional Conference has played an important role in that story from the very beginning. When we married on February 28, 1986, we spent our honeymoon at the ORC - the Conference happened early that year. I often joke that we had a couple of thousand alcoholics at our wedding reception. I remember walking into the hotel lobby in a simple ivory dress, carrying a bouquet of daisies, when Jack R. spotted us. Many will remember Jack and his beloved wife Maggie as a deeply respected and inspiring married couple in AA. With warmth, humour, and just a hint of a mischievous twinkle, Jack came right over to offer some classic AA marriage wisdom.

He reminded us that romantic love alone would not sustain a marriage between two alcoholics; that while being best friends mattered, it was even more important to love one another as fellow alcoholics in recovery on the hard days; and that whenever we walked through the doors of an AA meeting, we should remember we were members first - treating one another with the love, tolerance, and respect our Three Legacies ask of us. His words stayed with us. In truth, they have guided us for decades. From that moment on, AA principles became foundational to our marriage. We learned that our relationship could not rest on romance alone, nor on good intentions or luck. Sobriety gave us the foundation, but it was the principles found in all three AA Legacies - Recovery, Unity, and Service - that built the walls.

The Twelve Steps became daily practices in our marriage. There were days when old alcoholic thinking resurfaced, patience was tested, amends and forgiveness were slow to come, and simply showing up for one another required faith. The Steps taught us how to pause rather than react, to take responsibility instead of assigning blame, and to seek progress rather than perfection. Step work reminded us that honesty is an act of love, humility a doorway to peace, and willingness often the bridge back to one another. Over time, the Steps helped us learn that marriage in recovery is not about getting it right, but about staying open, accountable, and guided by something greater than ourselves. From the Traditions, we learned that when we placed our common welfare first, both personal recovery and our relationship followed. Living Tradition Two placed our faith in a loving God rather than our own desires and impulses. Tradition Five kept our primary purpose clear, both in meetings and at home. Tradition Twelve reminded us to put principles before personalities - especially when ego or old ideas showed up.

A.A.'s Twelve Concepts remind us that ultimate responsibility rests with our Higher Power, not with either of us. That understanding has brought freedom - freedom to listen to understand, to disagree respectfully, to appeal without resentment, and to remain accountable without control, and from my favourite passage in the A.A. Service Manual Warranty Six “...always try to act in the spirit of mutual respect and love - one member for another...that mutual trust should prevail; that no action ought to be taken in anger, haste, or recklessness; that care will be observed to respect and protect all minorities; that no action should ever be personally punitive; that whenever possible, important actions will be taken in substantial unanimity; and...be prudently on guard against tyrannies, great or small...” Over the years, the Ontario Regional Conference has become a true touchstone in our marriage. The Conference embodies the spirit of the Traditions: no hierarchy, shared responsibility, and self-support through our own time, talent, and financial contributions. Its atmosphere of attraction rather than promotion powerfully carries the message of recovery. Being part of it year after year has helped keep our marriage spiritually aligned. Sitting together in that big room, surrounded by hundreds of people walking similar paths, renews us. Listening to alcoholics share with honesty, humility, and humour reminds us why this works: God first, recovery second, each other third. There is also a gentle, unmistakable humour that accompanies the serious business of sober living. Whether it's a whispered comment during a session or a shared smile from a private, time-worn joke, humour has been one of God's quiet gifts to our marriage.

Early on, we discovered the importance of staying connected to the wider fellowship. Attending the ORC for our honeymoon may seem unconventional, but it gave us something invaluable: a shared spiritual experience that strengthened us as a couple. Surrounded by sober alcoholics, we learned that marriage in recovery is not just about living together - it's about living in recovery together. Every speaker, every coffee with old friends in the hotel lobby, every conversation with a newcomer became a lesson in humility, connection, and gratitude. We often reflect on how many disagreements and misunderstandings would have been far worse without the guidance of AA. Principles like willingness, patience, and humility are not abstract ideas for us; they have become daily practices. There were times when one of us felt frustrated, disconnected, or simply tired and stressed from life, and AA gave us shared language and shared tools. Sometimes we needed space, and a meeting provided a safe place to cool off and regain perspective. Sometimes we needed a conversation that reminded us it wasn't one against the other, but the two of us against a problem. And sometimes - perhaps most importantly - we just needed a good laugh at our own human imperfections. A lot of humility and a little humour have gone a long way toward preserving unity and sanity.

Our 40th anniversary has invited reflection on all the years in between. We remember the early days of sobriety, when life felt fragile and uncertain. We remember the moments when one or the other of us stumbled, and the other had to practice unconditional love and patience. Those days built something lasting: a marriage grounded in shared values and spiritual connection, strengthened by honesty, openness, and daily reliance on God's guidance. Jack's advice continues to echo in very practical ways. Treating one another with the love, tolerance, and respect our Three Legacies ask of us has carried us through challenges that could easily have undone a lesser marriage. Even now, we see how AA principles shape everything - from how we listen and forgive to how we celebrate life's joys. And we have learned, thankfully, not to take ourselves too seriously. Over the years, we have come to see that the Steps gave us the tools to change, the Traditions taught us how to live together in harmony, and the Concepts showed us how to share responsibility and serve with grace. All three have shaped not only our sobriety, but the marriage that grew from it.

Being married in A.A. has also taught us to celebrate milestones in ways that may look different from those outside the program. Anniversaries become moments for gratitude, reflection and shared spiritual connection. The ORC remains a living symbol of that union - a place where spiritual and relationship lessons meet, where we are reminded that recovery is not merely about not drinking, but about building a life of meaning and connection. The principles of A.A. extend well beyond our marriage. They guide how we show up with family, friends, and the fellowship. They remind us to stay humble, practice gratitude, and exercise patience when life is unpredictable. Marriage in sobriety is, in many ways, a daily spiritual practice, and the ORC marks the path - showing us how far we have come and how much there still is to learn.

If our story offers anything, it is simply this: recovery does not just restore individuals; it restores our capacity to love, forgive, and build something lasting. It allows a marriage to grow in ways only God can direct. And gatherings like the Ontario Regional Conference mark the milestones of our lives with a spiritual presence that lingers long after the weekend ends. For us, each Conference is both a celebration of sobriety and a celebration of marriage.

So, we will be there again this year, together as always - somewhere in aisle seats near the front of the big room - listening to speakers share their stories with honesty, humour, and gratitude. And when people stand to be acknowledged in the countdown for their years of sobriety, we will be among the loudest, clapping and cheering every single one. And there will be a moment when I look up at the faces of Bill and Bob beside the podium and quietly give thanks - for sobriety, for a way of life that transformed me, and for a deep, abiding love for the fellowship and for one another.

I would not have missed this for the world.

-Deb & Bill K. - Aurora Group

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

A REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE

MARCH 20-22, 2026

Join the Conference
Fellowship on Facebook



Ontario Regional Conference 2026

REGISTER ONLINE
AAORC.CA



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



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@aatontario.org for more information.

♥ Be the voice of encouragement for someone who needs it.

Join us in carrying the message!



GTAI/DISTRICT - MARCH SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Archives - Fri. March 13th, 7 p.m.

ID: 841 5376 9412 - PW: 018851

Communications - Tues. March 17th, 8 p.m.

ID: 850 5256 7237 - PW: 984555

CPC/PI - Tues. March 31st, 7 p.m.

ID: 854 7547 0291 - PW: 002060

Correctional Facilities - Tues. March 3rd, 7 p.m.

ID: 883 8002 9737 - PW: 950392

Self-Support - Tues. March 3rd, 6:30 p.m.

ID: 897 3620 8895 - PW: 162629

Treatment - Sun. March 15th, 4 p.m.

ID: 868 2207 4860 - PW: 787289

Twelfth Step - Tues. March 10th, 7 p.m.

ID: 813 0646 6967 - PW: 572531

IT Subcommittee - Mon. March 2nd, 7 p.m.

ID: 814 0942 9019 - PW: 379691

GRAPEVINE

[https://www.aagrapevine.org/?](https://www.aagrapevine.org/?srsrtid=AfmBOoq6pkYTdz8fon1zHN2LOutD9zXR8hSGTn77kxjYbi_gBNuUpddy)

[srsrtid=AfmBOoq6pkYTdz8fon1zHN2LOutD9zXR8hSGTn77kxjYbi_gBNuUpddy](https://www.aagrapevine.org/?srsrtid=AfmBOoq6pkYTdz8fon1zHN2LOutD9zXR8hSGTn77kxjYbi_gBNuUpddy)

THE AURORA GROUP

Celebrating 45 Years

Come celebrate with us
Sunday, March 29, 2026

Open meeting 7:30pm located at St. Andrews
Presbyterian Church.

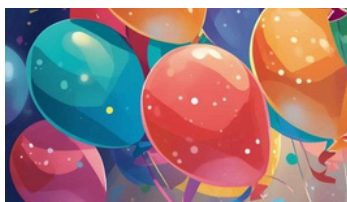
Address: 32 Mosley St, Aurora, ON

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.



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

March Medallions



Cheryl M. - Primary Purpose Group, 50 Years, **March 1, 2026**

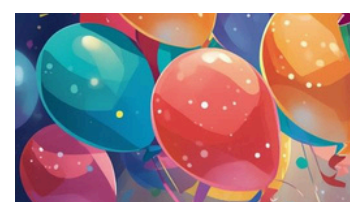
Maria M. - Anniversary Group, 1 Year, **March 11, 2026**

John B. - Thorncliffe Park Group, 45 Years, **March 13, 2026**

Karen B. - Anniversary Group, 30 Years, **March 18, 2026**

Linda U. - The See to it Group, 35 Years, **March 28, 2026**

Michael G. - The See to it Group, 30 Years, **March 28, 2026**



March Birthdays

Pedro B. - Beaches Group, 2 Years, **March 10, 2026**

Crista E. - Beaches Group, 13 Years, **March 11, 2026**

David B. - Beaches Group, 14 Years, **March 22, 2026**

David H. - Beaches Group, 34 Years, **March 27, 2026**



Announcements

New Group - Spirit of Hope

Westminster United Church

4094 Tomken Road, Mississauga, ON, L4W 1J5

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

Wednesday 7:30 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.

Doors open at 7:00 P.M.

Big Book Meeting

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions last Wednesday of each month.

Anniversary

Fifth Tradition Group - 40th Anniversary

Tuesday, March 17th at 8:00 P.M.

2021 Lawrence Ave E., Scarborough, ON M1R 5H2

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?

In **March 1935**, at the urging of her friend Delphine Weber, Henrietta Sieberling organized a Wednesday night Oxford Group meeting at T. Henry & Clarace Williams home on 676 Palisades Dr. in Akron, Ohio, specifically to help Dr. Bob with his drinking. Dr. Bob eventually openly admitted his drinking problem, but could not bring himself to stop drinking. Oxford Group meetings continued at the Williams house until 1954.

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 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.

By **March 1939**, the 400 multilith copies of the book that were distributed in January were returned. Reader's comments produced a few alterations in the final text. However, the original text made frequent use of the words "you & your. A Montclair, NJ psychiatrist named Dr. Howard suggested toning down the use of "you must," changing it to "we ought" or "we should." Dr. Silkworth & Dr. Harry Tiebout offered similar advice.

On **March 16, 1940**, the fledgling Alcoholic Foundation office moved from 17 William St., Newark, NJ, to 30 Vesey St., Room 703, Lower Manhattan in NY City. Rent was \$650 a year. The mailing address was Box 658, Church St. Annex Post Office. Ruth Hock became AA's first national Secretary. Most of the draft yellow pages & manuscript drafts of the Big Book were discarded before the move. A difficult loss to AA's Archives was the draft of the initial version of the Twelve Steps.

On **March 29, 1950**, a 2nd Saturday Evening Post article was written by Jack Alexander titled "The Drunkard's Best Friend."

In **March 1941**, Cleveland formed the Fellowships' first women's group & also the first Black women's group.

On **March 18, 1944**, the first reported women's prison group meets at Clinton Farms in Clinton, New Jersey.

On **March 22, 1951**, William Duncan Silkworth, M.D. (age 78), "the little doctor who loved drunks." & "medical saint" died of a heart attack at his home at 45 W 81st St., NYC. In his service as Medical Director at Towns & Knickerbocker Hospitals, he, "Silky," was credited with treating over 40,000 alcoholics. Dr. Silkworth was AA's first friend in medicine. He treated Bill in the beginning & was with him during his experience in Towns Hospital. He gave us knowledge of the nature of our disease: "the obsession of the mind that compels us to drink and the allergy of the body that condemns us to go mad or die." His funeral was held at the Calvary Episcopal Church in NY City & he was laid to rest in Glenwood Cemetery in West Long Beach, NJ.

On **March 21, 1966**, Ebby T., who was sober 2 months through the Oxford Group when he carried the message to Bill W., died at age 69 of emphysema with 2 1/2 years of sobriety. Bill W. loyally referred to Ebby as his sponsor throughout his life.

On **March 22, 1984**, Clarence S., founder of Cleveland AA, wrote a story in the Big Book, "Home Brewmeister" dies at age 81.

On **March 28-29, 1953**, Bill D. from Akron, Ohio, AA #3, "Man on the Bed," spoke at the ORC. Also, Ethel M. from Akron, Ohio, the first lady in Akron to get sober, spoke.

GTA Groups started in March:

March 17, 1949 - Sunnyside Group
March 1, 1954 - Willowdale Group
March 11, 1986 - Shepherd Group
March 17, 1960 - Port Credit Group
March 8, 1968 - West Toronto Women's Meeting
March 19, 1970 - Golden Mile Group
March 7, 1971 - Trial & Error Group
March 8, 1971 - King City Group
March 17, 1981 - St. Patrick's Group
March 1981 - Aurora Group
March 17, 1984 - St. Andrew's Group - Scarborough
March 29, 1984 - Recovery Group - Thornhill
March 6, 1987 - Lighthouse Group
March 17, 2004 - Primary Purpose 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'

Reminder that the Better Times **deadline for Submissions are due the 10th** of the month prior to the publication.

Share Your Thoughts and Pen a Letter to Better Times

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