

BETTER TIMES

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Kaye loves the young people in AA. The lifeblood of the program brings to her a vitality on which she thrives.

See Story, right...



See Page 2

Kaye H. celebrates 50 years

The trembling man in the bed listened as the AA members carried the message of hope of Alcoholics Anonymous. Sitting quietly to the side was his nurse who listened and found meaning in their words. Eight or so years before getting sober in AA, Kaye H. had listened while nursing her sick alcoholic patient. The seed was planted that day. She always remembered those men from AA and the understanding and kindness they imparted.

It was June of 1953 when Kaye placed a desperate call. The woman who answered suggested they could see her that evening. Kaye said, "I don't need you this evening. I need you now!" She attended her first meeting of AA that night.

That was 50 years ago. The Thornhill Group joyfully celebrated Kaye's anniversary on June 18th. Kaye gives herself little credit. All acclaim is reserved for her Higher Power. Her mission today, as she jokingly says, is to "don't drink and don't die."

Growing up on the Prairies instilled the values of hard work and self-support in Kaye. Graduating in nursing in

Vancouver, she worked all her life. Married in Toronto, the family eventually moved to Kingston. In her early sobriety, it was not unusual for her to attend meetings 50 to 100 miles away in another town and be on duty the next day. "Sobriety was not easy to come by with one meet-

when she discovered the world of clowning. "It's important to let AA members know what they can do once they get sober."

Kaye loves the young people in AA. The lifeblood of the program brings to her a vitality on which she thrives. Her second career, clowning, makes the connection with the young complete. "I don't mind changes in AA. It doesn't bother me. The basic program of AA is in the Big Book and that never changes," she says. Her basic philosophy in life is that 'it's so easy to complain that the glass is half empty without considering that one might have the wrong-sized glass.'

Kaye's service in AA has spanned many years and she met Bill W. through his interest in the Women's Penitentiary in Kingston where Kaye sponsored a women's group for seven years. Her favourite saying in AA is 'I am responsible' and for this elegantly dressed senior whose sophistication transcends all, she is the embodiment of this slogan. Her presence at meetings lets us all know of the treasure in our midst.

Bernadette MacL.



ing a week," Kaye adds with a twinkle, "but anonymity was much easier with the smoke in the rooms."

In sobriety, Kaye continued her schooling, ending up with a Masters degree in Education. She was about to further her studies in law and journalism,

Bob D. celebrates 45 Years

We have all heard people speak of the Giants in A.A. I think all of us have met individuals, who have had a deep impact on our sobriety, and are giants in our eyes. One of those giants in my life, and I'm sure in many other lives, is Bob D., formerly from Toronto, now residing in Barrie.

On July 17, 1958, Bob was DRUNK when he attended his first AA meeting at the Scarborough Group. He has always said don't let a drink keep you from an AA meeting. From that day on, he has not

had a drink. Bob, in all his humility, would take no credit for this, giving all the credit to the members of AA and our program of recovery.

For over 45 years, Bob has been a continuing and active member. For many years immersed in Toronto Intergroup, and always carrying a message of hope with such grace and dignity, wherever and whenever asked. He has made so many of us laugh with such stories, as the "Muffins Story" and many of us cry with stories of "two tear stains on a four year-olds

cheek", but I think we all remember Bob most when he tells us the real message of AA is 'stay a little longer and try a little harder.'

On July 29th, 2003, 8 p.m. at the Tuesday Collier Group, Collier Street United Church, 112 Collier Street, Barrie, we will celebrate 45 years for one of the True Giants in Alcoholics Anonymous and you can be sure he wants all the credit to go to AA. We hope you can make it to celebrate the miracle.

Butch M.



The Editors Say...

“Me Too!”

I was at a discussion meeting recently where, instead of the things we have in common, the discussion began to focus on the differences among those at the table. “I was confused when I first came in, because I read in the Big Book that if I was younger, I might be only a potential alcoholic,” said one. “I heard that others drank in blackouts, but I didn’t even know what blackouts were, so I didn’t think the rest of it applied to me, either. In fact, it wasn’t until I realized that if I was attending AA meetings and still having trouble staying sober, perhaps I might qualify for the program, after all.”

And, of course, that kick-started the discussion. “I never threw up,” said one woman. “I didn’t fall down in public,” said another.

And it was at about that point that one of the older members at the table spoke up. “None of the physical stuff matters,” he said. “Some of us blacked out. Others didn’t. Some threw up; some had diarrhea; some drove drunk, some killed people while driving drunk; some wound up in jail for other reasons; some drank a lot by anybody’s standards; others didn’t drink much (at least by most alcoholics’ standards). Some of us insulted our friends, family members, or our bosses when we were drunk; others did the same thing when they were cold sober. Some of us com-

plained about violent headaches, inability to sleep, or virtually starving to death because we couldn’t eat when we drank. And some of us had none of those symptoms.

“And the question is, so what?” Aside from the fact that we drink until we get drunk, repeatedly, none of the physical side-effects of drinking defines us as alcoholics. When I came to these rooms, it wasn’t the drinking stories that I identified with most strongly. It was the stories about how people felt, how they perceived the world around them, and how they reacted to those feelings and perceptions.

Over-achievers with insecurity complexes, people who felt isolated from those around them. Folks who tested their friends to destruction. How rejection feels. How hard it is to shake resentments or deal with anger. The hurt, the remorse, and the shame.

“That’s when I knew, for the first time in my life, that I was in the right place, with people who understood me because in a sense they were me. When I admitted I was an alcoholic, I finally found out what that was,” and when he was done, the chorus of, “me, neither,” changed to, “me, too!” And once again we were reminded that in the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, we were no longer alone.

Myles W.

The Seventh Step

“Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings”

I always had trouble defining ‘shortcomings’ as opposed to ‘defects of character’. I am sure that as we look at this step, like myself wondered why we have to take this step seriously since we have already in Step 6, asked God to remove all these defects of character. What is the difference is between the two.

I think the two actually define themselves. My defects of character were those activities that defined my character as a person. When I was drinking, even though I denied I had a problem, I was in every sense of the word a skid row, low bottom drunk. That was my character as others saw me. Whenever I told a lie to get out of some jam, (this happened often) others saw my character as a liar. When in the tavern among other drunks like myself, I spoke their language so I would fit in. That language was well peppered with many four letter words, which I

won’t repeat here, and cursing against God and all His family. So then my character became one of a foul mouthed drunk.

But now how about ‘shortcomings’? I will have to define them and the nearest I can come to it is to say they are shortcomings. Short lapses when, unthinking I would slip into being the

type of person who would lie or maybe just gild the lily. I might slip into saying the odd word of which I immediately became ashamed. Thankfully, I have never had the shortcoming of slipping back into the character of the drunk, and that is probably because each morning I talk to my Higher Power and ask Him to keep me sober today.

So that is my view of Step Seven - a daily request to God to remove these shortcomings whatever they may be. This will in my opinion prevent me from relapsing into my defects of character as long as I am requesting removal of all my shortcomings. This is the step that will add strength and character to my sobriety.

Love In Sobriety.....Joe C.



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Archives Alley

Dr. Bob (1879-1950), delivered his final message at the First International Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Cleveland, Ohio, July 1950. Text of this message follows:

"My good friends in AA and of AA. I feel that I would be very remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to welcome you here to Cleveland not only to this meeting but those that have already transpired.

I hope very much that they have the presence of so many people and the words that you have heard will prove an inspiration to you - not only to you, but may you be able to impart that inspiration to the boys and girls back home who were not fortunate enough to be able to come here. In other words, we hope that your visit here has been both enjoyable and profitable.

I get a big thrill out of looking over a vast sea of faces like this with a feeling that possibly some small thing that I did a number of years ago, played an infinitely small part in making this meeting possible.

I also get quite a thrill when I think that we all had the same problem. We all did the same things. We all get the same results in proportion to our zeal and enthusiasm and stick-to-itiveness. If you will pardon the injection of a personal note at this time, let me say that I have been in bed five of the last seven months and my strength hasn't returned as I would like, so my remarks of necessity will be very brief. But there are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis; one is the simplicity of our Program. Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind, but have very little to do with our actual AA work.

Our 12 Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words "love and service". We understand what love is and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two things in mind. Let us also remember to guard that

See Dr. Bob page 4

Recent Medallions

John H., 25 yrs., *Dunnville Breakfast Meeting*. June 15
Barry B., 10 yrs., *Bayview Group*. June 15
Verne L., 30 yrs., *As Bill Sees It Group*. June 22
Jonathan S., 1 yr., *Thornhill Group*. June 25
Bill D., 1 yr., *Twelve Steps Group*. June 25
Ken P., 10 yrs., *Lighthouse Group*. June 27

Upcoming Medallions

Fausto B., 1 yr., *Glenholme Group*. July 1
Carol T., 1 yr., *Lighthouse Group*. July 4
Ruth P., 30 yrs., *Pine Hills Group*. July 7
Ari M., 1 yr., *Westmoreland Group*. July 8
John G., 5 yrs., *Pine Hills Group*. July 14
June H., 10 yrs., *Thornhill Group*. July 10
Susan W., 10 yrs., *Thornhill Group*. July 10
Sheila H., 10 yrs., *Thornhill Group*. July 10
Rodney G., 5 yrs., *Westmoreland Group*. July 15
Aidan T., 1 yr., *Church Street Group*. August 2
Tony A., 5 yrs., *Church Street Group*. August 2
Larry H., 30 yrs., *Church Street Group*. August 30

Things We Cannot Change

The following A.A. member died recently:
Bill C. *Agincourt Acorn Group*, June 7

Special Events, Conventions & Conferences

More information on all these events is available on the bulletin board at the GTA Intergroup offices (address below).

Happy Joyous and Free, Midland & Area One Day Round-up 2003. Sat. July 19, 9:00 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre, 185 Yonge St., Midland ON.

AA & Al-Anon. Round-up: \$10., Lunch: \$10., Ticket info: Richard-rbj-plj@csolve.net

3rd Annual Step 11 Picnic and Family Day
 Location: Centre Island (Olympic Island) Saturday August 9th, noon to 6 p.m. Featuring Speaker Meetings. Admission Free. Further Info: Rick (416)231-1977. or John (416)234-8493.

6th Annual Big Book Study August 23, Duff's Presbyterian Church NW corner Hwy. 401 and Hwy. #6. Study presented by James B., Jamestown N.Y. and Wes B., Toronto. Registration starts 8:30 a.m. Study 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with a lunch break 12 noon to 1 p.m. Tickets \$10. Call Dennis (Guelph) (519)763-1599. Claude L., (416)275-6153, Wes B. (416)233-6732.

Strength, Kindness, Honesty, Sharing. 12th Annual Fireside Sobriety Gathering and Open Air Powwow. Aug. 28 - 31. Six nations, Third Line, near Hagersville, On. Meetings, Dances, Powwow, Talking Circles, Corn Roast: Advance: \$20. At Gate: \$25 or \$8/day. Elders 65 and over free. Children under 12 \$2. Toronto contact: Leslie K. 416- 850-7356 or e-mail FiresidePowwow@yahoo.com

Cornerstones of Sobriety Hamilton and districts AA 35th Annual Autumn Leaf Round-up. Sep. 12 - 14. Sheraton Hamilton Hotel, 116 King St. W., Hamilton, On. Full AA, Al-Anon, and Alateen programmes. Registration, dance & banquet: \$55/early bird (before July 31) \$50. Registration only: \$23/early bird: \$18. Alateen registration and dance: \$10. Info: Senga 1-905-387-5935. Hotel: \$129 single or double. 1-800-514-7101.

Have You Heard?

New Meetings

Active Group Wed 8 pm (O), (CENTRAL), 140 the Esplanade between Jarvis and The Esplanade. Buzzer #1040 Non Smoking wheel chair accessible.

Aurora Discussion Group (C). Tuesday 8 p.m. (SUBURBAN NORTH): St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 32 Mosley St. Aurora. (Mosley at Victoria St) BIG BOOK DISCUSSION

Basic Big Book Step Study (C). Wednesday 1 p.m. (WEST): St Matthew's Anglican Church, 3962 Bloor St. West at Shaver Ave. Entrance rear west. non-smoking.

Punjabi/English Meeting (C). Friday 8 p.m. (SUBURBAN NORTH WEST): Bramalea Baptist Church, 9050 Dixie Road and Queen St. Punjabi - speaking meeting. non- smoking, wheelchair accessible.

Meeting Changes

Credit Valley Group (O) (SUBURBAN WEST) Sunday 2:30 p.m. meets at Nowseating location 350 Britannia Rd. E. Mississauga. **CLOSED MEETING Wed. 8 p.m. Now back at Credit Valley Hospital Medical Professional Building.** Eglinton Ave. W. at Erin Mills Parkway. Main door downstairs.

Friday Night Gay Men's Discussion Group 8 p.m. (CENTRAL) Temporary location at Metropolitan United Church Hall Bond St. & Shuter St, rear entrance off Shuter St. parking lot.

Don Mills Discussion, Friday 8:30 p.m. (NORTH EAST) Now at Victoria Village United Church 7 Gretna Ave, south of Lawrence, west of Victoria Park, off Sweeney drive.

Markham-Stouffville Hospital Group Tuesday Night 7 p.m. (SUBURBAN NORTH EAST) moved to Maaco Auto Painting & Body Works, 1 Laidlaw Blvd., (just north of Hwy, 7.) Closed Discussion meeting.

Downtown 5:15 Group (C) Wed. 5:15 p.m. (CENTRAL) has a new location: Scotiabank Building, 44 King St. West, (King and Bay), 4th floor, 'Schooner' room.

Aurora Discussion Group (C). Thursday 8 p.m. (SUBURBAN NORTH) has a new location: Senior's Centre, 52 Victoria St., Aurora (main floor) fully accessible, non- smoking

Saturday A.M. Meeting (O) Sat. 10 a.m. (CENTRAL): and **Isabella Crosstown Group** (Wed CENTRAL 8 p.m.) are ON HOLD until further notice (church renovations).

Meetings Needing Support

Mount Dennis Group, Mon. (C), Thurs. 8 p.m.

Turning Point Group (C), Sun. 8 p.m.

Melrose Group Thur. (C) 8 p.m. Sat. (O) 2:30 p.m.

How to reach us

Submit group news, medallions, other event notices, letters to the editors, or articles to **BETTER TIMES (Before July 10 for the Aug. issue)** by mail: c/o GTA Intergroup, 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 202, Toronto, ON, M4P 1K5, by fax 416-487-5855 or by e-mail to btimes@aatonto.org. or e-mail Joe@vex.net. Only signed submissions with a means of contact will be accepted. For subscriptions call Alexx at 416-487-8110.

PRESENT: 60 group representatives, six group liaisons, 11 subcommittee chairs and alternates.

CHAIRPERSON Dan McK., *Half Century Group*, noted that, given the rate of inflation, members might want to think about increasing their contributions to the seventh tradition. He also announced three new Chair positions: **Mike E.**, *Kingsway Group*, **Self-Support Chair**; **Ken C.**, *Pathfinders Group*, **W.S.O.H. 2003 Chair**; and **Eric H.**, *Bayview Group*, **ORC 2006 Chair**.

Finance Committee **David H.**, *Erin Mills Group*, Finance Chairperson, said Intergroup had an operating deficit of \$24,275 for April, and also asked that members who can afford to give a bit more do so.

Website Committee welcomes volunteers with computer interests / experience. Contact 234.

Winter Season Open House Committee - The committee meets from September to January; **next meeting** (tentative) is **September 15 at 234**. All are welcome to volunteer for this committee. The committee is also looking for a **chef with vast kitchen experience**. Please contact 234.

Archives Committee The committee is currently updating the publication 'The History

Intergroup Report



of AA in Ontario' which will hopefully be available in early 2005. The committee is currently looking for persons with library / cataloguing experience, or an 'archivist' education; the committee is willing to waive 10-year the sobriety requirement for those volunteers. Contact 234.

Twelfth Step Committee There are 16 openings for phone shifts. One years' sobriety and a phone training session (**held every third Sunday at 1:30 p.m. at 234**) are required to become a Phone Greeter. Contact 234.

Newsletter Committee - Jim H., *Keep It Simple Group*, Newsletter Chair, noted the committee is always looking for new members for our committee. Stories on groups, special birthdays, etc. are also welcomed. **Deadline for copy is the 10th of the month preceding publication.**

Self-Support Committee - Mike E., *Kingsway Group*, Self-Support Chairperson, said that the committee desperately needs support. All members are welcome. The Self-Support committee is available to address groups at their business meeting. Contact 234.

CLOSING REMARKS — Dan McK. stated: "If each one of us goes out there and if you find one person in your group who wants to get into service, pass this information on to them."

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

All committee meetings are open to any interested A.A. members. Call 234 for times and locations.

The monthly general meeting is held on the last Tuesday of the month at 8 p.m. at Glebe Road United Church, 20 Glebe Road, north of Davisville subway, east of Yonge Street. All members are welcome as observers.

"Wake Up! It's Time For Breakfast!"

Many of us in the Fellowship have heard the term "Wake-Up Call" - usually associated with some horrendous Bottoming-out Event and the realization that it is "TIME to CHANGE!".

Here's a different kind - a "Good News Wake-Up Call" and an Invitation to a Free Breakfast on a Summer morning!

All you have to do is "Show Up & Help Out" when the Toronto Intergroup Public Information Committee and the District 10 PI Subcommittee goes down to Allan Gardens on Thursday, July 17th and runs the AA Information Table at the Metro Police #51 Division's Annual "Breakfast in the Park" for the homeless.

The Event starts at 8.00 a.m. (really gets going @ 9.00 a.m. or so) and usually runs until about Noon. Last year they served over 300 Breakfasts - consisting of things like Pancakes, Maple

Syrup and Sausages, Orange Juice and Coffee - sometimes Fresh Fruit and so on. The Menu varies each year, as all the food is supplied free by local merchants in the area; and some public-spirited corporations donate as well. Police Officers from #51 Division donate their time and get to "Play Short-Order Chef" for a Summer morning! Many, if not most of the City's Service Organizations attend this Event - the Salvation Army, the Scott Mission, the Harbour Light, Native Canadians Services, various Health Clinics and Medical Support Services - it's a long list of "People Helping People" - and help is needed - especially around Allan Gardens.

We're proud of our ongoing involvement in this Event - and we even got an Award from Metro Police (it's in the Boardroom at 234) - *an Award for the Fellowship is a long way from the things I used to get from Metro Police!!!!*

That being said, the "Breakfast in the Park" is also a superb opportunity to "Carry the Message to the still-suffering alcoholic" and to provide information and contact points to the

many other Social and Service organizations active in our city.

So...Wake Up! It's Time For Breakfast! Come down to Allan Gardens on Thursday morning, July 17th - just "Show Up & Help Out" at the AA Information Table at the Metro Police #51 Division's Annual "Breakfast in the Park" for the homeless. AND YOU GET A FREE BREAKFAST TOO!

Kevin M.

Public Information Chair,
Toronto Intergroup

No Crystal Ball

With the pace of change, the future is not what it used to be. From one moment to the next, no one can be certain of anything. Your job, your marriage, and your relationship to your children - none of these may be the same next year, next month, or next week.

How does one survive these changes? First, by being flexible, adaptable, and ready to change course at any moment. Be prepared to "roll with the punches" and release your old attachments or current expectations.

Second, live one day at a time. Focus on the present moment, you can continue to experience peace and joy - no matter how the outer circumstances may change.

Finally, know the removal of old securities opens the way to new opportunities. Human consciousness is moving to ever-higher levels of awareness. How much easier the journey is when we flow with the process of change.

Dr. Bob from page 3

erring member - the tongue, and if we must use it, let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance. And one more thing; none of us would be here today if somebody hadn't taken time to explain things to us, to give us a little pat on the back, to take us to a meeting or two, to have done numerous little kind and thoughtful acts in our behalf. So let us never get the degree of smug complacency so that we're not willing to extend, or attempt to, that help that has been so beneficial to us, to our less fortunate brothers. Thank you very much."

Dr. Bob