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“So how much should I contribute to the seventh tradition at meetings?” I asked.

See Story Right



See Page 2



Short Arm, Deep Pocket Syndrome

When it was time for me to join the ranks of Alcoholics Anonymous (Nov. 30th, 1987), I made a phone call to Toronto Intergroup. The person who answered the phone was very kind and understanding and asked for my name and phone number, saying that somebody would call me a little later in the day. Not too many minutes later a gentleman by the name of Moe P. from the *Pinehills Group* called. He asked me a few questions and asked if I was ready to go to a meeting that night. My reply was affirmative.

Moe picked me up at 7:00 and took me to the *Pinehills Group*, where he left me in the care of Joe P. (Deceased). Joe hooked on to me like a leach, only letting go of me long enough for me to breathe. Joe took me to meetings every night. On the fifth night, he took me to the *Wanstead Group*, which was right near my home. This is where I could get active immediately. The group had three members. I was the fourth. As soon as Joe told the members I was join-

ing the *Wanstead Group*, they gave me the keys to the church and told me I was on coffee duty and set up because I lived so close by.

I asked Joe at the first meeting how much money he got paid for taking me to meetings. Joe's answer astounded me. "Nothing," he said. He said he did it to stay sober. "So where does the money from the seventh tradition go to if not to you?" I asked him. He explained to me it goes to pay the group's expenses, such as rent, coffee, cookies, and literature and what ever is left over is split between Toronto Intergroup, The District, The Area, and GSO.

"So how much should I contribute to the seventh tradition at meetings?" I asked. He answered that I should give at least a dollar (1987) or whatever I could afford. He also warned me about a disease he called Short Arm and Deep Pocket Syndrome. When this disease takes hold, your arms get shorter and your pockets get deeper. All the money you save now that you are not drinking you squirrel

away or spend on something else.

Now, 15 years later, I have to admit I had Short Arm, Long Pocket Syndrome. So how did I get rid of this Syndrome that had taken hold? I first got a personal trainer – my arms are getting longer with exercise. I have given all my pants to a tailor to shorten the pockets. The group I still belong to is the *Wanstead Group* and I still make coffee. I give generously to my group, because they were there for me when I first came to AA. As I'm writing this, I'm making a check to Toronto Intergroup (my first one) just to say Thank You for being there for me when I needed AA.

I hope all of you with the Short Arm, Long Pocket Syndrome get yourselves a personal trainer and a good tailor and give generously to your home group and to Toronto Intergroup so the phones will be there for the next suffering alcoholic to come along. Thank you. Yours in love and service.

Matti H.

Third Annual 11th Step Picnic

The Third Annual 11th Step Picnic is to be held on Saturday, August 9, 2003, once again on beautiful Center Island in Toronto, Ont. It is a non-profit, fun day for AA members and their families, with AA and Al-Anon open speaker meetings at 1, 2:30, and 4 p.m. Barbecue pits are provided, or numerous snack bars are within walking distance for lunch or refreshments.

The concept of the picnic came to Rick S. of the *Friendly Group* in Toronto, as he was returning home from a spiritual retreat in February 2001. He immediately formed a committee and pretty much financed the

first picnic that was held in August 2001. The greatest costs were insurance and the permit for the sites on Center Island. Approximately 75 people attended, which was fewer than anticipated, but understandable, as advertising for this event was limited. The original volunteer committee members who helped Rick make this picnic possible were Barbara Q. of the *Friendly Group*, John B. of the *Kipling Group*, and Steve E. of the *Kingsway Group*. All four are still on the committee, with Donna from *Sunnyside Group* and Sergei from the *Friendly Group* as active members for the past 2 years, and Steve H. of the

Friendly Group joining this year.

The following year a nominal entrance fee was charged, and there was a door prize of a weekend retreat at Manresa Spiritual Retreat. The attendance rate doubled, and as a result, the entire cost of the picnic was covered, with enough left over to finance the entire cost this year. Accordingly, this year the picnic is once again FREE for all members and their families, with donation jars available in the hopes that by donation only it may be kept free of charge.

See Picnic page 2

To remember is to recall knowledge or experience to one's mind. When, at the time that, on the occasion that?

The heat of the summer reminds me of a cold beer (no glass). I spent many years up north camping with my family. From the time we got up until I passed out, I drank all day. Most of those days I would black out. I thought this was normal for all people who went camping, went to the cottage, or went boating, fishing, or golfing, etc. Then what about those days coming home from a hard day at work and it is so hot out, well I've worked hard and it is hot!!! But for me, one drink was never an option, it was just the beginning. I hated people who would say

The Editors Say...

Remember When "Summer Heat"

they had a couple and meant it. I heard someone say the other day that 'just a couple of drinks' should be a slogan.

Today and everyday it is very important to me that I do not take that fatal first drink. A cold beer, cooler, wine, or a fancy drink to cool off is not going to do the trick anymore (not that it ever did). I just thought it did. It is very important to me today to focus on the people, places and things that 'made' me drink. I have to keep going to meetings, talk to my sponsor, work the steps and pray. I have a few 24

hours behind me and I know even when I am on vacation that I can still get to a meeting or call someone. Never leave home without your phone numbers, or get information from Toronto Intergroup about meetings at your vacation destination. Also, take the tools with you that you use on a daily basis.

The summer always reminds me of the time I lost drinking and passing out. Today, I can go anywhere, with anyone, and I can enjoy people, places and things. I see things that I never used to see and I do things that I would

never have done. I like golfing and I do not have to pack the golf bag with beer, etc., to get me through the course. These are just examples of how my life has changed "One Day At A Time", and I never want to go back to where I came from for the sake of maybe just one drink. I know that it won't be just one. Summer is a very hard time for us all, with long weekends, the heat, the cafés with their patios that look so inviting, and let's not forget all the inviting TV and radio commercials. Remember that summer is just another season and we should treat them all the same, by working the program of recovery.

God Bless You All

Terry H.

The Eighth Step

"Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make to make amends to them all."

When I actually sat down to write out the list of people I had harmed, I found I was full of fear, anticipating the impossible, and wouldn't do it. Through the steps of Alcoholics Anonymous I have learned that when I take action to face what is in front of me, I grow into a person who is reliable and caring.

Those are not the words that people from my past would have used to describe my behaviour. Step 8 is precisely about acknowledging the harm I have caused to the people in my past. Steps 8 and 9 are concerned with personal relations.

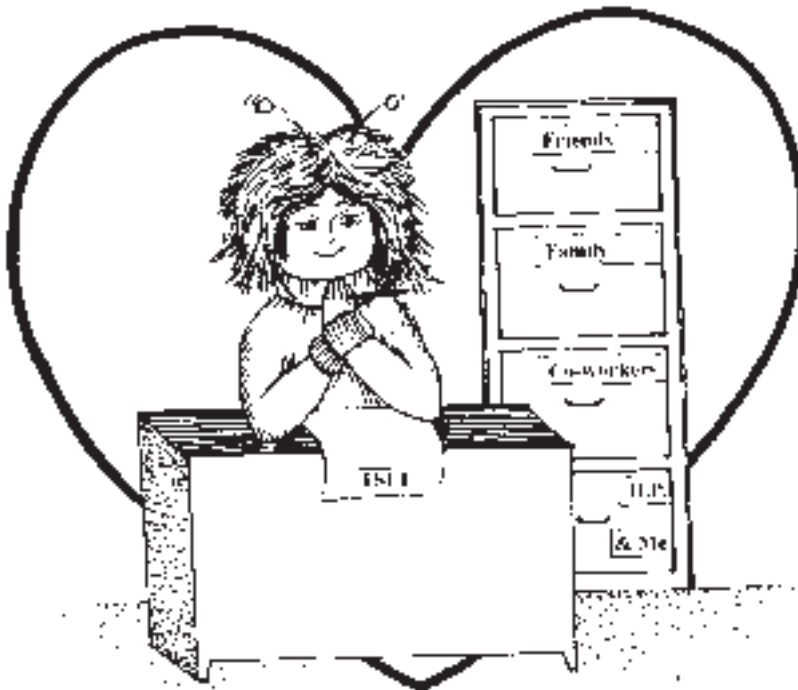
As an alcoholic, I was masterful at screwing up my personal relationships. So, making a list of the specific incidents when, and people to whom, I had caused harm was not a pretty picture. On my own, I did not have the courage to look at pain. I was powerless over the immense shame I felt. My forgiveness key was lost

long ago and I didn't have a clue how to find it.

My list is a work in progress. During a recent AA meeting a member was sharing that after 32 years of sobriety, he is entirely convinced that with his own will he cannot work the steps in this program. With God's will he lives the steps in

this program.

Today my Step 8 is the willingness to right a wrong from the past, either recent or historical. As I follow the Spirit's direction to do what is in front of me, I get to take another step down the road of freedom. Thanks to AA and a really Great Power.



Picnic from Page 1

Flyers have been distributed advertising this event, and there is a website at www.11thsteppicnic.com, but word of mouth, especially from those who have attended previously, promise an even greater turnout this year. The picnic starts at approximately noon, and winds up at approximately 6 p.m.

Anyone who wishes to volunteer to be on the Committee, or to help set up for this event, is encouraged to phone Rick at (416) 201-8573, John at (416) 234-8493 or Barb at (905) 264-2385.

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Archives Alley

The Washingtonians

In 1840, six alcoholics gathered at their usual pub in Baltimore, Maryland. Calling themselves unapologetic drunkards, they decided to abstain from liquor, and named themselves the Washingtonians. The reason appeared to be that George Washington was known to be a drinking man who knew when to stop.

Alcoholics Anonymous has much for which to thank the Washingtonians. By 1852, this movement had dropped out of sight. In 12 short years, a temperance society that had attracted hundreds of thousands of members, some estimated as many as 400,000, simply ceased to exist.

What happened and why did they self-destruct?

The similarity between the Washingtonians and AA are remarkable. They were alcoholics helping each other. They shared experiences and had weekly meetings. Relying on a Higher Power, their membership was totally abstinent, and available to others for support and guidance.

The Washingtonian society provided immediate tools for short-lived sobriety. Their focus strayed from the suffering alcoholic, and became politically motivated and opinionated in all sorts of other matters. Allowing outside influences to direct its membership, it lost direction and undermined itself. High profile speakers spoke to its membership on all sorts of issues, and

eventually it became extinct in trying to be all things to all people.

The Twelve Traditions of AA has prevented such an outcome, in that it protects and guides its membership. Tradition three counsels us in regard to our singleness of purpose. Tradition eight reminds us that we are non-professional. Tradition ten cautions us to guard against opinions on outside issues. Traditions eleven and twelve alert us on our public relation policy about promotion

Recent Medallions

Liz R., 1 yr., *King City Group*. July 7

Vivien V., 1 yr., *King City Group* July 21

Claudio P., 1 yr., *King City Group* July 21

Olaf S., 10 yrs. *Kingsway Group*. July 23

Ken A., 15 yrs. *East York Group*. July 29

Upcoming Medallions

Aiden T., 1 yr., *Church Street Group*. August 2

Tony A., 5 yrs., *Church Street Group*. August 16

Gary H., 1 yr., *East York Group*. August 12

Michael G., 5 yrs., *Agincourt Acorn* Aug. 12

Maire O'B., 15 yrs., *Leslie Group*. August 23

Larry H., 30 yrs., *Church Street Group*. August 30

Special Events, Conventions & Conferences

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

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 1:00 p.m. Tickets \$10. Call Dennis (Guelph) (519)763-1599. Claude L. (416) 275-6153. Wes B. (416)233-6732.

7th Anniversary AA Roundup Creemore, Stayner, Wassaga Beach. Sat., August 23, Stayner Community Centre. Door open 9 a.m. for registration. Speakers from AA, Al-Anon and Alateen. Pre-registration for banquet and dance by August 13th. Daily registration \$10 banquet \$20

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 are 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 Roundup. Sept. 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.

Scarborough District 22 Service Day; Service-Gratitude in action. Sat. Sept 20, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Oakridge Community Centre 63 Pharmacy Ave. Panels, Fun, Fellowship. Guest speaker Roy R. *Trial and Error Group*. Free lunch and coffee. Clean and Sober dance from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. Dance only \$6.

New Groups

Active Group, Wed 8p.m. (O) (CENTRAL) 140 The Esplanade between Jarvis and The Esplanade. buzzer #1040 non-smoking, wheel chair accessible

Have You Heard?

Aurora Discussion Group (C)

Tuesday 8 p.m. (SUBURBAN NORTH): St. Andrews

Presbyterian Church 32 Mosley St. Aurora (Mosley at Victoria St.) BIG BOOK DISCUSSION

Meeting Changes

Kf Group (O) (NORTHWEST) Sat. 8:30 p.m. New Time 8:00 p.m., New Location St John's Anglican Church 2125 Weston Rd. 3 lights north of Lawrence Ave. W. change effective July 5 2003

As Bill Sees It (O/C) Sunday 8 p.m. (EAST) Now open effective SUNDAY July 6 (SARS Ban Lifted)

Scarborough Centenary Group (C) Mon and Thurs. at 7 p.m. (NORTHEAST) Now Open. (SARS Ban Lifted)

Downtown 5:15 Group (C) (CENTRAL) meeting now held in cafeteria.

Credit Valley Group. (O) (SUBURBAN WEST) Sunday 2:30 p.m. meets at Nowseating location 350 Britannia Rd. E. Mississauga. (C) 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 Mens 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. moved to Macco Auto Painting & Body Works, 1 Laidlaw Blvd., (just north of Hwy 7.) Closed discussion meeting. Effective Immediately.

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

Sarurday 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)

Groups needing support

Free To Be Group (C) Sat. 10:30 a.m. (EAST). Eastminister United Church, 310 Danforth Ave, at Jackman 1 block west of Chester Subway Stn. (Women Only).

How to reach us

Submit group news, medallions, other event notices, letters to the editors, or articles to **BETTER TIMES (Before August 10 for the Sept. 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@aatoronto.org or e-mail Joe@vex.net. Only signed submissions with a means of contact will be accepted. Subscriptions available. Call Alexx at 416-487-8110.

Members present: 43 groups, four district liaisons, six committees

The meeting opened with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. **Rae C.**, *St. Clements Group*, read the Twelve Traditions.

FINANCE REPORT

Income for May was \$12,287 and expenses were \$17,033, leaving a deficit for the month of \$4,746.

LIAISON REPORTS

Editor's note: To save space, the Intergroup minutes have been shortened to fit in BETTER TIMES. Individual reports are available from 234.

Archives - Bob D., *Weston Sunday Open Group*, **Archives 1st Vice Chair**. The committee will not meet in July and August.

Corrections: Written report by Corrections Chair on file. This committee will not meet in July and August.

Grapevine - Scott MacD., *Bloordale Group*, **Grapevine Chair**

Scott asked that groups think about getting a monthly subscription for a year, and encourage the newcomer to purchase copies. This committee will not meet in July and August.

Information AA Day - Jim R., *Bloordale Group*, **Info AA Day committee member**

Jim reported that there was a good turnout this year, and financially they broke even. This committee will not meet in the sum-

Intergroup Report



mer.

Public Information - Kevin M., *P.I. Chairperson*

P.I. Events Coordinator Mary Ann N., *Welcome Group* received an award from U of T commending her for her P.I. work with the students of that institution. This committee will not meet in July and August.

Reception Centre - Mark C., *Yorkville Group*, **Operating Committee member**

Mark reported that attendance statistics indicates that 10% of the groups are supporting the service work of Intergroup.

Treatment Facilities - Diana M., *Thorncliffe Park Group*, **Treatment Facilities Chair**

The committee has been focusing on the upcoming Treatment Facilities Day to be held on Sat. Sept. 6 at Glebe Road United Church from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Self-Support - Mike E., *Kingsway Group*, **Self-Support Chairperson**. Volunteers are needed to attend this table. The Self-Support Committee is opening up its table to ALL interested AA members. Mike stated that "We need more members...we have to start carrying the message...we need people to get active." Next meeting: **Mon. July 7 at 7:30 p.m. at 234.**

Twelfth Step - John B., *High Park Group*, **Twelfth Step Committee member** Volunteers are needed.

This month, 3 new greeters were trained. **Greeter Training is held every third Sunday of the month at 1:30 p.m. at 234.** Next committee meeting: July 25 at 6:30 p.m. at 234.

Website - Gord MacK. (*New AnchorGroup*), **Operating Committee Liaison**. A Perl Programmer [volunteer] is needed to help with projects such as adding new fields to the database. The committee will not meet in July and August.

2005 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE [to be held in Toronto] **Approximately 3,000 volunteers will be needed for the event.** The work begins in January 2004.

The meeting closed with the Responsibility Pledge.

Letter to the Editor

On behalf of the 2003 Information AA Day Committee, I would like to thank all who attended the 24th annual Information AA Day at Lansing United Church on the 24th of May. It is because of people like you that this day has been such a success for as long as it has. A great time was had by all 200+ who came and learned about the different aspects of service and enjoyed a fantastic "pot-luck" lunch.

Information AA Day 2004 is the Twenty-Fifth anniversary of this popular Service Information Day in Toronto. As such, we are looking for people who may have attended the first "Info AA Day" in 1979 or even taken part in the day itself. What better way to show that service in Alcoholics Anonymous works, than to have those who

came before us share their message of service in recovery?

If you, or someone you know, took part in that day, almost 25 years ago, please talk to your Group General Service Representative, or Intergroup Representative so that they, in turn, can bring the information to the 2004 Information AA Day Committee. If you are "Web-enabled" you can also go to the Toronto Intergroup web site and send us a message through the "Contacts" page.

Robb W.
Chair Information AA Day 2004

Miracles of AA

On Tuesday, June 3, at 234, I received a call from a distressed woman, Virginia. She had 17 years sobriety and she told me she had taken a drink on the weekend, because of a family problem she could not handle. She did not know what to do. She was in

town from Sutton, visiting her store.

I asked her if she knew Toronto and she replied that she had a friend who lived in the Beaches area. I suggested that she call her friend and go to the *Beaches Group* that night. I talked with her for a while longer and sort of calmed her down. I also suggested she drop in at a daytime meeting on her way home the next day. I told her about a Richmond Hill and Newmarket meeting she could attend.

On Friday night, I participated at a one year medallion at my home group, the *SOS Group*, and after the closing of the meeting a woman rushed up to me and threw her arms around me, tears running down her cheeks. She said, "I thank you, you saved my life."

I was astounded. You probably guessed it. It was Virginia, who drove all the way from

Sutton to my meeting to say, "I thank you."

She apparently listened to my suggestions and went to all three meetings. Miracles sure happen within the rooms of AA

Bill S.

Washingtonian, from Page 1

of AA and about maintaining our personal anonymity.

Unfortunately, the Washingtonians did not have any Traditions.

Footnote: The Archives Committee asks that groups that have been operating for 25 years or more, supply group histories for archival purposes. Simply mail them c/o Archives Committee to GTA Intergroup office at 234 Eglinton E.

Bernadette MacL