



Info AA Day – 25 Years of Service

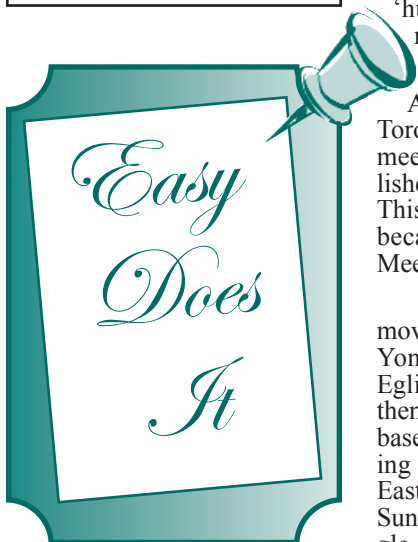
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Around the world, people are talking about Alcoholics Anonymous' 70th Anniversary

.... See story right

I know that I'm not yet the person I can be, but I thank God I'm not the person I used to be.



Twenty-Five years ago, approximately 22,500 people around the world were talking about the upcoming world convention, where Alcoholics Anonymous would be celebrating its 45th Anniversary in New Orleans. Here, in Toronto, there were approximately 15 people talking about different gatherings of sober alcoholics. The first annual Information AA Day was gearing up, and 25 years later, we're at it again. Around the world, people are talking about Alcoholics Anonymous' 70th Anniversary AA International Convention in Toronto, and we're talking about the 25th Anniversary of Information AA Day.

If you have any questions about the upcoming Convention in 2005, Info AA Day is the place to be. Joining us for the Ask-it-basket portion of the day will be Doug R. (Coordinator for International Conventions), Rick W. (Alternate Coordinator), and Gregg T. (Convention Consultant). All three of these gentlemen can answer any questions you might have.

To kick off the day, we will have an *Early Bird Meeting* in the main auditorium, followed by Committee Panels, both upstairs in the auditorium and downstairs in the Nickel Theatre. This year, Archives will share a panel with Access Ability. Info AA Day will be the first forum for the new Access Ability Chair to talk about this exciting area of service.

Our Delegate to the General Service Conference will give his report on the 54th

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8:00 A.M.	REGISTRATION \$5.00
8:45 - 9:45 Auditorium	EARLY BIRD MEETING Chair: Jim R.
9:00 - 1:00 Nursery	AA VIDEOS & MOVIES
10:00 - 10:15 Auditorium	CHAIR'S WELCOME: Robb W.
10:15 - 10:45 Auditorium	Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow Archives and Access Ability Chair: Harold S.
10:15 - 10:45 Nickel Theatre (Downstairs)	Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow Self-Support and 12th Step Chair: Kellie M.
11:00 - 12:00 Auditorium	Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow Treatment Facilities and Corrections Chair: Joyce S.
11:00 - 12:00 Nickel Theatre (Downstairs)	Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow Cooperation with the Professional Community Public Information and Grapevine Chair: Peter N.
12:00 - 1:15	POTLUCK LUNCH
1:15 - 2:15 Auditorium	DELEGATE'S REPORT Roy R.
2:30 - 3:30 Auditorium	VIEW FROM G.S.O. Speaker, Gayle S.R.
3:30 - 4:30 Auditorium	ASK-IT-BASKET & SHARING TIME Claude L.

2,860 SUNDAYS

For 55 years, thousands of ladies have been curious to know just where their 'hubbies' go every Sunday morning.

In the early days of Alcoholics Anonymous in Toronto, a gathering place and meeting location was established at 1170 Yonge Street. This Sunday morning meeting became the Toronto Men's Meeting.

From there, the meeting moved to a restaurant at 2245 Yonge Street, just south of Eglinton on the east side, and then to a small room in the basement of the YMCA building at 130 Eglinton Avenue East. This location became a Sunday morning haven for single or lonely, lucked out and

maybe hung over men to have a coffee and attend a meeting.

As the meeting grew, the need for a larger venue became obvious. In line with the Third Legacy of "Service", a steering committee was formed to arrange for a larger hall. Participants soon met upstairs at the 'Y' at 130 Eglinton Avenue East, where the meetings continued to flourish.

In 1978, the 'Y' sold its building, and gave the men's meeting a couple of years' notice to vacate. Taking a word to the wise, one member began searching for a new location. After a lengthy search, and knocking on many doors, a new home was found at Leaside Memorial Gardens on Millwood Road in 1980.

In 1993, extensive renovations at the Gardens forced yet another move. The meeting relocated a short distance away at the York Banquet Hall, where the 55th Anniversary celebration will be held on Sunday, April 25, 2004.

This occasion will also be an opportunity for those thousands of ladies to satisfy their curiosity. Everyone is welcome to attend this special meeting, and share in the celebration of our 55th year!

Please help us celebrate on Sunday, April 25th, 2004 at 10:30 a.m. - York Banquet Hall, 1100 Millwood Road at Overlea Boulevard.

Doug W. (Webby)

Here I am, the Editor of *Better Times*, a long way from the smoky BT meetings in Myles' and Anne's living room, where we sat at a table, a select few disciples of AA working for the betterment of members in the Toronto area (and beyond). We discussed how to carry the message as we drank coffee and nibbled on the treat of the day. Some nights took 'til the wee hours as distribution was planned, picnics were arranged, and spelling, punctuation and grammar were tediously polished.

The Editors Say...

It's a Small World After All

This reflection on the humble beginnings of the 'Little Newsletter That Grew' prompts me to look at how people places and things have changed over the years since I arrived at AA, a beat up drunk looking for a way out of the Hell he had got himself into.

But in reality, nothing

much in this world has changed but my perception of it. The world just seems a little smaller today.

At my first ORC, I could not believe there were more than 3,000 people in AA, never mind getting them all together for a weekend. Next year there will be more than 60,000 of

them, but somehow, now, it just makes sense for them to be here.

My job now is to funnel the message to you, Constant Reader, and at the same time, ask you to spread this message to more people and more Groups, helping to make this world that much smaller for everyone.

If I do my job, and you like what you see, will you buy a copy for a friend?

Gord MacK.
Editor

Easy Does It

This slogan is the most difficult to pass on to another alcoholic, as the practice of 'Easy Does It' is contrary to the alcoholic's nature to complicate everything, and turn even the smallest task into something that requires an Einstein to work out.

The only way to follow this slogan and make it work in our lives is to break every

presenting few difficulties, free from worry or problems". We should immediately deal with difficulties or problems as they arise, avoiding complications that will affect us later, such as worrying or thinking of all the things that can go wrong.

'Do' is a verb that requires action, and the action can also be broken down into several tasks required to solve the problem. Tackle each task as it arise. If the solution to a problem requires a phone call, a visit to another member to clear up a misunderstanding, or a trip to the bank to obtain funds, then each step will bring the solution closer.

'It' is the root problem we're attempting to solve, and the best way to achieve this is by ensuring that the actions necessary are in the right order, and done in a timely manner. A necessary conversation with someone may be premature if other actions have not yet been completed, and nothing makes a problem worse than procrastination.

I hope this will make finding the solution a little less stressful, and eliminate unnecessary headaches. If, on the other hand, it does not help you, then ignore it and go to a meeting.

Joe C.



problem down into small pieces that we can handle. For example, say we have a problem writing about something we know nothing about, such as 'Easy Does It'. We must first find the basic definition of its parts.

'Easy' is defined as "achieved without great effort,

Info AA (from Page 1)

General Service Conference. There will be a guest speaker from the General Service Office, Gayle S.R., who is currently serving as Public Information Coordinator. Gayle will share some of her experience, strength and hope with us, as well as a glimpse into the day-to-day operation of our General Service Office.

Just as the Ontario Regional Conference is a celebration of our sobriety, Information AA Day is a testimonial to service in Alcoholics Anonymous. Cecil J. will be on hand to share a little of what it was like 25 years ago. Cecil was at the first Information AA Day in 1979, newly sober and willing to help out. Now Cecil returns to give us a taste of what it was like yesterday. There will be many members who are currently active in service that will share about what it is like today. Our hope is that some of you will catch the spark of service and get involved with what service will become tomorrow.

Robb W.

By the Book

I am often amazed at how some members of AA stay sober, particularly the newcomers. I speak, of course, of the members who behave as if AA was a drop-in community centre. Every few weeks, they may stop in for an open meeting, provided there are snacks available. A Sponsor is little more than someone they can catch a ride with. I think that they must collect desire chips to use in some great International Slippers' Poker Tournament.

Please don't take my cynicism to mean I condemn those who have a difficult time getting sober. There are many of us who take months, even years, to put the plug in the jug, but continue to do 'the do things' everyday. Sober suits some better than others. They are the primary reason I attend meetings regularly, for they are the suffering alcoholics who have a desire to stop drinking.

Above all, the greatest injustice one can cast upon oneself in the program of AA is to dismiss the importance of the Big Book. While understandable for the newcomer, every so often I am faced with

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Opinions expressed in **BETTER TIMES** are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Greater Toronto Area Intergroup.

Archives Alley

There have been many prominent women involved in the greatest spiritual movement of the twentieth century, but none more significant than the one Bill W. called the 'Mother of AA'. Anne S. was the wife of Dr. Bob, and was an undeniable influence in the evolution of AA.

Anne S. was a very well educated woman. She graduated as a teacher on a scholarship from Wellesley College, a prestigious women's private school. As a sister among three brothers, she led a relatively sheltered life and was described as 'strait-laced' by her children. She had never been exposed to alcoholism and married Dr. Bob after 17 years of courtship. She tried everything to help her husband to stop drinking.

Things were really desperate in the household in May of 1935. Although both Anne and Bob attended meetings of the Oxford Group, seeking spiritual reprieve, the drinking continued. When Anne's friend Henrietta Sieberling called to say that some man from New York wanted to help any drunk to stay sober, she immediately thought of Dr. Bob.

Anne arranged a meeting between the two men, and the allotted 15-minute get-together concluded in five-and-a-half hours. Then a reserved and private Anne opened her home and invited Bill W., who called himself 'a rum hound from New York', to come to live with them.

Anne worked with her husband and Bill not only to keep them sober, but also to steep them in spiritual nourishment through Bible scripture and meditation. She fed them what archivists have referred to as 'spiritual Pabulum®', and was instrumental in encouraging 'quiet time' (which may have influenced the Eleventh Step).

Anne S. lived an exemplary and principled life. AA will never be able to repay the debt of gratitude owed to such an extraordinary woman.

Bernadette MacL

Have You Heard?

Recent Medallions:

Brian P., 1 year, *Friendly*, March 1.
Don C., 1 year, *Keep It Simple*, March 21.
Klaus N., 1 year, *Friendly*, March 22.
Ida Y., 20 yrs., *Glenholme*, March 22.

Upcoming Medallions:

Donna M., 10 yrs., *Thorncliffe Pk*, April 2.
John A., 5 yrs., *Keep It Simple*, April 4.
Sandy P., 25 yrs., *Markland Wood*, April 4.
Lewis C., 1 year, *Markland Wood*, April 5.
Irene H., 5 yrs., *St. Jamestown*, April 18.
Dan C., 30 yrs., *King City*, April 19.
Steve S., 1 year, *Thorncliffe Park*, April 23.
Helen MacC., 5 yrs., *New Anchor*, April 29.
Brian M., 15 yrs., *Thorncliffe Pk*, April 30.
Kenny C., 15 years, *Westmoreland*, May 8.
 (medallion at Scott Mission Saturday 2 p.m.)

Group Anniversaries:

TORONTO SUNDAY MORNING MEN'S MEETING (central / 10:30 a.m.). See story front page.

May 8th Saturday 2 p.m. meeting (O) at the Scott Mission celebrates 8 years of service.

Things We Cannot Change:

Joe C., *Willowdale Group*, 57 yrs of sobriety passed away Mar 16.

Meeting Changes:

AS BILL SEES IT DISCUSSION (C) (EAST / Sundays) has a NEW LOCATION and starts at a NEW TIME: 7:30 p.m. at St. Ninian's Anglican Church, 930 Bellamy Rd at Brimorton Drive, north of Lawrence Ave E. 1st Sunday of the Month is an Open Speaker Meeting.

MARKHAM-STOUFFVILLE HOSPITAL MEETING (Tues/Suburban N.W.) is NOW CALLED **MARKHAM TUESDAY MEETING**, Same time, same location.

LIVE AND LET LIVE GROUP (O), Sunday was previously reported as cancelled on the web page in error. Meeting is still in effect.

BOLTON GROUP Tuesday and Saturday. Correct address is 110 King Street West

Special Events, Conventions & Conferences:

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

SPRINGATHON 2004. 'Living In Sobriety Together' April 3, 2004 at Loafers Recreation Centre, 10 Loafers Lake Lane, Brampton ON. 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. E-mail springathon04@sympatico.ca. Registration \$15 (7th tradition for alateens).

NEW ANCHOR GROUP (O) Annual Service Meeting - April 22nd. **The Intergroup Tradition Players will be performing.** Hot dogs, chips and pop. Meeting starts at 8:30 p.m., and EVERYONE is welcome.

INFO AA DAY - See story front page or contact www.aatoronto.org/Events/Info_One.htm aaday2004@hotmail.com

Scarborough General Hospital Service Meeting

Many meetings have suffered from the outbreak of SARS last year. We, as members of AA, have tried to keep these Groups up and running for the still suffering alcoholics. The Scarborough General Hospital Service Meeting has a special place in my heart. When I surrendered, my very first meeting was the Scarborough General Hospital. I had left Detox, and had an appointment in three weeks with a treatment centre for the third time. I attended the meeting before returning to treatment, and have since attended the meeting for over 5 years. I have seen the attendance drop to as low as two people some weeks. I find myself questioning whether or not the meeting should go on, but then I remember the way AA started many years ago, with two Alcoholics sharing with one another.

The Scarborough General Hospital Service Meeting was started **November 8, 1977** by **Tony T., Duncan Donald MacK., Jack T., and Joe S.** They all continued coming to the meeting until their passing from causes other than alcohol. **Roy St. C.** came to the second meeting as a patient from the hospital. Soon **Murray D.** (deceased with 45 years of sobriety) became a regular, coming early to set up and make coffee. The legendary **Tommy H.**, of the Unionville Group, was also there at the beginning, continuing his support until his passing April 1999. **Bob S.**, also of the Unionville Group, and the late **Gord D.**, (passed on October 13, 2002), coordinated the weekly set-up with a number of faithful AAs. In 2002 the torch was passed on to me, and it's an honour giving back.

Service at this Group includes escorting patients to the meeting from the 10th floor. The meeting is now held in the Boardroom in the Basement of the Crockford Wing, as the classroom was needed for something else. The hospital was very cooperative in helping in getting a new meeting room. No rent is charged, but the meeting makes a donation to the hospital annually.

Originally a discussion meeting, the format soon changed to its current style. Three readings are read, a speaker shares their experience, strength and hope, followed by a question period. Many **Big Books** have been given to someone attending their first meeting in hopes of planting a seed. Groups in the surrounding area have supported the meeting, volunteering to set-up, supply the chairperson and speaker, including *The Pine Hills, As Bill Sees It, New Anchor, Keep It Simple and the Bellamy Group*. More groups are still needed on a monthly basis, and this is a great way to get newcomers involved in service.

We must not forget that everyone in AA is responsible for carrying the message to all, not just the Scarborough General Hospital. Some of us also must remember where our alcoholism took us, to places like hospitals, detoxes or even on the street.

Terry H.

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

PRESENT: 62 groups, 2 District Liaisons, 9 Subcommittee Chairs or reps. **Chairperson's Opening Remarks.** Operating Committee 2nd Vice Chair, Mary J. (*Saturday Morning Disc.*) chaired the meeting and announced that the new **Access Ability Chairperson** is Morton G. (Don Mills).

Finance Report – Dominic A. (*Glenholme*), Operating Committee member. Funding to InterGroup has declined last over the last two years, and members must remain vigilant.

Regular business suspended for election of Neil N. (*Long Branch*) as new Operating Committee Junior.

Subcommittee Reports

Self-Support – Phil M. (*Bayview*), Chairperson. Phil reported that several committees (Twelfth Step, Self-Support) **need volunteers.**

Access Ability – Stephanie K. (*Hill*), outgoing Chairperson. This committee will also be participating in Mayfest (cultural festival for the Deaf).

Intergroup Report



Ad Hoc Computer

Committee – Dominic A. The Intergroup office is up, running and stable. They have the computer programs they need and working the way they should be working.

Archives – Bob D. (*Weston*), Vice Chairperson. The committee is working on the idea of taping 'longtimers'.

Corrections – Mike C. (*Beverly Hills*), District 04 CF Chair. **This committee needs**

a Secretary.

CPC – Mary J., Operating Committee liaison. CPC would like representatives from Districts 04, 12, and 16 (Spanish) to attend this table.

Treatment Facilities – Gary L. (*Recovery*), Operating Committee liaison. Gary reported that there is a major problem with districts not attending this table. **This committee is looking for a Secretary, and one applica-**

tion has been received for the Chairperson position

Newsletter – Kevin M. (North Toronto), incoming Chairperson. **Please send all submissions about group birthdays, anniversaries, etc to bt@aatoronto.org.** This address is now up and running, thanks to the Website committee

Reception – Donna M. (Thornclyffe Park), Operating Committee liaison. Donna welcomed new Reps, and explained the various procedures to them.

Twelfth Step – Donna M., Operating Committee liaison. No one showed up for the last Phone Training Session. The TTY number is now going to be in the Toronto phonebook and will be in the Peel Region phonebook in November.

Website – Christina March (*Welcome*), Alternate Chair. It was reported that GTA Intergroup has changed web hosts in the last month, and the changeover was successful. The new mailing address for the site is webmaster@aatoronto.org.

A Real AA Member

In the spirit of the humour of a popular comedian who pokes fun at folks with "You know you're a Redneck when..." I would like to paraphrase this to...

You know you're a real AA member when...

- you understand that self-supporting is not a buck or two in the basket at a meeting once a week...
- you know how to set up a meeting with table, chairs, and literature and how to take the meeting down...
- you know how to make decent coffee for the usual number of members that come to that meeting...
- you know that members that go to meetings with you don't think your name is Pass...
- you don't show up for your medallion every five years and wonder why no one knows you...

- you know that the Program of recovery for AA members is in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and you have read this Book...
- you know that members of AA have seen you chair a meeting more than once...
- you know what AA means by Gratitude Month...
- you share your experience, strength, and hope with AA groups in order to practice the Twelfth Step...
- your name is on a group list somewhere and members of this group know your phone number and how to get in touch with you...
- you understand that recovery is a continuing growth movement and carrying that message to others is the primary purpose of AA.

Bernadette MacL.

Book (from Page 2)

someone who has been around for some time who says, "Oh, I don't understand the Big Book." Many members depend solely on '12 and 12 Step Meetings' for their spiritual growth, and feel the Big Book is too old fashioned, hard lined and out of date.

The Big Book (coincidentally titled "Alcoholics Anonymous") is as much the authority on alcoholism and the alcoholic as it was in 1939. Alcoholism is still a fatal disease. Alcoholics still suffer from an allergy to alcohol. There are still "a hundred forms of Fear, Self Delusion, Self Seeking and Self Pity" to make that next drink justified. And the Twelve Steps, the program of action contained in Chapter 5 "How It Works", STILL WORK.

I have a friend who refers to me as 'Bible Gord', not for any wisdom on the Good Book, but for my constant and vigilant preaching of our Big Book. I will admit that, at times, my enthusiasm can become somewhat obnoxious, particularly when those around me are reading the latest Dr. Phil book on how to overcome your anger.

My friend had never opened a Big Book before meeting me (with over a year of sobriety at the time). Today, she regularly attends our Big Book Discussion meeting (Tuesday nights at the New Anchor Group) and while she debates what she reads, SHE READS IT. That, Constant Reader, is an AA success story if I ever heard one.

Here's another. With Big Book in hand, sober suits 'Bible Gord' just fine.

Gord MacK.

How to reach us

Submit group news, medallions, other event notices, letters to the editor or articles to **BETTER TIMES** (before the 10th previous month of issue), mail to 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. Only signed submissions with a means of contact will be accepted. For subscriptions call Alexx at 416-487-8110