

A Beginner's Guide to GTA InterGroup

June 2007

The Better Times Committee has prepared this insert to help orient new group reps to the inner workings of GTA InterGroup and its subcommittees. We hope that you find it helpful and encourage any feedback you think would be helpful to keep us all on the same page(s)! And to every member of AA in the GTA, you don't have to be a rep. to join one of our subcommittees, anyone can!

AccessAbility

Think back to when you first admitted you were an alcoholic and attempted to go to your first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Now imagine yourself that same day but unable to see the address of the meeting location because you are blind, unable to know what people are sharing or unable to attend a meeting because you are hearing impaired and interpreters are not allowed at that meeting, unable to enter the meeting because there is a step or the bathroom is not accessible and use an assistive device such as a wheelchair or cane.

These are some of the obstacles that disabled alcoholics face every day and the reason why the AccessAbility committee was established 11? yrs ago.

The AccessAbility committee works to make AA accessible to all alcoholics, not only the able bodied.

We strive to raise awareness regarding this issue and ensure that meetings, service days, conferences, and all aspects of Alcoholics Anonymous are accessible to all alcoholics who wish to attend.

We provide literature in large print, Braille, CD, and in sign language with closed captioning on VHS.

Our committee is involved in carrying the message to events outside of AA such as People In Motion (Canada's largest national trade show highlighting services and equipment for the disabled), Association of Visual Language Interpreters Convention, Mayfest (Deaf Cultural Convention) just to name a few.

AccessAbility has created a buddies list at 234 for 12 step volunteers wishing to assist blind or severely disabled alcoholics to attend meetings.

Illness and disability can happen to anyone of us and therefore we must all strive to create access to AA for the disabled.

We are dedicated to continuing to increase awareness and access for the disabled alcoholic and you do not have to have a disability to join to AccessAbility committee, which meets at 11am on the 3rd Sunday of every month at 234.

We encourage all who are interested in continuing to carry the message to attend a meeting of the AccessAbility Committee.

Archives

a) Purpose/Mission:

- Receive, classify, and index all relevant material
- Hold and preserve such material
- Provide access to those who may have a valid need to review said material

b) Contact Information:

- Toronto Intergroup, who will put you in touch with the Committee Chair.

c) Committee Positions Available or Volunteers Required: Various, at your District's Archives Committee

- All archives committees are looking for people with training in the preservation of artifacts

d) Committee Meeting Times

- Toronto Intergroup Archives - 7 pm the 2nd Friday of each month at 234
- District Archives – per Districts' calendars

e) Upcoming Sub Committee Events

- 23rd Annual Archives Breakfast – November 4 at the Oasis convention Centre.

Better Times

Better Times, published by GTAI, is a monthly newsletter that presents news, feature articles, opinions and calendar events to the GTA Toronto Intergroup Fellowship. Opinions expressed are not those of Alcoholics Anonymous and are the responsibility of each writer.

Chair, Editor, Secretary-Treasurer, Asst Editor, Desktop Publisher, Cartoonist, Editorial Committee Members, Circulation Managers, Business Development Manager

Better Times Committee Positions Available: Business Development Manager, Circulation Managers

Submissions: Medallions: 1st year and each subsequent fifth year anniversaries with recipient's medalion date, group and name to: bettertimes@aatoronto.org

Events: Please direct your event, 2 months prior to event date to: bettertimes@aatoronto.org

Meeting Changes: Please direct your meeting changes to: bettertimes@aatoronto.org

Article Submission: Articles must be maximum 450 words. Please submit before the 10th of each month to: bettertimes@aatoronto.org

Article Topic Suggestions: Email bettertimes@aatoronto.org or contact your Group Literature Librarian

Price: *Better Times* Monthly Editions are 25 cents or yearly Group & individual Subscriptions are available

Better Times Monthly Meetings: 3rd Wednesday of Each month at 234 Eglinton Ave. East #202 7:00 PM

Suggestions, Ideas or Concerns: please contact 234 or email *Better Times* at bettertimes@aatoronto.org

Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC)

WITH WHOM DO WE COOPERATE?

- * Family doctors or other health care professionals
- * Members of the clergy
- * Law enforcement or court officials
- * Educators
- * Social workers
- * An alcoholism or other counselor
- * ANYONE who deals with problem drinkers in the course of their work.

We are actively seeking ways to make contact with professional people and set up programs to increase the knowledge and the understanding of Alcoholics Anonymous.

We believe that professionals are our best allies in getting the AA message to the still suffering alcoholic. We carry the message to professionals and to students attending professional schools in the community, helping them to understand how and why AA works.

Members of the CPC Committee inform professionals and future professionals about AA, What we do, Where we are, What we can and cannot do. We attempt to establish better communication between AA's and professionals and to find simple effective methods of cooperating without affiliating.

For AA members: We will provide workshops for regional conventions, Area assemblies, District meetings, service information days, and set up information tables at District or Area conferences. This kind of workshop provides an opportunity to assist AA members in carrying the AA message to the still-suffering alcoholic.

For our professional friends: We will explain how Alcoholics Anonymous may be helpful to people served by professionals. We will be more than happy to attend a "working" breakfast, luncheon or dinner, provide AA literature and meeting information, or put on workshops on professional development days.

For students attending professional schools: For students studying medicine, nursing, law, psychology, teacher training, management, the ministry or any other course that is preparing the student for direct contact with people, we will set up workshops and provide literature that will better enable the student to gain an understanding of Alcoholics Anonymous.

National or International Meetings of Professionals: Exhibits at national or international sights are coordinated through the General Service Office (GSO) in New York. Invitations are reviewed by the CPC trustee committee for approval. Local CPC committee members staff these exhibits. The costs for these exhibits are handled by GSO.

Local, Regional or Provincial Meetings: CPC participation at these events is coordinated by the local CPC committee at 234 Eglinton Ave. E. The local CPC committee will set up and man an information booth at these events. The local or Area committee handles the costs for these events.

We participate in 3 or 4 professional international conferences that are held each year in Toronto and we are always looking for volunteers to man our display during the conferences. Since many of these take place on weekdays we sometimes have problems getting volunteers to cover the "work hour" shifts'

Corrections

The Correctional Facilities Committee is responsible for supplying chairpersons, speakers, and literature for meetings at all correctional centers, jails, detention centers, probation centers and similar institutions.

The Correctional Facilities Committee shall deal

directly with the staff and personnel of corrections facilities who are responsible for alcoholics.

Going Inside Correctional Facilities: The fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous was in its seventh year when a pioneering warden at San Quentin Penitentiary asked nearby A.A.s to carry the message to alcoholics in the prison. He was heard to say, "If the A.A. program will help just one man, I want to start it."

GTA Intergroup formed the Correctional Facilities Committee back in 1973. It comprises of one Correctional Chairperson and, preferably, an Alternate from each of the General Service Districts in our Area 83. Coordinated by a committee chairperson selected by the Operating Committee of Intergroup.

To become a Correctional Volunteer requires minimum continuous sobriety of one to two years. Because we are entering highly restricted areas, there are application forms to be completed and submitted to the facility where the individual would like to carry the message of recovery to our members on the inside. A government background check is completed. In some cases, a reference letter is requested by mail from someone given as a character reference. The A.A. member is then required to attend an one to two evening orientation meeting to become acquainted with procedures and guidelines for the institution. When all this has been completed, a identification tag with a recent photo on it is provided. By now a fairly good idea of the type of commitment needed is clear. For example, how many times a months one can be available to put on a meeting on the inside. It is suggested that our newly cleared members consider a minimum of once a month and commit for six month period.

There are a lot of facilities available in the GTA area for correctional service work: Toronto Don Jail, East Detention Centre, Centre West Detention, Mimico Reformatory, Vanier Centre for Women, Ontario Correctional Institute.

If this is something you would like to do, you must be an AA member. And you now have the opportunity to submit your names on the Correctional Facilities Volunteer Form via this Web site; or to call the GTA Intergroup Office (416) 487-5591 to leave a message of your interest for the Correctional Committee; or ask your Intergroup Representative or your G.S.R. for the Correctional Volunteer Form and mail it to the address listed on it.

Finance

Besides a Finance Subcommittee member giving a report to Floor members at each monthly InterGroup meeting, the following are suggested informational actions that the Finance Subcommittee would like to provide members:

- Every month, there will be copies of the Financial Bar Graph, which shows income and expenses by month, and year-to-date (YTD) for a 4 year period
- Each January, April, July, & October there will be a Quarterly Financial Statement provided
- If your group donates to InterGroup, there will be a receipt in the Donation Receipt file folder for each rep to pick up and submit to the group treasurer
- It would be appreciated if InterGroup could have the name and phone no. of your group treasurer

- It would also be greatly appreciated if reps could request to your group secretary for an updated group list with full names, addresses, postal codes, and phone number(s), and ask members if they would like to be added to our 12 Step contact list. This information is strictly confidential and is vitally needed for the yearly Gratitude mail-out; an initiative that helps support your InterGroup!

Grapevine (Sub-Committee of GTA Intergroup)

Promotes Sales of *Grapevine* Magazines, Subscriptions and other *Grapevine* Materials. Promotion to all AA Groups and individual members that they should have a good supply of *Grapevine* Materials and Magazines for sale at their individual groups, looking forward to establishing *Grapevine* Displays and Representatives in every AA Group in the GTA.

Consists of: Chairperson, Alternate Chairperson, Secretary, GTA Intergroup Liaison, Representatives from all the Districts in the GTA, and of course any AA member that wishes to attend.

Agenda: Organize display and set up at the Ontario Regional Conference, Information AA Day, Conferences, Workshops, Round-Ups, or Anniversaries. We must be invited to the event in order to attend and set up the *Grapevine* Display.

Meetings are held the 2nd Thursday of every month at 7:00 P.M. We hold them at the GTA Intergroup Office (234 Eglinton Avenue East).

2007 Grapevine Sub-Committee Budget: \$ 90.00

GTA Toronto Intergroup is currently taking resumes for the Grapevine Chair Position. This position is selected by the GTA Intergroup Operating Committee

Volunteers: The Sub-Committee is currently looking for a Chairperson, Alternate Chairperson, and more District Representation to help with Grapevine Events.

For all 2007 *Grapevine* Sub-Committee (open) positions, please submit a Sub-Committee Volunteer Form to fax: 416-487-5855.

For More *Grapevine* Sub-Committee Information please log on to: www.aatoronto.org or please enquire at 234.

Information AA Day

Information AA Day is a great service day that has been taking place for more than 25 years and is a day for people to learn about service. Intergroup and General Service put it on. One year Intergroup chairs the committee and the next year General Service chairs the committee. The committee is usually comprised of District Committee Members (DCM's), Alternate District Committee Members (Alt DCM's) from each District in the GTA and the Intergroup Operating Committee members.

These committee members organize the day. They meet once a month on the last Monday of the month at the Intergroup office at 234 Eglinton Ave E. There are many jobs for everyone to do. There is a committee chair, treasurer, secretary, kitchen organizer, and people to chair the various meetings. Other committee members are responsible for the coffee, printing tickets, nametags and the agenda, set up and tear down and much, much more. It takes a lot of work and people to put on this day. I can tell you from experience, it is well worth it.

Information AA Day was originally started so that our Area 83 Delegate could give their report when they returned from the General Service Conference in New York. The conference is held in April. Info AA is usually held in May for this reason.

The day starts off with an early bird meeting at 8:45 am. Service committees such as Public Information, Cooperation with the Professional Community, *Grapevine*, Self Support, Corrections, Treatment, Archives and Access-Ability are represented by Committee Chair(s), whether from General Service or Intergroup. Each has about 20 minutes each to explain about their committee. There is a potluck lunch. Everyone can participate in this part and bring a delicious dish. Any food contribution is accepted and appreciated. The Delegate gives their report. The last speaker of the day is the View From GSO. This is where a staff member of the General Service Office in New York will give a talk. Usually the talk includes how they got sober (all staff are alcoholics), how they came to work at the General Service Office (GSO) and a visual or verbal tour of the office. The day ends with the ask it basket. All this for the low cost of \$5.00 a ticket.

If you haven't experienced Info AA Day, I would suggest that you give it a try. Whether to volunteer your services or to attend. Don't cheat yourself. It doesn't take much and service is fun!

Ontario Regional Conference

The 2008 committee has been hard at work in preparation for the ORC conference March 14, 15, & 16 2008.

A number of great speakers have already been booked & we are looking into entertainment for Friday night.

There will be discussion meetings as well as a 12 step workshop available for those that are interested.

We are looking for submissions for graphics with the theme of Happy Joyous & Free. The submission chosen will receive a night at the hotel, registration and banquet and the statement "graphics by" on all the literature. Submission deadline August 15th 2007. Email to reneorc2008@hotmail.com

There will be monthly draws for early registrants and for those who book through the hotel at the conference rate a chance to win their stay free.

Stay tuned for more exciting updates over the coming months...until then "May the 4th be with you!"

Public Information

There is a lot of "public" out there who do not have the "information" that alcoholism is a disease and that there are over 2 million sober alcoholics in AA worldwide who were once at their wits end with lives that were falling apart.

PI use literature,public presentations,media and personal contact to reach out anywhere where people may gather or pass by.

Whether speaking to students at a school,or setting up an information table at a shopping mall or police sponsored breakfast for the homeless in a park,or displaying pamphlets in a doctor's office; the list goes on.

We have provided Big Books to the public library system as well as public service announcements on television or newspapers.

Ultimately, however, 12th step work is carried out by practising the principles of recovery in all our affairs. By setting an example, we can carry a message of hope that there is a better way to live for those who want it.

But first they need to know it's available.

Self-Support

A.A. *ought to be* fully self-supporting. This requires the whole-hearted participation of *every* AA member. It isn't just about money, we need people for every service position there is, and for all the positions we may create in the future. Only by giving back without reservation do we get to watch the miracle of other's recoveries, and vouchsafe our own. That said, there is a place for money and spirituality to meet, and that's in "the hat", as Bill once said in the Grapevine.

The committee meets the first Wednesday of every month and is always glad to see new faces at the table. Contact 234 or volunteer online.

Treatment Facilities

- A. To work in cooperation with treatment facilities and detox centers etc.
- B. As with all subcommittees all are welcome (one year sobriety).
- C. To volunteer contact the Operating Committee, fill out a volunteer form at 234 or online or leave a message with a phone greeter.
- D. Agenda: Info A.A. Day
- E. The second Thursday of each month, 7:30 at 234. For further info, re: meeting dates and times, again ask a phone greeter.

12 Step

- A Purpose/Mission: is to provide people to answer the phones and be available for the person who reaches out for help, and to provide a 12 step calls.
- B Contact Person: Chairperson: or Past Chair: Timothy C.
- C Committee Position or Volunteers needed: Alt. Chair, Phone Greeters & 12 Step Volunteers.
- D Qualifications: 1 Year of Continuous Sobriety
- E Contact 234 Att: Alexx
- F committee Meets Last Friday of every month except December at 6:30pm
- G Upcoming Sub Committee events: 2008 O.R.C and Info A.A Day. And anything we're invited to
- H Other Suggestions: We don't need money, we're about people, send us people.

Website

Purpose/Mission: The mission of the Toronto (GTA) Intergroup Online Committee (hereinafter called the Web Site Committee) is to develop and maintain a site on the Internet's World Wide Web to act as the Web site of the Greater Toronto Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Web site's dual purpose is to carry the message to the suffering alcoholic and to provide information of interest to members of the fellowship and visitors, both from within the GTA and from elsewhere, via the Internet.

Contact Information: You can send e-mail to the GTA Intergroup Online committee at webmaster@aatoronto.org

Committee Positions Available/Volunteers Required and Qualifications:

Chairperson – 1 year of sobriety

Alternate Chairperson – 1 year of sobriety

Alternate Webmaster – recommend 1 year of sobriety and reasonable web designing skill sets

Secretary - none

GTA District liaisons - none

Anyone else that would like to be of service - none

Send résumé's to 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Unit 202 Attn: Carole Keenan, or, send by fax to 416-487-5855

Committee Meeting Times: The meetings of the GTA Intergroup Online Committee are held in the Intergroup offices, 234 Eglinton Avenue E., Suite 202, at 1:00 pm on the second Saturday of each month.

Winter Season Open House 2007

Purpose: The 2007 Winter Season Open House Subcommittee of the GTA Intergroup is an annual event to be held on Tuesday December 25, 2007 that brings together AA members, their families and friends for a day of meetings, dinner, music and fellowship.

The Committee consists of:

- a) An Executive Body - Chair, Secretary, Treasurer & GTA Intergroup Office Manager
- b) Event Location Manager, Dinner Preparation Co-ordinator, Musical Director, Open & Closed Meeting Planners, Literature Co-ordinator, Communications Liaison, Greeting Captain, Purchaser & Event Set-up Manager

Agenda: 4 AA Closed Meetings, 1 AI-anon Closed meeting, 1 Keynote Speaker meeting, 1 Gratitude Meeting, 2 Hours of Live Music, 2 Hours of Can Music, Turkey and Ham Dinner with all the trimmings

Location: Emmanuel Howard Park United Church, 214 Wright Ave. (Northwest Corner Roncesvalles & Wright) Toronto

2007 WSOH Budget: \$1200

GTA Toronto Intergroup is currently taking resumes for the 2007 WSOH Chair Position.

The WSOH Chair position will be selected by the Operating Committee in July 2007. For all 2007 WSOH Committee (open) positions please submit Subcommittee Volunteer Form to fax: 416- 487-5855.

For More WSOH Committee Information please log on to Website: www.aatoronto.org or please contact past Chairs: Marvyn W. (Streetsville Action Group), Ken C., Francis A. (Crossroads Group)

Reception Centre

The Reception Centre is located right by the door at the monthly InterGroup Meeting. An Operating Committee member is there at that table to meet, greet, provide information, and direct reps to other sources of service information. This table provides reps with the following:

- Group rep sign-in: all reps (or, in their absence, alternate reps) are to sign the Roll Call List at every General Meeting. This information is recorded in the Minutes of every General Meeting

- Copies of Minutes, Meeting Agenda, & Finance Reports: after signing in, reps are encouraged to take all documentation provided (see Finance Subcommittee)
- Monthly Boardroom Bookings for GTAI Subcommittees: this is a sheet listing when the Subcommittees of GTAI meet monthly
- Donation Receipt File Folder: please look in this file for any donation receipts for your groups donation(s); these are to be given to your group treasurer
- New Group Rep / Alternate (green) Forms: every new rep / alternate is encouraged to provide InterGroup with their name, address, e-mail address, etc. so they are indicated on our confidential database that they are the group rep. Please submit forms to 234 (attention Carole Keenan, Executive Secretary)
- Subscriptions for Receiving monthly Minutes (e-mail or 'snail mail'): this option is indicated on the bottom of the New Rep (green) Form (see above). Minutes are available five business days after the monthly General Meeting takes place. Cost for mailing is \$12 for a year, and \$10 for e-mailing. This charge covers mailing / Internet costs. Please submit forms to 234 (attention Carole Keenan, Executive Secretary)
- GTAI Operating Procedures & Guidelines: this document is a must for all reps. It outlines the 'ways and means' for conducting service and making decisions at the InterGroup level. The document also outlines how to make Motions, present Notice of Motions, approach the Floor, how to vote, who can vote, etc. They are available at every Workshop Meeting (May & November)
- Referendum Notices / Documents: check with Reception to see if there are any upcoming Referendum votes for groups to be aware of (see explanation of voting in GTAI Procedures & Guidelines document)
- Group Update List Forms: please take these to your group secretary, as updated information aids us in a) 12 Step work; and b) helps us to save wasted postage on incorrect addresses for every Gratitude mail-out
- Event Flyers, Medallions Announcements, etc.: there is a separate table for these items; feel free to take a number of these back to your groups for your event bulletin board or for group secretary announcements

Please remember... don't be afraid to ask questions! We understand that the process of GTAI can be confusing at first (we've been there!), but there are folks willing to listen and help. Please feel free to approach any Operating Committee member for guidance and/or feedback. We are happy to assist you in providing timely and correct information to your group.

SUBCOMMITTEE VOLUNTEER FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____

PHONE: _____ WORK#/CELL#: _____

E-MAIL: _____ GROUP: _____

DRY DATE: _____

AVAILABLE to help out or volunteer...

- > 1 (DAYS) _____ Yes _____ No
> 2 (EVENINGS) _____ Yes _____ No
> 3 (WEEKENDS) _____ Yes _____ No
>All ANYTIME _____ Yes _____ No

INTERESTED in volunteering for / finding out about...

- Access Ability subcommittee
- Archives subcommittee
- Better Times* newsletter
- Corrections subcommittee
- CPC (Cooperation with the Professional Community)
- Grapevine* subcommittee
- Information AA Day subcommittee
- Public Information subcommittee
- Self-Support subcommittee
- Treatment Facilities subcommittee
- Twelfth Step subcommittee:
 - 1. Phone Duty
 - 2. 12 Step Duty (12 Step calls)
 - 3. 12 Step subcommittee member
- Website subcommittee
- Winter Season Open House subcommittee

Signature: _____ Date received: _____

Submit this form to:

Toronto Intergroup - 234 Eglinton Ave. East, Suite 202, Toronto M4P 1K5 Fax: 416-487-5855

Website: www.aatoronto.org

PLEASE NOTE Access to the members' database is *limited* to two individuals: the executive secretary (Carole Keenan) and the admin. assistant. *Privacy laws are respected.* If you wish instead to dictate personal information regarding this form over the phone please call **416-487-5591 and ask for Carole or Alexx.**