



• Contents •

Kaye H. – 55 Years 1
Mississauga Fall Roundup 2008 1
Myths in AA – A Rebuttal... 2
Moving On 2
Catching Your Breath 2
Archives Alley 3
Have You Heard? 3
E Toronto Archives Brekkie .. 4
This Month's Cartoon 4
Intergroup Report 4

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Editorial Ctte: Marvyn W, (Chair) Bernadette M (Editor) Carolyn M (Asst: Editor) Elaine G (Co-Editor) Mary P (Co-Editor) David N (Cartoonist) Ciara C. (HYH) John G (Archives) John P (Desktop) Jim H (Circulation). Opinions expressed in *BETTER TIMES* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Greater Toronto Area Intergroup.

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Kaye H. - Fifty-five years

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 55 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 and Alcoholics Anonymous.

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 meeting 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 Master's degree in Education. She was about to further her studies in law and journalism, 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, she continues to reach out to the suffering alcoholic who needs the help of Alcoholics Anonymous. Her presence at meetings gives us all hope that help is always available for all alcoholics.

Bernadette M.
King City Group

Mississauga Fall Roundup 2008

You can't miss the location – it's the magnificent, multi-spired St. Mary's Catholic Ukrainian Church on Cawthra Road just south of Burnhamthorpe. There's lots of free parking. You can't miss the timing: it's on Saturday, October 4 – one week before Thanksgiving weekend.

And you certainly won't want to miss the event: the 2008 Mississauga Fall Roundup called 'Experience, Strength and Hope'. It runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with freshly-brewed coffee and registration beginning at 8 o'clock in the morning. One big reason (among many other reasons) you will want to remember this year's

Mississauga Roundup is the keynote speaker, who has influenced so many of us alcoholics in our recovery: Dr. Graham C. of Guelph's Homewood Health Centre has kindly agreed to kick off a day filled with excellent AA, Al-Anon and Alateen speakers.

Your ticket will cost you \$20, unchanged from last year. You will be treated to a hot and cold buffet lunch, and coffee will be available with snacks throughout the day.

Another popular feature you definitely should not miss is the family panel. This unique perspective on AA, Al-Anon and Alateen – from members of the same family – proved to be one of the most powerful moments

during last year's Mississauga Fall Roundup.

Of course, the not-to-be-missed sobriety countdown promises once again to be a Mississauga Fall Roundup highlight.

Tickets are available from Committee members at meetings throughout District 6, beginning August 4. They will also be available at the door on Roundup Day, and on the Internet – you can visit us online at www.mississaugafall-roundup.org.

Mark down Saturday, October 4th as a day of sharing Experience, Strength and Hope. It's a Roundup you will be delighted not to miss.

Geoff S.
Mississauga Group

Myths in AA – A Rebuttal

It's a long time since I have had such a good laugh as when I read the article "Myths in AA". (July 2008)

For those who find it hard to attend meetings, the author says she "has witnessed hundreds of members recover in 7 days or less by taking the Steps. Many have never gone to a single AA meeting..." I mean, who needs meetings? As far as getting a sponsor, the author has "seen many recover (there's that word 'many' again). How many is "many"? 5, 500? And none of them ever had a sponsor." (Quotes from the article)

To say that "Sponsorship as it is practiced today creates a human dependence" is vague, though possibly as true, as saying that sex as it is practiced today creates cases of venereal disease.

Why bother joining a group? Just because the Traditions, Concepts and General Service structure are predicated on the group doesn't take away from the fact that "a group is not a Fellowship." Since, "A true Fellowship does not care for chips/medallions..." I suppose those poor dupes who have received chips or medallions can consider themselves seriously deluded.

So much for joining a group.

However, here's some good news! For those like the hundreds of members, though without a group or sponsor, who have been witnessed by the author to recover in 7 days or less, they can start dating, as it says in the Big Book, "Once a man has recovered, he can come and go as he pleases as long as his motives are good".

The myth about "Don't work with others until you have 5 years or more." Being described as "Nonsense" seems self-evident.

Is there anybody in AA who can name 3, or even 1 person who seriously believes and would admit to cautioning newcomers to wait until they have 5 years or more, before they work with others? It doesn't say 5 years of what.

Tom S.
Toronto Intergroup, CPC committee

Marilyn McC.

On June 20th, 2008, Marilyn McC., a member of A Place to Share in Aurora, passed away at Uxbridge Cottage Hospital. She was an active member, was GSR and Intergroup Rep for her group, and helped many people, both newcomers and long timers along the way. Marilyn loved AA and did not have an easy life after becoming sober, but through it all, she did not find it necessary to drink. She touched many lives and will be deeply missed.

Carolyn McCA Place to Share Group.

Catching Your Breath

Eleven years ago, I coped with the death of my mother by diving into the deepest part of any bottle of booze I could find to ease the excruciating emotional pain. I had been building up to daily drinking for years, but it went completely out of control when she passed away. I was concurrently having difficulty coping with yet another multi-billion dollar merger as an Operations Manager in a major Canadian Corporation. By the spring of 1996, my situation had deteriorated to the point

where I had to drink to stop the shakes and to sleep. Being in a state where you know you have to stop, but if you do you go through withdrawals, is as close to purgatory as I can ever imagine. Thanks to my wife who gave me an ultimatum...me or the bottle, I contacted our local hospital. I completed their day treatment program.

For the first few months of sobriety, the best I could do was to hold on by my fingernails. The program introduced me to AA. I must admit I hated my first few AA meetings. The dreaded "G" word, laughing

Moving On...

From the time I was a youngster, I had an aptitude for writing. But reading was my real passion. I would write stories entertaining thoughts of authoring the great Canadian novel. I contemplated being famous. However, my God had other plans for me. He made me anonymous.

In December of 2003, John G., then chair of Archives, asked me to script a column about the origin of AA in Ontario. The anniversary of its 1943 inception was fast approaching and the Archives committee requested Better Times run a column entitled "Archives Alley". That was the beginning of my involvement with the BT committee.

Month after month, we would all work together in collaborating to produce an enlightening, inspirational, factual four page circular that would inform the GTA membership. We were open to all of the membership's submissions but we would not publish controversial untruths, ranting or complaints that should be addressed in committee.

Five years have slipped by quickly. The faces of the BT committee changed completely and recently merged with the website committee. But its mandate continues. We have aimed to present an interesting, current, informative newsletter. Hopefully, we met the challenge and the next editors will continue in an helpful, uplifting manner.

It has been a wonderful journey, especially writing Archives Alley. I walked with 'giants', so they say. I visualized Bill and Lois at Stepping Stones; I sipped coffee with Dr. Bob and Anne at their kitchen table on Ardmore Avenue; and walked with Sister Ignatia as she inspired suffering alcoholics at St. Thomas Hospital. All of them, Ebby, Richmond, Hank, Florence, Smitty, Sue, from the past, and our own models of inspiration, Tommy H., Lew C., Al S., Marg M., Bobby D., Tom M., and many more. It was a great gift in my sobriety to have had this opportunity.

As I leave this service position, I thank everyone with whom I have communicated in the publication of Better Times. It has been all and more.

Bernadette M.
King City Group

and happy people, who I was convinced had switched to other substances, were major deterrents for me to accept AA. Several months into sobriety, I was diagnosed with osteoarthritis in both knees. I was starting to deal with life without my emotional crutch...booze. My first sober Christmas was going fine until my then 82 year-old father decided to have some wine with dinner as I was trying to tell him I was an alcoholic. The painful irony here was my father was relapsing after many years of sobriety at the exact moment I was making an

attempt to tell him I was an alcoholic. The good news is my father sobered up again within a few weeks. He passed away...sober...at age 92 in August 2005. Members of my home AA group were at the funeral to support me. I am eternally grateful to them. What's next? With continued love and support from those near me and a solid recovery program, I will celebrate 12 years of continuous sobriety in June 2008.

Murray J.
Former member of
Credit Valley Group

The G.S.O. Archives received more than 1,900 requests for information in 2007. One of the most frequently asked questions follows:

Q. What are the origins of the Serenity Prayer?

A. The debate over who wrote the Serenity Prayer has gone on for years and its origins are still somewhat murky. However, it seems most likely to have been written by Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, a well-known theologian who served for many years as Dean and Professor of Applied Christianity at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

Alcoholics Anonymous became aware of the Serenity Prayer in 1941, when it was discovered printed in the New York Tribune newspaper. Ruth Hock, A.A.'s first secretary and a nonalcoholic, was immediately taken with it. On June 12, 1941, Ruth wrote Henry S., a Washington, D.C.-based A.A. member and printer by profession, saying: "One of the boys up here got a clipping from a local newspaper which is so very much to the point and so much to their liking, that they have asked me to find out from you what it would cost to set it up on a small card, something like a visiting card, which can be carried in a wallet... here it is... would appreciate it if you would let me know right away."

Henry answered back immediately and enthusiastically: "...Your cards are on the way and my congratulations to the man who discovered that in the paper. I can't recall any sentence that packs quite the wallop that that does and during the day I've shown it to the A.A.'s that dropped in and in each case have been asked for copies. Incidentally, I am only a heel when I'm drunk, so naturally there could be no charge for anything of this nature."

'Markings' is a quarterly publication for A.A. archivists which can be accessed at www.aa.org.

Recent Medallions:

Gina B.	1	Place To Share	July 5
Glenda H.	20	Place To Share	July 5
Kurt M.	1	King City	July 7
John L.	1	East York	July 15
Bernie Z	1	New Anchor	July 17
Mark H.	5	Principles Before Personalities	July 20
Dave B	10	Pine Hills	July 21
Shannon S	1	Principles Before Personalities	July 27

Upcoming Medallions:

Tony A.	10	Church Street	Aug 2
Lise R	15	Islington	Aug 8
Jozef D.	1	Glenholme	Aug 4
Bill H.	1	Westmoreland	Aug 5
Heather B.	15	Golden Mile	Aug 6
Michelle R.	5	Principles Before Personalities	Aug 10
Mark T.	10	Half Century	Aug 10
Cathie D	5	Pine Hills	Aug 11
Mike G.	10	Rouge Valley Centenary	Aug 14
Paul G.	30	Golden Mile	Aug 20
David Z.	1	Rouge Valley Centenary	Aug 24
Dick J.	15	Golden Mile	Aug 27

New Meetings:

The Main Purpose Group (C) Thursdays 10am (EAST): 740 Broadview Ave, Broadview and Danforth subway. Big Book Study Format.

Meetings needing support

New Life Port Credit Mtg, Lion's Hall (Community Ctr), 20 Rosewood Ave, 1 Bldk E of Hurontario from the Lakeshore; Tuesday, Discussion Gr. 7pm, followed by an Open Mtg at 8:30 pm.

Meeting Changes:

Mount Royal- York Group Tues and Thurs (CENTRAL): correct address is Metropolitan United Church, 50 Queen St E., Queen and Bond St. Enter south door through parking lot (meeting in basement).

Isabella Crosstown Group Wed (CENTRAL): DISCONTINUED.

Deer Park Group Mon (O) (CENTRAL): has a NEW LOCATION at Holy Rosary Parish Hall, 354 St Clair Ave West at St Clair West Subway.

M.I.A.A. Wed (CENTRAL): meeting CANCELLED FOR THE SUMMER.

St. Michaels Hospital Meeting Tues (CENTRAL): DISCONTINUED.

Glen Everest Meeting Fridays 12:15 noon (EAST): DISCONTINUED.

Pine Hills Group Mon/Wed/Fri (EAST): correct address should be 200 McIntosh (not 20 McIntosh) at Sandown Avenue (1 block west of Midland off Kingston Road)

Danforth Group Discussion (C) Thursday 6:30 pm (EAST): Holy Name Church, 71 Gough Ave at Danforth Ave, west of Pape Ave. Meeting in basement. Open speaker meeting at 8 pm (Discussion meeting not held 1st Thurs, due to group business meeting).

Danforth Group (O) Thursday 8 p.m. - SAME ADDRESS AS ABOVE.

Markham Village Group (SUBURBAN NORTHWEST) will not be holding their regular Monday and Thursday meetings on Aug 11, 14, 18, 21. Meeting will recommence on Mon Aug 25 as usual.

Things we cannot change

Marilyn M. of the Place to Share Group passed away on June 20.

Betty (Kingsway/Erin Mills/Credit Valley) passed away on June 22.

Suzanne V. of the King City Group passed away on June 23. George C. of the Miracle Group passed away on July 9.

Events:

The Lawrence Plaza Group at St. Leonard's Church, 25 Wanless Avenue (2 Blocks North of Yonge & Lawrence) will be celebrating 50 years on August 10. The group was founded August 10, 1958.

<p>GREATER TORONTO AREA INTERGROUP MONTHLY BOARDROOM BOOKINGS FOR SUB-COMMITTEES *Subcommittees meet at the Intergroup Office (234 Eglinton Ave E, Suite 202)</p>	
<p>CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES: Every first Monday of the month at 7 pm</p> <p>ARCHIVES: Every second Friday of the month at 7:00 pm</p> <p>WEBSITE and Better Times NEWSLETTER: Every second Saturday of the month at 1 pm</p> <p>COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (CPC): Every second Monday of the month at 7 pm</p> <p>ACCESS ABILITY: Every third Sunday of the month at 11 am</p> <p>PHONE TRAINING SESSION: Every third Sunday of the month at 1:30 pm</p> <p>PUBLIC INFORMATION: Every third Monday of the month at 7:30 pm</p> <p>TREATMENT FACILITIES: Every third Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm</p>	<p>INFORMATION AA DAY: Every last Monday at 7:30 pm</p> <p>TWELFTH STEP: Every last Friday of the month at 6:30 pm</p> <p>FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE*: Second-last Tuesday of the month at 4:30 pm (*non-committee members: attendance by appointment only)</p> <p>OPERATING COMMITTEE*: Second-last Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm (*non-committee members: attendance by appointment only)</p> <p>THE MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING of GTA INTERGROUP is held on the last Tuesday of the month at 8 pm at the Glebe Road United Church - 20 Glebe Rd E, off Yonge St. (near Davisville subway) Phone 234 to ensure the meeting you want to attend isn't cancelled during any particular month...</p>

East Toronto Archives Breakfast Recap

It was a celebration of the past, the present, and the future!

On Sunday, May 25, 2008, 117 AA members sat down for fellowship and food at the third annual East Toronto Archives Breakfast held at Ellas Restaurant in Scarborough. This event was conceived as a means of increasing awareness of the history of Alcoholics Anonymous in Districts 18 and 22, and foster fellowship and unity among the members of both districts as we celebrate our common heritage in East Toronto.

If that sounds a little dry, let's reduce it to a simple equation: Fellowship + Service + AA Members = FUN!

This is the third year I've had the privilege of sitting at the door taking tickets, and as I looked around the room, I could feel, as always, the love and sense of belonging – the same feeling I have experienced many times since I first came through the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous. Contrast this happy

scene with memories of the haunting loneliness of Sundays past. The chatter and laughter gave truth to the vital importance of fellowship within AA, while displays of Grapevine and Archival material added interest for those who wished to browse through our past.

Following breakfast, everyone settled in to listen to our two speakers. First up was Ruth P. of the Pine Hills Group who shared some of the history of her group with us and spoke movingly about the effects of alcoholism within the family. Al R. of the Fellowship Group followed with more interesting history of earlier times including several amusing stories – stories that were undoubtedly more enjoyable in the telling than in the living!

The lively sobriety countdown is always a highlight of the East Toronto Archives Breakfast. This year, Joe C. "won" a copy of *Best of the Grapevine Set (I, II, and III)* for his fifty-three years of sobriety while two

OVERHEARD AT A MEETING!

WHY ARE YOU SQUIRMING IN YOUR SEAT?

THE MIND CAN ONLY ABSORB WHAT THE BUM CAN STAND!



IDEA submitted by EILEEN B.

newcomers with one month of sobriety were presented with copies of the *Big Book*.

You may be asking, "Why have an Archives Breakfast?"

Well, we have already talked about how much fun we have at such events. However it's also a reminder "of how far we have come. Knowledge of our past helps ensure that our original message of recovery, unity and service will continue undiluted and true." (*A.A. Archives Pamphlet*)

Ed H.

Twelve Step Group

June '08 Intergroup Report

Finance Report: Gregg W. (Rox Glen Trad.)

No discrepancies, we are on track. Copies for 2007 year end report distributed and are available via email. FC is looking for 2 new members (accounting/business experience preferred). Send service/resumes c/o Operating Ctte., to 234.

Subcommittee Reports ad hoc Ctte.: Lynn B. (City Central)

History of committee was described. i.e. directed to look at other Intergroups and how they are run. A position paper (2006) was presented and 3 recommendations were approved. Changes in Procedures & Guidelines (P & G) were presented to the

floor to improve communications. There are 18 subcommittees. The hope is to streamline this requiring less people.

Another general meeting will be held to discuss issues on July 15, 8pm at Glebe Rd. United.

Access Ability: Donna M. (Sunnyside)

Kingston Assembly was good. *Mayfest* (cultural festival for the Deaf) was successful and Info AA Day May 31 had good attendance. *People in Motion* in early June was a large, successful event. Next will be *District 22 Service Day* on Sep. 13. There are 2 new members and we always welcome more help. Next Mtg. July 20 at 234.

Archives: Maire O. (Leslie) *Archives Breakfast* will be Sun, Nov. 2 at Oasis Convention Centre. Speakers will be Ben W. (Thorncliffe Pk.) and Kay H. (55

years, Thornhill). *East Toronto Archives Bkft.* was great success. Archives is in process of moving from 5th floor at 234 to 2nd floor back of Literature Dept. Sept. 11, 12 & 13 will be *National Archives Workshop* in Niagara Falls USA. Next mtg. Fri. July 11 at 7pm.

Twelfth Step Ctte. : Jim O. (Markland Wood)

Volunteers need to call and let us know they cannot make their shifts. There is a great need for people to help out both on phones and 12th step calls. Next mtg. Fri July 25 at 6:30pm at 234.

Website/Better Times: Marvyn W. (Streetsville Action) – *Beginners Guide to General Service Insert* is in July Issue and the Website. Lots of changes on the committee. Website has also been updated.

We will be needing a new Webmaster as of October and a Chairperson as of December. Next Mtg. Sat. July 12 at 1pm at 234.

Reception: 46 groups represented tonight.

Unfinished Business

Bryan W., not present (Rox Glen Trad.) Motion: Exec. Secretary needs to be non-alcoholic. To be rolled over to next meeting.

New Business

Discussion occurred regarding reports by committees ie length of presentation time.

Motion: Wes B. (Long Branch) Any change from the published Agenda (for Intergroup Mtg.) be made by a vote from the floor. The motion passed.

Next Gen. Mtg. Tues. July 29 at 8PM Glebe Rd. (*a full copy of minutes is available at aatoronto.org)