

• Contents •

**Information AA Day Celebrates 30 Years..... 1**  
**12th Step Committee Needs Your Help! ..... 1**  
**Port Dover Group 60th Anniversary ..... 2**  
**Spirit of Rotation ..... 2**  
**The 12 Traditions ..... 2**  
**Have You Heard ..... 3**  
**Archives Alley ..... 3**  
**This Month's Cartoon ..... 4**  
**Intergroup Report ..... 4**  
**AA Service Centre..... 4**

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 Telephone: 416-487-5591 Fax: 416-487-5855 TTY: 416-487-5062  
 Email: [bettertimes@aatoronto.org](mailto:bettertimes@aatoronto.org)  
 Web: [aatoronto.org/btimes.html](http://aatoronto.org/btimes.html)

**Editorial Ctte:** Elaine G. (Editor), Marrey P. (Editor.), David N. (Cartoonist), Jim H. (Circ.), Ciara C. (Desktop), Lynn W. (HYH). 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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## — Information AA Day Celebrates 30 Years —

On May 3rd, 1980, the first Information A.A. Day was arranged. It had but one purpose, to allow members of Intergroup and General Service to co-mingle and communicate, to share their problems and their actual functions.” (*50 Years of AA in Ontario*, p.115). Tom H. District Committee Member (DCM) for Toronto City East was the 1st Chairperson and Wilf O’G. was the Delegate, Panel 29 (1979-80) for Area 83 Eastern Ontario International. Over the years it has been intended that the chairpersons of the Committee alternate between GTA Intergroup and General Service. The one purpose of ‘co-mingling and communicating’ has been expanded to include receiving a report on the Annual General Service Conference from the Delegate for Eastern Ontario Area 83 International.

The format of the early years has been maintained. The day opens with an early-bird speaker — usually someone with a strong background in service to Alcoholics Anonymous from outside the group, whether that person is with the GTA Intergroup or from General Service in the Districts. The remainder of the day is organized around information sharing about the various sub-committees — Archives, Accessibility, Correction Facilities (CF), Cooperation with the

Professional Community (CPC), Public Information (PI), Treatment Facilities (TF), and Self-Support. In the earlier years these sessions ran consecutively because there were fewer committees, but over time there has been a need to ‘double-up’ to cover all the areas where AA carries the message. The subcommittees set up literature tables in the lunch room and everyone gets an opportunity to look at the many ways we work to reach the still suffering alcoholic.

In the afternoon, after a great morning of fellowship, sharing and a tremendous pot luck lunch, everyone settles in to listen to our afternoon speakers. Traditionally, a staff member from the General Service Office (GSO) shares their story and view from our office. This is followed by a rich presentation from the Area 83 delegate who gives a synopsis of all the ways in which our 93 North American delegates have made decisions on a myriad set of issues related to all the sub-committees, literature, and finance. Please join us on Saturday, May 30th, 2009 at Lansing, United Church, 49 Bogart Avenue. Doors open at 8:30 a.m. and tickets are \$5.00 which includes a potluck lunch. We look forward to seeing you there!

## Toronto Intergroup 12th Step Committee Needs Your Help!

As a result of a 2006 AA GTA survey, it was felt that the primary purpose of Intergroup was to act as a communications centre to the still suffering alcoholic and the public at large. Twelve Step calls are the cornerstone upon which alcoholic recovery depends. They are based on the process that was established by Dr. Bob & Bill W. many years ago where a recovering alcoholic works with the still suffering alcoholic. When a suffering alcoholic calls in, the telephone greeter should then phone a member of AA on the 12 Step volunteer list in the caller’s area and request that 12 Stepper, in turn, phone the caller to set up a face-to-face meeting.

Unfortunately, most callers today are directed to meetings versus meeting one-on-one with a recovering alcoholic. Why is this happening? Because Toronto Intergroup’s once active 12 step caller list of over 6,000 members has dwindled to about 180 members, making it difficult, if not impossible to set up 12 step calls now. Not only are we short-changing the still suffering alcoholic but we are also shortchanging our existing members.

### What can you do to help?

- *Rebuild the member database to its original numbers*

The goal is to get as much contact information from the GTA AA Fellowship as possible so we can keep you

informed as to the goings on at Intergroup and also as a way of contacting you if you wish to volunteer at Intergroup. We need to know who you are. Please don’t feel pressured to give your full name if you’re not comfortable... an alias/nickname will do just fine. However, we do need your mailing address, home, cell phone numbers and email addresses to update our records.

We have provided your Intergroup Reps with an AA Volunteer Form as a means for collecting this data. Please rest assured that you will NOT be contacted by Intergroup for either gratitude donations or volunteering unless you specifically request we do so.

- *Upgrade the phone system*
- *12 Step Training Sessions*

This is the first step towards restoring Our 12 Step Call Program to its former glory. With an updated database, improved telecommunications system and a well trained and easily reachable group of AA 12 Steppers, we can only succeed. Please fill in your contact information on the AA Volunteer Forms provided to your group’s Intergroup Rep. If no forms are available, then please fax or email us your information at [twelfthstep@aatoronto.org](mailto:twelfthstep@aatoronto.org) Fax: 416-487-5855. Please send us your information by May 15, 2009. Thank you for your cooperation.

# Port Dover Group Anniversary: 60 Years One Day at a Time

Harry G. is 89 years old and lives in the small lakeside town of Port Dover, Ontario. He is a ship builder by trade and is to this day actively working in his shipyard. Harry has been a member of AA since 1946. Harry started the Port Dover Group on May 18th, 1949. Our group is celebrating 60 years on May 18, 2009. Harry will be celebrating 63 years of sobriety on May 17, 2009 at Grace United Church.

*Harry we are very grateful that you are still an active member of our group. Tell us a bit about what it was like getting sober in 1946.*

**Harry:** We didn't have any literature; all we had was one another. The first thing I saw was a little thing that said Easy Does It. On the desk, there was a book with a yellow and orange cover on it and it said Alcoholics Anonymous. Women sat on one side and the men on the other; the wives all come to the meetings with their husbands. Lots of food, a whole big counter full of food; you'd think there was a party going on.

*Did you have to travel a lot to go to meetings?*

**Harry:** Leamington was my home group, 155 miles each way. Then I found out that there was a meeting in Simcoe, 8 miles away. They started in January and I started in May. So we started going to Simcoe. Simcoe decided that Dover

should have a group. So they come to Dover and got a hold of the council, head of the churches, and then they went to every hotel and on every table they put a "Who Me" card. The town gave them the council chamber, behind the town hall and 80 people showed up the first night. So we got a group, there was 4 of us. We got a ten cent scribbler and a nickel pencil and we were in business. They gave us the Red Cross room in the town hall. I had a briefcase with some stuff in, we sent to New York and they sent us up a bunch of stuff. We were affiliated with New York. We had this group and we went to every place you could think of; we went to Guelph, Buffalo to a big conference up there. Met people there, and those people from Buffalo started coming to our meetings, to our anniversaries. Brantford would come down, and we would fill the hall on an anniversary, so it just got better and better.

So we're in the Red Cross room, well they need the room, but there's another room up on the next floor, the band room, so up we go to the band room. Then all at once, we got an invitation to come to the Grace United Church. They made room for us in the basement; been there ever since.

*How does it make you feel that Port Dover is celebrating 60 years, and it started with you?*

**Harry:** Well, it's only a day at a time.

*How did you spread the word about the AA movement in your town?*

**Harry:** We didn't have to, it was attraction.

*The Port Dover Group is still very strong today and has approximately 60 members. Why do you think our group has been able to survive all the changes that have taken place over the years?*

**Harry:** It just happens and the doors are kept open.

*How do you feel Harry, when you walk into the meeting these days and see so many happy faces?*

**Harry:** I see 25 to 30 people. I feel proud. I am an AA person, very simple. I love my life and I love AA. It works!

*We want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for sharing some history about our group. It has been an honour to have this time to talk with you.*

## Spirit of Rotation

In accepting an AA service commitment, We proceed through three stages:

- a) we feel honoured and privileged at the opportunity to serve the AA fellowship;
- b) we strive to work the position honestly, in the best interests of the General Service, GTA Intergroup, the Home Group and, most importantly, the individual AA member;
- c) we rotate out of each service position to enable other AA members an equal opportunity to serve.

The Better Times/Website committee allowed this Alcoholic the opportunity to personally learn all areas of AA service; to capture the voices of the GTA AA fellowship in print (Better Times) and on-line ([www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org)) and to develop new initiatives: the *Beginners Guide to Intergroup*, the *Beginners Guide to General Service*, the *Things We Can Not Change Memorial Insert*, and implementing new features online at [www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org).

In the Spirit of Rotation, a Committee Chair's vision is that the committee will continue to grow, as we are taught that we strive for progress not perfection.

This Past Chair's vision has grown immediately, as the BT/Website Committee is developing

new initiatives that have, and will, greatly impact and benefit the entire GTA fellowship. At the 2009 Ontario Regional Conference, Better Times had two firsts: the ORC Weekend Schedule was printed in the March 2009 issue and the April 2009 monthly issue was released on the opening day of the conference.

The webmasters have created a map meeting locator /revised meeting planner for the still suffering alcoholic, which is our primary purpose. Great job!

This alcoholic would like to thank the GTA Intergroup for showing confidence in my ability to chair the Better Times/Website Committee over the past two years. It will also be an honour and privilege to serve as the appointed incoming 2010 Information AA Day Chair.

Please stop by and say hello at the 2009 Info AA Day, *Sharing Service with Gratitude*, at Lansing United Church, 49 Bogert Ave (Sheppard & Yonge) on Saturday May 30th from 8:30am to 4:30pm. We welcome your suggestions and ideas! Yours In Service,

**Marvyn W.,  
Past Chair BT/Website Committee,  
Incoming 2010 Information AA Day Chair**

## New Better Times Feature: The Twelve Traditions

Starting in our July Issue, a feature article based on The AA Twelve Traditions will be a part of each Better Times issue.

Every month, the Better Times will provide a forum to discuss the numeric tradition which corresponds to the numeric month, ie in January we will feature Tradition One, in February we will feature Tradition Two, etc.

Everyone is encouraged to submit their experience, strength and hope concerning the Twelve Traditions, though we ask that you keep your comments brief (150-200 words in length). We suggest drawing from one meaningful experience where the tradition played a role. All submissions will be considered, however, Better Times reserves the right to decide which articles will be published each month.

If you are interested in contributing to this new feature, ensure that your responses are submitted to [bettertimes@aatoronto.org](mailto:bettertimes@aatoronto.org) by the 10th day of the month.

We look forward to getting your responses concerning Tradition Seven – *Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting for July Better Times.*

# haveyouheard

## Recent Medallions:

Paul McN.	30	Unionville Group	April 1
Rick P.	5	Principles Before Pers.	April 4
David B.	1	Lakeshore Group	April 5
Andy B-H.	20	Bellamy	April 6
Paul C.	5	East York Group	April 7
JoAnne L.	5	Unionville Group	April 8
Ted B.	1	Golden Mile Group	April 15
Steve E.	1	Unionville Group	April 15
Helen MacC.	10	Anniversary	April 16
Stanley G.	1	Markland Wood	April 17
Manuel T.	5	Markland Wood	April 17
Johanne D.	5	Aurora Group	April 26
Lynn H.	5	Aurora Group	April 26
Darren B.	1	Unionville	April 29

## Upcoming Medallions:

Carolina C.	15	Bellamy	May 4
Sally W.	1	New Anchor Group	May 7
Wendy B.	1	Markland Wood	May 8
Jennifer C.	5	Thornhill	May 13
Andrew R.	1	Markland Wood	May 20
Rick McC.	20	Six Point's Group	May 25

## Meeting Changes:

**Restoration and Recovery Group** (O) Fridays (SUBURBAN WEST): As of May 1st, meeting time will be 8:00 pm.

**973 Group** (C) (CENTRAL): Meeting changed to Thursday at 7:30 pm and is a service meeting.

**Friendly Group** (C) Monday/Wednesday (WEST): Effective May 1, 2009 meeting time will change to 8pm.

**Midtown Group** (O/C) Sunday 8:30pm/ Monday 8pm (CENTRAL): Please note we have moved to our new location (Trinity St. Pauls Church), day and time.

**Principles Before Personalities** (O) Sundays 8pm (EAST): As of May 3rd, moving to Corpus Christi Catholic Church, 16 Lockwood Rd (corner of Lockwood & Queen St E). Enter via

2nd set of doors on east side.

## DISCONTINUED MEETINGS

**As Bill Sees It** (C) Tuesday 7pm (EAST)

**Start Again** (C) Tuesday 7pm (SUBURBAN NORTH)

**Oakville Odyssey** (C) Mondays 7pm (SUBURBAN WEST)

## NEW MEETINGS

**Silverbirch Group** (C) Fridays 7pm (East): New Big Book Discussion, St. John's Norway Church, 470 Woodbine Ave.

**Top of the Stairs** (C) Friday 12pm (EAST): Meeting at Alano Broadview Club, 740 Broadview Ave. 12 & 12 Study.

**Joy of Living** (C) Friday 12:30pm (EAST): Meeting at the Oasis Club, 921 Danforth Avenue. 12 & 12 Discussion.

**Saturday Night Main St.** (O) Saturday 8pm (EAST): Meeting at Hope United Church, 2550 Danforth Avenue.

**Great Fact Discussion** (C) Tuesday 8pm (CENTRAL): Meeting at Trinity St. Pauls Church, 427 Bloor St West. This is a men's discussion meeting.

**Eagle Manor** (O) Monday 1pm (NORTHWEST): Meeting held at Eagle Manor Seniors Centre, 1901 Weston Road, in the sun room. This is a service meeting.

**Cornerstone Discussion** (C) Friday 8pm (SUBURBAN NORTH): Meeting at Cornerstone Community Church, 180 Nashville Road, Kleinburg. 12 Step discussion.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Alateen Meeting** Sundays 5 pm (CENTRAL): O.I.S.E. Bldg., 252 Bloor St. W., east of St. George (subway) on the 8th floor. Alateen meetings are for teenagers (11 to 21 approx.) who have been affected by alcoholism (from family members).

**Kingsway Group** celebrating their group anniversary Wed. May 13th at 8:30pm at Humber Valley United Church. All

are welcome.

**U of T group** celebrating 20 years of service on June 21st, 2009! Join us to celebrate at our joint meeting with the St. George Alateen group, on Sunday June 21st 2009 at 5:00pm. OISE Building, 8th floor in Room 8-280.

**44th Annual Blossom Time Convention:** will be held in Niagara Falls, Ontario on May 1st - 3rd, 2009 (Crowne Plaza Hotel). This year's theme is Let's Spring into Recovery. For more information, go to [www.blossomtimeconvention.com](http://www.blossomtimeconvention.com)

**Chatham-Kent's 23rd AA One-Day Round-Up:** Country View Golf Course, Ungah, Ontario, May 2nd, 2009, Doors Open at 1:00pm. For more information review the event flyer online at [www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org)

**51st International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous** will be held in Atlanta, Georgia May 21st - 24th. For more information visit [www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org)

**First Annual Spring Fling Convention** will be held May 22 - 24 in St. Louis, Missouri. For more information review the event flyer online at [www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org)

**4th East Toronto Archives Breakfast:** Sunday May 24th at Embers, 781 Warden Ave. (south of Eglinton) Tickets are \$15, available until May 15th from District 18 & 22 GSR's.

**Circle of Hope Roundup** will be held May 29 - 31 in Reading, PA. For more info see event flyer at [www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org)

**Info AA Day:** will be Sat. May 30 at Lansing United Church, 49 Bogert Ave, Willowdale, from 8:30 - 4:30. Registration is \$5.

**Steps to Freedom:** 39th Central West Ontario Convention Aug. 7-9. Participation by Al-Anon on Aug. 8th. University of Guelph Campus. Panel discussions, talkathon, sobriety

# archivesalley: Metropolitan United Church

[Continued from March 2009 issue]

Prior to the availability of A.A. in Ontario, many alcoholics made efforts to lead sober lives. A good example is the Toronto Magistrate who found sobriety in 1938 through total association with the Oxford Group. After sobering up, he maintained a room near his office where he met alcoholics and succeeded in helping some quit drinking. Though unaware of A.A. during his initial years of sobriety, the Judge learned a lot about it after he attended the meetings at



the Little Denmark Restaurant and Metropolitan United Church House. He joined A.A. from that first meeting and his efforts on behalf of A.A. and alcoholics became legendary and helped establish A.A. throughout the province. Another example was the flour merchant who, by 1940, had succeeded in drinking away his business. He was one of many helped by the judge, and in February 1942, he sobered up for good, later becoming one of A.A.'s initial members. He and many others rendered yeoman service to A.A., handling correspondence when the clubroom at 160 Bloor St. East, Toronto, was swamped with enquiries from across Canada and referrals sent in from A.A. New York. Entrance to the Metropolitan United Church House where the meetings were held after moving from Little Denmark Restaurant. The Reverend Percy Price was very helpful at this stage of the A.A. movement in Toronto. The first meeting here was Thursday January 1943. Meetings were to continue off and on over the years right up to the present.

Maire O'B, GTA Intergroup Archivist

## Coming Soon... AA Service Centre

The Better Times Committee has decided to introduce a regular monthly feature focussing on AA service work. Each month, some aspect of service work will be discussed. Some suggested topics are getting started in service, growth in service, how service work has helped you, and what service work is right for you (the list is limited only by your imagination!). To get started, Better Times co-editors will solicit responses from their area group members, from Intergroup committee members and reps, as well as from District reps. Once the ball's rolling, we hope that you, the reader, will be inspired to share your comments – 200 - 300 words in length to [bettertimes@atoronto.org](mailto:bettertimes@atoronto.org). Again, all submissions will be considered but Better Times reserves the right to select submissions for print. Please have your submissions into us by the 10th of each month. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

### GREATER TORONTO AREA INTERGROUP MONTHLY BOARDROOM BOOKINGS FOR SUB-COMMITTEES

**Correctional Facilities:** 1st Mon. at 7:30 pm

**Self-Support:** 1st Wed. at 7 pm

**Archives:** 2nd Fri. of the month at 7 pm

**Website & Better Times Newsletter:**  
2nd Sat. of the month at 1 pm

**Cooperation with the  
Professional Community (CPC):**  
2nd Mon. of the month at 7 pm

**Access Ability:** 3rd Sun. at 11 am

**Phone Training:** 3rd Sun. at 1:30 pm

**Public Info:** 3rd Mon. at 7:30 pm

**Treatment Facilities:** 3rd Thurs. at 7:30 pm

**Info AA Day:** Last Mon. at 7:30 pm

**Twelfth Step:** Last Fri. at 6:30 pm

**Finance Subcommittee\*:**

Second-last Tuesday at 4:30 pm

**Operating Committee\*:**

Second-last Tuesday 7:30 pm

**Monthly General Meeting of GTA  
Intergroup** is held on the last Tues. of the  
month at 8pm at the Glebe Road United  
Church – 20 Glebe Rd E, off Yonge St.

To ensure that the meeting you want isn't  
cancelled, please phone the office at 234.

(\*non-committee members: attendance  
by appointment only)

All Subcommittees meet at the Intergroup Office: 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 202

## March '09: Intergroup Report

**Chairperson's Opening Remarks:** Bill M. (Westmoreland) – Better Times/ Website Committee needs a Chairperson. Elections for the Operating Committee will be held at April's General Meeting.

**Collection of the 7th Tradition:** \$141.60.

**Finance Report:** Bruce L. (Back to Basics), Finance Chair – Donations for February 09 were on budget and year-to-date donations were over budget, both due to greater than expected group donations. Net Income for February was \$4,066 and year-to-date \$12,166, both over budget due mainly to the deferral of the phone system purchase. Bruce also reported that the Prudent Reserve balance is \$134,300 and is based on 6 months of operating costs. These monies are invested with RBC in provincial government bonds and Bank of Nova Scotia preferred shares.

### SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

**Access Ability:** Donna M. (Sunnyside), Chairperson – Committee had a table at the ORC; gave away a Big Book in Braille, donated by the Leaside Men's Meeting. Committee has two new volunteers – one is versed in American Sign Language. Next mtg: Sun. Apr. 19 at 11 am at 234.

**Archives:** Glenn G. (East York), OC Liaison – Committee currently drafting a receiving policy. We are co-hosting the 4th annual Area 83 Archives Workshop this Sat. The committee had a display at the ORC, and look forward to participating in Info AA Day. The 25th Annual Archives Breakfast will be held Sunday Nov. 8. Next mtg: Fri. Apr. 17 at 7 pm at 234.

**Correction:** Chair Phil G. sent the following report – The March GTACC meeting was attended by more new District Chairs and Alternates from D22 and D12. Murray O. of D18 reported District is purchasing soft covered 12&12's and Daily Reflections for "The Don" jail. The ORC Corrections Info Table was well staffed by our Committee and we gathered some potential volunteers' names and numbers. Next meeting: Mon. Apr. 6 at 7:30 pm at 234.

**CPC:** Peter B. (Beaches), Chairperson – Committee had a table at the ORC; all went well. Also attended the Area Assembly, where he received a lot of good feedback and ideas. This committee will be active in giving presentations/holding meetings with OPSEU in late April. Next mtg: Mon. Apr. 13 at 7 pm at 234.

**Info AA Day:** Jim A. (Leslie), Committee member – Info AA Day will take place on Sat., May 30 2009 at the Lansing United Church. Theme of the event is 'Service with Gratitude'. Event will feature a GSO Speaker, Mary D. (CPC), and an address from our Area 83 Delegate. Tickets: \$5, includes potluck lunch, and are available at IG meeting and through GSRs. Next meeting: Mon. Apr. 27 at 7:30 pm at 234.

**Public Information:** No report. Next mtg: Mon. Apr. 20 at 7:30 pm at 234. Bill R. (Bellamy) asked the Operating Committee why there hasn't been a P.I. report for some time; the OC will look into this.

**Reception:** Rick M. (Six Points), OC Liaison – 64 reps were present at meeting.

**Website/Newsletter:** Brian T. (Twelve Traditions), Committee member – A meeting map system in place on the site, also many links for feedback from members. New Webmaster is needed. Resumes to 234. Next mtg: Sat. Apr. 4 at 1 pm at

234.

**Transition Committee:** Dee T. (Streetsville), Chairperson – At March meeting, Dee reported that the committee went through all the Subcommittee pages/ responsibilities and a full report will be available to the Floor in 2 to 3 months. Next mtg: Sat. Apr. 18 at 3 pm at 234.

### NEW BUSINESS

**Twelfth Step Committee Presentation:** Harold Y. (Port Credit), Twelfth Step Committee – Harold presented the committee's plan outlining proposed new phone system for 234 and 12-Step Volunteer Initiative, based on six month's research. To deal with outdated phone system and member database, committee proposed: purchase a new phone system; update current database; educate GTA AA Fellowship on the importance of working with the still suffering alcoholic; improve training for phone greeters and hold Workshops on 12-step calls. New phone system provides remote call-forwarding system, enabling 24 hour phone service. New computer database enables the system to autodial by postal code, connecting a 12-step volunteer to a caller quickly and efficiently. Phone system to be installed May 15/09 at a cost of \$10,000; new database to be ready for June 1; 12-step volunteer training to be completed by Oct. 1/09. Harold stressed the importance of having group reps circulate the 5 page AA Volunteer Form (provided to reps at this meeting) to recruit new volunteers and to get accurate 12-step volunteer information. Form is to be submitted to 234 no later than May 15th. Next mtg: Fri. Apr. 24 at 7 pm at 234.

**Next General Meeting:** Tuesday, April 28 at 8 pm at Glebe Rd. United Church.

**Election for new Operating Committee Chairperson & 3 new junior members** will be held then.

