

BETTER TIMES

Produced for A.A. members, by A.A. members in the GTA



Step One.

A journey of a thousand steps begins with one.

Step One: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.

Alcoholics
Anonymous

JANUARY 2023

OORC 2023

KEEP COMING BACK!

IN-PERSON EVENT! MARCH 17-19, 2023

INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS INCLUDE

Craig F. - Glasgow, Scotland (Banquet Speaker)

America K. - Los Angeles / Paul G. - Cleveland

Tina A. - Los Angeles / Christina G. - Cleveland

Al-Anon Keynote Speaker David E. - Chicago



Visit aaorc.ca today to register and book your room at Sheraton Toronto

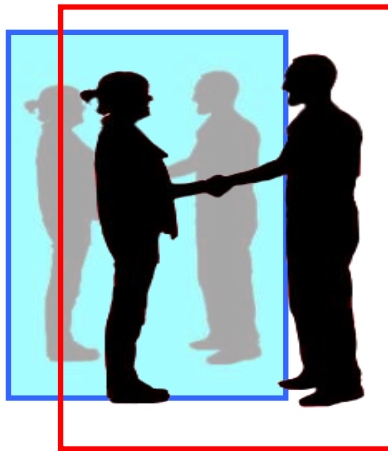
BETTER TIMES / 2

Sheraton Centre
Toronto Hotel
123 Queen St. West,
Toronto, ON

Assistant Greeter Coordinator AA Intergroup

[A.A. Intergroup](#) is fortunate enough to have a supportive team of greeters, data entry and technical volunteers and a Greeter Coordinator who, working together, ensure the smooth operation of the [A.A. Help Lines](#).

The Greeter Coordinator position is now open to the addition of one or two more assistants to work on a rotating basis. The responsibility of the Assistant Greeter Coordinator is to take infrequent calls from greeters who may wish to make changes to their assignments, report these changes to the Greeter Coordinator or to the data entry team. Access to a computer, tablet and/or smartphone, knowledge of Microsoft Office programs (Word / Excel), as well as Google Drive and Gmail are a definite asset. What a great way to do service! Those interested in this new opportunity are asked to contact the undersigned by email.



Yours in Love and Service,
Lise R., Greeter Coordinator
lise.srodrigue@gmail.com

**PHONE GREETERS
ARE NEEDED**

24/7/365

Call
416-487-5591

Or sign up for a
shift by emailing
12step@aatoronto.org

Medallions

NAME	YEARS	GROUP	DRY DATE	CELEBRATION
Rick M	20	Parkway Group	Jan 1, 2003	Jan 2 @ 8 PM
Joe K.	40	Golden Mile Group	Jan 15, 1983	Jan 16 @ 7 PM
Gord S.	30	Golden Mile Group	Jan 25, 1993	Jan 30 @ 7 PM

Meeting Changes

This pandemic has brought about incredible changes and quickly; please don't forget that our website and meeting list updates are dependant on you letting us know [here](#)

Opinions expressed in *BETTER TIMES* are those of the authors and don't necessarily reflect those of the [GTA A.A. Intergroup](#). The Editor reserves the right to edit for length, content and grammar in accordance with layout and quality purposes. Submit group news, medallions, other event notices to: webmaster@aatoronto.org. Letters or articles to the Editor (200—500 words) for *BETTER TIMES* at bettertimes@aatoronto.org

Reflections

On Step

By Mary M.

"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable."

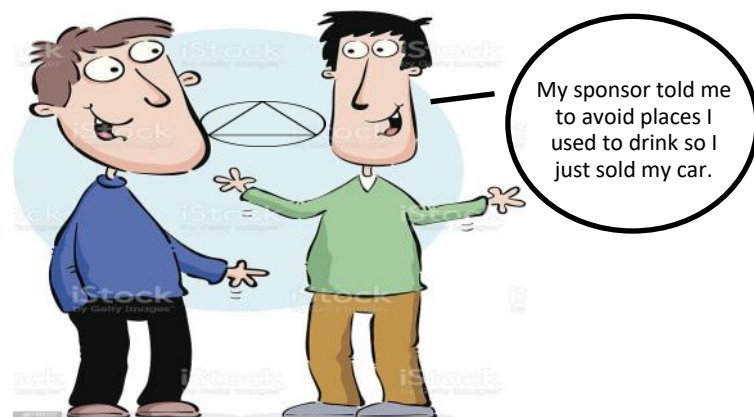
I wondered why I saw people with long term sobriety in closed discussion step one rooms. In the beginning it confused me: why would someone with so much sobriety want to be in a newcomer room? I asked because I wanted to learn. Long-timers told me that a newcomer is closest to their last drink and hearing them still in their suffering is a "sobering" reminder of how it was. It also helps long-timers to appreciate by the Grace of God how far they themselves have come. Alternately, for the newcomer, the long-timer is an example that this program works, one day at a time. We all start at that same teetering point, that place between deadly dreadful despair and wondering if there is another way.



The moment I started to think about the possibility of living differently things began to change. The change from days buying alcohol with money I didn't have and plummeting me deeper into debt. The change from living only to drink and working only to get the money to get the drink. This wasn't living. This was existing in a fog of the oblivion. The change from working whilst shaky hands preventing me from holding my coffee mug steadily, and unable to sign the documents required of me at my job. Living with the anxiety of what tax would come down next--my boss's constructive dismissal contracts, letters from my bank about my mortgage because I was using my mortgage money for alcohol. The change from my family turning away from me and the chaos that surround-

ed me. The change from living with the sadness of friends I'd lost long ago.

I understood I was powerless over alcohol. All I had to do was look at the state of affairs of my life and my relationships. That wasn't the hard part. The hard part was gaining power over the pain, that incredible pain that pushed me toward alcohol because I knew no other way. Oblivion was what I sought to erase the mistakes, the shame, the blame and the guilt. Not at the bottom of the first glass nor the bottom of the fifth bottle that night did I find the solution to the unmanageability of my life. But the conscious awareness that things had gotten bad enough for me was what it took to seek change. I had to admit these things to nobody but me. Once I got honest about me and what I was doing to myself and others is when I believe I took the first step toward sobriety and away from active alcoholism. I haven't looked back since, and I haven't felt the need to pick up a drink since that admission. I hope you don't either—**Mary M., Erin Mills Group**





The [Erin Mills Group](#) in Mississauga celebrates 45 years on January 2, 2023

On a typical Monday evening, when you enter the Erin Mills Group's meeting room, a boisterous party atmosphere surrounds you: people chatting, laughing, catching up with friends and welcoming newcomers. Like the wooden sign at the bottom of the stairs says: **You Are No Longer Alone**. One of the larger groups in Mississauga, Erin Mills' 100 plus members are clear proof that alcoholism has no boundaries and does not discriminate by age, gender, culture, profession or financial situation. People from all walks of life gather each week at Erin Mills United Church to share their sober journey.

Forty-five years ago, a group of letter carriers from an Oakville station started the group: Paul T., Ray T. and John H., as well as Bruce A.

shortly after, Moe D., Ivy C. and Herta S. joined as well. Despite initial opposition from some of the older members of the day ("we don't need another meeting in this area"), Erin Mills grew rather quickly into one of the most popular meetings in the west GTA. The first meeting was Monday January 2, 1978 with over 100 people in attendance. Paul T. chaired and the late Blake G. was the first speaker. Within a year, the group had about 50 members and has continued to thrive ever since.

The founders had foresight, as most of Erin Mills was still in the planning stages. Some homes existed south of Dundas but to the north it was mostly farmland and woodlots. E.P. Taylor and Canadian Equity and Development Limited planned and built the Erin Mills community starting with Erin Mills South in the early 1970's. Construction of Phase 2 Erin Mills West happened in the mid-1980's. Erin Mills Town Centre was the focal point for Phase 3 and opened in 1989. Population growth was rapid. In 2001 Erin Mills' population was 105,000, by 2016 it grew to over 122,000.

Christ Our King Lutheran Church on Dundas St. in Mississauga was the group's first home. The Church had just lost an Al-Anon meeting on Monday evening and that space was a welcome opportunity for our group. In addition to the Monday night open meeting, Linda J. saw a need for a closed meeting. She started a Saturday morning meeting in 1987, a [Big Book](#) discussion meeting around a ping-pong table. As attendance grew a second room was added, then a third room and ultimately a fourth room, each focusing on the Steps. John F., Carol G. and Jeff H. chaired the Steps meetings. The ping-pong table became known as the "Magic Ping-Pong Table" as so many people got sober around it! There was a good relationship with the church for many years, but with a change in elders difficulties arose. Conditions were imposed and a break-in at the church strained relations beyond reason. In

the summer of 1995, the group asked Linda J. and the late Peter M. to find a new location. The Erin Mills United Congregation had just built their new Church at Winston Churchill and the Collegeway in 1992. As part of their community outreach program, Erin Mills United Church welcomed our inquiry and David H. formalized our rental agreement within a week. The Group adopted its present location in 1996 and is grateful for a good relationship with the Church to this day.

From the beginning, there were fundamental principles that shaped the Erin Mills Group: service is a key responsibility. The Group has been a consistent financial supporter of the General Service Office, Toronto Inter-group and District. Group representatives attend Intergroup and District meetings and have chaired committees on both levels. Erin Mills' members have chaired and managed key functions of the Ontario Regional Conference and the Mississauga Fall Roundup.

Spirit of Rotation is an [A.A.](#) principle that keeps the group balanced. Key roles are rotated so that no one person becomes too influential; there is room for new ideas and fresh perspectives. The "Core does not overpower the Group". Resentments don't build up because everyone has a voice.

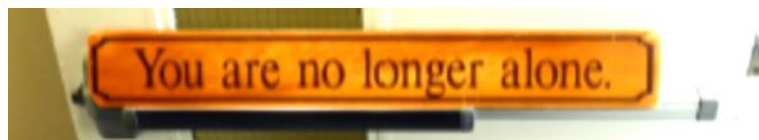
Respect: in the early days, many young women joined Erin Mills as it was a progressive group where they felt safe and welcome. Today our group is diverse and enjoys a richness of comradery. This value is championed by many long-term members, especially the late Jeanne B. Things don't go unnoticed; if someone is having a problem a member is sure to step up and try to help.

Group Assets: the wooden **You Are No Longer Alone** sign, made by one of the early members Bill B., is still in use today. The late Randy B. made the lectern; the late Jeanne B. made our white tablecloth displaying our group name and founding date. We were one of the early groups to invest in microphones and a sound system so that all could hear clearly.

Well Run: at our business meetings, it is obvious that operations and finances are well organized and open to discussion. A.A. traditions are respected, especially the Seventh with consistent contributions to A.A. beyond our own group.

The pandemic in early 2020 brought its share of challenges and new horizons for the fellowship as a whole and to our group. We would be remiss to not give special thanks to our own Jill B. and Jim Y. who stepped up to the challenge and propelled us to a virtual platform. Of this era, the term "Zoom baby" was born to acknowledge alcoholics who'd never attended a live meeting but for the Grace of God were able to attend virtually.

Our group's personality is respectful, social and energetic. Known for being speaker seekers, Erin Mills often draws speakers with excellent messages from afar. Sometimes the overwhelming message is simply the spirit in the room. We welcome all to share our experience, strength and hope.



—Mary M., Doug W. [Erin Mills Group](#)

RECOVERY FORMULAS

Recovery (Steps)
Unity (Traditions)
Service (Concepts)

1. **R** + **U** + **S** = CS (Contented Sobriety)
2. **R** + **U** - **S** = BS (Boring Sobriety)
3. **R** - **U** + **S** = BO (Burnt Out)
4. **R** - **U** - **S** = SS (Selfish Sobriety)
5. -**R** + **U** + **S** = CS (Crusading Sobriety)
6. -**R** - **U** + **S** = FS (Fanatical Sobriety)
7. -**R** + **U** - **S** = GA (Group Addicts)
8. -**R** - **U** - **S** = HD (Hopeless Drunk)

—Submitted By Deidre B, [Rexdale United](#)

Step 1 Prayer

"Dear Lord, Help me to see and admit that I am powerless over my alcoholism. Help me to understand how my alcoholism has led to unmanageability in my life. Help me this day to understand the true meaning of powerlessness. Remove from me all denial of my alcoholism. "

There Is A Solution

GROUPS BEGUN IN JANUARY

- Jan. 2, 1978- [Erin Mills Group](#)
- Jan. 3, 2016- [One Paragraph at a Time Group](#)
- Jan. 5, 1957- [Whitby Group](#)
- Jan. 5, 1980- [Saturday Noon Meeting](#)
- Jan. 5, 1983- [Rouge Valley Centenary Group](#)
- Jan. 6, 1968- [Six Points Group](#)
- Jan. 6, 1984- [Thornclyff Park Group](#)
- Jan. 14, 1958- [Streetsville Group](#)
- Jan. 14, 1959- [Twelve Steps Group](#)
- Jan. 22, 1980- [Midtown Group](#)
- Jan. 1972- [Parklawn Group](#)

Service?

Express interest in these service opportunities by sending an email. It's that simple to give back what has been so freely given to you and me!

[Information Technology \(IT\)](#) [Twelfth Step & Phone Greeters](#)
[Finance](#) [Operating \(formerly Executive\)](#)
[Winter Season Open House](#) [Communications](#)



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Darren G.	Editor



Jan. 1929.

On a trip to Manchester, VT, Bill W. called Ebby T. in Albany, NY. After an all-night drinking spree, they chartered a flight with Flyers Inc. in Albany to be the first flight to Manchester. They landed quite drunk (the pilot Ted Burke, as well) and disgraced themselves .

Jan. 1939

After writing of the [Big Book](#) began, it was evident that something more was needed in the form of a story or case history section. It would be living proof to identify with the distant reader in a way the text itself might not. Akron produced 18 stories thanks to the efforts of journalist Jim S. whose Big Book story is "The News Hawk." He interviewed the Akron members and wrote their stories (Dr. Bob wrote his own). Two stories came from Cleveland and one from non-alcoholic Marie B. whose Big Book story is "An Alcoholics Wife." NY members contributed ten stories that were edited by Bill W. and Hank P. over the contributor's protests. The story section was completed by late January.

Jan. 1945

Bill W. was called by Barry L., later author of "[Living Sober](#)," from the 41st St. Clubhouse in NY. Bill persuaded the group to take in a black man who was an ex-convict with bleach-blond hair, wearing women's clothing and makeup. The man also admitted to being a "dope fiend." When asked what to do about, Bill posed the question, "did you say he was a drunk?" When answered "yes" Bill replied, "Well I think that's all we can ask." The man was reported to have disappeared shortly after.

Jan. 1939

Prior to completion of the publication manuscript, NY member Jim B. whose Big Book story "A Vicious Cycle" suggested the phrases "God as we understand Him" and "Power greater than ourselves" be added to the steps and basic text. Bill later wrote "Those expressions, as we so well know today, proved lifesavers for many an alcoholic." Jim later moved to Philadelphia in February 1940 and was the [A.A.](#) founder of that city. He helped start A.A. in Baltimore.

Jan. 1940

Meeting attendance at Dr. Bob's house was so large that the Akron group moved their meetings to King's School in Akron, Ohio on Wednesday night (the first A.A. meeting not in a home). In late October 1939, Akron OH alcoholic members withdrew from the Oxford Group and held meetings in Dr. Bob's house. It was a very painful separation due to the great affection the members had toward Henry and Clarace Williams (Oxford meetings were held in their home).

Jan. 1951

The [Grapevine](#) published a memorial issue dedicated to Dr. Bob. It is a historical gem and it is available in facsimile today from the Grapevine. Grapevine Editor Al S. had much to do with issue. In an assessment of the founders in later years, Al stated, "Without Bill's drive, there wouldn't be any A.A. Without Dr. Bob's balance, who knows what it would be like?" Al was the member who drove Dr. Bob back and forth between Akron and Cleveland for the 1950 [International Convention](#).

OLD GTA MEETING BOOKS ARE NEEDED FOR THE GTA ARCHIVES

TO DONATE A.A. GTA ARCHIVAL ITEMS, PLEASE CONTACT THE

GTA ARCHIVIST EDDY G. at 416-536-7536

GROUP SPOTLIGHT

Central Women's' Meeting

Sunday 11:00 AM

707 Dundas St W, Toronto, ON

Celebrating 45 Years of the Sunday Central Women's Meeting on January 29, 2023!

It was the winter of 1977. The series, *Roots*, was on TV. *Star Wars* had just hit the theatres and Pierre Elliot Trudeau was Prime Minister. In Toronto, four women held the first meeting of the [Sunday Central Women's](#) group in a tavern at the corner of Yonge and Eglinton.

These four women, Carroll A., Beth C., Kathryn M. and Hilary N., came from two central groups—[St. Clement's](#) and [The Hill](#). There was a Sunday morning women's meeting in the west end which the women loved but it was far away, and they felt there were certainly enough women [A.A.](#) members at that time to support a mid-town women's meeting. They were right.

Our meetings moved to a two-story legion on Roselawn Ave just north of Eglinton Ave and just West of Yonge. It was a great location, four blocks up from the subway and almost across the street from The Good Bite and Fran's where the meeting after the meeting took place.

Our meeting was held in a bright room on the first floor, rectangular, with wooden floors. We sat with the door to the street and the southern windows at our back. The speaker was always enveloped in a soft, indirect light. Everyone looked beautiful.

There were a stalwart group of consistently attending members including the founders along with Pasha, Cec, Margaret, Ruth C., Arlene A., Myrna Q., and Mary Mac. In the mid-80's, these regulars were joined by Elsa, Deborah K., Valary C. and Lee-Anne M. It was a fantastic group of women—actresses, writers, artists, businesswomen,

teachers, and moms—a varied, loving, and inclusive group.

Around 1990 the legion sold their Roselawn house, and we had to find a new location. Carroll A. and Kathryn M. spearheaded the search. It proved difficult to find a location uptown and so the group

made a dramatic move to Scadding Court Community Centre at Bathurst and Dundas. It has been our welcoming host ever since. The location has proved perfect for the women at The Renascent Treatment Centre.

We are delighted to report that the meeting those four women started forty-five years ago continues to this day. Come and join us on **Sunday, January 29, 2023, at 11am** for a celebration of forty-five years of service! 707 Dundas St W, Toronto.

The entrance is on Bathurst St, just below Dundas St W. Please come and, if you know any women who were there in the beginning, please make sure they know where and when it is! We would love to see them.

For more information, please call Lee-Anne M. 416 419 1551 or Gari-Ellen B. 416 450 6224

