

THE JULY ISSUE

Summer is here, and for many of us, this season of barbecues, beach trips, and social gatherings can be difficult to navigate. In this issue, we explore ways in which we can enjoy a joyful, fulfilling, and alcohol free season.

SHARE YOUR STORY



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Submit Group News, medallions, event notices, letters to the editor and articles to Better Times by the 10th of the current month for publication in an upcoming issue by email to bettertimes@aatoronto.org

EMBRACING A SOBER SUMMER

Summer is a season synonymous with barbecues, beach trips, and social gatherings — activities often accompanied by alcohol. For those of us in recovery, these social settings can be difficult to navigate.

However, a sober summer doesn't have to be a boring summer. With some planning and a positive mindset, you can enjoy a fulfilling, alcohol-free season. Here are some practical tips to help you embrace a sober summer.

1. Engage in Sober Activities

The key to a fun and sober summer is finding activities that don't revolve around alcohol.

Here are some ideas:

- Outdoor Adventures: Hiking, biking, kayaking, or a day at the beach can be exhilarating and naturally fulfilling.
- Fitness Challenges: Sign up for a 5K run, join a local sports league, or start a new workout routine.
- Creative Pursuits: Take a photography class, learn to paint, or try your hand at gardening.
- Volunteer Work: Engaging in community service can provide a sense of purpose and accomplishment, while also filling your time with positive, alcohol-free activities.



2. Stay Plugged In

One of the most effective ways to ensure a sober summer is by leaning on our fellowship.

If you know you'll be attending events where alcohol is present, have a plan on how you will navigate the event. Talk to your sponsor or friends in recovery for tips on how to navigate spaces in which alcohol is served. They can help you come up with your own game plan on how to not get tempted to pick up a drink and stay sober.

Also, consider attending extra meetings or connecting more frequently with a sponsor or friend(s) in recovery during the summer months.

3. Mindful Participation at Social Events

When attending social events, plan ahead and practice mindfulness.

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REDISCOVERING THE JOY OF SUMMER

For years, my summers were a blur. I believed that life was a perpetual party filled with constant drinking.

I loved to attend anything that ended in the word "fest". I loved outdoor patios, weekends at the cottage and summer concerts - most of which I would not remember the next day. These were the ingredients of my supposed "fun".

Initially, drinking seemed innocent. Yet, it led me into dependence. As the parties escalated, so did my consumption.

Hangovers ruined many beautiful sunny days, but I couldn't stop drinking.

The moment I realized that this lifestyle was not enjoyment but just an illusion, I walked into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. It was there that I began to understand the true joy of living through working the steps.

At first, the thought of a sober summer seemed boring, and inconceivable. How could I possibly enjoy the season without alcohol?

But as I began my journey of recovery, I discovered that true happiness does not reside in the

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Embracing A Sober Summer - cont'd from pg. 1

If you are not sure whether there will be non-alcoholic beverage options, bring your own drinks. For example: sparkling water, mocktails, or soft drinks.

Keep a non-alcoholic drink in your hand to avoid being offered alcoholic beverages. This not only provides you with a safe drink option but also helps you feel included in the social aspect of toasting and sharing drinks.

If you feel uncomfortable at any point, have an exit strategy. It's perfectly okay to leave early or step outside for a breather. Remember, your sobriety comes first.

4. Seek Support

Sometimes, those around us may not understand our need for sobriety. Be vocal to your friends and family on your intentions of a sober summer.

If you feel comfortable, you can educate them about your journey of recovery and the importance of staying alcohol-free. This will not only garner their support but can also raise awareness about the challenges of recovery.

5. Create New Traditions

Instead of focusing on what you're missing, think about the new traditions you can create. Host a sober barbecue with delicious food and fun games, organize a beach volleyball tournament,

or have a movie night under the stars. By establishing new, positive traditions, you'll re-associate summer with joy and sobriety rather than alcohol.

7. Practice Self-Care

Summer can be a busy time, but it's essential to carve out moments for self-care.

Whether it's through meditation, yoga, reading, or simply taking a nap, ensure you're nurturing your mental health.

Take time to reflect on your journey and the progress you've made. Journaling can be a powerful tool for processing your experiences and emotions.

Self-care reduces stress, which can be a trigger for many in recovery.

8. Celebrate Your Sobriety

Celebrating milestones, whether it's another month of sobriety or successfully navigating a social event without drinking, reinforces your commitment.

Acknowledge your achievements, no matter how small. Treat yourself to something special as a reward - like a massage, a new book, or a day trip.

In conclusion, remember that sobriety is a journey, and each step forward is a victory worth celebrating. Here's to a healthy, happy, and sober summer!

-Alice N., Lakeshore Group

hotline and asked about setting up socials and events for members. The lady at the other end loved the idea but suggested I go to my home group and ask for the GTA intergroup contact. Since I am not a member of one particular group, I wrote directly to AA about my idea. Sadly, I have not heard back.

The idea would be to set up meetings in which members brainstorm ideas for social get togethers and events to break our isolation.

These events could be a football or baseball game. Or a community fair. It could even be something more rewarding like raising money for a charity. Anything that gets our minds away from alcohol.

Over the years, when I was plagued by worries, my family would tell me to get my mind off my troubles by helping someone less fortunate. There's always someone hurting and in need of our attention. To that, I'd like to add that helping doesn't have to be expensive. It could be as simple as buying someone a cup of coffee. A line from St. Francis of Assisi's prayer sums it up nicely - it's in the giving that we receive. And by doing so, we can hopefully get our minds off alcohol.

No matter what season it is, it's important we stay in contact with our local AA group, our sponsor, or whatever works to keep us sober.

-Ken M.

HAVING FUN AND STAYING SOBER

It can be a challenge for many of us to enjoy the hot days of summer without being tempted to pick up a drink. But it is possible to have and enjoy a sober summer.

To find something to do, start by googling "things to do in Toronto."

There are a ton of events held every summer in which we can participate in. For example, there are soccer games, baseball games and street festivals almost every weekend. There are also

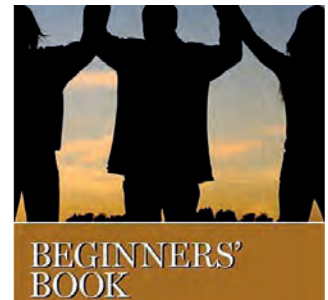
museums, fairs and amusement parks - just to name a few. Some of these events and attractions have days in which you can attend for free. Sadly, many of these events offer alcohol. So it is important to be mindful of your triggers and have a safety plan.

But there is one component that is missing, and it needs to be discussed.

Since one of the most common traits of the typical alcoholic is feelings of loneliness, it's important to build real community among sufferers. I am talking about connecting with each other outside of meetings to break that loneliness. A few months ago, I called the AA



GRAPEVINE BOOK OF THE MONTH



AA members share to newcomers useful insights and suggestions on what helped them get sober and successfully navigate early sobriety.



Scan this QR code to access [more](#) "Better Times" issues!

Letter From The Organizers of the 19th East Toronto Archives Breakfast

The East Toronto Archives Breakfast Committee would like to extend a massive show of appreciation to the Better Times for having printed our information article before the breakfast was held.

It was a resounding success, made possible by all who came together to help organize the event, including ticket sales, flyers and announcements.

Joyce S., our Eastern Canada Regional Trustee spoke to a full house of 2,024 years of combined sobriety.

There was coffee and camaraderie, fun and Fellowship, door prizes and a raffle.

Oh, did I mention the breakfast?

Just wanted to **Thank You All** for making it possible and your continued support.

The Committee will be meeting in September to plan next year's 20th anniversary event - which will be spectacular!



-Tom S. ETAB19 Committee

GTAI/DISTRICT - JULY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Accessibilities - Sun. July 21 – 11 a.m.

ID: 824 8962 1874 - PW: 799763

Archives - Fri. July 12 – 7 p.m.

ID: 841 5376 9412 - PW: 018851

Communications - Tues. July 16 – 8 p.m.

ID: 850 5256 7237 - PW: 984555

CPC/PI - Mon. July 15 – 7 p.m.

ID: 854 7547 0291 - PW: 002060

Correctional Facilities - July 02 – 7 p.m.

ID: 883 8002 9737 - PW: 950392

Self-Support - Meets every other month.

Next Meeting: July 25 - 6:30 pm

ID: 820 9238 0206 - PW: 319853

Treatment - July 21 - 4pm

ID: 868 2207 4860 - PW: 787289

Twelfth Step - Wed. July 10 – 7 p.m.

ID: 813 0646 6967 - PW: 572531

IT Subcommittee - Tues. July 09 - 7 p.m.

ID: 814 0942 9019 - PW: 379691

Information AA Day - Mon. July 22 - 7 p.m.

ID: 811 8277 5978 - PW: 587553

OVERHEARD AT A MEETING!

IT'S NOT ABOUT **KAREN & SHARON!**
BUT RATHER... **CARING & SHARING!**



by
DAVE N.



Idea submitted by
JIM A.

Originally Published: February 2015

JULY MEDALLIONS

Megan W., Anniversary Group, 1 year, May 29, 2023, Celebration date: July 3rd, 7 p.m.

Rob S., New Anchor Group, 1 year, July 4, 2023, Celebration date: July 4th, 2024

Larry V., Thorncliffe Park Group, 35 years, July 8, 2024, Celebration date: July 12th, 2024

Jon W., Bloordale Group, 1 year, July 17, 2023

Cody D., Miami Beach Group, 1 year, July 20

Rick S., Black River Group - Sutton, 15 years, July 19th, 2024

Sarah F., Fellowship Group, 1 year, July 28, 2023, Celebration date: July 29th, 8 pm

IS THERE AN UPCOMING MEDALLION?

Please send your medallion details to
bettertimes@aatoronto.org

in the format of:

name - homegroup - year(s) of sobriety - medallion date

Kindly note that Better Times only publishes the first year of continuous sobriety birthday celebrations or every subsequent 5th year of continuous sobriety (i.e. 1, 5, 10, 15, 20...)

ARCHIVES CORNER

Did you Know ?

In July 1934, Bill W. was admitted for the second time at Towns Hospital (again paid for by Lois's brother-in-law Dr. Leonard Strong). Bill met Dr. Silkworth for the 1st time. Dr. Silkworth explained the obsession and the allergy of alcoholism to Bill. However, upon discharge, Bill started drinking again around the clock. He was unemployable, \$50,000 in debt and suicidal.

On July 4, 1935, Akron, Ohio attorney Bill D. (man on the bed) left St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, OH sober and became AA No. 3 (Big Book story Alcoholics Anonymous Number Three). Bill D. was hospitalized 8 times in 1935 for his drinking. It took 5 days before he would admit that he could not control his drinking. Bill D. died September 17, 1954 with 19 years of sobriety.

On July 28-30, 1950, the 15th Anniversary and 1st International Convention was held in Cleveland, Ohio on AA's 15th year. An estimated 3,100 people attended. A gravely ill Dr. Bob made a brief appearance at the Convention for his last talk. Part of his now famous short statement was "There are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis. One is the simplicity of our own program. Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind but have very little to do with our actual AA work... Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words love and service."

It was also at this conference that the Twelve Traditions were adopted unanimously by standing vote by the attendees.

On July 2-4, 1965, the 30th Anniversary & 4th International Convention was held in Toronto, Ontario. An estimated 12,000 gathered at the Royal York Hotel & Maple Leaf Gardens Arena to celebrate. The Responsibility Declaration, written by Al S. (a past Class B Trustee, AAWS Director, GV Director & GV Editor), was introduced at this convention. Bill W. asked the crowd to stand, hold hands and recite the Responsibility Declaration: I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there, and for that I am responsible.

On July 5-7, 1985, the 50th Anniversary & 8th International Convention was held in Montreal. The theme was "50 Years With Gratitude", and about 44,000 people attended. In Montreal's Olympic Park Stadium, the flags of 53 nations represented at the Convention were paraded as a band played their national tunes. They represented nearly half of the 114 countries where AA could be found.

As part of the festivities, Ruth Hock Crecelius was given the 5th millionth copy of the Big Book. Ruth was Bill W.'s 1st Secretary & typed the manuscript of the Big Book as Bill dictated.

Bill & Lois's home since 1941 was also declared a New York State Historic site.

On June 30 – July 3, 2005, the 70th Anniversary & 12th International Convention was held in Toronto with over 44,000 in attendance. Toronto was the first city to host the International Convention twice. The theme was "I Am Responsible", repeating the theme of the 1965 Convention held in Toronto. The Convention also commemorated the 50th anniversary of Bill W. turning over the operation of the Fellowship to the Conference in 1955 in St. Louis.

On July 3-6, 2025, the 90th Anniversary & 16th International Convention will be held in Vancouver, BC. The theme is "Language of the Heart."

Greater Toronto Area Groups That Started in July

- July 1960 - Mount Royal-York Group
- July 3, 1979 - Responsibility Group
- July 18, 1972 - East York Group
- July 19, 1993 - Rox Glen Traditional Group

TO DONATE AA/GTA ARCHIVAL ITEMS TO ARCHIVES PLEASE CONTACT ARCHIVIST
EDDY G. 416-536-7536 or archives@aatoronto.org
OLD GTA MEETING BOOKS ARE NEEDED FOR THE ARCHIVES.

Rediscovering The Joy Of Summer - cont'd from pg. 1

bottom of a glass. It comes from within, and from genuine connections and experiences. Unclouded and alcohol free.

As I begin this summer season, I find myself rediscovering the simple pleasures that I had long overlooked.

Instead of drowning in alcohol, I embrace the beauty of nature. Gone are the reckless nights and blurred memories. In their place are evenings filled with meaningful conversations and laughter.

I've come to realize that the true joy of summer does not lie in false friendships, but in authenticity and being present. Summer festivals and live bands have taken on a new meaning.

Instead of drinking myself to oblivion and trying to escape reality, I now embrace the energy of the crowd; dancing with a newfound sense of clarity and purpose.

Even outdoor patios - that used to be alcohol-fueled - have become venues for genuine enjoyment and camaraderie. As I sip on a refreshing mocktail, I am surrounded by true sober friends, enjoying each moment without the need for artificial stimulants.

Summers at the cottage have transformed from weekends of excess booze to cherished moments of connection and reflection. Surrounded by the beauty of nature, I find peace in simplicity. As I lounge by the lake, each moment becomes a true gift of sobriety.

In the end, summer is a season of boundless possibilities. A time to embrace life's simple pleasures and create memories that will last a lifetime.

So, let's raise a glass - to friendship, to adventure, and to the magic of summer, enjoyed without the need for alcohol.

Cheers to a season filled with sunshine, laughter, and endless possibilities.

- Penny A., Orillia, ON

