



BETTER TIMES

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BETTER TIMES

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Rene D. — 50 Years of Sobriety

It was 1957 – ‘Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age’ was published through WSO and Rene D. joined AA. She attended her first meeting at the Beaches Group in 1956 as a support for her boyfriend who later became her husband – “I was too young to be an alcoholic,” she recalls.

A few months later the seed was planted. She identified with a speaker at the Hill Group one night – Evelyn V. It wasn't so much the drinking she related to – rather, Evelyn's description of her defects of character that caught Rene's attention. “I didn't know there was another soul on this earth that felt like I did.”

Rene's moment of clarity came about a week later. “I was packing our bags for a holiday and trying to figure out how much booze to take, she recalls. “One minute I didn't know I was an alcoholic, the next moment I did. Thank God for that moment of clarity.”

So Rene joined the Hill group. For the first six months she floated on the proverbial ‘pink cloud’ – until one night (January 11, 1957)

in complete anger, she picked up a drink.

For the next 10 years Rene was an active member of the Hill Group, attending every Thursday night. A move to Kendal Ontario meant a change of groups. For two and a half years Rene was a member of the Port Hope Group. On her return to Toronto, she joined the Willowdale Group. She later



joined the Shepherd Group which has been home for Rene for almost 21 years.

Rene has had three sponsors since joining AA: Ruth P.; Marie C.; who have passed on, and Mary M. of the Hill Group, her current

sponsor. She has sponsored and helped many other women.

When asked what advice she would like to share, she doesn't hesitate a moment. “I beg all members to keep the traditions as they are written. Remember what Bob said to Bill: ‘Don't louse it up. Keep it simple.’”

“Everything I have in this world is a result of this blessed program,” says Rene. “The twelve steps, the twelve traditions and working the program in my daily life, one day at a time. It has been the most exciting, challenging, thrilling, incredible journey – and I ain't finished yet,” she laughs. “My heartfelt thanks to my God, AA, and all the wonderful people who have joined me and helped me on this wonderful adventure.”

Rene will celebrate her 50th birthday at the Shepherd Group on Tuesday, Jan 16.

Her infectious joy and laughter, her wise words and her power of example are Rene's legacy to AA and all those she meets.

Anne H., Pine Hills Group

2007 Ontario Regional Conference

The 2007 Ontario Regional Conference Sub-Committee is hard at work ensuring that the 2007 Conference “Surrender to Win” meets the high standards set by previous ORC's. The conference runs from Friday, March 16th through Sunday March 18th at Toronto's Fairmont Royal York Hotel. The speakers, including Polly P. from Washington D.C, Linda R. from Indiana and Don P. from Florida, are all scheduled. The flyer and registration forms have been distributed at the October and November Intergroup meetings and will continue to be available at the January and February meetings. The form is also available at the

ORC section of the GTA Intergroup website www.aatoronto.org.

Attendees who pre-register will be eligible for draws for each of the months of November, December, January and February so register early for more chances to win. The pre-registration deadline is February 28, 2007. Those who reserve a room with the hotel prior to February 13th are eligible for a draw for 2 nights. One room night was graciously donated by the Fairmont Royal York Hotel and that was matched by the Conference. Win your weekend stay!

Remember that Conference registrations make great Christmas gifts for spouses and friends. Donations of conference registrations and Big Books or 12 and 12's for the Newcomers' Room are always welcome.

Please stay tuned to the Better Times for additional ORC information in future issues. March 16th will be here before we know it and we look forward to welcoming you all to the Conference. Surrender to Win!

On behalf of the 2007 ORC Committee, I would like to wish everyone a safe, sober and peaceful holiday.

Barb H., Welcome Group

Tradition
One
“ Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”

OUTSIDE ISSUES

For a number of years now some members of our Fellowship have been associated with an outside enterprise on Christmas Day, and this year an AA Group is cancelling one of their meetings to hold a dance in support of this project.

Seldom is it pointed out at meetings where these events are being announced that, these are in fact, outside issues. When it has been, the response from those who support it is, "A lot of alcoholics show up there and we're helping them so it's OK with me." This is like the little white lie; it's only breaking some of the Traditions and only a little.

By supporting this enterprise, an AA Group violates the 6th Tradition by lending the AA name to an outside enterprise, endorsing it and helping to finance it. Further, contrary to our 4th Tradition, when it is brought up at other groups, it affects them and their members as a direct result. AA as a whole could be seen to be affected by this enterprise, as AA sanctions the Annual Winter Season Open House for alcoholics, their families and their friends on Christmas Day. WSOH has been historically af-

ected by AAs attending an outside enterprise.

Controversy brought on over the years, because of AA's seen as supporting this enterprise, flies in the face of our 10th Tradition, to say nothing about affecting AA's Unity and perhaps placing personal recovery in some jeopardy thereby infringing our 1st Tradition.

By canceling a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, members of the Fellowship might be seen as forgetting our 5th Tradition, carrying the message. This also contributes to questions that might arise from being seen as allowing itself to be supported by this enterprise (7th Tradition) and allowing members to be attracted by Promotion rather than the other way around as stated in our 11th Tradition.

I do not see this as the proverbial "Slippery Slope", but more a matter for concern within the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous and something I would suggest be brought up at your Group's next Business Meeting.

Yours in service

Wayne D., Golden Mile Group

FOR THE SAKE OF DISCUSSION

In a recent article in the Better Times, some curmudgeon from the Unionville group suggested that there may be something wrong with holding hands and reciting the Lord's Prayer at the end of AA meetings.

I recently had the opportunity to attend a Regional Forum in Sudbury. The staff of the General Service Office, who host these weekends, asked me if I would chair a workshop on "Chanting and Rituals." I agreed.

The workshop was held on the Saturday evening and was well attended. My role was to moderate the discussion, and we covered a lot of territory. Examples and issues that were discussed included "We think NOT" (when the Promises are read), reading the Steps and Traditions at every meeting. We even discussed reciting the Lord's Prayer.

With the diverse views on most of the topics we touched, it was a credit to our recovery that no fights broke out; no bad lan-

guage was used. Firm views were held by all.

I shared my experience when suggesting at my group's business meeting that we not use the Lord's Prayer to close our meetings. I was shocked at the intensity of the refusal to consider the idea. Others in the room indicated similar experiences.

At the end, the sense of the workshop was that we, the current custodians of Alcoholics Anonymous, needed to be ever-conscious of the newcomer, and that things we do, and perhaps don't do at our meetings are probably the most significant factors in a newcomer coming back and staying, or not.

If you ever wonder why, in a multi-cultural city such as Toronto, the rooms of AA are so predominantly filled with white, Anglo-Saxons; I suggest you begin by looking at some of the rituals and chants that are being practiced in those rooms.

Roy R.

Past Delegate, Area 83 Eastern Ontario International
(guest columnist)

A View of Service by an AA Newcomer

When we walk into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous for the first time, we are overwhelmed by fear, upset, anger, with little knowledge or direction on how to proceed. Early days of sobriety are intimidating. Fellow members suggest that we find a group, a sponsor and get active.

Ten days into sobriety, this alcoholic's eyes focused on an August 2005 Better Times article. Volunteers required for the 11th Step Picnic. A call was made to the Committee. What a pleasure watching seven committee members working the 12 Step program together and accepting my participation so readily. At the last 11th Step Picnic meeting, the words "Marvyn, the Committee would like you to Chair the 1st Pic-

nic meeting". An initial reaction was, 'Are they kidding, and if they are not, is 33 days of sobriety enough!

Valuable Lesson #1 When asked to perform an AA task, "Yes" is a good answer!

The picnic chair presented an opportunity to introduce an AA speaker. Gail (by kayak) came to the Center Island picnic and delivered a spiritual talk! (Ironically, the last binge, a month previous was a Dinner cruise boat on the same Lake Ontario). No Longer Alone, Keep an Open Mind, Easy Does it But Do It were slogans that had an impact after a first AA Service day.

Joining a Group: The Streetsville Action Group suggest

newcomers get active by setting up chairs and tables, participating in meeting readings, chairing, and eventually speaking.

Streetsville Action Group service positions require a year sobriety. I wanted what they had.

The ORC meetings at the Royal York in March 2006 brought AA knowledge, new friendships & future committee members. This alcoholic's sponsor suggests the importance of service to an AA program, encouraging, keeping it simple and doing one's best with each opportunity. Ken (Long Branch Group) shared "Service How it Works" 1997 Info-Day, Richard B- GSO-New York. The tape assures that AA service is the right direction

for this alcoholic to enhance his program.

Opportunities became available: a Retreat, Intergroup Rep, Mississauga 10th Fall Roundup Committee and being appointed by GTA Inter-group to the Chair-2006 Winter Season Open House Committee.

Page 164 of the Big Book:

God will show you how to create the fellowship you crave. This article is meant to be suggestive only. I realize I only know a little but God will constantly disclose more to me and to all us as we reach out to help.

Yours in Service,

Marvyn W.
Streetsville Action Group

Archives Alley

Bill W.

Bill W. passed away on January 24th, 1971 at 11:31 p.m. He was 76 years of age and had been sober for 37 years.

A life-long smoker, Bill W. began to feel the physical effects of his 'nasty habit', as he termed it, by the mid-'60's. When he was diagnosed with emphysema and associated heart problems, it was Lois' belief that all of Bill's health problems could be improved by being outdoors. Their long walks were a constant comfort to them but eventually were halted by Bill's shortness of breath.

In 1969, Bill's New Year's resolution to quit smoking began on an upbeat note but a painful fall from the studio roof at Stepping Stones ended in a hospital stay and the first bout of pneumonia. It would not be his last.

The International Convention was held in Miami Beach Florida in 1970. Despite failing health, Bill was determined to attend. But just prior to the opening ceremony, he was rushed to the Miami Heart Institute. On Sunday morning, by ambulance and with much assistance, Bill W., with oxygen tank in tow, was wheeled onto the stage to the applause of more than twenty thousand cheering people. The cheers and ovation went on for five full minutes. With his eyes filled with tears, Bill slowly rose and steadied himself by grasping the podium; his ashen face spoke volumes about his failing state. His address was powerful, succinct and poignant.

Arriving back at Stepping Stones, he contracted pneumonia again. In January of 1971, Lois completed arrangements to fly him back to Florida. Shortly after his arrival there, he passed away. Congestive heart failure plus emphysema and pneumonia were the contributing factors in his death.

Naturally, Lois was heartbroken. Bill had passed away on their 35th wedding anniversary.

Bernadette MacL.
King City Group

Have You Heard?

UPCOMING MEDALLIONS:

Name	Yr.	Group	Date
Tracy R.	1	Anniversary.....	Dec 13
Gerard O.	5	Chartwell	Dec. 14
Cheryl M.	15	Eventide Group	Jan. 7
Sara E.	5	Mount Royal	Jan. 9
Joan (the Hat) A. .	30	Agincourt Acorn	Jan. 9
Ray P.	10	East York	Jan. 9
Brenda I.	5	Fifth Tradition	Jan. 10
Bruce D.	1	Fifth Tradition.....	Jan. 17
Derek H.	10	New Anchor Group.....	Jan. 25

MEETINGS OPEN AND CLOSED AROUND THE HOLIDAYS:

Erin Mills (Suburban West) **open** Christmas Day and New Years Day.

West York (Sunday, 10:30 a.m.) will be **open** Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

City Central open Christmas Eve and New Years Eve.

Armour Heights cancelled Mon. Dec. 25; meeting will be open Jan. 1

Sunday Northwestern cancelled Dec 24 and Dec 31

Church Street Group open to meet on Sat. Dec. 23, 24, 30, 31 at 12:30 pm at the 519 Community Centre. The 519 Church Street Community Centre will be **closed** Dec. 25 to Dec. 29. (**Just for Today Meeting**, Thurs. Dec. 28, 12:15 pm is **cancelled** & **Rainbow Group**, Fri. Dec. 29, 8:30 pm is also **cancelled**)

Six Points cancelled Mon. Dec 25 and Mon. Jan 1

Welcome Group open Dec. 24 and 31!

Glenholme Group open on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

The King City Group: open meetings as usual at 8 pm on Dec. 25 and Jan. 1/07.

CANDLELIGHT AND HOLIDAY MEETINGS:

New Anchor Group - Thurs. Dec. 14, 8 pm

Scarborough Centenary Candlelight on Dec. 14

Promises Group Christmas Gratitude Meeting Fri. Dec. 15. Ajax

Back to Basics Richmond Hill, Christmas Meeting: Fri. Dec. 15, 8:30 pm

Church Street Group Sat. Dec. 16

City Central Group - Dec. 17 at 8 pm

Keep it Simple Group - Dec. 17 at 8 pm

Love in Action Group—Dec. 17 at 8 pm

Welcome Group Seasonal evening! Dec. 17 at 8 pm

King City Group - Dec. 18 at 8 pm

Westmoreland Group - Dec. 19

Thornhill Group - Wed. Dec. 20

St. Clemens Group - Wed. Dec. 20

Rox Glen Traditional Xmas Meeting Dec 21, 8:30

Chartwell Group Candlelight Thurs. Dec. 21, 8:00

Mount Royal Group—Thurs. Dec. 21 (66 Bond St.)

High Park Group Candlelight Meeting Fri. Dec. 22

No Longer Alone Meeting Seasonal Meeting & Potluck - Fri. Dec. 22.

Lansing Group Xmas Party Sat. Dec. 23, 8:30 pm

MEETING CHANGES

Kennedy Park Group, (O) Monday 8 pm, Konko Church of Toronto, 398 Kennedy Rd., (SW corner of Kennedy and Danforth), Scarborough

U of T Group, (O) Sun. 5 pm, (C) Mon. 5:30 pm (C) Thurs. 6 pm, OISE bldg., 252 Bloor St. W. (east of St. George St.) please "watch for signs" in the lobby and elevators as the meeting room sometimes changes. Thursday meeting is now Big Book/12 and 12.

NEW MEETINGS

The Step Eleven Meeting (C) Tuesdays 12:15 noon (CENTRAL): Calvin Presbyterian Church, 26 Delisle Ave (one street N of St. Clair, off Yonge St). Meeting focus: Step Eleven & meditation. BYOC ('bring your own coffee!'). One-hour duration.

Lawrence Plaza Discussion (C) 8 pm Thursdays (NORTH): St. Leonard's Anglican Church, 25 Wanless Ave., 2 blocks N of Lawrence Ave, on Yonge St. (behind fire station). Step discussion.

MEETINGS NEEDING SUPPORT

Kennedy Park Group, (O) Monday 8 pm, Konko Church of Toronto, 398 Kennedy Rd., (SW corner of Kennedy and Danforth), Scarborough

Mount Dennis Group Thursdays (Closed Step Discussion) 8 pm (WEST): 71 Guestville Ave., S of Eglinton, W of Weston. Open speaker meeting Monday at 8 pm.

Pourquoi Pas? (French-speaking) Saturdays (C) 11 a.m. (CENTRAL). 22 College St. *Closed discussion.*

Beverly Hills Group Fridays 8 pm (NORTH WEST). Greenborough Community Church, 2000 Keele St. N. of Eglinton Ave. The group needs support in the form of Chairpersons and Speakers.

Lawrence Plaza Group 8:00 pm Sundays (NORTH) (O). **New time and location:** St. Leonard's Church, 25 Wanless Ave., 2 blocks N. of Yonge & Lawrence (behind fire station).

St. Patrick's Group Tuesdays: Big Book study (C), 6:45 pm; open speaker meeting (O) follows at 8 pm (CENTRAL) St. Paul's RC Church, 83 Power St., at Queen St. East, east of Parliament.

Don Valley Group Tuesdays 8 pm (O); Thursdays 8 pm (C) Step Discussion. (NORTH) Advent Lutheran Church, 2800 Don Mills Rd., 2 blocks N of Sheppard Ave. East at Don Mills divide, Don Mills subway.

Parklawn Group (O) Fridays 8:30 pm (WEST) needs Chairpeople, Speakers, new members. Humbercrest United Church, 16 Baby Point Rd., Jane and Annette.

Centenary Mon (C) Thurs(O) 7 pm (NORTHEAST)

See HYH Page 4

In opening the meeting, **Rene T.** (Silverbirch), **Operating Committee Chair** asked for a sense of having a **'Workshop / Social Night'** for the Dec. 12 **General Meeting**, she added that "It would be a good opportunity for us to get to know each other and learn about some of the things we do at Intergroup". *The Floor was almost unanimous in agreement.*

Finance Report – Chris H. (Friendly), **Finance Subcommittee member** said that for Gratitude Month; we are down about \$6,000 from the previous year. This subcommittee is continuing in its efforts to rebuild the Prudent Reserve. Accounts Receivable regarding outstanding invoices for literature: it was reported that a fair number of customers come from outside the GTA. Chris reiterated the new literature department policy that started as of November 1 [\$300 limit per group, per customer, on credit for literature], opining that it makes "good common business sense". The current number for A/R stands at \$17,000; \$10,000 of which is current (30 days or under).

Rene asked Lynn B. (City Central) who works in the Literature Department, to address the **Accounts Receivable concerns.** It is Lynn's observation that the GTA groups that are presently donating to Intergroup "are carrying the rest of the groups" financially. It was suggested that a **two-tier pricing idea be adopted**; this would be where groups active with us are given a "benefit for participation" in terms of literature orders.

WSOH 2006 – Marv W. (Streetsville Action), **2006 event**

HYH from Page 3

Sunday Scarborough (O) 8 pm (EAST)
Freedom Friday Friday (C) 8:15 pm (CENTRAL)

SPECIAL EVENTS, CONVENTIONS, and CONFERENCES

Scarborough Centenary Group celebrates **24 years** as a group on Jan. 5, 2007
The 2nd Annual New Year's Eve Candle-light Spontaneous Speaker Meeting at the 519.(O) 7 to 8 pm, Sun Dec. 31. 519 Church Street Community Centre north of Wellesley.
3rd Annual Sober Karaoke New Year's Eve Dance Party. 8:30 pm to 12:30 a.m.
Sun. Dec. 31. No cover charge. 519 Church Street Community Centre.
29th Annual Spiritual New Year's Dance & Buffet, Holy Rosary Parish Hall, 354 St.

Intergroup Report



Chairperson. The event will be held on Christmas Day from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Emmanuel-Howard Park Church. *Still in need of volunteers in various capacities.* **Next committee meeting:** Sat. Dec.16 at 1 p.m. at 234.

Better Times Newsletter – Tim R. (Chartwell), **subcommittee member.** *A new BT Chairperson is needed.* Please send resumes to the Operating Committee c/o 234. *A volunteer with desktop publishing experience is also needed.*

ORC 2006 – Jim R. (Bloordale), **ORC 2007 event graphics coordinator.** Placards and flyers for the upcoming event, 'Surrender to Win' (March 16, 17, and 18, 2007 at the Royal York Hotel) were made available for group reps. Registration: \$30. For

Clair Ave. W., (at St. Clair West subway). Doors open at 8 pm Open AA meeting in the Hall, AI-Anon meeting, Interfaith Gratitude Service. Dance starts at 10 pm Admission to dance and buffet only \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door. Contact John P. (Welcome) 416-460-7956 for advance tickets or to volunteer.

15th Annual Toronto Winter Round Up with Clancy I. from Venice, CA. Saturday, January 27, 2007 at 9:00 a.m., Novotel North York, 3 Park Home Ave., Toronto (North of Sheppard Ave. West, off Yonge St.), North York Centre Subway Stop • \$50.00 – Includes dinner and coffee breaks • Pre-registration required by Jan. 20, 2007 • Speaker Tapes will be available onsite • Visa and MasterCard accepted. For more information or tickets please contact: James H. at 416-221-9155

E-Mail: winterroundup@gmail.com

more information, call 416-487-2677 or e-mail orc@aatonto.org.

Archives – Roy R. (Trial & Error), **Chairperson** reported that the Archives Breakfast was a success. If anyone still has money from sold tickets, please get it to Roy or Bob D. (Weston group) as soon as possible.

Ad Hoc Implementation Committee – Doug Y., committee member Doug gave a brief update on the objectives of this committee. One of the ideas they came up with was the idea of printing off a brief one page document of each General Meeting which would be made available at the end of each of the meetings. He commented that the Operating Committee preferred the

'Implementation Committee' be called 'Recommendation Committee'. Rene then asked the Floor how they felt about implementing the **one-page General Meeting summary idea.** To do this process, the *Ad Hoc* committee will need a small budget for this purpose (approximately \$200 towards the purchase of a printer + cost of paper, which will be ongoing). This document could also be e-mailed. A motion by Wes. B. (Long Branch) that the one-page summary be given a three-month trial period was carried.

Rene read a **resignation letter** from Niels B. (Hill), outgoing Corrections Chair. Rene also **asked for resumes.** Resumes are also needed for ORC 2009 Chairperson (10 years of sobriety recommended)

Doug. R. (St. Clements) presented a motion concerning the members running for the Operating Committee. This Notice of Motion **to be discussed in March 2007.**

Rene informed Floor members that the **administrative offices and the literature department at 234 will be closed for business during the Holidays** from 1 p.m. Fri.Dec.22 to Jan.1, and will **re-open Tues. Jan.2.** Any orders for literature and / or medallions are requested **before Wed., Dec. 20.**

The phone lines will be operational throughout the Holidays.

Tim R., Chartwell Group

GTAI Subcommittee Meetings—January 2007

Date	Committee.....	Time
Mon 1	CF & TF Committees	7:00 pm
Wed 3	Self-Support	7:00 pm
Mon 8	CPC	7:00 pm
Thu 11	Grapevine	1:00 pm
Fri 12	Archives	7:00 pm
Sat 13	Website	1:00 pm
	Spiritual New Years Cte	2:00 pm
Mon 15	Public Information	7:00 pm
Sun 21	Access Ability	11:00 am
	Phone Training Session	1:30 pm
Tue 23	Finance Committee	4:30 pm
	Operating Committee	7:30 pm
Wed 24	Better Times	7:00 pm
Fri 26	Twelfth Step	6:30 pm
Mon 29	Info AA Day	7:30 pm
Tue 30	Monthly General Meeting	8:00 pm

of GTA Intergroup—Glebe Rd. United Church 20 Glebe Rd. East (N of Davisville subway station)

Subcommittees yet to be announced:

- *Ad Hoc Committee*
- *WSOH Wrap-up meeting*