

A Holiday Message from the Operating Committee of Toronto Intergroup

Season's Greetings from our O.C. Chair

Hi everybody, my name is Arwen. I'm an alcoholic and am presently your new Chair of the Operating Committee for Toronto Intergroup. I have been involved with the Operating Committee for just over a year now and what a great year it has been! If you haven't done so already, please check out our brand new website at aatoronto.org. My favourite part of the new Website is how the meetings are now organized by time. Now I can find out what meetings are going on all day in my neighbourhood. It truly has

Spiritual New Year's Eve – 30 Years Young!

This year, the Annual Spiritual New Year's Eve Dance and Buffet will be having its 30th anniversary. The late Joan B. would find volunteers for the first event and continued doing so for another 21 years. I know that whenever I announce at meetings that the committee is looking for volunteers, people will approach me, either to say how they remember being on the committee, or having attended, or even that they'd like to do something this year. Why not come out to the next committee meeting Dec. 15 at 234 at 1 pm and help make a difference!

Now that I have that out of the way, I should mention that starting last year, we've moved the dance up so that it will be starting at 10 o'clock. The Spiritual Service should be back in the church this year as we have a "responsible" (read non-laity) person to head things up there. Also, the hall should have received a long-overdue renovation as well. The AA and Al-Anon meetings will start at 8:00 p.m. and hope to see more of our AFG friends this year. Everyone is urged to bring food to share, from salads to casseroles to desserts to whatever you can dream up. Remember, AA is about sharing and it seems to work much better for givers than for takers.

We're still looking for a kitchen co-coordinator and someone to head up a decorating committee as well as volunteers to help set up and run things the night of the event. So, unless you have a previous service commitment for that night, I expect to see you at our next committee meeting!

The Spiritual New Year's Eve Dance and Buffet, at Holy Rosary Parish Hall, 356 St. Clair Ave. W.

John P., Welcome Group

become a faster and easier way for the still suffering alcoholic to get to a meeting. Also the twelfth step committee is always looking for phone volunteers. If you have over a year's sobriety and have some time on your hands, come down to 234 the third Sunday of each month at 1:30 p.m. and get trained to get on the front lines of twelve step work!

Our three legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous are Unity, Recovery and Service. Through my Service in AA, I have been consistently amazed at how, no matter what the conflict or difference in opinion, we are always able to come back to our Primary Purpose. The way that we are able to unify

under any circumstance gives me hope that with God and this program, I can do anything. Also, it has given me the opportunity to learn our Traditions on a deeper level which has definitely enhanced my sobriety, and therefore, my recovery. So if you've never had the chance to get a wider view of service in AA, I invite you to check out our website and find a committee that works well for you.

On behalf of the Operating Committee, I wish you Happy Holidays and a safe and sober New Year!

Yours in Love and Service,
Arwen H., Primary Purpose Group

Memories of Winter Season Open House

The Winter Season Open House is an annual event sponsored by GTA Intergroup. Its primary purpose is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Winter Season Open House had five venues over the years: 1170 Yonge Street, 2 Gerrard Street West, Columbus Hall, and the Metropolitan United Church and since December 25th, 1989, its current location, Emmanuel Howard Park United Church. A few years ago, the assembled representatives at Intergroup decided to change the official name from "Christmas Open House" to "Winter Season Open House" to avoid the Christian bias of the traditional name. The assembly acted in response to the challenge that as a worldwide institution, it is now seeking to help alcoholics of all stripes, regardless of religion. AA should avoid officially associating itself with any particular form of religion as declared in the "Preamble".

Thoughts from Past WSOH Chairs

Francis A.

What WSOH means to me is that there is some place to go if anyone is spending Christmas alone and wants to give back by getting active. In my early sobriety, I was alone and feeling sorry for myself. The pain was unbearable. I decided never to go through that experience again at Christmas. So I volunteered by getting on the WSOH Committee. By doing this, I not only got out of my self-centeredness and self-pity, etc., but learned to be grateful by doing something useful for others. I not only served on the committee for several years but enjoyed doing it. I must say it certainly refocused my attention from I, self and me.

Ken C.

"I always remember that Christmas can be pretty lonely for an alcoholic. I used to hate Christmas but all that has changed for me. You can find me at WSOH every Christmas".

Frank I.

"This is an amazing event! I wouldn't miss it for the world! Where else can you come across 300 sober alcoholics at Holiday Season time AND get holiday brunch too?"

Marvyn W.

The theme for 2006 was to enhance our winter sobriety during a season of hope with open fellowship amongst family and friends and to provide an atmosphere of responsibility & gratitude creating a positive "remember when" December 25th 2006. The theme was accomplished by the AA Members of the GTA Intergroup, their families, friends & AA visitors from out of town.

One of our AA brothers from Moncton New Brunswick called 234 looking for a meeting December 25th. At WSOH, he found four closed meetings, two open meetings & an Al-Anon meeting. While he worried he may be alone for Christmas in a strange city, he certainly found a different meeting at WSOH with over 450 people attending. GTA AA Fellowship, Your Favourite WSOH Memory could be this year at the 2007 Winter Season Open House December 25th, at Emmanuel Howard Park Church, 214 Wright Avenue at Roncesvalles (Northwest Corner). Come early. Bring Your Family. Volunteer and enjoy a wonderful day of sobriety. Be happy, joyous and free.

Check aatoronto.org for any up-to-date info!

Marvyn W., past chair

Meetings OPEN during the holidays

Bloordale Group meetings are on over the holidays, Sundays, Mondays & Wednesdays King City will hold its regular mtg. on New Year's Eve: Dec. 31

Midtown Group (Central) Dec. 25 & Jan. 1

Shepherd Group (North) Dec. 25th

Streetsville Meetings Dec. 25 and Jan. 1

Third Tradition Service Meeting will be open Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

Wexford Group (Northeast) Dec. 25 and Jan. 1

Meetings CLOSED during the holidays

Tues Noon Meeting (east (main and Danforth) CANCELLED Dec. 25

Gift of Life Service Meeting (Northwest) CANCELLED Dec. 25 & Jan 1

King City Group will not be having its regular Open mtg. Christmas Eve, Dec. 24

Candlelight meetings and other seasonals during the holidays

A Place to Share Candlelight Mtg. Dec. 8 at 11:30 am

Amazing Grace will be having it's candlelight meeting on Dec. 11, at 8 pm

Beaches Group (East) - 60th Group Anniversary Dec. 11

Mount Royal Group (Central) - Christmas Meeting Dec. 11

Unionville Group Dec. 12

Chartwell Group Dec. 13

Chartwell Group Candlelight mtg. Dec. 13

Scarborough Centenary Group (Northeast) - Candlelight meeting Dec. 14

Thorncliffe Park Group Dec. 14

Islington Group Friday Dec. 14

Meadowvale Fellowship Group Dec. 15

Newcomers Group Dec. 14

City Central Group (Central) - Candlelight Meeting Dec. 16

High Park Sunday Candlelight Meeting Sun. Dec. 16

Welcome Group Seasonal mtg. Dec. 16

The Friendly Group Annual Candlelight Meeting Dec. 17 8:30 pm

King City's Christmas Meeting will be held Dec. 17

Third Tradition Service Meeting Dec. 17

Beaches Group Gratitude Mtg. Dec. 18

Don Valley Group Dec. 18

East York Group Dec. 18

Shepherd Group (North) - Christmas Meeting Tues. Dec. 18

Streetsville Group Gratitude Meeting Dec. 18, 8:30 pm

The Anniversary Group will hold its Candlelight Meeting on Dec.19

Golden Mile Group Dec.19

Danforth Group Dec. 20

Markland Wood Group (West) - Season Greeting Meeting Dec. 20, Dinner 7 Meeting 8 pm

Thursday East End Group (East) - Candlelight Meeting Dec. 20

Beverly Hills Candlelight Mtg. Dec. 21, 8pm

No Longer Alone Meeting (Central) - Christmas Party and Potluck Fri. Dec. 21

Lansing Group (North) - Christmas Party Dec. 22

Church Street Christmas Party Dec. 22

Trillium Group (Queensway Hsptl.) 11 am Sunday Morning Service Mtg Dec. 23

Milliken Group Dec. 24

Wexford Group (Northeast) - Christmas Meeting Dec. 25

Special events during the holidays

Winter Season Open House at Emmanuel – Howard Park United Church, 214 Wright Ave. at Roncesvalles Tues. Dec. 25

30th Annual Spiritual New Year's Eve Holy Rosary Parish Hall, 356 St. Clair Ave. W. AA meeting at 8 pm, dance and buffet at 10 pm, spiritual service at 11! Al-Anon and our other fellowship members more than welcome! \$10 advance, \$12 at the door, POT LUCK Mon. Dec 31

Condolences

Toronto Intergroup has made available the opportunity to make expressions of sympathy in the memory of members of AA who have passed away. Simply send your donation to 'Toronto Intergroup' at 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario

The family of the decedent will receive a beautiful memorial letter from the staff.

12 Tips for Staying Sober during the Holidays!

The Christmas season is a time of festivity and family gatherings. But there are other factors. Family squabbles bring unease and anxiety, office parties offer trials and temptations and misguided friends try to goad us into one last drink.

For that reason, we offer a few helpful tips for the holidays.

1. Most AA groups have candlelight meetings. Attend them. Bring a newcomer to make the meeting special. Setup, bring food, make coffee, and clean up. Volunteer.
2. Pass up a drinking party when you're feeling fragile. If in doubt, don't. No party is important enough to jeopardize your hard won sobriety.
3. Carry a phone list of AA members and key their numbers into your cell phone memory. A simple call can save your life.
4. Open your home to AA members. Have an evening or afternoon of fellowship.
5. If your finances are low, pass on the gift giving. Remember that the greatest gift you can give to your family and friends is your sobriety.
6. Leave the party or function when you feel 'restless, irritable, and discontent.' You don't have to close up the party anymore.
7. Keep some candy in your pocket/purse to stave off the urge to drink.
8. Don't sit around brooding. Catch up on your reading, go for a long walk, have a luxurious bath, see a good movie.
9. Stay in the now. Don't start projecting about 'what ifs' or 'if onlys'. Remember to 'Live a Day at a Time.'
10. Attend church/synagogue/temple. Sit in the peace of God's house and focus on Step Eleven.
11. Look for the beauty of the season. You are now fully awake to what you are truly capable of. Give the gift of love to your fellow travellers.
12. We are awakened spiritually by our Steps. We need to apply this spirituality to our lives and pass it on to others. What we give away, comes back tenfold.