

BETTER TIMES



February 2008
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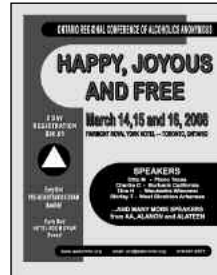
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Pre-register for the ORC until Feb. 29!

And be sure of room availability at the Fairmont Royal York by booking by Feb. 14!

Happy, Joyous and Free!



I wasn't happy, joyous and free when I came to AA. I thought my social life was over. There would be no more parties for me! But, boy was I wrong!

I was a year into sobriety when I attended my first ORC. My parents, both members of AA and Alanon, paid for my registration and banquet. I was only able to get a babysitter for the banquet but I dressed up and nervously rode that long escalator ride to the conference level. I was completely mesmerized by all the people. They looked so good! At the banquet I felt totally out of place and couldn't wait to get out of there. But as I continued to attend the conference yearly, I gradually started to fit in.

Bradford One Day Roundup

It all started back in 1987 when AA members of District 8 in the South Georgian Bay area found the time long between the Geneva Park Conference in Orillia in October and the Ontario Regional Conference in March. Jack G., formerly of the World Famous Bradford Group, now of the 'Barrie Sunday Nighters for Uptighters', conceived the plan for a day-long Bradford Roundup.

The first Saturday affair was held in the Bradford Community Centre where the sounds of figure skaters supplied the backdrop. The move to a quieter venue at the Danube Community Center ensued, but they eventually located at a larger location at

Every year I would hear something profound which I could take with me to grow in sobriety. I began to look forward to the ORC each year.

One year I was commandeered into service in registration giving out the badges. I was still very shy but as the day rolled on, I began to enjoy my job. I was able to greet everyone as I walked around the conference. I volunteered to do the job every year and was quite miffed when they put me on the computers. Since I was a 'peck and find' type of typist, I wasn't able to socialize as much.

One year I was asked to serve on the committee. I was grateful that someone thought I might be able to do something so important and... here I am, Chairperson for the 2008 ORC. Who would have thought?

It is a great place to celebrate sobriety, to run into old friends and

make new ones. People from all over come to our Conference because it is one of the best around and they come back every year. We have people from Scotland who will be back for their third year and a fellow from Bermuda who has been coming for a long time.

Registration is \$30.00 and includes all meetings and dances. There are dances both Friday and Saturday this year; where else could you get such a deal! The banquet is \$55 and I know that may seem like a lot to some. But try it. The atmosphere alone is worth it. The rooms at the hotel are at a special conference rate.

Today I am "Happy Joyous and Free". I look forward to sharing all of that with some of you March 14, 15, & 16 at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel.

Rene T. Silverbirch Group, 2008 ORC chair

evening and arrive by 7:00 am Saturday to complete arrangements. Tables are set up for AA, Al-Anon, and Alateen literature along with tapes of the speakers. From 9:00 am till 4:00 pm, panel speakers share their experience, strength and hope. After the dinner speaker, the hall is set up for the dance. Last year, 250 prepaid tickets were sold making it the best year to date.

On Saturday, February 16 at 167 Essa Street in Bradford, the doors will open with a warm AA welcome. For tickets or information, contact Tom W. at 905 841-3641 or Lorraine S. at 905 775-3606.

Bernadette MacL. King City Group

They start setting up Friday

History of the ORC

PART 2

1968 The ORC marked 25 years of AA in Canada

Throughout the 70's, the ORC was no longer viewed as a miracle that happened. In fact, it was the result of good planning by AA members who cared. The ORC continued to evolve, the banquet was permanently moved from noon Sunday to Saturday evening. This enabled out-of-town members to get away sooner on Sundays.

1978 A decision to have only Canadian speakers applied to this year only.

1980 The ORC moved from the Royal York Hotel to the Harbour Castle Hotel

1986 In attempt to add more fun to the ORC a talent night was introduced immediately after the Friday night speaker. It was extremely successful.

1990 The ORC moved to the Sheraton Hotel on Queen St. W.

1993 The ORC was cancelled in order to celebrate the 50th year of Alcoholics Anonymous in Canada

The ORC moved "home" to the Royal York Hotel.

2000 The ORC of AA presented: "Sobriety, The Dawning of a New Era".

The year marked the 51st Annual Ontario Regional Conference 'A Celebration of Living', which coincided with AI-Anon celebrating their 50th anniversary in Canada.

2003 March 14 – 16, The 52nd Annual Ontario Regional

Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous presented "Let the Miracle Happen" at the Royal York Hotel.

2004 The theme this year for the ORC was "Sobriety and More in 2004"

WE, IN TORONTO, ENJOYED WELCOMING THE WORLD IN 2005, TO HELP CELEBRATE THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

The Ontario Regional Conference was again cancelled, just as it was in 1965, due to the International Convention held in Toronto from June 30 – July 3. This time at the Rogers Centre.

2006's venue for the 54th Annual O.R.C. held March 17-19, was the newly-renamed *Fairmont* Royal York Hotel. Our theme was "People, Program, Prayer", just as one of our giants described it.

2007 This particular year had a theme of "Surrender to Win" & was again held at the *Fairmont* Royal York. There were 2,673 registered guests & 619 guests for the Saturday night banquet.

2008 "Happy, Joyous & Free" was decided on as the theme when the Committee met in March of 2007. This year's venue will again be the *Fairmont* Royal York hotel in downtown Toronto.

Problems Endangering AA Meetings

The clock ticked to the 8:00 position and the secretary called the meeting to order. The leader began to read the format. Then they picked a newcomer to read one of the chapters. The newcomer, a young kid with an uncertain look on his face, began reading. A couple of members ask, 'Who are you?' The newcomer smiles sheepishly and says, 'I'm Jim, I'm an addict.' An old timer stops him, telling him that he is in a closed meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous and that he cannot participate unless has a problem with alcohol or he can identify as a member of AA. Almost at once, pandemonium breaks out as other members attack the old timer for standing up for the principles of the program. The result being that the old timer, once again, is shown that what was given to him is not what is wanted or being passed on to newcomers.

This scene is a common sight in AA today. The problem is that few sponsors are taking the time to teach their sponsees the 12 Traditions. Still, fewer AA's have the courage to stand up for the program that has given them their life. It is fundamental to our program that we keep it simple.

We are a program for alcoholics who want to stop drinking. This is the reason why in the Third Tradition it states clearly that 'any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.' The group is the membership. Each person who participates in the meeting represents the meeting as a whole. If anyone participating in any AA meeting identifies as something other than an alcoholic, they are affiliating the group with something other than alcoholism. In so doing, simplicity is lost and they, as a group, stop being a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

It is a fact that most alcoholics today have used and often have become addicted to other substances. It is important for us to remember that there is a difference between alcohol and other drugs. Anyone can become addicted to most drugs. They are addictive by their nature. Alcohol, on the other hand, is not addictive to most people. It is addictive only to alcoholics. This is what the Big Book means when it points out that, 'We are bodily and mentally different from our fellows.' Alcoholism is not drug addiction and a drug addict is not necessarily an alcoholic. This fact must be understood by each of us if we are to be truly helpful to our fellow alcoholics in their struggles with our disease.

On his deathbed, Dr. Bob's last words to Bill have become an honored cliché in our program, 'KEEP IT SIMPLE.' We must keep the program simple if we are to survive as an organization. We must not lose focus on the one thing that has brought each of us together with one another and with the grace of God. That one thing is alcoholism. That has been from the start and continues to this day to be our only focus and it is the sole affiliation that an AA group can have.

Submitted by an AA member

RESOLUTIONS

This time of year I'm often asked if I've made any New Year's Resolutions. I answer no. I figure that the word 'resolution' means a 're-solution', another look at the solution. That means I already know the solution, but I haven't implemented it.

November is a good time to say "My New Year's Resolution is to eat more fruit (bran, greens, etc.); or exercise each day, or whatever.

But if eating fruit is going to be good for me next January, why wouldn't it be good for me this November? Likewise a 30-minute walk three times a week?

Or quitting smoking? Or talking with newcomers? Or getting to a Big Book Study? Or listening to my sponsor.

If today I know the solution, today is probably a good time to start putting it into effect. It's not too late in the day to start saying little prayers.

A resolution is a convenient way of putting off the action until tomorrow; that's procrastination. My sponsor tells me that's deadly. What were your New Year's Resolutions, and would your life have been better if you'd implemented them last November?

Chris G. Bloordale Group

"If you are looking for something in this newsletter to criticize, you will find it. We aim to please everyone." The editors.

Joe McQ.

Many of us consider the 'Big Book' to be the most important piece of literature that we have read and attribute the miracles in our lives to its Twelve Steps. Rightly so. They are the essence of our recovery.

Joe McQ. recognized this, being a devoted student of the Big Book. When he met Charlie P. in 1973 at an Al-Anon Conference where they were both speakers, it was the basis of a life-long friendship. Their mutual love for the indispensable text of AA jelled and over time, the two presented the "Joe and Charlie Big Book Study" to enthusiastic members of AA. It took them across North America on speaking engagements.

In 1962, Joe was detoxed, courtesy of the state of Arkansas. As a black man, there were precious few resources available but AA was. However, due to the time period with its the lack of social bonding, he made it his mission to found an offshoot of AA for others which he called Serenity House, even before it was a house, in Little Rock. Eventually it became Serenity Park and was available to anyone, black or white, penniless or professional, alcoholic or drug addict. His service to treatment centres, government, industry, penal systems, and higher education and self-help groups expressed his philosophy that we 'do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God'. Joe celebrated 45 years of sobriety March 10, 2007. He often said that if he wasn't an alcoholic, he probably would not have amounted to anything. On October 25th, 2007, Joe passed on after succumbing to pneumonia. He was 79 years of age. He was the author of two books, one of which, "The Steps We Took", was published in 1990. It is a constant and enduring discourse of the how we recover and a treasured resource on my book shelf.

Bernadette MacL.
King City Group

Recent Medallions:

Spud S.	20	East York	Jan 1
Grace C.	5	King City	Jan 7
Greg S.	1	Bloordale	Jan 15
Bob M.	35	Anniversary	Jan 19
Bill S.	35	Anniversary	Jan 19
George K.	15	Mississauga	Jan 27
Michael R.	1	Erin Mills	Jan 21
Gord S.	15	East York	Jan 29

Upcoming Medallions:

Scott B.	1	Erin Mills	Feb 4
Steve S.	1	East York	Feb 5
Gus P.	5	Westmoreland	Feb 5
Barb M.	15	Bloordale	Feb 6
Ralph W.	15	Aurora	Feb 10
Laurie H.	15	Aurora	Feb 10
Catherine M.	1	Westmoreland	Feb 12
Jeannine C.	25	Newmarket	Feb 14
Ted B.	30	Bayview	Feb 17
Peter R.	5	Aurora	Feb 17
Mary R.	20	Birds of a Feather	Feb 17
Norma Z.	20	King City	Feb 17
Lyle G.	40	Thornccliffe	Feb 22
Lionel L.	20	Westmoreland	Feb 22
Cathy Z.	5	Amazing Grace	Feb 26

New Meetings:

The Oasis Club, Tues, closed disc mtg, based on a story from Grapevine Magazine. Meeting at 7pm, 2nd Floor, 720 Broadview Ave. First bldg. south of Loblaws, west side of Broadview. First mtg was held Dec 18

Fifth Tradition Discussion Grp (C) (Scarb.); Wed. 6:30 – 7:30pm; Konk Church of Toronto, 398 Kennedy Rd at Danforth Rd. Open topic disc. Mtg. followed by speaker mtg at 8pm, same location. NO DISCUSSION MTG the 1st Wed of the month.

Happy Valley Grp, Sat, 2pm, Speaker mtg. Knights of Columbus Hall, 10 Harlech Ct., Thornhill, ON (near Bayview & Green Lane).

Pourquoi Pas Grp (restarted), 22 College St., Sat 11am

Meeting Changes:

Newmarket Grp LOCATION CHANGE to 460 Oak St. (Sun, 2pm and 8pm, Wed, 7:30pm, Thur, 8pm, and Sat at noon). Tues noon meet. still on at St Timothy location.

What are you taking to the meetings?
Your recovery or your disease?

Brampton Recovery Grp LOCATION CHANGE:12 step mtg (formerly held @ Loafers Lake Brampton). New location: Chris Gibson Rec. Ctr. Youth Room, 125 McLaughlin Rd N, Brampton; Sat 11am

Dry on Danforth Grp (C) Tues 12:30pm, Metro Oasis Club bsmt, 921 Danforth Ave, (Donlands subway) Steps 1-12 disc. And BB pp 1-118 disc.

Events:

KF Group will be celebrating its 40th anniversary on Feb. 9
Valentine's Dance Clean & Sober; Sat. Feb. 16, 7:30 pm; Erin Mills United Church, Winston Churchill & The Collegeway, Mississauga, ON (run by AA members in Mississauga); tickets \$10 (advance) and \$15 (at the door). Linda B, 905-601-0976

Streetsville Action Group is celebrating its 25th anniversary on Feb. 20

Lakeshore Grp celebrates its **60 year anniversary** on Feb 24

Ontario Regional Conference Mar. 14, 15 & 16 2008 at Fairmont Royal York Hotel. 3 Day registration \$30, Early Bird Registration Draw Monthly. For Tickets and Information please contact www.aatoronto.org or email: orc@aatoronto.org or phone 416-487-2677

2008 Spring-A-Thon, Fri, Apr. 25, 6pm to 10pm; Sat, Apr 26, 9am –midnight; Travelodge Hotel, 1376 Carling Ave & Queensway, Ottawa, ON
www.ottawaaa.org
www.travelodgeottawa.com/hotelhome/

50th International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (ICYPAA), July 3 to 6, 2008, Oklahoma City.

GREATER TORONTO AREA INTERGROUP MONTHLY BOARDROOM BOOKINGS FOR SUB-COMMITTEES

*Subcommittees meet at the Intergroup Office (234 Eglinton Ave E, Suite 202)

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES:

Every first Monday of the month at 7 pm

SELF-SUPPORT:

Every first Wednesday of the month at 7 pm

GRAPEVINE:

Every second Thursday of the month at 7 pm

ARCHIVES:

Every second Friday of the month at 7:00 pm

WEBSITE:

Every second Saturday of the month at 1 pm

COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (CPC):

Every second Monday of the month at 7 pm

ACCESS ABILITY:

Every third Sunday of the month at 11 am

PHONE TRAINING SESSION:

Every third Sunday of the month at 1:30 pm

PUBLIC INFORMATION:

Every third Monday of the month at 7:30 pm

TREATMENT FACILITIES:

Every third Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm

INFORMATION AA DAY:

Every last Monday at 7:30 pm

TWELFTH STEP:

Every last Friday of the month at 6:30 pm

FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE*:

Second-last Tuesday of the month at 4:30 pm

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

OPERATING COMMITTEE*:

Second-last Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm

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

Better Times NEWSLETTER:

Last Wednesday of the month before the Intergroup meeting, 7:30 pm

THE MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING of GTA INTERGROUP is held on the last Tuesday of the month at 8 pm at the Glebe Road United Church - 20 Glebe Rd E, off Yonge St. (near Davisville subway)

Phone 234 to ensure the meeting you want to attend isn't cancelled during any particular month...

Membership in AA and Group

My group is the foundation of my sobriety. It encourages me to make a commitment to the process of AA, to be of service, and to get to know a small group of alcoholics who are a part of my support. I have belonged to four groups in twenty five years and never more than one at a time! The basics of AA include going to meetings, getting a sponsor, and joining a group.

Lately it has come to my attention that some people are joining more than one group. I can see several issues from this decision. Service work is impossible at two groups. Where does a person receive a medallion when appropriate? This token is given, not just because you stayed sober, but as recognition from your group for your contribution. Have you ever heard a speaker introduced as a member of two groups?

Somehow belonging to two groups suggests lack of commitment. When I arrived at AA I did not have any idea of discipline, trust, loyalty or commitment. It is in my group that I am offered the lesson to learn these values.

There are other concerns such as voting at business meetings – double representation. Financial commitment and active service to two groups makes no sense whatever.

I quote from a source online: "There are the 12 Traditions of AA that we adhere to strictly and there are the unwritten traditions of AA. Things work in a certain way in AA, have for 73 years, and will continue to work that way for years to come. It is called the 'unwritten traditions' within our spiritual fellowship."

Join a group, be committed and attend lots of other groups!

Andrea W.
King City Group

Happy New Year!

Another New Year's come and gone. This year's 30th annual event was a wonderful night with attendance up 40%.

Dances have been an integral part of the fellowship since the 30's, and it's always satisfying to see old and new faces co-mingling in a relaxed informal atmosphere. People are starting to get used to the fact that the dance is now starting at 10 p.m. The spiritual service is scheduled again for next year at 11:15 as well! For those who were feeling a bit hungry, I should reiterate that the buffet is potluck. Hey, that's the way it's always been, it helps remind us of our humble beginnings when everyone shared. Perhaps that's more important now, so we don't lose our connection with the roots of our program and those who came before.

People as always had lots of suggestions to improve things. But the one thing that



would really improve things is helping out. I don't mean showing up the night of, offering to help, although that's a nice gesture. I mean join the committee; have a hand in the planning and preparation; and help in the clean-up New Year's Day. I'd like to thank everyone who did help set-up, especially Jim A. and Tim R. for being there once again. Thanks, Francis, for chairing the AI-Anon meeting, and Craig for putting the food together and making it look so delicious. Ryan, a pal from my home group, was an unexpected help to us all.

Hoping you're all having a great new year. We'll see you all next December!

John P., Welcome Group

December '07 Intergroup Report

Finance Report: Chris H. (Friendly), Finance Member. Looking for members for the Finance Committee. Bar Graph: +3,915 this month. YTD: up +14,443. iMoving in the right direction. Regarding new FC members: Ida is rotating out, as is Jackie and Chris. Suggested 5 yrs sobriety and some business background good, but not required. Please send service / relevant employment experience resumes c/o Operating to 234. Questions were entertained from Floor.

Subcommittee Reports

ad hoc Recommendation Committee: Lynn B. (City Central), Chairperson. Attended Joint Sharing; a lot of discussion via districts and Area interested in proposed changes. Main concerns: that none of the functions get lost! Best way to avoid this: ongoing dialogue with districts and Area. We formed a focus group to revitalize the Twelfth Step Committee. It's in trouble; they only have four members; also, 12 Step list not functioning well. This committee will meet with 12 Step to share ideas and solutions. Also give members some 'homework': what does the ideal Intergroup look like? We need to get proactive on this issue. Need feedback on this for next month's General Meeting. Discussion ensued.

Mostly positive feedback on efforts of this subcommittee. There will be some 'various serious issues' that are coming down the pike. Changes have to come from the Floor.

Access Ability: Tom S. (Saturday Morning Disc.), member. Dec 3rd, had a display table at Variety Village; also had a table at another event. Met with Ann Johnson Health Centre regarding Access Ability initiatives.

Newsletter: Marv W. (Streetsville Action), Chairperson. The Floor gave this committee applause for all their hard work. Literature Clerk requirement mentioned. Please send all medallion/anniversary announcements to bettertimes@aatoronto.org.

Archives: Bob (Weston), 1st Chairperson. The Archives Breakfast was 'in the black' (about \$360). A full report of the event will come in January. Repository is up and running. Request from Vancouver lady; trying to start an Archives out there. This must go to the committee first, then will take this to the Floor in future.

Corrections: John M. (Thornhill), Liaison. Innovative meeting at Keele Centre (Halfway House) introducing 'Bridging the Gap'; it was well-attended. These meetings can be attended by any member. Niels is resigning as of June 1, 2008. 'This is a very dynamic subcommittee'. Resumes c/o the Operating Committee to 234.

CPC: Courtney R., member. Asking GSRs for five minutes for a presentation at each district table meeting

re: folders and holders.

Grapevine, Information AA Day: no report

ORC 2008: Stephanie L, Liaison – all going well.

Public Information: Tom S. (Saturday Morning Disc.), Chairperson. Rotating out. P.I. Initiatives are still ongoing. Goals: 'Fight apathy within the Fellowship'. Thanked for opportunity to serve.

Reception: 3 guests and 30 reps tonight.

Self-Support: John P. (Welcome), Chairperson. Will be resigning next month. Call for resumes.

Treatment, Twelfth Step: no report.

Website: Fran H. (Kingsway), Chairperson. Andy (Webmaster) is working away at the meeting database. Might rearrange a few items. Any comments or suggestions, please contact this committee. Stephanie wondered if the ORC pages are going up; Fran asked ORC to send on their materials.

Winter Season Open House: Aaron, Liaison. VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED. Event starts at about 8 a.m. and goes on to about 6 p.m.

Unfinished Business from Previous Meetings: Aaron announced that Mike K. will be resigning from the 12 Step Committee; he is moving in Feb. Resumes to 234.

New Business: none.

Next General Meeting: Tues., Jan. 29 at 8 p.m.