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Greeter Captains and Greeters Required!

Looking for volunteers for the Ontario Regional Conference.

Please email us at: orc@aatoronto.org or call 416-487-5591

Leave message for Tim R.

ORC 2009 THE JOY OF LIVING

The excitement is gearing up! The 2009 ORC is fast approaching! We look forward to sharing a weekend of sobriety with you. Below are some of our experiences. See you there!

**Kathleen MacD, RoxGlen Traditional Group,
Chairperson 2009 ORC**

My experience with the ORC started as a greeter when I was 6 months sober. I knew some things well (I could never drink again) and some things not so well (... at least I'll get in for free to this thing, whatever it is). I was stationed at a stairwell on the mezzanine level, overlooking the lobby on the Friday afternoon and I saw the place literally come alive. These weren't the business people I expected to see at a hotel like this; they were all laughing, kinda' goofy people who shook my one hand with both of theirs. Frankly, some of them scared me, and I don't scare easily. I met a special friend that day that I still have to this one, and I'll never forget the wonder I took away on the Sunday evening. I think only another AA can understand how "included" I felt after that experience. It has been the basis for whatever service I've been able to give since.

Mel C., The Hill Group, ORC 2009 Registration Chair

My first ORC was 23 years ago, when I was about 4 months sober. My husband had been in the Program for about three years; however, he had never attended a conference before. We were amazed at the welcome we received on that first Friday night; all those happy, smiling faces and sober people. The speaker was a Texan with an incredibly powerful message; so powerful that we came home that night and played the tape of his talk for our daughters. We returned for more on Saturday, then again on Sunday. The entire weekend could have been quite overwhelming had it not been for the hospitality suite that our group sponsored. (There were many more suites like this a few years ago.) Being able to go up and see some familiar faces, "put our feet up", and have a little quiet time between sessions became so important that first year. Since then, we have come to meet and get to know so many beautiful people. We look forward to seeing them every year, and making new friends as well. I do not think we have ever missed a conference, and plan to attend many more.

**Judy and Ron B., The Oakville Group
Greeter and P.I. Committee ORC**

I attended my first ORC in 2002, when I was eighteen months sober. I wasn't sure what to expect but my sponsor, Geoff, who was very enthusiastic about the program and about the ORC, said, "It's like a pep rally for AA". If you had told me a year -and-a-half earlier that I would be excited to attend an event described as a pep rally for AA, I would have laughed in your face.... or passed out drunk in my own sick.

But I showed up at the Royal York with an open mind ... and was promptly greeted by about seventeen different people (which I now know were part of the greeting committee). It was very welcoming and very overwhelming. I enjoyed the energy and fellowship of the event but, still a bit shy, stuck by Geoff's side. Which I suppose is why we were referred to as Batman and Robin. Either that or they thought I'd look good in green underwear and a yellow cape.

But Geoff didn't lie. Sitting through the opening night speaker, I was moved to tears. I wasn't used to crying, certainly not in public, but as I tried to inconspicuously brush the tear away, I noticed Geoff wiping a tear from his eye. He nodded to me and I nodded back...this AA thing was pretty good.

I left the final speaker that Friday night deeply moved and excited about God, AA and the miracle of sobriety. I haven't missed an ORC since that first year and this year will have the privilege to serve as the chair for the Newcomer's Room. I get to sit down with people new to AA and attending their first ORC, and like Geoff did with me six years ago, share my enthusiasm for this program, this conference and this miracle called sobriety. It doesn't get much better than that.

**Adam N., Welcome Group
ORC 2009 Newcomers Room**

ORC Announces Early Bird Draw Winners

We are pleased to announce that Barbara Q. of the Friendly Group (Ticket #31) is the first winner of the ORC Early Bird Pre-registration draw. Barbara has won a full set of CDs with all the ORC Speakers. Our second early bird draw winner is Martie B. (Ticket #8) of New Life AFG, Owen Sound. Winners should go to the Pre-Registration Table at the Conference to pick up their prize coupons.

Congratulations, Barbara and Martie!

There will be one more Early Bird draw in February... pre-register now for a chance to win!

When we think of “archives” in A.A., we tend to review the very beginnings of this “unorganization”.

In truth, each of us has our own personal archive of memories from our first meetings, our first contacts and our hesitant first steps on the path to recovery.

While I like to think of myself as positively youthful, the inescapable truth is that I have been around these rooms since the spring of 1967 and have been without a drink since early January of 1969.

The holiday season is a time of looking back for everyone. Those of us who celebrate our anniversaries during this period usually have particularly vivid recollections.

As the years have passed, we either think the meetings and members are much the same as they have always been or we come to believe that it “ain’t like the good old days”. In fact, both thoughts are somewhat accurate. The folks who join with us now and the purpose of the meetings have really changed little; however, in some ways there have been subtle, gradual changes.

For example, when I first went to the Unionville Group, there were no female members. It wasn’t a men’s group but the only women that attended were the wives of members. These women made the coffee and brought loaves of sandwiches to be consumed after the meetings (which were generally 90 minutes to two hours in length).

Newcomers seemed to have lower “bottoms” than many do today. When I arrived, I still barely had a job and a wife and a car, so a few didn’t hesitate to question whether or not I “belonged”.

Of course the only area treatment centres were the Donwood Clinic (Dr. Gordon Bell) or the Ontario Government’s Addiction Research Foundation. Some of the “treatments” suggested folks could “learn” how to drink responsibly.

Certainly, none of the guys in meetings that I attended in those early years were

inclined to hold hands at the conclusion of the evening and the practice of responding to a reading of the “promises” with the affirmation “we think not” would have been greeted with alarm.

A grizzled senior member was a person with an average of 5 years sobriety — which seemed to me to be impossible to attain. Most of the grouchy old buggers were at least 50. There were not a lot of young people around and hardly anyone ever mentioned drugs and when they did, they were quickly silenced.

It was common for people to get to meetings at least a half hour before they started so they could chat with their new pals and hardly anyone went straight home after. At Unionville, we put out tables and chairs and often stayed for an hour or more before the coffee man flicked the lights.

A.A. wasn’t better then — it was just different. More people came from places like box cars and skid row and had a history of drinking interesting substitutes.

Sponsors like Bob D. and Tommy H. would contact you daily and take you to meetings all over the area to get you started.

We talk about the two by four treatment with reverence now — but it has been romanticized — it was merely the unvarnished truth quickly and firmly spoken when a person needed it.

So here I am, some 40 years later, looking back with admiration and gratitude at the many, many people who so freely gave of their time to help me recover.

My Unionville Group is at least 50% female now and most are better, more active members than I. Many have been a great help to me. Sure we hold hands and, would you believe, we even hug on occasion.

Some methods have changed but the message of hope remains a constant.

John G.. Unionville Group

‘B.’ Was Sober Last Week

‘B.’ has been attending meetings in our corner of Toronto for the last while. Middle-aged, snaggle-toothed, street-worn. Drunk, usually. Loud and disruptive, most nights.

He was at my home group Christmas Eve. Drunk and loud. Weaving up and down the aisles, looking for someone to lend him a lighter so he could go out for a smoke. Slurring so close to my face that I could smell the whisky. Someone brought him a coffee and he settled down near the back for part of the meeting.

He was at my home group on New Year’s Eve. I was in the kitchen serving coffee and overheard someone comment, “‘B.’s here again tonight. Yippee.”

‘B.’ came to the kitchen serving window and asked for a cup of tea. Still middle-aged, snaggle-toothed, street-worn. But tonight, sober. And clean. Clean and sober.

“How are you, ‘B.’? What’s up?” He said quietly, “I realized that I could keep drinking and die, or try to stop and get to live”. Took his tea and sat down to listen for the whole meeting.

Stay a little longer. Try a little harder. Don’t leave before the miracle happens to you.

Roy R.

TIME!

Remember that when talking of time,
To get to two you have to start
with one,
That takes time, but then again,
who’s counting?
We never did!
That meant nothing to us in
The past and yet now,
it means so much!
To us!

Now we are able to
let that time go so that
Another time can take its place.
But, only this time
We have the right time!
So let’s do it!

**Jim M.
Danforth Group**

haveyouheard

Recent Medallions:

Fred O.	1	East York Group	December 30
Gillian H.	1	Pine Hills Group	January 12
Dave W.	10	Pine Hills Group	January 19
Shirley M.	1	Back to Basics	January 23
Gary W.	1	Erin Mills Group	January 26
Michael S.	1	Back to Basics	January 30

Upcoming Medallions:

Sharon M.	15	Mississauga Group	February 1
Mike G.	20	Armour Heights Group	February 2
John G.	40	Unionville Group	February 4
Lynda W.	20	Unionville Group	February 4
Tom C.	25	Sunnyside Group	February 5
Craig B.	1	Back to Basics	February 6
Lenora C.	15	Tues Night Women's Grp	February 6
Phil F.	15	Back to Basics	February 6
Diane S.	1	Bloordale Group	February 8
Hilda S.	25	King City Group	February 9
Corina M.	1	East York Group	February 10
John T.	5	Lakeshore Group	February 15
Laurie D.	5	East York Group	February 17
Debbie X.	1	Rouge Valley Group	February 19
Denny R.	15	Back to Basics	February 20
Murielle L.	1	Lakeshore Group	February 22
Donna Z.	15	Rouge Valley Group	March 19
Doug M.	1	Rouge Valley Group	March 26

Meeting Changes:

New St Andrews Saturday Night Meeting (O) Saturday (NORTHEAST): Meeting time has been changed to 7:30 pm.

Royal York Group (O) Tuesday (WEST): Meeting time has been changed to 8 pm.

Midtown Group (C/O) Tuesday/Thursday (CENTRAL): Open speaker meeting now Sunday at 8pm at Trinity St Pauls Church, 427 Bloor St W, 1 block west of Spadina. Closed discussion Mon at 7:30pm, at Trinity St Pauls Church.

Silverbirch Group (O) Friday (EAST): Moved to St Johns Norway Anglican Church at 470 Woodbine Ave. Note we are now Wheelchair Accessible and AASL are welcome.

Deer Park Group (O) Mondays 8pm (CENTRAL): is now a closed discussion meeting. The last Monday of each month will be an Open speaker meeting.

The Grapevine Group (C) Tuesday (CENTRAL): Has a new venue at the Alano Club at 740 Broadview Ave on the 1st floor at 8pm. Closed discussion on as Bill Sees It.

Strength in Recovery Group (SUBURBAN WEST): Our meeting Mon. at 8pm are suspended until further notice. Any help in finding a new venue would be appreciated.

Monday Night Big Book Discussion (C) (EAST): New location at St. John's Norway Church, 470 Woodbine Ave.

Mount Royal-York Group (C) Thursdays (CENTRAL): Address change to St. Michael's Cathedral, Parish Hall, 66 Bond St., side door.

New Meetings:

Kennedy Park Group Discussion (C) Monday 6:30pm (EAST): Konko Church of Toronto, 398 Kennedy Rd, SW

corner of Kennedy & Danforth. Open Speaker meeting follows at 8 pm.

The Great Fact Discussion (C) (Men's) Tuesdays 8 pm (CENTRAL): Trinity St Paul's Church, 427 Bloor St West, 1 block west of Spadina, south side of Bloor.

Discontinued Meetings:

Stepping Up Group (C) Thurs 7 pm (WEST) is discontinued.

Announcements:

The Bayview Group will be hosting **Bayview's Annual Young People Meeting** Sun Feb 8th 2009 at 8 pm. Five speakers under the age of 30. All are Welcome

Rexdale United Group presents **AA Round Up** Sat Feb 21, 9am – 5pm. St. Paul the Apostle Anglican Church, 2182 Kipling Avenue (beside Duca Credit Union). Speakers, Fellowship and Lunch

51st International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous will be held in Atlanta, Georgia on May 21st - 24th, 2009. For more information see www.aatoronto.org/beyond_gta_events.php

44th Annual Blossom Time Convention will be held in Niagara Falls, Ontario on May 1st - 3rd, 2009 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. For more information, visit our website at www.blossomtimeconvention.com

22nd Annual Salt City Round-up will be held in Syracuse, New York on February 13th - 15th, 2009. For more information visit our website at www.saltcityroundup.com.

GREATER TORONTO AREA INTERGROUP MONTHLY BOARDROOM BOOKINGS FOR SUB-COMMITTEES

Correctional Facilities:

1st Mon. of the month at 7 pm at 234

Self-Support:

1st Wed. of the month at 7 pm at 234

Archives:

2nd Fri. of the month at 7 pm at 234

Website &

Better Times Newsletter:

2nd Sat. of the month at 1 pm at 234

Cooperation with the

Professional Community (CPC):

2nd Mon. of the month at 7 pm at 234

Access Ability:

3rd Sun. of the month at 11 am at 234

Phone Training Session:

3rd Sun. of the month at 1:30 pm at 234

Public Information:

3rd Mon. of the month at 7:30 pm at 234

Treatment Facilities:

3rd Thurs. of the month at 7:30 pm at 234

Information AA Day:

Last Mon. at 7:30 pm at 234

Twelfth Step:

Last Fri. of the month at 6:30 pm at 234

Finance Subcommittee*:

Second-last Tuesday of the month at 4:30 pm at 234

Operating Committee*:

Second-last Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm at 234

Monthly General Meeting of GTA

Intergroup is held on the last Tues. of the month at 8pm at the Glebe Road United Church – 20 Glebe Rd E, off Yonge St. (near Davisville subway).

To ensure that the meeting you want isn't cancelled in a particular month, please phone the office at 234.

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

All Subcommittees meet at the Intergroup Office
234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 202

Why We Pay

This Conference is a special event:

While parts of this conference have a format similar to a regular AA meeting, the Ontario Regional Conference is NOT a regular meeting as such. It is a regional celebration of our sobriety and many extra costs are incurred, such as room rentals, speakers' expenses, printing (flyers, posters, programs), badges, etc.

No group monies are spent on the Conference and no scheduled weekly AA meetings have been cancelled. As stated in our Seventh Tradition, "We are fully self-supporting through our own contributions". All registrations are paid for, including those of Committee members. As responsible AA members, we pay our own way,

From files and AA Conference Guidelines.

You Are Never Alone

In 'Language of the Heart', Bill W. wrote about the Cleveland Conference in 1950, and described a meeting with the lone representative of AA in the Marshall Islands ('We Came of Age', pages 117-124). Although this gentleman was, truly, a "loner", he steadfastly maintained to Bill that he wasn't alone in AA, and that his group had three members: "God, the book Alcoholics Anonymous, and me."

It was people like him that carried the message in the early days of our fellowship when membership was small and hopes were high. When I first read that passage, I was blown away by his belief, and now I know that no matter how far I am from a meeting of AA in terms of physical miles, I am, surely, no further away than the length of my own arm, whether it's to pick up a copy of the Big Book, Grapevine or other AA material, or to phone my sponsor (well, yes, maybe I don't do that as much as I should!).

I'm fortunate that where I work I am, literally, just five minutes walk from a noon meeting, Monday through Friday. Of course, I'm not able to get to a meeting every day; work commitments preclude me from doing that. But every day when I drive to work, I have at least a copy of "Language of the Heart" in my backpack and, often, there's the latest copy of "The Grapevine" too. So if I can't get to a lunchtime meeting, when I sit down in the Staff Room at lunchtime I, too, can enjoy a three-way meeting just as that gentleman from the Marshall Islands did way back in Cleveland in 1950.

No matter how bad a day I've had... or even how good a day I've had — I know days like that can be just as dangerous as bad ones... I can have my few minutes of meditation, of quiet, to move closer to that inner serenity and calmness that has become more and more part of my life ever since I made that monumental decision (or, rather, ever since someone or something — God as I understand him — made that monumental decision for me!) to at least take that first step into the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

And what an amazing journey it's been! Every day now is wonderful; I can stop and smell the roses, instead of falling into them; I can enjoy the song of a bird high up in a tree, instead of wanting it to shut up because of my throbbing headache and last night's hangover; I can enjoy being with my wife and family, instead of spending all my time with them plotting the next drink... or, as it usually turned out, the next drunk.

I am not perfect; I never will be (except, perhaps, in the dark days before I came into the fellowship, when I was often a perfect idiot!) But, as our program teaches me, I can have perfect goals, as long as I don't expect to attain them today... or tomorrow ... or even the day after that.

As Bill also wrote in 'Language of the Heart' ('Humility for Today', pages 254-259), "Don't try to get too damned good by Thursday!" — those early AA's sure knew what they were talking about! I try to listen!

Peter B.
Streetsville Action Group

December '08: Intergroup Report

Finance Report: Gregg W. (Rox Glen Traditional), Finance Chairperson — Proposed 2009 budget presented. Items listed for consideration: a donations figure decrease by 10%; an anticipated reduction of literature sales. Expenses are estimated at \$218,600 with a 'break-even' budget of +\$2,500.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Access Ability: Tom S. (Saturday Morning Disc.) — Access Ability will be involved in the upcoming 'People in Motion' Conference at Exhibition Place. As this is a national conference, GSO covers the costs for participating in the event. Next mtg: Sun. Jan. 18 at 11 am at 234.

Archives: Bob D. (Weston Sunday Open) — Bob reminded Reps to return monies/tickets from the Archives Breakfast in Nov. Bob also thanked a member for her donation of a laptop computer. The committee has created a sign-off sheet for archival materials received. Next mtg: Fri. Jan. 9 at 7 pm.

Corrections: Niels B. (Hill) — The aim of combined meeting is to provide info about the GTA Correctional Facilities process. We will suggest ways for the new C.F. Chairs can best do C.F. work, as well as suggested local activities for each district. Next mtg: Sat. Jan. 3 at 3 pm at 234.

CPC: Next mtg: Mon. Jan. 12 at 7 pm.

Info AA Day 2009: Jim A. (Leslie) — This is a joint Intergroup/9 Service District venture and will take place on May 30 2009. Theme is 'Service with Gratitude' and is celebrating its 30th year. GSO Speaker will be Mary D. and the day will also feature an address from our Area 83 Delegate. Tickets: \$5 lunch included. Next mtg: Mon.

Jan. 26 at 7:30 pm at 234.

ORC 2009: Kathleen McD., 2009 Chair — Early-bird draw for those who register early. Pre-registration deadline is Mar. 6 and registration is \$30. Volunteer forms for Greeters at the ORC are available at 234 and on website. Committee accepting gifts from groups /members for Newcomer room. Theme is 'The Joy of Living' and will be held at the Fairmont-Royal York Hotel on March 20, 21, and 22.

Public Information: Next mtg: Mon. Jan. 19 at 7:30 pm.

Treatment Facilities: Next mtg: Thurs. Jan. 16 at 7:30 pm.

Twelfth Step: Tom S. (Saturday Morning Disc.) — Committee held a Volunteer Appreciation Day on Dec 14. 50 people were in attendance. Next mtg: Fri. Jan. 30 at 6:30 pm.

Website/Better Times: Elaine G. (Port Credit), Newsletter Co-Editor — "Things We Cannot Change" insert will be in the Feb. issue; deadline is Jan. 10. The website is receiving 1,000 hits a day. Brian is the new Alternate Webmaster. Next mtg: Sat. Jan. 10 at 1 pm.

Winter Season Open House: Marv W. (Mississauga) — 9 people serve on this committee. Set-up begins at 7 am. Program includes three closed mtgs, an Al-Anon mtg, an AA keynote speaker and a Gratitude Mtg.

Reception: Rick Mc.C (Six Points) — 39 reps/alternates, and 7 districts/Chairs were represented tonight. 7th Tradition: \$132.18

NEW BUSINESS

Bill M., Operating Chair, asked for ORC 2011 Chairperson resumes.

Next General Meeting: Tues. Jan 27 at 8 pm at Glebe Rd United Church.

OVERHEARD AT A MEETING!

