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BETTER TIMES Published monthly for AA members in the Greater Toronto Area. 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 202, Toronto, ON M4P 1K5 Telephone: 416-487-5591 Fax: 416-487-5855 TTY: 416-487-5062 Email: bettertimes@aatoronto.org Web: aatoronto.org/btimes.html
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How To Reach Us: Submit group news, medallions, other event notices, letters to the editor or articles to *BETTER TIMES* (before the 10th of the month prior to the month of issue), by mail, fax or email. Only signed submissions with a means of contact will be accepted. For subscriptions call Alexx 416-487-8110.

2009 Ontario Regional Conference is coming March 20 – 22 at the Fairmount Royal York.

Pre-register for the ORC by March 6th to qualify for the Early Bird Draw!

Niagara Blossom Time Convention

In May of 1964, the very first Blossom Time Convention was held in Niagara Falls. It was held on the Mother's Day weekend of May 8th, 9th and 10th at the Brock Hotel. Except for 1965 and 2005, when the World Conference was held in Toronto, it has been attracting visitors from all over. This year marks the 44th anniversary of the convention.

That first convention was planned and organized by a group of members who worked hard at making it a success. They approached the Brock Hotel, as it offered lots of meeting space and a wonderful banquet facility. It was probably the only place that could accommodate the number of people they hoped would attend. They also invited Al-Anon and Alateen to take part. As a result, not only did attendees have the chance to see Niagara Falls and all its attractions, they could also take part in the convention as a family. It was to be a wonderful experience.

According to records, about 280 people paid \$3.00 per plate to attend the banquet and hear the main speaker. I don't know how many registered, but I know that in spite of their best effort, the committee lost about \$200.00. This money was covered by some of the committee out of their pockets. In 1966, another committee was selected. Guidelines were set up and the convention was on its way again. Guests from all over Canada and the United States have come and occasionally, visitors from England, Ireland and even

Jamaica have attended. Many wonderful speakers have come share their experience, strength and hope.

In 2007, we were at a crossroad. Due to circumstances beyond our control, it was getting harder to cover expenses. We either cut our losses and not have another convention or do something that would attract AA members back to the convention. A few years back, the convention was moved from the Brock and Niagara Falls, so the obvious solution was to bring it back to Niagara Falls. A number of different hotels were approached about holding the convention at their venue. In the end, it was the Brock that was chosen. So in May, 2008, the Blossom Time Convention returned to Niagara Falls and to what is now the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The name has changed a few times since 1964 but it felt like coming home to me. It was wonderful to be back.

This year, on May 1st, 2nd and 3rd, the Blossom Time Convention will once again be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. It promises to be a great weekend filled with great speakers and activities. It will be a good time to connect with new friends and re-connect with old ones. Registration is available online at www.blossomtimeconvention.com or flyers have been mailed to all the Intergroup offices. Bring your family or bring a friend. Hope to see you there!!!

Peggy N., BTC Committee Member

Sunnyside 60th Group Anniversary

On March 17, 1949, Parkdale had its first AA Meeting, at the newly formed Sunnyside Group.

For the past 60 years it had its doors continually open — and that through four changes of location. Many Old Timers belonged through that time from Marg B. (48), Mel R. (48), Jack T. (52), Bill G. (53), Don C. (53), Frank L. (54), Gord G. (54), Bill P. Sr. (55), Wally H. (55) to Shakey Bob (60).

The latter is responsible for establishing the group in Service, a tradition kept since then and perpetuated by a fresh crop of newer members.

In 1951, Mel R. left the Sunnyside to form the Friendly Group, because Sunnyside was too 'big'. Other members of note were Jack H. who later became Mayor of Cobourg, and Jack T. who started AA in King City by forming a group by that name.

Since the Eastern Ontario Area was established, and Districts were formed, our group has been able to serve the General Service Structure with seven DCM's.

In 1981 we had a sudden growth spurt with 'the Class of 81'. By the end of the following year membership was up to 75. Gradually, the Class of 81 faded away. In 1984 the Sunnyside attracted Tom C. and Lothar S., who both remain members till this day.

The Group now meets at location number four — Bonar Parkdale Presbyterian Church on 250 Dunn Ave, (between King and Queen).

On Thursday March 19th, 2009, the Sunnyside Group will be celebrating its 60th Anniversary. Please note that the new meeting time is 8:00 p.m. We hope to see as many of you there as possible for a great speaker and great hospitality!!!

Sunnyside Group

The Joy of Living

Ontario Regional Conference:
March 20th – 22nd 2009

Conference Schedule

Conference Schedule

FRIDAY MARCH 20TH

	Chair	Speaker(s)	Location	
3:00pm	Panel: Young in AA	Ally A., Toronto, ON	Mike K., Thornhill, ON Nadine C., Toronto, ON	Ballroom
4:30pm	Panel: Service and Action	Lisa B., Ottawa, ON	Maire O'B. Toronto, ON Rodney S., Aurora, ON	Ballroom
5:30pm	AA Open Meeting	Gary C., London, ON	Kevin C., London, ON	Ballroom
7:00pm	Official Opening of the Conference	Conference Chair Opens	Kathleen MacD., Toronto, ON	Cdn Room
7:15pm	AA Open Meeting	Sharon W., Toronto, ON	John A., Dallas, TX	Cdn Room
9:15pm	AA Open Meeting	Ron B., Oakville, ON	Mary Clare L., New York, NY	Cdn Room
10:30pm	AA Talkathon			Ballroom

SATURDAY MARCH 21ST

9:00am	AA Open Meeting	Bernadette M., Richmond Hill, ON	Nancy W., Hamilton, ON	Cdn Room
10:15am	Panel: Relationships in AA	Lara K., Dallas, TX	Bobby Y., Toronto, ON Ed. Y., Toronto, ON	Ballroom
11:00am	AA/AI-Anon Family Panel	Larry E., Barrie, ON	Chuck and Sandy L., Superior, WI	Cdn Room
12:15pm	Panel: AA Steps We Took	Costa D., Toronto, ON	Stephanie B., Toronto, ON Roman R., Toronto, ON	Ballroom
1:00pm	AA Open Meeting	Lisa D., Toronto, ON	Scott T., Coldbrook, NY	Cdn Room
2:30pm	AA Open Meeting	Adam N., Toronto, ON	Jay P., Myrtle Beach, SC	Concert Hall
3:00pm	AI-Anon Main Speaker	Ruby S., Toronto, ON	Beverly B., Lewisville, TX	Ballroom
4:15pm	AA Open Meeting	Jonas McC., Toronto, ON	Sean McC., Toronto, ON	Concert Hall
5:00pm	AA Open Meeting	Marvyn W., Mississauga, ON	Terry R., Hamilton, ON Ruth P., Toronto, ON	Ballroom
5:45pm	Banquet Doors Open			Cdn Room
7:15pm	Banquet and AA Open Meeting	Kathleen MacD., Toronto, ON	Clancy I., Los Angeles, CA	Cdn Room
9:15pm	AA Open Meeting	Loreen T., Toronto, ON	Frank O., Toronto, ON	Concert Hall
	DJ & Dance Party			Cdn Room
10:30pm	AA Talkathon			Ballroom

SUNDAY MARCH 22ND

9:15am	AA Open Meeting	Judy B., Oakville, ON	Marily H., Eugene, OR	Cdn Room
11:00am	AA Open Meeting	Mel C., Toronto, ON	Tim T., Westlake, ON	Cdn Room
1:00pm	Sobriety Countdown	Barbara H., Toronto, ON		Cdn Room
1:15pm	AA Open Meeting	Romana K., Toronto, ON	Kenna M., South Pasadena, CA	Cdn Room
3:00pm	Closing Remarks	Jim B., Toronto, ON		Cdn Room

Why Go To AA?

An AA goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to AA every Week. "I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 experiences over and over. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them.

So, I think I'm wasting my time and the AA People are wasting theirs by talking at all."

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals.

But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this. They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to AA for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

When you are DOWN to nothing... God is UP to something! Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible!

Thank God for our physical AND our spiritual nourishment!

Anonymous

Prayers

Please.

Thank You.

Be with me.

What is your will?

Take away the fear.

Thank you

for this day.

Chris G., Bloordale Group

haveyouheard

Recent Medallions:

Christine B	10	Anniversary Group	February 4
John S.	15	Unionville Group	February 25

Upcoming Medallions:

Burke K	15	Streetsville Action Group	March 4
Margaret M	1	Principles Before Pers.	March 8
Domenic L.	1	Unionville Group	March 11
Carol J	35	Crossroads Group	March 15
Tim R.	1	Unionville Group	March 18
Joyce P.	30	Unionville Group	March 25
Paul McN.	30	Unionville Group	April 1

Meeting Changes:

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

Sunnyside Group Tuesday (C) Thursday (O) (WEST): both meetings now start at 8 pm.

Sober and Living It (C) Saturdays 11 am (NORTH): is a Women's Discussion Meeting

Freedom Friday (C) Fridays 8:15 pm (CENTRAL): There is no meeting held on Statutory Holidays.

Joy in Sobriety (C) Thursdays 8 pm (EAST): Meeting is now a closed Big Book Discussion.

Mount Royal-York Group (O) Thursdays 6 pm (CENTRAL): is located at St Michael's Parish Hall, 66 Bond Street, building across from Cathedral. Use side door; the meeting downstairs.

Midtown Group (C/O) Tuesday/Thursday (CENTRAL): Open speaker meeting 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.

Maple Group (O/C) Thursdays 8:00 pm (SUBURBAN NORTH): Meetings are closed meetings with the exception of the 2nd and Last Thursdays of each month which are Open Meetings.

Melrose Group (C) Fridays 7 pm (WEST): St Matthew's Anglican Church, 3962 Bloor St West, one block west of Shaver on Bloor. East parking lot. Wheelchair accessible.

Melrose Group (O) Saturdays 2 pm (WEST): St Matthew's Anglican Church, 3962 Bloor St West, one block west of Shaver on Bloor. West parking lot. Wheelchair accessible.

New Meetings:

Twelve Steps Group Disc. (C) Thursdays 8 pm (EAST): Birchcliffe Bluffs United Church, 33 East Rd at corner of Kingston Rd and Warden Ave (behind library). Wheelchair access; non-smoking.

Bur Oak Saturday Morning Women's Meeting (C)

Saturdays 10:30 am (SUBURBAN NORTHEAST): Meeting is located at the Rhenish Church of Canada, 2667 Bur Oak Avenue, Markham, Ontario.

973 Group (C) Fridays 7:30pm (CENTRAL): Ossington Christie Neighbourhood Center's shelter at 973 Lansdowne Avenue, south of Dupont (go thorough entrance with big metal gate to the big glassed room on left.

Discontinued Meetings:

Noon Meeting: Thurs noon (C) at the Paulist Center is now discontinued.

Things We Cannot Change:

Richard Y. of the Glenholme Group passed away recently.

Announcements:

Alateen Meeting Sundays 5 pm (CENTRAL): O.I.S.E. Bldg., 252 Bloor St. W., east of St. George (subway) on the 8th floor. It takes place at the same time as the U. of T. open meeting. Alateen meetings are for teenagers (11 to 21 approx.) who have been affected by alcoholism (from parents or family members).

51st International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous will be held in Atlanta, Georgia on May 21 - 24, 2009. For more info visit www.aatoronto.org

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

28th Annual Flower City Fellowship Convention will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Rochester, New York on March 6th - 8th, 2009. For more information on registration visit www.rochester-ny-aa.org.

30th Annual East Valley Intergroup Anniversary Dinner at the First United Methodist Church in Mesa, Arizona on March 7th, 2009. For more information review the event flyer online at www.aatoronto.org

Chatham-Kent's 23rd AA One-Day Round-Up will be held at the Country View Golf Course in Oungah, Ontario on May 2nd, 2009. Doors open at 1:00 pm. For more information review the event flyer online at www.aatoronto.org

First Annual Spring Fling Convention will be held May 22 - 24, 2009 in St. Louis, Missouri. For more information review the event flyer online at www.aatoronto.org

Circle of Hope Roundup will be held May 29 - 31, 2009 in Reading, Pennsylvania. For more information review the event flyer online at www.aatoronto.org

archivesalley

The Preamble

Who wrote A.A.'s Preamble? And when was the word "honest" dropped from it (i.e. "honest desire to stop drinking"), and why?

"Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism."

The Preamble first appeared in the Grapevine in June 1947, and was written by Tom Y., the Grapevine editor at that time. The aim was to offer a concise definition of A.A. Shortly thereafter, the Preamble began appearing in each monthly issue of the Grapevine, and later on in much of our A.A. Conference-approved literature.

It came to be called the preamble because it is so often read at the opening of A.A. meetings.

The original version of the Preamble contained the wording, "an *honest* desire to stop drinking." However, since the adoption of the short form of the Traditions in 1950, the Third Tradition has always read, "*The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking*" and this form was used by Bill in writing the book, *Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions*.

In 1958 the expression "honest desire" was discussed at great length at the General Service Conference. It was felt that it was impossible to determine what constitutes an "honest" desire to stop drinking, thus the word was dropped. The version of the Preamble without the word "honest" first appeared in the September 1958 issue of the Grapevine.

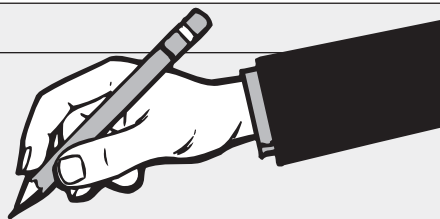
There have been other versions of the Preamble, written by A.A. members for their local groups' use, which were then circulated around A.A.; for example: the "Texas Preamble," the "Wilmington Preamble," etc. Many members find these interesting, though they have never been adopted by the Fellowship as a whole.

Reprinted from Markings – Summer 2008

Write for Better Times

We're always looking for new views and perspectives from members of the GTA fellowship. Here are just a few suggested topics:

- Autonomy - Not Self Will
- What Harms AA?
- Service Work in Your AA Program
- A Sponsor is...
- When Do I Say I'm an AA?
- GTAI Groups Needing Help
- The Wisdom to Know the Difference
- AA Traveling Abroad
- Accepting Acceptance



Or better yet, create your own article topic! All submissions will be considered for the current or future issue of Better Times, however only signed submissions with a means of contact will be accepted.

You may contact us at:

Mail: c/o GTA Intergroup, 202-234 Eglinton Ave. E.,
Toronto ON M4P 1K5

Fax: 416-487-5855 • E-mail: bettertimes@aatoronto.org

January '09: Intergroup Report

Finance Report: Bruce L. (Back to Basics) – IG net income was \$53,000 over budget. Donations were down in December. The new literature price list will be available in July.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Access Ability: Donna McQ. (Sunnyside) – The committee is invited to attend Mayfest (A yearly cultural Festival for the Deaf). Groups asked to list if they will allow ASL interpreters at closed discussions; also reminded to list the group's accessible entrance address if it is different than the main entrance. Next meeting: Sun. Feb. 15 at 11 am at 234.

Archives: Roy R. (Trial & Error) – Still short 25 tickets from the last Archives Breakfast. The 4th annual Archives Workshop will be in April. The Archives Committee Operating Procedures document is complete, pending Operating Committee approval. Next meeting: Fri. Feb. 13 at 7 pm at 234.

Corrections: no report. Next meeting: Wed. Feb. 4 at 7:30 pm at 234.

CPC: Courtney R. (Living Sober) – 5 districts were represented at the last committee meeting. The incoming CPC Chair is Peter B. (Beaches). Next meeting: Mon. Feb. 9 at 7 pm at 234.

Information AA Day: Jim A. (Leslie) – This event is celebrating its 30th year, our theme is "Service with Gratitude" and will take place on Sat., May 30 2009 at the Lansing United Church. Tickets: \$5. Tickets/Flyers will be made available in February. Next meeting: Mon. Feb. 23 at 7:30 pm at 234.

Ontario Regional Conference: Tim R. (Chartwell) – Early-bird draws every month for those who register before March 6. Registration cost is \$30. ORC Greeter Volunteer forms available at 234 and on website. Deadline for ORC Volunteer forms: Feb. 2. ORC — The Joy of Living will be held at the Fairmont-Royal York Hotel on March 20, 21, and 22. Banquet Speaker will be Clancy I. (50 years) from California.

Public Information: no report. Next meeting: Mon. Feb. 16 at 7:30 pm at 234.

Treatment Facilities: Greg H. (Hill) – In District 12, there is a new service meeting at a men's hostel located at 973 Lansdowne Ave. Next meeting: Thurs. Feb. 19 at 7:30 pm at 234.

Twelfth Step: Jim O. (Markland Wood) – Due to general appeal by IG reps for more phone volunteers, committee now has lots of new volunteers. This committee also needs members to serve on this committee as monthly Greeter Captains. One year of continuous sobriety is required. Next meeting: Fri. Feb. 27 at 7 pm at 234.

Website/Newsletter: Marv W. (Mississauga) – Marv will be rotating out as Chair on Jan.30. The February edition of BT is out; featuring the "Things We Cannot Change" insert, listing deceased members who have passed on in 2008. All changes/ requests please e-mail webmaster@aatoronto.org. Next meeting: Sat. Feb. 14 at 1 pm at 234.

Winter Season Open House 2008: Marv W. (Mississauga) – The event was very successful, better attended and had more volunteers than previous years. Expenses for event were \$1,583; donations were \$1,193.93 with a total expense of around \$400.

Reception: Rick McC. (Six Points) – 63 reps/alternates, and 5 districts/Chairs were present this evening. 7th Tradition: \$162.49.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Referendum Results: The recent referendum PASSED by a vote of 64.5% IN FAVOUR of the Motion. 52 out of 195 groups submitted their votes, and the actual numbers were 531 for, 292 against.

Chair requested a Transition Committee be formed to develop a formal document outlining the changes to "make the Procedures and Guidelines a workable document". Target date for document completion is April 28, 2009. All the Districts are encouraged to participate in this process (it was recommended all volunteers have at least one year of continuous sobriety). Chair added this document will be presented to the Floor and could be a very lengthy process. This committee would meet on Saturdays at 234. Anyone interested, please phone 234.

NEW BUSINESS

Florence B. (Noon Rap), Operating Committee member, called for nominations for the Info AA Day 2010 Chairperson. Mary (R&R) nominated Marv W. (Mississauga), and the nomination was seconded by Elaine G. (Port Credit). Marv accepted the nomination, and will be the Chair for the 2010 event.

Bill called for resumes for the ORC 2011 Chair. Deadline for resumes will be Feb.28. Please send all resumes to the Operating Committee c/o 234.

Lynn B. (City Central) asked all former members of the ad hoc committee to meet for discussion.

NEXT GENERAL MEETING: Tuesday February 24 at 8 pm at Glebe Rd United Church (20 Glebe Road East, off Yonge Street.)

GREATER TORONTO AREA INTERGROUP MONTHLY BOARDROOM BOOKINGS FOR SUB-COMMITTEES

Correctional Facilities:
1st Mon. of the month at 7 pm

Self-Support:
1st Wed. of the month at 7 pm

Archives:
2nd Fri. of the month at 7 pm

**Website &
Better Times Newsletter:**
2nd Sat. of the month at 1 pm

**Cooperation with the
Professional Community
(CPC):**
2nd Mon. of the month at 7 pm

Access Ability:
3rd Sun. of the month at 11 am

Phone Training Session:
3rd Sun. of the month at 1:30 pm

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

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

Information AA Day:

Last Mon. at 7:30 pm

Twelfth Step:
Last Fri. of the month at 6:30 pm

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

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

**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.

To ensure that the meeting you
want isn't cancelled, 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

