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Thirty-Five Years Together In AA

When Bobby heard her husband, Ed, ask for help for his drinking, she thought "about time". On New Year's Day, 1974, she phoned Bob T. who was their neighbour, friend and a member of AA. Unable to contact Bob T., she called Ed S., who was Bob's sponsor. Neither particularly liked Ed. He said nasty things like "we're saving a seat for you, Ed". It was a relief when he knocked on their door, late that night, with Bob T. in tow. They both twelve-stepped Ed and 'planted a seed' so that Bobby might recognize her excessive drinking. Ed S. became Ed's sponsor and the reluctant sponsor of Bobby for that first difficult year when she decided that AA would address her alcoholism. Though Ed S. has long since passed away, they say they can still hear the messages of AA recovery he delivered to them in those early days.

It is rare indeed to find a husband and wife in AA with the same dry date. Right from the start, they became actively involved with the program. They held most positions in their home group and have worked with Toronto Intergroup and the ORC for years. Ed is past medical director for Renascent Treatment facilities

with Bobby, his dedicated medical assistant. Ed is a long time member of Doctors in AA. They have been members of several groups in Toronto and are currently members at the Roxglen Traditional group. Spending five months in Florida every year, they faithfully attend the meetings at Monday Night Melrose Park. Any group this distinguished couple graces benefits from their dedication, passion and commitment to AA. They personify the Eleventh Tradition, which states 'attraction rather than promotion'. Their exemplary qualities are those positive characteristics to which we all aspire.

When asked what counsel they would pass on to others, they agreed that 'doing the next right thing' covered it all. As they kneel before sleep, they pray, "Thank You God for this day — please keep on steering and I'll keep on pedaling".

Ed and Bobby Y. will celebrate their 35 years of sobriety at the Roxglen Traditional group Thursday, June 4th. The meeting starts at 8:30 p.m.

Bernadette MacL., King City Group

A View of Service

I caught the service bug right away. I wasn't a year sober (only 7 months) and I was the alternate General Service Representative (GSR). I went to my first Area Assembly in Kingston and loved it! (I think everyone should go to the Assembly, whether they're in service or not.) As an alternate GSR, I knew absolutely nothing, but I went to my group's business meetings religiously. I heard initials like CPC, PI, CF, TF and asked what they were. That's how I became an alternate GSR.

Service and recovery go hand in hand. Service can be many things — setting up chairs and greeting individuals at the door are examples. I'm my group's librarian and it's my most important job. We talk about the upside down triangle model of service in A.A. The people who are busy at the group level are the front line who meet the still suffering alcoholic, and that's our primary purpose.

When I got to A.A., my sponsor went through the 12 Steps and the 12 Traditions with me. Tradition 12 emphasizes principles before personalities, implying that we focus on our primary purpose and not on ego. I was the Chair of the Area 83 Eastern Ontario Committee when I thought about standing as a Delegate to the General Service Conference. There were 2 considerations:

1 – I wanted ensure a 2/3 win by a Delegate rather than a win by acclamation and 2 – What was my rationale — was it ego?

I ran and lost, so I ran for Alternate delegate under the 3rd legacy procedure (2/3 majority vote to win) and won. I always ask myself if it's ego. When your name and the votes you get are displayed on a screen for everyone to see, it can be a very humbling experience.

A.A.'s Service Manual Combined With Twelve Concepts for World Service by Bill W. is a must read for anyone in service or otherwise. It is full of information about service at the district and area level and it has the 12 Concepts with Bill's 12 essays about the 12 Concepts. The way the 12 Steps are focused on personal recovery and the 12 Traditions are focused on our relations with others, the 12 Concepts focus on the business side of A. A. up to the General Service Office (GSO) level.

The GSR is probably the most important position because that person is the link between the group and the GSO. The GSR has the 15 or so bosses (the group), the DCM has about 1500 bosses (the district) and the Delegate has the 15,000 bosses... *continued on page 2*

Father Joseph C. Martin, S.S.

October 12, 1924 – March 9, 2009

My name is Joe Martin, and I'm an alcoholic.

Father Martin first uttered this statement in 1958, when he was in treatment for alcoholism at the Guest House, where he would find refuge from his drinking and where he would come to a turning point in his life. His personal journey in recovery prompted a celebrated career in which his only aim was to ease the suffering of individuals and families affected by addiction.

Father Martin was born in Baltimore, Maryland and quickly developed a fondness for religion and faith. People fondly recall his special story-telling ability and wonderful sense of humor. In 1942, Father Martin graduated from Loyola College and entered St. Mary's seminary. He was ordained a priest in 1948 and underwent rigorous training to become a Sulpician, a highly regarded teaching society within the Catholic Church. After losing this

coveted distinction as a result of his drinking, only in sobriety did he regain this title.

Father Martin taught minor seminarians and fulfilled several teaching roles on his journey in recovery. In his career, spanning more than 35 years, Father Martin was catapulted into international acclaim as a prized speaker and educator on addiction and recovery through the Twelve Steps. He founded Kelly Productions in 1972 and used it as a platform to capture the minds and hearts of millions of people. He will continue to inspire love, service, helpfulness to others, and recovery through the use of his films, audio lectures, and books. In his last year, he shared the vision that the still suffering individual affected by addiction might benefit from his God-inspired message of hope. For more information visit www.fathermartin.com

Frederick T. Reihl, M..A.. LCADC
Chief Executive Officer, Freedom House, Inc.

Tradition Six: One Member's Interpretation

"An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose."

To me, Tradition Six directs groups to focus on the primary purpose of helping the suffering alcoholic. If a group accepts outside contributions, it could lead to the formation of a committee to administer the distribution/use of the monies. Some on the committee might want to start a recovery place for alcoholics, where food and overnight accommodation is provided. Others might want to use funds to purchase flight tickets to world conferences for alcoholics in the group who could not afford to do so. A situation similar to this arose at a GTA group.

For the Toronto World Conference, the group decided it was a good idea to cover the cost of 5 tickets. This seemed like a worthy use of group funds. A problem arose when 10 people in the group were able to suggest recipients for those 5 tickets — how were the 5 to be chosen?

Ego could also be problematic. If someone heads a committee to fundraise and is

successful at it, the focus becomes raising more money and not the suffering alcoholic. This becomes a self-perpetuating ego-feeding process.

What if we align ourselves with other groups such as M.A.D.D.? Again, we are getting away from our primary purpose and are no longer focused. That's the other thing — if we lend our name to an outside enterprise, that enterprise will eventually make demands on A.A. as a stakeholder and these demands could lead to change.

I was told by my sponsor, "You can't change a word in the Big Book or the whole of A.A. will change". Our focus is simple. If we start to make changes, then what group do you go to, the one with the green book?"

Carl Sagan writes about earth appearing as a little blue dot as seen from the perimeter of our universe, the earth as an insignificant dot. This brings me back to humility, to who we are. In my opinion, humility is hard to find and hard to live by. Tradition 6 keeps A.A. humble and focused on what alcoholics know best — how to help other alcoholics.

Hal G., Burlington Group
Interviewed by Marrey P.

Lead Us Not Into Temptation

I remember them telling me "Be prepared to walk right away from an awkward situation; put your feet and legs in motion". If I wanted to put staying-away-from-that-first-drink first, then it had to come before any other consideration, even if the consequences were a tad embarrassing, which they were, from time to time.

So here I am, alone in the office (not an AA office, by the way). Someone has just donated \$500 in \$20 bills. I write a note for them (there's no receipt book) and stuff the \$500 in my trouser pocket.

There's no question of dishonesty — that's partly why I was picked to run the office by myself, but I spot a telephone. "Use the 'phone", they told me, without conditions. I pick up the 'phone and leave voice-mail messages with two of the committee members, saying that I have received \$500. A new calm settles over me.

It's not enough to resist temptation; I must walk away from it. It's not enough to ask to be led not into temptation. Where an avenue of right-thinking is made available to me I must take physical steps to strengthen my rigorous honesty on a daily basis.

My armour of trustworthiness is strengthened by repeated practical exercises in right-action, not by prayer alone.

Chris G., Bloordale Group

A View of Service cont'd

continued from front page

... (the area). That's the weight of the upside down triangle where all the members are at the top. In service, remember that the guy sitting in your group is the ultimate authority and you are only the trusted servant. Someone has to do it and I like to do it.

At my first Area Assembly meeting in Kingston, I was in awe of everything and everyone; it was unbelievable! I got the bug! I see that at every assembly, in those there for the first time. I've never missed an assembly and been to 24 (they take place twice a year). I will continue going, even if I have no position; you're there with 300 alcoholics, at a business meeting, AND IT WORKS!

Rob W., Streetsville Group
Interviewed by Marrey P.

The Big Book Comes to Canada

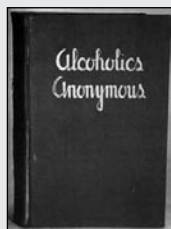
Continued from April 2009 issue

If June 10th, 1935 is a Red Letter Day for alcoholics worldwide, then January 1940 must rank as the most important month for all alcoholics in Ontario. It was January 1940 that Dr. Emerson Fosdick wrote an enthusiastic book review on "Alcoholic Anonymous" — A.A.'s own book, which later became affectionately known to alcoholics as the "Big Book." This review was to have a profound effect on the very existence of A.A. in Ontario.

This Big Book is on display in the Archives room at the Toronto Intergroup Offices at 234 Eglinton Avenue East. It is one of the original Big Books, red in colour and much larger than the current ones. It is a First Edition, one of the original 5,000 printed and which they had difficulty selling. The review stirred an interest in Dr. George A. Little, D.D., then a fifty-six year old minister of the United Church in Toronto. Dr. Little had been a caring man who had unsuccessfully attempted to help alcoholics gain sobriety. Fosdick's review led him to order a personal copy of the Big Book for himself. Having read the book, he began in earnest, mimeographing portions of it which he distributed to anyone he felt could further the cause or, more importantly, to those he felt might be helped themselves. With his good intentions and tireless effort, people started to become more interested and, as a result, he ordered five copies of the Big Book in June 1941.

One of those copies was sold to Canon Quintin Warner of London, Ontario, who read the book and was impressed enough to pass it along to a hospitalized alcoholic friend. On March 29th, 1942, after reading and studying the book, the alcoholic made a decision to stay sober — a decision he maintained for the rest of his life.

Maire O'B, GTA Intergroup Archivist



haveyouheard

Recent Medallions:

Carolina C.	15	Bellamy	May 4
Barbara F.	20	Anniversary Group	May 6
Wendy B.	1	Markland Wood	May 8
Sally W.	1	New Anchor Group	May 7
Helen Mac.	10	Anniversary Group	May 13
Jennifer C.	5	Thornhill	May 13
Andrew R.	1	Markland Wood	May 20
Alex M.	5	Principles Before Pers.	May 24
Catherine M.	10	Bloordale	May 24
Helen M.	20	Bloordale	May 24
Rick McC.	20	Six Points	May 25
Michele G.	1	Pathfinders	May 27

Upcoming Medallions:

Bobby Y.	35	Roxglen Traditional	June 4
Ed Y.	35	Roxglen Traditional	June 4
Wes B.	30	Long Branch Group	June 8
Peter B.	20	Streetsville Action Group	June 10
Gino C.	1	Maple	June 11
Tony MacN.	15	Lansing	June 13
Emile C.A.	30	Anniversary Group	June 17
Dave H.	1	Aurora	June 21
Steve A.	1	Rouge Valley	June 25
Bill N.	15	Bloordale	June 28
Norma M.	1	Bloordale	July 5
Ronald A.	5	Maple	July 9
Joanne S.	1	Anniversary Group	July 10
Clark S.	10	Aurora	July 12
Tom W.	10	Aurora	July 12
Ed R.	20	Rouge Valley	July 23

Meeting Changes:

OISE Morning Discussion (C) Mon - Fri 7:30 am (CENTRAL): Meetings are held in Room 8124, except for: Sat May 30 to Sat Aug 29 (room 8280); Thurs Aug 20 (room 4426) and Fri Aug 21 (room 4426).

Silverbirch Group (C) Fridays 7pm (East): Big Book Discussion now meets every Friday.

Strength in Recovery: (C) Mondays (SUBURBAN WEST): location changed to Cooksville United Church, 2500 Mimosa Row, behind Price Choppers at King & Hurontario

End of the Line Discussion (C) Wednesday 8:15pm (EAST): moved to Corpus Christi Catholic Church, corner of Queen St E and Lockwood Rd (west of Woodbine).

DISCONTINUED MEETINGS

Oakville Odyssey (C) Mondays 7pm (SUBURBAN WEST)

August Discussion Group (C) Fridays 12:30 pm (CENTRAL)

Woodbine Group (O) Sat 8 pm (EAST)

Glenview Discussion Group (C) Mondays (CENTRAL)

NEW MEETINGS

Beginners (Back to Basics) (C) Fridays 7pm (CENTRAL): OISE Bldg, 252 Bloor St West. 8th floor; room 414 (see Security). This meeting is on the website, but not listed anywhere else.

Annex Women's Discussion (C) Thursday 8pm (CENTRAL): Meeting at Trinity St. Paul's Church, 427 Bloor Street W.

Rouge Valley Centenary Big Book Disc. (C) Mondays 6pm (NORTHEAST): location/address same as 7 pm open meeting.

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

Fr. Brian Massie passed away on Sunday May 3rd. in Winnipeg. He was involved in starting the New Comers Mtg. He was a passionate and grateful member of AA. A Memorial Mass will be held on Tues May 26 at 7:30 pm at Our Lady of Lourdes church, 520 Sherborne St. just north of Wellesley St. E.

Jerry M. a member of the Pine Hills Group for over 45 years, passed away Wed. April 8.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

O.I.S.E. (U. of T.) will be celebrating 20 years service on June 21st at 5 pm. Join us to celebrate at our joint meeting with the St. George Alateen group. OISE Building, 8th floor in Room 8-280. This is an open meeting.

36th Annual Francophone District 90-05 of Hull-Ottawa-Aylmer Congress: August 8 & 9. For more info visit www.aa-quebec.org/region90

Joint Intergroup/District Meeting: Tues June 9 7:30 pm, 234 Eglinton Ave E, District 2 facilitates

Joint Intergroup/District Meeting: Tues Sept 8 7:30 pm, 234 Eglinton Ave E, Intergroup facilitates

74th Anniversary of AA Founders Weekend: June 12-14, 2009 in Akron, OH (Birthplace of AA). For more information visit www.akronaa.org/foundersday

Steps to Freedom: 39th Central West Ontario Convention Aug. 7-9. Participation by Al-Anon on Aug. 8th. University of Guelph Campus. Panel discussions, talkathon, sobriety countdown, speakers, Saturday dance & optional banquet. For more information visit www.cwoc.synthasite.com.

WHEN THE BIG BOOK GOT BIGGER



In 1939, Alcoholics Anonymous co-founder Bill Wilson wrote the philosophy of the program in a book titled Alcoholics Anonymous, generally referred to as the "Big Book." Sotheby's auction house had the master copy of the book with Wilson's handwriting inside.

I was blessed to have breakfast yesterday with my friend Lorna K. and other wonderful sober sisters. Lorna was present at the sale of the Big

Book at Sotheby's. She is an auctioneer and from her perspective, it was really a funny event. Sotheby's had the book for viewing in a back room, not in a place of honor. They were not aware of how important it was, nor did they know much about Bill. As the throngs of people came to see it, and then as the subsequent bidding began, they were astounded. The book sold at auction for over a million dollars. Lorna said that after the sale all they could ask was "Did this guy Bill write anything else?" LOL!

April '09: Intergroup Report

Operating Committee Executive Opening Remarks: Woody K. (Willowdale), 2nd Vice Chair – Starting in July, the General Meeting will be held at Lansing United Church (49 Bogart Ave., Yonge & Sheppard). Rent will be about the same; will need to get insurance. The meeting will be held in the Wilson Hall (downstairs). Both Woody and Bill M. (Westmoreland), Operating Committee Chair, remarked on what a privilege it has been to serve on the Operating Committee.

Finance Report: Bruce L. (Back to Basics), Finance Chairperson – Donations down a little this month, but year to date is \$6,300 over budget. Net income for the month is on target. Prudent reserve figure is now shown on the monthly budget sheet. GSO is introducing price change as of July 2009. Big Book increasing in price by 30%, and 12 & 12 by 16%.

1st Vice Chair, Aaron K. (Yorkville), chaired the meeting.

REGULAR BUSINESS suspended to facilitate Elections. Aaron outlined who could vote as per our Procedures and Guidelines.

Operating Committee Executive: The three Senior Operating Committee members stood for the position of Chairperson.. Results: Florence B. (Noon Rap), new Operating Chairperson; Rick Mc.C. (Six Points), 1st Vice Chair, and John C. (Half Century), 2nd Vice Chair.

There were 2 vacancies in Junior positions and the remaining Junior member, Glenn G. (East York), moved into a Senior position. 5 remaining positions needed to be filled (2 Seniors; 3 Juniors.). Results: 2 Senior members are Ed R. (Rouge Valley Centenary), and Elaine G. (Port Credit).; the 3 new Juniors are Sidrah A. (Stepping Stones), Karen K. (Twelve Steps), and Su McS. (Principles Before Personalities).

Aaron thanked Floor members for the opportunity to serve on the Operating Committee. Florence B., facilitated the rest of the meeting.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Archives: Roy R. (Trial & Error), Chairperson – Archives Area Workshop held April 4th was a success. 25th Annual Archives Breakfast, will be on Sun. Nov. 8 at the Oasis Convention Centre. Committee has created and approved an acquisitions policy for archival materials. East Toronto Archives Breakfast will be Sun. May 24, 9am to 12:30 pm at Embers Restaurant (781 Warden Ave., south of Eglinton). Tickets are \$15 and available through group GSRs and/or event committee members until May 15. Next mtg: Fri. May 8 at 7 pm at 234.

Information AA Day: Marv W. (Mississauga), 2010 Chairperson – This event is a joint venture, sponsored by Toronto Intergroup and the 9 Service Districts. It will take place on Sat. May 30 2009 at Lansing United Church. Theme is 'Service with Gratitude' and is the 30th year. GSO Speaker will be Mary D. (CPC) and also feature an address from our Area 83 Delegate. Event includes a potluck luncheon. Tickets: \$5. Flyers and tickets available for reps at this meeting; members can also get tickets through their GSRs. Marv requested that reps announce this event at their groups. Next mtg: Mon. May 25 at 7:30 pm at 234.

Corrections: Chair Phil G. sent the following report – Murray O. D18 has been invited to attend Probation & Parole officers next meeting at OCI to present a proposal for AA to hold meetings at P&P offices around the GTA to better reach inmates serving time in the community. Gale R of D22 presented a reported the EDC is being well served. Dan H. has Mimico CC meetings well supplied with volunteers and literature. Used Grapevines are being gathered and distributed to all District Chairs. Next mtg: Mon. May 4th at 7:30 pm at 234.

Public Information: Bryan W. (Rox Glen Traditional), Chair – Bryan announced that committee will be present and participating at the upcoming Info AA Day. Next mtg: Mon. May 18 at 7:30 pm at 234.

Reception: Rick McC. (Six Points), incoming 1st Vice Chair – 60 group reps were present at this meeting. Collection of the 7th Tradition: \$188.41.

Treatment Facilities: No report. Next mtg: Thurs. May 21 at 7:30 pm at 234.

Twelfth Step: Harold Y. (Port Credit), committee member – Committee continues to work towards a new phone system. Harold asked members to include cell phone contact numbers on the group update list for 12 step work (Deadline: May 15th.) Next mtgs: Wed. May 13 at 7 pm at 234; Fri. May 29 at 234.

Website/Newsletter: Aaron K. (Yorkville), Chairperson – There is a new banner for the front page of the Better Times. The committee is coming up with new ideas for articles (i.e. 'Spotlight on Service' column). Deadline for stories and announcements: the 10th of every month. Next mtg: Sat. May 9 at 1 pm at 234.

Implementation Committee: Committee would appreciate more volunteers. Next mtg: Sat. May 9 at 3 pm at 234. In closing, Florence requested that subcommittee Chairs submit copies of their monthly meetings to the office.

Next General Meeting: Tues. May 26 at 8 pm at Glebe Rd. United Church.

Intergroup General Meeting Moving Location in July 2009

Starting July 2009, the Intergroup General Meeting will no longer be held at Glebe United Church. Instead, it will be held at Lansing United Church (49 Bogart Ave., near Yonge & Sheppard subway). The monthly meeting will be held in the Wilson Hall (downstairs). The rent will be about the same, and the meeting will continue to begin at 8:00 p.m. on the last Tuesday of every month.

Directions By TTC

From the Yonge subway, get off at the Sheppard Station. Exit the platform by the Poyntz Ave — West Side exit. Walk west on Poyntz Ave 1 block. By bus, exit at the main Sheppard/Yonge bus terminal. Follow the signs that direct you to the Sheppard Ave, South Side stairway. Walk west to Beecroft and you will see the church in the park.

By Car

The parking lot to the church is accessed from Poyntz Ave off Yonge St. (1st stop light south of Sheppard). From Sheppard, turn south on Beecroft and right on Poyntz Ave.

