

# BETTER TIMES

May 2010

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**Editorial Ctte:** Aaron K. (Chair), Sonja T. (Co-editor), JoAnne L. (Co-editor), David N. (Cartoonist), Jim H. (Circ.), Ciara C. (Desktop). Opinions expressed in *BETTER TIMES* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Greater Toronto Area Intergroup. **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.

## Interested in the history of AA?

There is a "AA History Lovers Group" on Yahoo which is a devoted group of members who talk about the archival history of AA.

<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/AAHistoryLovers/>

## Information AA Day 2010

Welcome to the 31st annual Information AA Day. This event is put on to demonstrate how alcoholics in this great program can become active (or more active) in the fellowship. Subcommittees such as Archives, Accessibility, Correction Facilities (CF), Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC), Public Information (PI), Treatment Facilities (TF), and 12-Step will have literature tables set up in the lunch room and everyone will have an opportunity to discover the many ways we can reach the still-suffering alcoholic.

Panel meetings are held in the morning where members of the subcommittees will explain what their committees do and describe their volunteer experiences. You will discover that service is not limited just to those with many years of sobriety; there are many opportunities open to members who have only 1-2 years of sobriety.

The potluck lunch is a wondrous affair, with contributions from many members of the fellowship, and is a good time to talk to new members and catch up with people you may not have seen for awhile.

Sandy S., our Area 83 Delegate, will be on hand to give her report on the Annual General Service

Conference, and in the afternoon, Jim M., the Public Information Chair at the General Service Office (GSO) in New York will share his story and the progress that is being made by Alcoholics Anonymous as seen from his office.

This day will give everyone who attends an excellent insight into the possibilities available to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic, and the chance to find out what is being done in other areas of North America. Don't miss it!

Saturday, May 29th, 2010 at Lansing United Church, 49 Bogart Avenue. Doors open at 8:30 am and tickets are \$5.00 which includes a potluck lunch (donations for lunch are welcome).

We look forward to seeing you there!

**Info AA Day Committee 2010**

**INFO AA DAY**  
**Saturday May 29th, 2010**  
**8:00 am – 4:00 pm**  
**Lansing United Church, 49 Bogert Ave.**  
 Early bird meeting 8:15, Opening at 9:00  
**Potluck lunch**  
 \$5.00 at the door or from Group Reps or GSRs

## 2010 International Convention of A.A.

The 2010 International Convention of A.A. will be held July 1-4 in San Antonio, Texas with the theme "A Vision for You." A.A. members and guests from around the world will celebrate A.A.'s 75th year at this event with big meetings held Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning in the Alamodome. Other meetings, scheduled or informal, will take place throughout the weekend in the San Antonio Convention Center and local hotels.

Registration opens in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center on Wednesday June 30, 2010 at 8:00 am Registration will continue Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, and Saturday from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. The opening Party in the Park starts at approximately

8:00 pm Thursday evening, July 1 and ends at midnight.

Marathon meetings will begin at midnight on Thursday, and run around the clock until Sunday morning. Meetings start at the Convention Center on Friday at 9:00 am and continue until 5:00 pm, with the same schedule on Saturday.

Friday night and Saturday night from 8:00 to 10:00 pm, we gather in the Alamodome stadium for Big Meetings. The Flag Ceremony will take place before the meeting on Friday night, and Saturday we will have an oldtimers meeting, where A.A.s with more than 40 years of sobriety will share.

The closing meeting will take place in the Alamodome on Sunday from 9:00 – 11:00 am.

***We look forward to seeing you in San Antonio!***

# Ontario Regional Conference

## I wondered why I hadn't gone years before!

How is a regional conference different from an AA meeting? What were some of the favourite moments from this year's conference? What's special about the Ontario Regional Conference? For the answers to these, and other questions, read some comments from three East York Group members who attended this year's conference.

One important way a regional conference is different from an AA meeting is in size. There are a lot of people attending and not just one, but many, many speakers ... in this case most from the United States. Kevin, a first-time attendee, was impressed with how articulate the speakers were. Plus, he heard again and again that having a Higher Power and using the Steps were integral parts of recovering alcoholics' programs. He said he found the whole event inspiring.

Also, at a conference, there are different types of meetings and events – Alateen, Al-Anon and panel discussions, to name just a few. Although he had been married to an alcoholic, Ken had not been to an Al-Anon meeting until this year's conference. He is now considering attending other Al-Anon meetings.

Compared to an AA meeting, there is of course more of a build-up at such a large event. Ken said he looks forward with great anticipation to the conference each year. Also, he enjoys the social aspect – renewing acquaintances with people he has known for years but doesn't see very often.

As for some of the favourite moments, Dennis said he was particularly impressed with Otto from Fort Worth, Texas, the dinner speaker.

The favourite moment, according to both Ken and Dennis, was the sobriety countdown at the end of the event: they both indicated it was incredibly moving to watch a person with 54 years of sobriety giving a Big Book to a person with one day of sobriety.

What makes the ORC special? Lots of things but a key one is that a conference provides wonderful opportunities for different types of service: for example, both Ken and Dennis have been greeters at the conference in past years.

Also a wide variety of AA messages can be seen, heard, and purchased, materials that are not readily available. Ken purchased CDs of the speakers' messages. He said it was all but impossible not to relate to so many of the stories he heard.

To end on a sports note, Dennis compared the conference to a major sporting event like Wrestlemania, the World Series, March Madness; he called the conference the Superbowl of AA.

And finally, Kevin said it was so special that he wondered why he hadn't attended years before! Indeed!

*From interviews with Kevin M., Dennis G. and Ken A., East York Group*

**Sonja T., East York Group**

## Thank you!

The 2010 ORC committee would like to say a big THANK YOU!

Thank you to all the Alcoholics, Al-Anon members, Alateens and guests who travelled from all over Ontario and afar and made the Royal York Hotel one big home group for the weekend of March 19–21.

Thank you to the volunteers who donated over 750 hours of their time to make us feel welcomed at the ORC and made sure that we got our name badges.

Thank you to the great speakers and panellists who carried the message of Celebrating Sobriety. Everyone walked away on Sunday knowing they had been part of something special.

Thank you to GTA Intergroup and the Operating Committee who were supportive of the conference throughout the year of planning.

Thank you to the Website and Better Times committee who helped to carry the message of the ORC to the fellowship.

Most of all, thank you to our Higher Power who expressed himself throughout the weekend, whether through the words of a particular speaker or the friendly smile and handshake of one of the greeters.

If you have any thoughts or suggestions about the conference please send them to [2010orcvolunteer@gmail.com](mailto:2010orcvolunteer@gmail.com).

The 2011 conference may be almost a year away, but the 2011 Committee has already been working hard to ensure they bring the fellowship an even better conference next year. Thank you and see you at the Royal York Hotel in 2011.

**2010 ORC Committee**

## Response to Letter to the Editor, April 2010 Issue:

### AA's Greatest Danger: Rigidity

The comment below, sent by a member of the Yahoo group, "AAHistoryLovers" seems to address the letter from the member who objected to the reading of 'Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow' at our meetings, after reading my submission in January 2010's issue. I thought I would pass it on to you for your reading interest:

*At the 1986 General Service Conference, Bob P. gave what the 1986 Final Report called "a powerful and inspiring closing talk" titled "Our Greatest Danger: Rigidity."*

*He said: "If you were to ask me what is the greatest danger facing A.A. today, I would have to answer the growing rigidity – the increasing demand for absolute answers to nit-picking questions; pressure for G.S.O. to 'enforce' our Traditions, screening alcoholics at closed*

*meetings, prohibiting non-Conference approved literature, i.e., 'banning books,' laying more and more rules on groups and members. And in this trend toward rigidity, we are drifting farther and farther away from our co-founders. Bill, in particular, must be spinning in his grave, for he was perhaps the most permissive person I ever met. One of his favorite sayings was 'Every group has the right to be wrong.'*

The above comes from [www.silkworth.net/aabiography/bobp.html](http://www.silkworth.net/aabiography/bobp.html). I believe if someone can find his entire speech, it will have the material asked about in it. I know I have seen it in conjunction with this speech but can't seem to locate it. <http://hindsfoot.org/pearson.html> gives the part of Bob P.'s speech which was published in the 1986 General Service Conference's final report: "The Thirty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous 1986 (Roosevelt Hotel, New York City, April 20-26, 1986), Final Report."

**Submitted by Bernadette Macl.**

# haveyouheard

## Recent Medallions:

Diane L.	10	Amazing Grace	April 13
James H.	10	Amazing Grace	April 13
Steven A.	1	Beyond Belief	April 15
David I.	20	Lawrence Plaza	April 18
Karu S.	1	Rexdale United Group	April 22
Ricardo B.	1	Rexdale United Group	April 29
Chris B.	1	Silverbirch Group	April 30

## Upcoming Medallions:

Tim C.	25	Mississauga	May 2
Abdi J.	1	Westmoreland	May 4
Brandon F.	1	Living Sober (Newmarket)	May 4
Dave R.	25	Shepherd Group	May 4
Bill J.		Anniversary Group	May 5
Tom McN.	30	Rexdale United	May 6
Dave A.	5	Lakeshore	May 9
John M.	1	Prince Edward Group	May 10
Soren T.	1	Westmoreland	May 11
Sari S.	5	East York Group	May 11
Sharlene G.	1	Rexdale United Group	May 13
Judy B.	15	Scarborough Group	May 14
Sandra H.	10	Lakeshore	May 16
Gina C.	1	Prince Edward Group	May 17
Mary P.	20	A Place to Share	May 21
Alinne C.	1	River Drive	May 24
Mike Q.	20	Westmoreland	May 24
Veronica M.	5	River Drive	May 24
Kirk S.	1	Rouge Valley Centenary	May 27
Peter Y.	1	Scarborough Group	May 28

## Things We Cannot Change

Received from the General Service Board:

It is with great sadness we announce the passing of **Michael Alexander**, a man linked deeply to the history of

Alcoholics Anonymous, who died February 16, 2010

## New Meetings:

**Vision for You (O) Tuesday 8pm (EAST):** Meeting located at Konko Church of Toronto, 398 Kennedy Road.

**Vision for You (C) Tuesday 6:30pm (EAST):** Meeting located at Konko Church of Toronto, 398 Kennedy Road.

## Meeting Changes:

**Brampton Sunday AM Discussion (C) Sunday 10:30am (SUBURBAN NORTHWEST):** As of May 23 meeting is temporarily moved to Flower City Community Campus, Building D, at 8850 McLaughlin Road South.

**Recovery 12 Step (C) Saturday 11am (SUBURBAN NORTHWEST):** From April 17 – June 12 meeting is temporarily moving to Central Public School Arts & Recreation Centre, 24 Alexander St., Studio D, Brampton. Meeting room is on 2nd floor and is NOT wheelchair accessible.

## Announcements:

**45th Annual Blossom Time Convention** will be held May 7–9 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Niagara Falls. Speaker meetings, discussion meetings, marathon meetings, etc. Full Al-Anon & Alateen Participation. For more info visit [www.blossomtimeconvention.com](http://www.blossomtimeconvention.com).

**Spring AA Convention** will be held Saturday May 8th at 8 am at Wesley United Church, 275 Pembroke St E. Speakers, panels, food and fellowship. Everyone welcome.

**First Meeting of Russian Speaking AA Groups** will be held May 15–16th in Chicago, IL. For information contact: [suviksuvik@yahoo.com](mailto:suviksuvik@yahoo.com).

**5th Annual East Archives Breakfast** will be held Sunday May 16th at 9am at 781 Warden Avenue. For more

information go [www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org).

**The 39th Annual Manitoulin & Espanola Rainbow Round-up** will be held May 21–23 will be held at Little Current, Manitoulin Island, Ontario. For information email [rainbow.roundup@yahoo.ca](mailto:rainbow.roundup@yahoo.ca)

**No Longer Alone Group** will be celebrating their 15 year anniversary on Friday May 28 at 8pm. All are welcome!

**Info AA Day** will be held Saturday May 29 at Lansing United Church (Yonge and Sheppard subway). Cost of the day is \$5, and includes a pot luck luncheon.

**42nd Annual Big Deep South Convention** will be held June 18–20 in New Orleans. For more information go to [www.bigdeepsouth.org](http://www.bigdeepsouth.org)

**The Trillium 2010 "Courage to Change" Convention** will be held June 18–20 at the Doubletree International Plaza Hotel in Toronto. Hosted by Ontario South Al Anon/Alateen with full AA participation. To Register go to [al-anon.alateen.on.ca](http://al-anon.alateen.on.ca)

**Lakeshore Districts' 38th Annual Conference** will be held August 13–15 at 1551 Stevenson Road North, Oshawa. For additional information call Lakeshore Intergroup at 905-728-1020

**52nd International Conference of Young People in AA** will be held August 26–29 at the Marriott Marquis-Times Square in New York City. For more information go to [www.icypaahost.org](http://www.icypaahost.org)

**Mount Royal - York Group** will celebrate their 50th anniversary on July 13 at Metropolitan United Church, 56 Queen Street East. All are welcome!

**2010 International Convention of AA** will be held July 1–4 in San Antonio, Texas. For more information go to [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org).

## archivesalley

### What made alcoholics so ready to join Alcoholics Anonymous?

Ontario groups began to appear in cities with vastly different make ups. The industrial motor city of Oshawa, the inland port city of Midland and the City of Stratford, primarily a farming community, was third. This served alcoholics a reminder that alcohol played no favourites and that Alcoholics Anonymous could help problem drinkers everywhere. In 1945, the first women's group was formed. The following year, 1946, showed no signs of slowing down. In fact six new groups started Midtown, East End, West End, Kingsway, Victor Mission and Parkdale. In 1947, North Toronto, Danforth and Beaches were born and in 1948, the Friday-Yonge, Lakeshore and Hill groups came into being.

What made alcoholics so ready to join Alcoholics Anonymous? Why did it grow so fast? Perhaps there are no answers to these questions, but while respecting anonymity, here are some combined recollections from a few oldtimers who were there. "We hadn't any hope until A.A. — we were just lost souls. Many of us, most of us from skid row. It wasn't the Twelve Steps that attracted us then it was really the sense of belonging ... the fellowship." Another comment was: "God was soft pedaled back then for fear of losing members. We learned

as we went, remember none of us had been sober that long, I mean two years was an eternity in 1946." Yet another long time member recalled the mixed feelings towards Dr. George Little. "So many of the early members had no sense of God or a fear of Him - they felt Dr. Little shouldn't attend meetings and although sometimes he did preach, often he didn't it was just not being an alcoholic left him open to question. Unfortunately, gratitude aside, some members even mimicked him." Other events occurred in 1946, one of which threatened some members of A.A. in Toronto, another which benefited all A.A. members everywhere. "The rumors flew...the Catholics had formed their own group, this created quite a rift. Strange as it may seem today, back then Toronto was an Anglo-Saxon society. Somehow we all got past it, everything worked out fine for Catholics and Protestants alike, I mean A.A. was and is for everyone who seeks it." The other was much more important, the formation of the Twelve Traditions finalized and published in the Grapevine, traditions which continue to benefit all alcoholics even today.

*(p. 12, 50 Years of AA in Ontario)*

**Maire O'B, GTA Intergroup Archivist**

**Note:** The Bob D. display announced in February's article will be postponed to September.

# March '10: Intergroup Report

**Chair's Opening Remarks:** John C. (Half Century), incoming Executive Committee Chair: John gave kudos to Florence B., past Operating Chair, for all her efforts during her tenure.

**Chair's Opening Remarks:** John C. (Half Century), Executive Committee Chair – John invited the event Chair, Jim B., to give a brief report:

**ORC 2010:** Jim B. (Saturday Morning Discussion), 2010 Event Chair – 2,914 were in attendance, and over 700 attended the banquet on Saturday night. Committee currently working with the hotel to get final tally of financials. All in all, it was very successful, and Jim appreciated all the support and hard work from committee members and volunteers.

**Finance Report:** Don M. (Hill), Finance Chairperson – Finance Report for the month of February 2010 Summary:

	Income	Expenses	Net Income
January	\$13,624	\$12,159	\$1,465
Comp. to Budget	156	-4,403	4,459
Year to Date	29,406	24,958	4,448
Comp. to Budget	117	-4,475	4,592

Phone expenses were a little higher because we an extra phone line for the ORC. Also there was cost of forwarded phones during building closure to facilitate extensive repairs (Feb.12–14). Margaret T. (Bayview) had a question about the Prudent Reserve, and the yearly cost to run Intergroup. Don replied that our annual expenses ran around \$300,000. GSO recommends a Prudent Reserve figure at  $\frac{3}{4}$  to one year's operating expenses.

**MOTION** to Suspend Regular Business to facilitate Election moved by Wendy (Willowdale) and seconded by Gord W. (Glenholme). **MOTION CARRIED.**

A new Executive Committee member is needed, due to the resignation of Amanda W. (Deer Park) due to time constraints. This is a 9-month term, plus another optional year to serve. The requirements are 2 years of sobriety. 2 members stood for the position; each gave a brief address to the Floor. Sarah M. (Don Mills) was elected as the new Executive Committee member.

**MOTION** to destroy ballots moved by Dan (S.O.S.) and seconded by Peter (Royal York). **MOTION CARRIED.**

## SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

**Twelfth Step:** Jim O. (Markland Wood), Chairperson – Need new 12 Step Committee members to serve as Greeter Captains (1 month commitment/making sure all phone shifts are covered). At the last training session, 3 new people

were trained. To work on the phones, volunteers need one year of sobriety and must attend a phone training session. There was an issue with members giving out phone numbers, which will be addressed promptly. Jim announced that he is stepping down as Chair, so a new chair is needed. This is a two-year term, and you need one year of sobriety. Duties include: chairing monthly committee meeting, giving a monthly report to the General Meeting, attendance at the quarterly Joint Sharing Session, reporting to the Executive Committee, and standing in for the monthly Greeter Captain when necessary. Please send Service Resumes to the Executive Committee c/o 234.

**Access Ability:** Donna MacQ. (Sunnyside), Chair – Purpose of our committee is to help alcoholics with disabilities by providing access to meetings and literature. We also provide 'Buddies List' for people who are willing to drive others to meetings; also includes phone calls, visits, and e-mails. Attending AA Service Days as well as outside events such as Mayfest and People in Motion. We welcome all members who wish to help us in this work (about one year sobriety is needed).

**Archives:** Glenn G. (East York), Executive Committee Member – East Toronto Archives Breakfast to be held on May 16 at Embers Banquet Hall. For event details and ticket information go to [aatoronto.org](http://aatoronto.org) or Better Times. Archives will not be meeting in April due to a Workshop.

**CPC:** No report.

**Public Information:** No report.

**Information AA Day:** Phil M. (Bloordale), 2010 event Chair – Event will take place on Sat. May 29 at Lansing United Church (Yonge and Sheppard subway). Cost of the day is \$5, and includes a potluck luncheon. This is a joint venture between Intergroup and the 9 service districts. Event tickets/flyers were available for reps at this meeting. The 2011 event chair will be Vince (Welcome). Volunteers needed for food/kitchen duties. Please contact 234.

**Website/Better Times:** Aaron K. (Yorkville), Chairperson – The Website is still in need of a new webmaster, if interested please contact us. Better Times would like to thank co-editor Marrey P. (R&R) for her dedicated service over the last two years. Please have submissions in to the Newsletter by the 10th of the month for inclusion in the next edition. Notices sent to the Website will be posted promptly.

**Corrections:** Vince M. (Leslie), committee member – Members interested in carrying the message of AA into the jails need clearance from the police. Information on how to get clearance is available at 234 or members can contact the Corrections committee via the website about this procedure. There is also a 'Bridging the Gap' program for inmates: the committee will find an AA member close to where the inmate will be released and this member will be their temporary sponsor.

*To see the complete minutes go to [www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org).*

## In the Spirit of Rotation:

### Thank You and Welcome

The Better Times/Website committee would like to thank outgoing members Marrey P. and Brian T. for their outstanding and dedicated service to A.A. in the Greater Toronto Area.

For the past 2 years, Marrey has co-edited the Better Times newsletter – providing insightful and significant contributions. For the same period of time, Brian has worked tirelessly to build up the website's mechanical infrastructure. For perspective, one should take a look at some other North American A.A. Intergroup websites – none of which compare to the pure simplicity and high functionality of [www.aatoronto.org](http://www.aatoronto.org). Anyone trying to find or confirm a meeting time, location or relocation are now very well served by our "Meetings Listings" search engine. It's now time for future "webservants" to simply maintain Brian's handiwork.

Brian and Marrey: thank you for your service.

**Aaron K., Chairperson**

