

BETTER TIMES

Produced monthly by AA members in the Greater Toronto Area

March 2019



ONTARIO REGIONAL CONFERENCE of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

March 1 - 3, 2019

Sheraton Centre Hotel
123 Queen St. W, Toronto ON

Register now at: www.aaorc.ca

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

please contact: orcvolunteers@gmail.com

SPEAKERS:

Earl H.	- Scottsdale, AZ
Ben B.	- Oklahoma City, OK
Jennifer W.	- Austin, TX
Alonzo C.	- Phoenix, AZ



Pre-Registration closes Friday February 22, 2019



ONTARIO REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Monthly Word Search



French Food



GREATER TORONTO AREA INTERGROUP

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Toronto, Ont., M4P 1K5
416-487-5591
www.aatoronto.org

Find the words from the list below. They can be forwards or backwards, and can run horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Accents and spaces between words should be ignored.

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T A P E N A D E G C A U T V E A Q O E
C N F E S C A R G O T R T B E E U E L
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R O L I U R T E L B C G E U E E N R P
A O A E O B U U G L S S E T I O E L R
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BETTER TIMES

bettertimes@aatoronto.org

Editorial Committee:

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baguette
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cassoulet
choucroute
confit de canard

coq au vin
crème brûlée
crêpe
croissant
éclair
escargot
foie gras

fondue
gougères
grenouille
madeleine
milles feuilles
mousse au chocolat
quenelle

ratatouille
rillettes
roquefort
salade niçoise
tapenade
tarte tatin



Opinions expressed in BETTER TIMES are those of the authors and don't necessarily reflect those of the Greater Toronto Area Intergroup. The editorial staff reserve the right to edit submitted articles for length, content and grammar in accordance with layout and quality purposes. Submit group news, medallions, other event notices, letters to the editor or articles to BETTER TIMES before

the 5th of the month prior to the month of issue. Submissions should be 200 to 500 words and may be made online at www.aatoronto.org or emailed to bettertimes@aatoronto.org.

History of the ORC

On December 16, 1943, “capping off a year of miracles [in which Alcoholics Anonymous began in Canada] eighty people enjoyed a banquet at the Royal York Hotel and celebrated their new friends and more importantly, their sobriety ... Eighty people had renewed their lives, many of them had arrived from the gutter and 12 months earlier, only eight of them had met – now they were tenfold.” (The History of AA in Canada).

The Ontario Regional Conference as it has come to known had humble beginnings in one of Canada’s finest hotels of the time. The Conference moved around a bit for few years – the Central office at 1170 Yonge Street or ‘1170’, the Knights of Columbus Hall on Sherbourne Street and Central Tech High School until it settled in at the Royal York.

In 1948, at Central Tech Bill and Lois W. were in attendance. Al-Anon began to participate as early 1956. In 1959, the first numbered conference noted that it was the 10th Annual Conference though current archivists in their research have found this to be inaccurate. In 1961, the heads of Toronto’s churches and Mayor Nathan Phillips were invited bringing a new sense of legitimacy to the program of Alcoholics Anonymous in Toronto and attesting to the fine work of the Public Information (PI) and Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) committees in the AA service structure in Ontario.

The Conference at this time was co-sponsored by Toronto Intergroup and the Ontario Provincial Committee which was in effect the precursor of the what is now the four Ontario General Service Areas. During the Conference, the Delegate would give their lengthy report of the business General Service Conference held each spring in New York City.

In the early 1990s the Ontario Provincial Committee as such was disbanded as the Areas had fully ‘come of age’ and the Conference has since been sponsored solely by Toronto Intergroup. The Conference has evolved over the years from an evening event, to one day, two days and now a full weekend with talkathons, a banquet, and a dance. The location moved a few times in the 1980s and 90s.

A few great highlights were in 1965 when the Conference planning was directed to that of the 13th International AA Convention held in Maple Leaf Gardens and where the Fellowship received the Responsibility Pledge. In 1993, the Conference was again held over in favour of celebrating 50 Years of AA in Canada at the Convention Centre.

Toronto was blessed again in 2005 to host the 21st International Convention celebrating 80 years of AA and renewing the Fellowship’s commitment with the Responsibility Declaration. Over the years, trusted servants on the annual committee have been chosen by various means and accountability mechanisms have varied. In recent years it seemed wise given the size, i.e. average annual attendance hovers around 3000, and scope of the Conference and the enormous financial responsibility, that more stringent protocols be put in place to ensure tighter accountability in all operations of the Conference.

Each conference has been distinguished by a particular theme. The theme for 2019 is:

That’s me. I drink like that.



ONTARIO REGIONAL CONFERENCE



Archives Update

DID YOU KNOW?:

- That in March 1935 Henrietta Sieberling organized a Wednesday night meeting at T. Henry & Clarace Williams home in Akron, Ohio specifically to help Dr. Bob with his drinking? Bob eventually openly admitted his drinking problem but could not bring himself to stop drinking.
- That in March 1939 Reader's Digest goes back on commitment to article on AA?
- That in March 1940 Bill W. moves the Alcoholic Foundation office from 17 William St., Newark, NJ to 30 Vesey St. Room 703, New York?
- That in March 1941 the 2nd printing of the Big Book was produced?
- That in March 1941 The Saturday Evening Post article on AA by Jack Alexander creates national sensation: AA membership will quadruple in one year from 2,000 to 8,000? Thousands of appeals for help were mailed to the NY office. The office asked Groups to donate \$1.00 per member for support. This began the practice of financing the General Service Office (GSO) from group and member donations.
- That in March 1941 the wording of Step 12 was changed in the 2nd printing of the 1st edition Big Book? The term "spiritual experience" was changed to "spiritual awakening" and the term "as the result of these steps" was changed to "as the result of those steps". Also Appendix II, "Spiritual Experience" was added to the book. In 1956 the wording of Step 12 changed again in the 2nd printing of the 2nd edition Big Book. The term "as the result of those steps" was changed back to "as the result of these steps".
- That in March 1941 Cleveland forms the Fellowship's first women's group & also the first Black women's group?
- That on March 18, 1944 the first reported women's prison group meets at Clinton Farms in Clinton, New Jersey?
- That in March 1946 The Twelve Traditions of AA are first formulated and published?
- That on March 31, 1947 the first AA Group is formed in London, England?
- That on March 29, 1950 a second Saturday Evening Post article was written by Jack Alexander titles The Drunkard's Best Friend?
- That on March 3-4, 1951 Bill W. spoke about the proposed General Service Conference at the ORC held at the Royal York Hotel?
- That on March 3-4, 1951 at the ORC Adam C. (Friday-Young Group in Toronto) was elected as the 1st Delegate from the whole province of Ontario? He served on Panel 1 (1951-1952) and then as Trustee for all of Canada in 1953 but was taken sick during his term.
- That on March 22, 1951 William Duncan Silkworth "the little doctor who loved drunks" dies in New York at Towns Hospital, "Silky" treated Bill W. & 1000's more?
- That on March 21, 1966 Ebby T. who was sober 2 months through the Oxford Group when he carried the message to Bill W. died at age 69 with 2 years of sobriety?
- That on March 22, 1984 Clarence S. founder of Cleveland AA, story in Big Book "Home Brewmeister" dies at age 81?
- That on March 17, 1949 the Sunnyside Group in Toronto started? On Thursday March 21, 2019 the group will celebrated their 70th Anniversary.

GTA Archives is currently collecting old GTA meeting books. To donate AA archival items to the GTA Archives, please contact the GTA Archivist Eddy G at 416-536-7536.

What's Up?

21st Archives Breakfast 21st

Let's Celebrate Our History

\$25



\$25

SPEAKER Paul McQ.

Belle Harbor, N.Y.

The Grand Olympia

660 Barton St. (at Fruitland) Stoney Creek, ON

Sunday April 14th, 2019

Doors Open at 9a.m.

Breakfast at 10a.m.

Speaker at 11a.m.

For info/ticket sales: hamiltonarchivecmte@gmail.com

NO TICKETS SOLD @ DOOR



GREATER TORONTO AREA
INTERGROUP

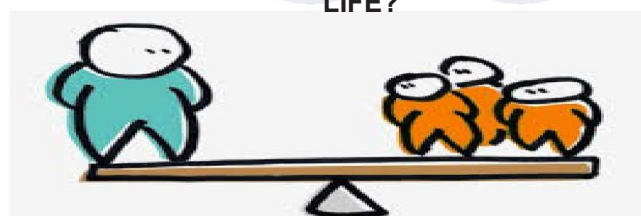
You asked for it!

What's a Concept?

IS MY TRIANGLE BALANCE?

Let's complete your triangle

HOW CAN I APPLY THE CONCEPT TO MY LIFE?



Saturday APRIL 27th 2019

Fellowship, Service

Doors open at 8:30 A.M. to 4 P.M.

156 6th Street (Lakeshore and 6th street)

- Parking on the street
- Phone 416-487-8110 (Alexx/admin. Assistant at 234) to RSVP (in order to prepare enough Concepts Workbook hand-outs for the Workshop)

Presenters: 5 Area 83 Past Delegates

**RELAX
MEET
REFLECT
REFUEL**



**THE HILL
GROUP
ORC
HOSPITALITY
SUITE**

LOOK FOR SIGNS IN THE HOTEL LOBBY!

The ORC Perspective

In 2008, I was asked to share on a panel at the Ontario Regional Conference. The year prior, at about 9 months of sobriety, I attended the ORC for the first time. My main memory from that first ORC was how powerful it felt to be in a room with 3,000+ people saying the Serenity Prayer all together. Fast-forward a year later and I was honoured to be sharing my experience with fellow members. Leading up to that conference, I shared what I had been asked to do with my Grandfather - who I had discovered since joining the Fellowship - had been a friend of AA and also an attendee of Al-anon. You see, my late Grandmother was a member of the Fellowship but unfortunately passed away before I was born as a direct result of this illness. Now here I was some years later, telling my Grandfather that I would be participating in a conference that he had attended a number of times as a guest in the 1960's. Shortly

thereafter he gave me a copy of her Big Book and also an old ticket stub from the 4th International Conference of AA that was held at the Royal York Hotel in 1965.



My Grandfather passed away in 2010 when I was almost 4 years sober. He was proud of who I was becoming and I am grateful to have had the relationship with him that I did. I think he felt a sense of comfort knowing that I had found AA.

In addition to discovering a bit of my family's history with AA, I also crossed paths with a woman named Audrey G. Audrey is a friend of my late Grandparents - she actually sponsored my Grandmother in the 1960's. Audrey is still a very active member of AA and attends the Ontario Regional Conference every year. She's 99 years old and has 60+ years of sobriety.

In 2016, I ran into Audrey at the ORC - which I had often done since crossing paths with her in sobriety. She was taking a quick break from the dance where she often likes to hang out on the Saturday night of the conference. We chatted a bit, and she talked about my Grandmother. "She wore such elaborate make-up!" - she said, and then she teased me about how the

fashion these days is all about tight pants. Her enthusiasm for life is contagious. At that time it was close to midnight and at 97 years young and almost 60 years sober at the time, there was no slowing her down. She even said something along the lines of "I've got to get back in there for one more dance!"

I'm honoured to have crossed paths with Audrey and can only hope that my enthusiasm for the Fellowship of AA, and for the Ontario Regional Conference is half as strong as hers is when I am that age.

I've had the privilege of serving as the Pre-Registration Chair on the 2019 ORC committee, and it has been an absolute honour to have the opportunity to pay back even a tiny sliver of the debt of gratitude that I owe this Fellowship.

For that, I thank you.

Jane F.
Pre-Registration Chair, ORC 2019

The ORC Hospitality Suite

The Ontario Regional Conference is, of course, a wonderful opportunity for AAs from far and wide to come together in the spirit of the program and fellowship. Thousands of us gather...and being among those thousands can sometimes be overwhelming for the newcomer and long timer alike. It was with this in mind that, in 2011, some members of Stepping Stones in Toronto decided to offer to any and all conference attendees a 'hospitality suite'. Basically, a room in the hotel that was removed from the fray of the conference, providing a bite to eat, a coffee, and some fellowship in a quieter environment.

Since then, the hospitality suite has not only continued to offer some respite from the conference at large, it has grown into a spot where AA members from all over pass through for an excellent meal supplied and served by volunteers and made possible through donations. It also serves, for some, as a familiar rendezvous point at the conference where one can meet with friends and plan their day.

The tradition continues this year at the ORCs new location, the Sheraton Centre Toronto. The folks at the Stepping Stones hospitality suite look forward to welcoming friends, both old and new, for fun, fellowship, and food!

"...we aren't a glum lot. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn't want it. We absolutely insist on enjoying life."

Stepping Stones Group, Toronto

The ORC was and still remains my favorite AA conference ever! 1st class all the way. My mind is swirling with all the great memories I have, from the beautiful hotel with shopping on an underground level to the hospitality of all the committee member and the fantastic fellowship everywhere.

What I didn't see coming was the introduction of the speakers. To be walked into a room with thousands of people standing and clapping and not stopping until you were seated by a (forgot what you called them, please fill this in for me) on stage. Still gives me goosebumps today to think about it.

The Orc does something very special in recruiting speakers. Most conference look for "seasoned" speakers to participate. Not the ORC. They will invite new speakers with very little experience to come and have this great opportunity. So my husband Charlie, who has also spoke there and I have had the privilege to see my sponsor and sponsee both speak at the ORC. The combination of speakers blows me away.

It is true commitment and dedication to see an event like the ORC still going strong since 1943.

In love and service

Katie P.

DEAR NEWCOMER,
GREETINGS. COME ON IN
BROTHER, COME IN SISTER. GRAB
A COFFEE, HAVE A SEAT!
IF YOU THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE A
PROBLEM WITH BOOZE, THEN YOU ARE
IN THE RIGHT PLACE. ARE YOU HAVING
TROUBLE? WE HAVE ALL BEEN THERE. IF
YOU ARE FED UP & WANT SOMETHING BETTER,
THERE IS HOPE. AS LONG AS YOU HAVE THE
DESIRE, THERE IS HOPE. LOOK AT US, WE ARE
LIKE YOU... WE WERE LIKE YOU... YOU MAY
HAVE HAD YOUR LAST DRINK IF YOU STAY...
YOU WANT TO THINK ABOUT IT? THINK.
THIS STARTED WITH TWO DRINKERS &
THERE ARE NOW MORE THAN TWO MILLION
OF US. THINK... JUST DON'T FORGET, -
YOU ARE ALWAYS
WELCOME, AND THE DOOR IS
ALWAYS OPEN!

<JOHN F.>

Sunnyside Group: 70 Years of Service

Not many things are made to last these days: The lifespan of appliances is shorter, technological gadgets are constantly being upgraded, clothes fray quickly in the name of fast fashion. Obsolescence seems the name of the game. Our fellowship also sees groups come and go because it's not easy to keep one going. But as long as we emphasize our primary purpose -- carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers -- a group stands a good chance of achieving longevity. For the Sunnyside Group, carrying the message has kept it in good stead for 70 years.

Always known as the Sunnyside Group, it formed on March 17, 1949 with initial membership estimated at four or five members. As a west Toronto group, Sunnyside first met at St. Jude's Anglican Church on Roncesvalles and stayed at this location for 27 years. The group made a brief move to a church on Annette Street, then stayed



13 years at Wesley United Church at Ossington and Dundas. In 1988, Sunnyside moved back to Roncesvalles Avenue and set up shop at the Emmanuel-Howard Park United Church (now Roncesvalles United). In 2004, Sunnyside relocated to its present location at Bonar-Parkdale Presbyterian Church at 250 Dunn Avenue in Parkdale. Spin-off groups from Sunnyside include the Friendly Group (our closest rival!), the West End Group and the Harmony Group.

Considering that the first AA meeting in Toronto was on January 13, 1943 at the Little Demark Restaurant, Sunnyside followed relatively soon afterward. Business meeting notes from the past are an interesting glimpse into the AA fellowship. These notes suggest little has

changed over the years in what matters to AA members. At a June 2, 1970 business meeting, discussion over whether paper cups or cups and saucers should be used for coffee was documented. It also noted that "if ladies who look after the refreshments require some help they should be free to ask any member for the group for assistance in the way of sandwiches or pouring coffee". Today, Sunnyside is pleased to say all members are encouraged to assist with KP duty!

At one point the Sunnyside Group had over 150 members. Today there are fewer members, but they share the same spirit of carrying the message. A long standing service commitment has been the St. Joe's detox meeting on Sunday nights and many alcoholics have joined Sunnyside upon being discharged. Whether at a detox or at our own meetings Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 8 p.m., carrying the message has always been a group priority. A fresh generation of Sunnysiders can be found greeting newcomers at the door and welcoming the suffering alcoholic to the program, just like those who went before.

On Thursday, March 21, 2019, the group will be celebrating its 70th anniversary. You are invited to join us to celebrate this milestone with an inspiring speaker, warm hospitality and fellowship. The sober fun begins at 8 p.m.

Sunnyside -- carrying the message since 1949. Nothing obsolete about that.

- Carolyn B., Sunnyside

The Sunnyside Group
Bonar-Parkdale Presbyterian Church, 250 Dunn Ave, Toronto
Tuesday - 8:00 pm & Thursday - 8:00 pm