

Produced monthly by the AA members in the Greater Toronto Area

BETTER TIMES

March
2018



The 75th Annual Ontario Regional Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous


Road of Happy Destiny

A large, stylized orange sun with many sharp rays. Inside the sun, the text "75 years of AA in Ontario" is written in white.

75
years
of AA in
Ontario

Speakers:

Polly P., Jacksonville, FL
Charles C., Burbank, CA
Ruth L., Montreal, QC

A wide-angle photograph of a two-lane asphalt road stretching straight to the horizon. The road is flanked by vibrant green grassy fields. The sky is a deep blue with scattered white clouds. A small, colorful tree frog is perched on the grass on the right side of the road.

March 9 - 11, 2018
Fairmont Royal York, Toronto

To register, sign up for email updates and see the latest news, visit:

www.aaorc.ca

masthead & wordsearch

BETTER TIMES is published monthly for AA members in the Greater Toronto Area.

234 Eglinton Ave. E.
Suite 202
Toronto, Ont.
M4P 1K5

Telephone: 416-487-5591
Fax: 416-487-5855
TTY: 416-487-5062

bettertimes@aatoronto.org
www.aatoronto.org

Editorial committee:

Chair – Chris C.
Editor-in-Chief – Maija P.
Assistant Editor – Jana S.
Secretary – Tim S.
Layout Editor – Lisa T.

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Submit group news, medallions, other event notices, letters to the editor or articles to BETTER TIMES before the 7th of the month prior to the month of issue by mail, fax or email.

Submissions should be between 200 and 500 words and may be made online at www.aatoronto.org or emailed to bettertimes@aatoronto.org. Only signed submissions with a means of contact will be accepted. Your anonymity will be protected.

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DON'T GET BAFFLED WORD SEARCH

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Lake Huron Wisconsin Minnesota Lake Erie Kitchener New York James Bay Manitoba
Missinaibi River Hamilton Lake of the Woods Lake Michigan Lake Superior St. Catharines
Severn River Lake Ontario Albany River Lake Nipigon Hudson Bay Georgian Bay
Michigan Quebec London Windsor Oshawa Toronto Ottawa

To contact the committees, please email:

Accessibility: accessibility@aatoronto.org
Archives: archives@aatoronto.org
BETTER TIMES: bettertimes@aatoronto.org
Communications: communications@aatoronto.org
Correctional Facilities: corrections@aatoronto.org

Cooperation with the Professional Community: cpc@aatoronto.org
Finance: finance@aatoronto.org
Ontario Regional Conference: orc@aatoronto.org
Public Information: pi@aatoronto.org
12th Step: 12step@aatoronto.org



Letter from the Editor

Greetings from the Editor!

This month, the Better Times is dedicated to the Ontario Regional Conference (ORC) held from March 9 to 11 at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel in Toronto. What a weekend this event is for our community and our sister organizations Alanon and Alateen.

Whether you're first-time attendee or a seasoned volunteer, check out some tips and tricks from fellow AAers. You'll find them in speech bubbles throughout this issue.

Happy ORC weekend!

Yours in love and service,
Maija, Editor-in-Chief

"The ORC can be a very emotional weekend for me. It's a lot of information to absorb, a big crowd to maneuver and some very sobering stories to take in. I make sure to check in with my sponsor, if I am not with her, to keep things 'right-sized.'"

Sammi H., Toronto

"Drink lots of water throughout the weekend. I carry a large bottle of water with me in my bag to keep hydrated."

Carrie G., Scarborough

"I stop drinking coffee after lunch. The ORC is like attending four or five AA meetings in a day and if I have a coffee per meeting, I won't sleep all night after I get home!"

Bob V., Toronto

Message from the GTAI Chair

Chers amis,

En tant que président de l'Inter groupe de la région du Grand Toronto, il me fait plaisir de vous inviter à la Conférence régionale de l'Ontario, qui se tiendra à l'hôtel Royal York les 9, 10 et 11 mars. Attendez-vous à de nombreux intervenants, à une atmosphère accueillante, ainsi qu'à la participation d'AL-Anon et d'Alateen. C'est une belle façon de célébrer notre sobriété en grand nombre.

On se voit là-bas.

Bert J. Silverbitch
Président de l'intergroupe

Dear friends,

As the GTAI chairperson, I would like to invite you to the Ontario Regional Conference, held at the Royal York Hotel on March 9, 10 and 11.

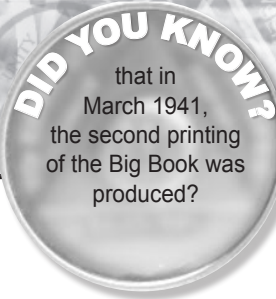
Many speakers, a welcoming atmosphere, as well the AL-Anon and Alateen participation, are good elements to enjoy. This is a nice way to celebrate our sobriety with others.

I hope to see you there.

Bert J. Silverbitch
Intergroup Chair

"I always take some time to get some fresh air between meetings, even for a few minutes. It re-energizes me for the next meeting and allows me to say a silent prayer of gratitude for my sobriety."

Vicky U., Oakville



Concept nine

Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety. The primary world service leadership once exercised by the founders of AA must necessarily be assumed by the Trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

*They lead us
by example.
They don't
boss!*



“No matter how carefully we design our service structure of principles and relationships, no matter how well we apportion authority and responsibility, the operating results of our structure can be no better than the personal performance of those who must man it and make it work. Good leadership cannot function well in a poorly designed structure... Weak leadership can hardly function at all, even in the best of structures.”

Due to AA's principle of rotation, furnishing our service structure with able and willing workers has to be a continuous effort. The base of the service structure — and the source of our leadership — is the General Service Representative. The GSR is the service leader for his or her group, the indispensable link between the group and AA as-a-whole. Together the GSRs are AA's group conscience — and together, in their areas, they elect the area committee members and ultimately the delegates and the area's candidates for trustee. Groups who have not named GSRs should be encouraged to do so. And as the GSRs meet in area assemblies, care and dedication are required. Personal ambitions should be cast aside; feuds and controversies forgotten. “Who are the best qualified people?” should be the thought of all.

“No society can function well without able leadership in all its levels, and AA can be no exception. Fortunately, our society is blessed with any amount of real leadership — the active people of today and the potential leaders of tomorrow as each new generation of able members swarms in. We have an abundance of men and women whose dedication, stability, vision, and special skills make them capable of dealing with every pos-


sible service assignment. We have only to seek these folks out and trust them to serve us.

“A leader in AA service is therefore a person who can personally put principles, plans and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back him and help him with his job.

“Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better, and it will give credit to the source.

“Good leadership never passes the buck. Once assured that it has, or can, obtain sufficient general backing, it freely takes decisions and puts them into action forthwith, provided of course that such actions be within the framework of its defined authority and responsibility.

“Another qualification for leadership is ‘give and take,’ the ability to compromise cheerfully whenever a proper compromise can cause a situation to progress in what appears to be the right direction... We cannot, however, compromise always. Now and then, it is truly necessary to stick flat-footed to one's convictions about an issue until it is settled.

“Our leaders do not drive by mandate, they lead by example. We say to them, ‘Act for us, but do not boss us.’ 

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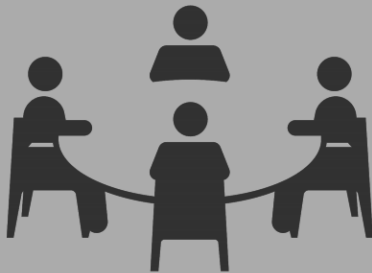
DID YOU KNOW... that in March 1941, the Saturday Evening Post article on AA by Jack Alexander creates national sensation: AA membership will quadruple in one year from 2,000 to 8,000?



UNITY. SERVICE. RECOVERY.

CONCEPTS MEETING

A DISCUSSION MEETING ON THE 12 CONCEPTS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS



~ Starting in September 2017 ~

1st Thursday of the month, 7:00pm - 8:30pm
3rd Sunday of the month, 1:00pm - 2:30pm



MEETING LOCATION:

234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 202

Buzzcode #202



ANNOUNCEMENTS

KF group celebrates 50 years

Saturday, March 3 at 8 p.m.

Anglican Church of St Mary & St Martha
1149 Weston Rd., York

TELEPHONE GREETERS WANTED

I am responsible.

When anyone, anywhere,
reaches out for help,
I want the hand of A.A.
always to be there.

And for that, I am responsible.



Phone training is now the first Sunday of every month. To book an appointment, please call 416-487-5591 or contact the 12th Step Committee.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE YOUR TORONTO AREA GROUP
FEATURED IN AN UPCOMING ISSUE OF
BETTER TIMES?

Contact us
bettertimes@aatoronto.org



DID YOU KNOW... that on March 18, 1944, the first reported women's prison group meets at Clinton Farms in Clinton, New Jersey?

medallions & archives

DID YOU KNOW?
that on
March 31, 1947,
the first AA Group
is formed in London,
England?

MEDALLIONS

Ted B.	40	Bayview	Mar. 4
Lisa P.	10	Erin Mills	Mar. 5
Phil H.	1	Thornhill	Mar. 7
Raffaele C.	5	Bayview	Mar. 10
Anne C.	10	Erin Mills	Mar. 12
Jennifer H.	1	Erin Mills	Mar. 19
Michelle J.	5	Six Points	Mar. 19
Lynda T.	30	River Drive Park	Mar. 19
Jim B.	15	Sobriety Plus	Mar. 20
Thane H.	1	New Anchor	Mar. 22
Teresa R.	30	Traditional	Mar. 23
Rob R.	20	Traditional	Mar. 23
Jim F.	20	Traditional	Mar. 23
Colin W.	30	Traditional	Mar. 23
Malle S.	5	Erin Mills	Mar. 26
Bob I.	1	East York	Mar. 27
Barry D.	30	Sobriety Plus	Apr. 3
Angelica C.	1	New Anchor	Apr. 5
Michael S.	35	Aurora	Apr. 8
Scott M.	20	Bloordale	Apr. 8
Martha W.	5	Six Points	Apr. 16

Due to ongoing submissions, this list may not be current.
For the latest information, please visit www.aatoronto.org



- Old books,
 - brochures,
 - flyers,
 - photographs,
 - CDs,
 - DVDs
 - & other materials
- from AA in Ontario!



To donate AA and GTA archival items to the GTA Archives, please contact the GTA Archivist Eddy G. at 416-536-7536.

From the archives with GTA Archivist Eddy G.

Recent items donated to the GTA Archives:

- History of Kingston Penitentiary AA Groups (original hand-written copy, 2 pages & printed copy)
- The Aurora News, Jan.-Feb., 1954: 14-page newsletter produced by the Aurora Group in Kingston Penitentiary
- AA Vision Group News, Nov. 1977: 45-page newsletter produced by the AA Vision Group in Collins Bay Penitentiary donated by David T., Ottawa
- Meetings in Metro Toronto, March 1985 (meeting book)
- 8 GSO pamphlets from All Hope Group, Foundation 33 group & St. Jamestown group (names stamped on pamphlets)
- 7 Carlaw group lists (March 1981, May 1984, March and Oct. 1985, Jan. and June 1986, Dec. 1987) donated by a member (Birds of a Feather Group).
- Sunnyside group business meeting minutes (July and Nov. 2014, Jan., Mar., Apr., June-Sept. and Dec. 2015, June, Sept. and Oct. 2016) & group inventory, Oct. 2013, & group list, spring 2014, donated by Steve S. (Westmoreland Group).

Eddy G., Archivist

A brief history of ORC's name

1943-49

references to anniversary
and conference

1950

AA Conference

1951

Regional Conference

1952

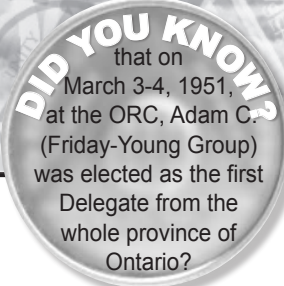
Ontario AA Conference

1953

Ontario Regional Conference

FROM THE ARCHIVES

DID YOU KNOW... that on March 3-4, 1951, Bill W. spoke about the proposed General Service Conference at the ORC held at the Royal York Hotel?



My favourite weekend of the year

I was nine months sober when I attended my first ORC in 2001. My sponsor and members of my home group encouraged me to attend and volunteer as a greeter for at least one shift.

I heard some great speakers that weekend. Peg from Nebraska had me laughing so hard that I thought a rib or two might break. There were times that weekend when I felt overwhelmed by the crowds, the energy and the excitement. Now that a few 24 hours have passed for me, I know that feeling overwhelmed by the ORC is not unusual for a newcomer.

The best part of that ORC was my greeting shifts. I was partnered with a wonderful woman from Sudbury who had several more years of sobriety than I did. She encouraged me and shared

with me that greeting and other service was important if I wanted to stay sober. She seemed to know everybody, which amazed me.

Over the years, I have not missed the ORC once. Whether I volunteer as a greeter or am given the privilege of being part of an ORC Committee, my service commitments at the ORC remain vital to my recovery.


This year, I have the honour of being the Chair of the 2018 ORC and part of a dedicated team of sober people who bring their energy and love of Alcoholics Anonymous to organize what promises to be a fabulous weekend.

2018 marks the 75th anniversary of the first AA meeting in Ontario. We are excited to include elements of our fellowship's history at this year's ORC.

We hope that you can join us and about 3,000 of our friends to mark this significant anniversary.

While I have been grateful to serve on ORC committees, for me, the best job at the conference is still that of greeter. By the way, I still look forward to seeing that amazing woman from Sudbury every year at the ORC. The way I figure it, if she is there and sober, and I am as well, then our fellowship's program of recovery works. That is worth celebrating.

Please join us at the Fairmont Royal York March 9 to 11 for my favourite weekend of the year.

See you at the ORC! 

Steve A.
Chair, 2018 ORC

Alateen at the ORC

As we set up in the Alateen room on Friday night, I say a little prayer that we have more Alateens than we had last year. It doesn't matter the number; just one more would be great but 10 more, of course, would be greater. I am also grateful that we are here, at another conference.

I greet the parents and thank them for bringing their children to the conference. I'm aware of their dedication to not only their own recovery and program but to the recovery of their child from the effects of this family disease. Usually, the old-timers arrive first, full of joy at another conference where they can learn and be free. Watching them renew old friendships – even at this young age – brings joy to my heart. These are


recovery friends, not survival acquaintances. Seeing them setting up the room as they want it, getting ready to write their Conference Rules for Alateen, each in their own way eyeing the door for their friends and, especially, the newcomer.

When that newcomer arrives, there is electricity in the room that is unexplainable. While the parents are doing the paperwork, the teen will shyly look around the room, not knowing what to expect. What they see, I am sure, amazes them: teens laughing and hugging, kindness and respect, silliness and acceptance.

As they attend the meetings and hear speakers, they begin to understand. They learn to talk to each other and rea-

son things out. Usually, the first thing they grasp is that they did not cause this disease and any ensuing behaviour; they cannot control it and they cannot cure it. For the first time, they feel included.

All too soon, the conference ends. I watch the Alateens leave, old friends and new friends saying "Sad to see you go." But then there is the excitement of "See you next year!"

I observe the transformation of the newcomer. As I watch that teen take the hand of their parent and look at them, I believe I see the new thought going through their minds: "Together, we can make it." 

Wendy C.
Supportive Alateen member

DID YOU KNOW... 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. & thousands more.

2018 ORC

ORC tips & tricks

DID YOU KNOW?
that on
March 21, 1966,
Ebby T., who was sober
two months and carried
the message to Bill W.,
died at age 69 with two
years of sobriety?

"Go find the Newcomer's Room when you get to the hotel. It's a wonderful place to meet other newbies, take a breather and compare notes. Also, it's a good place to meet buddies if you get separated."
Anonymous

HELLO

"Make use of the Hospitality Suites at the conference. It's a place to rest your feet, exchange numbers with newcomers or connect with old AA buddies. The free coffee and cookies aren't bad either!"
Ted P., Barrie

COOL

"I put a little bottle of hand sanitizer in my purse. I love the fellowship at the ORC but that's A LOT of hand-shaking!"
Naomi B., Oshawa

"Find someone from your home group who knows the ins and outs of the conference and ask them if they have any suggestions."
Anonymous

HI

WOW

Keep your phone on silent & in your pocket - ALL WEEKEND! There is nothing more distracting than someone texting or talking on the phone during a meeting. Disconnect to hear the message!"
Peter W., Toronto

"Wear comfy clothing, don't bring valuables and circle the meetings you plan on attending in the program you get when you register. It's a nice reminder after the weekend."
Helen O., Toronto

DID YOU KNOW... that on March 22, 1984, Clarence S., founder of Cleveland AA, story in Big Book "Home Brewmeister," dies at age 81?