




Memories of the ORC 2018

When I think of fun, I think of going to the movies, amusement parks or even for a cup of coffee with friend. Never in a thousand years would I have guessed that hanging out with a bunch of alcoholics would be a close option. But leave it to a group of recovering drunks to prove me wrong.

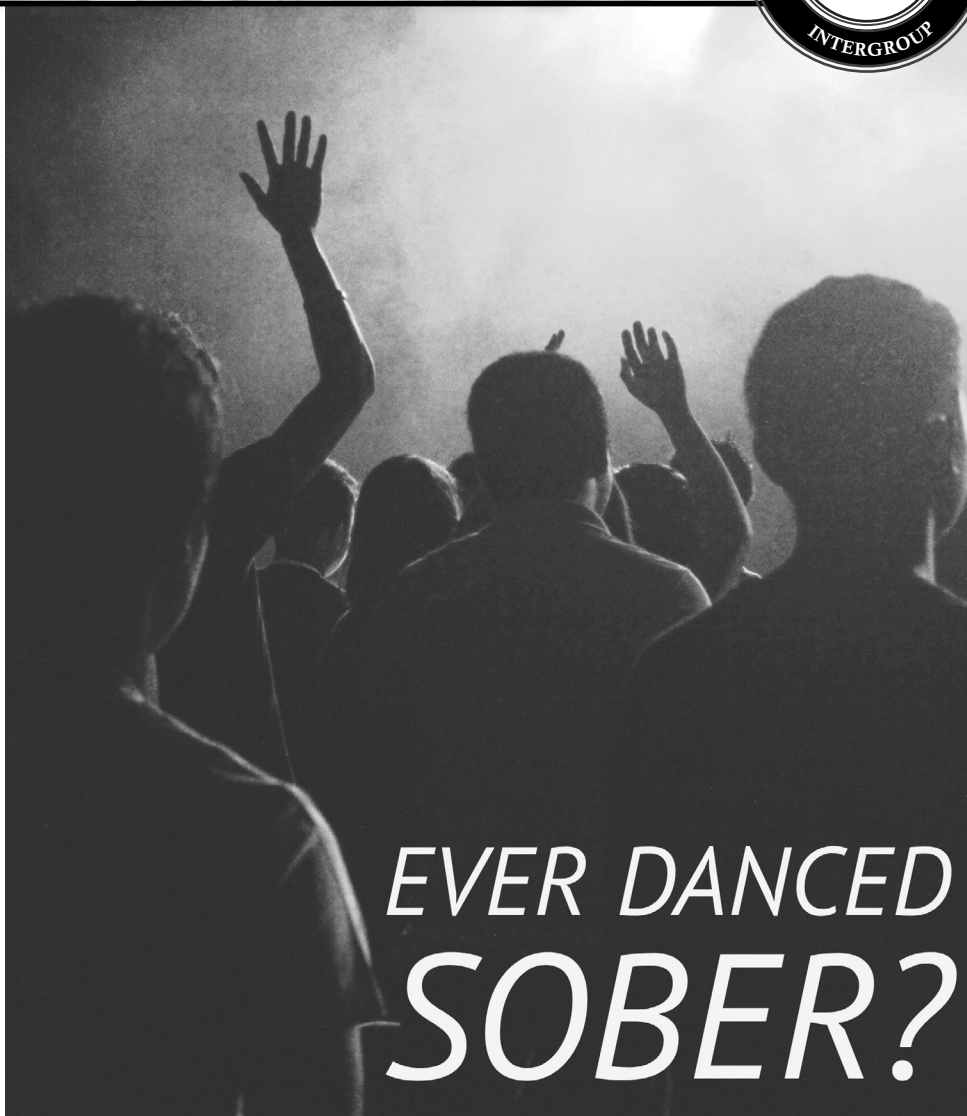
The Ontario Regional Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous was one of the most amazing weekends I've had in a long time. From the moment I arrived at the Fairmount Royal York hotel till the moment I left the conference, my days were filled with fellowship from all walks of life and inspiring stories from speakers that had powerful messages.

There wasn't a moment of rest, but my body, mind and soul were at ease because I was where I was meant to be, surrounded by wonderful people. I've never felt so comfortable in a crowd of people in my entire life. All that mattered to me was this celebration of sobriety for an entire weekend. It was amazing to experience all this life, love and laughs in one place for life-changing program of alcoholics anonymous.

I've never conversed so humbly, danced with such passion or stood up with such pride in an ocean of recovering human beings of all ages and races. It was a spiritual experience like no other and from now on, I will be attending every regional conference.

As long as I stay on this path and do the work that's required, I can remain on my journey of sobriety and continue to attend admirable functions such as the ORC. This is a major part of my journey of experience, strength and hope to a life I never imagined was possible. 

Jeremy R. & Ashley H.



EVER DANCED SOBER?


The spirit of AA

The Spirit of AA is alive and well as witnessed at ORC at the 75th anniversary of AA in Ontario.

Cheerful participants from far and wide; outstanding speakers from the very first on Friday to the very last on Sunday; hardworking volunteers and greeters from the floors to the hospitality suites; generous contributors to help pay the bills; excellent banquet on Saturday night followed by a dance for those who had the energy.

As a long-timer, I was invited to share the stage with another long-timer, Eric C.

from Mississauga, who shared an excellent message of how in the last 45 years, he turned from a reluctant newcomer into a most enthusiastic and happy old-timer.

I too gave one version of my three talks: the one I planned, the one I gave and the one I wished I had given. The saying goes that if you have helped one person, you did your job. At the end, I got more than fifteen hugs. Things are looking up. Thanks to AA and the power behind it, I never had it so good. 

John F., Hill Group

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

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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 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

F D Z X O Z W Q M A Y N M G G P A R A I L L
G U W L S E U B Q P I Q E Y F C Q S G K C J
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F O O D M A R C H N E W L E A Y E S U K G K
B U D D H A S B I R T H D A Y B O G G L E S W

flowers bloom	birds return	green
April Fool	cherry blossom	Easter
March	bees	Buddha's Birthday
May	seed	spring break
plant crops	warm	lilac
bears awake	new leaves	picnic

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Letter from the Editor

Greetings from the Editor!

Welcome to the April Edition! We hope if you attended the ORC you had a transformative weekend filled with inspiration and hope. If you did not have a chance to come down to the Royal York this year, we hope to see you in 2019. Many thanks to all who put their service foot forward to make this year's event into such a fantastic success.

April is when Spring springs into action outside but it also represents the first physical action, the act of putting pen to paper, in our steps. This takes courage, faith, dedication and hope - all qualities that a person in sobriety may have quickly abandoned in favour of the bottle. I will say it took great dedication to drinking to get where I got, the dedication to the process of the 4th step requires a different kind of drive.

Tradition 4 tells us that "Autonomy is a \$10 word" meaning that when we begin our program in A.A. we always must consider our foundation and history. Groups are king and they are governed by a Higher Power and the Group Conscience ensuring safety. In our personal lives practicing "the bouncing of ideas" on our sponsor, thinking of how our HP may solve a problem or how the group could benefit from my right action. All in A.A. have the freedom to decide our path but if it is remembered that we try to act in keeping with the principles, we will never stray too far from sober contented living.

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



TELEPHONE GREETERS NEEDED

Phone training is now the first Sunday of every month, except in April when the training will be on April 8th.

To book an appointment, please call 416-487-5591 or contact the 12th Step Committee.



“YOU CAN’T
THINK YOUR WAY INTO
RIGHT ACTION,
BUT YOU CAN ACT YOUR
WAY INTO RIGHT
THINKING.” BILL W.

DID YOU KNOW... that in April 1939, bank forecloses on Bill & Lois' Brooklyn home? They stay with Hank P. in Monclair, NJ -- the first of more than 50 moves they will make before buying Stepping Stones in 1941.

concepts corner

Concept ten

Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority — the scope of such authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description or by appropriate charters and bylaws.



Our service structure cannot function effectively and harmoniously unless, at every level, each operational responsibility is matched by a corresponding authority to discharge it. This requires that

authority must be delegated at every level — and that the responsibility and authority of every entity are well defined and clearly understood.

Final responsibility and ultimate authority reside with the AA groups, and they delegate this authority to the Conference. The Conference, in turn, delegates to the General Service Board the authority to manage AA's affairs on its behalf. The board is in authority over its subsidiary operating conditions — AA World Services, Inc. and The AA Grapevine, Inc. — but it delegates to the directors of those corporations the authority necessary to run these service entities. The directors are in authority over the executives of the corporations, but delegate to these officers the authority needed to carry out their administrative responsibilities. And finally, the executives delegate to the GSO and Grapevine staff members and other employees the authority necessary to carry out their important service jobs.

A call to service can be a whisper, not a shout


(This is a continuation of a story published in the February 2018 issue of Better Times.)

Then I saw it. This guy was struggling, bad. I could see it from a mile away now. He was clammy, bloated and nervous, clutching his soda can. I felt as though I was staring at myself half a year ago. It was surreal. I was in front of a man clearly white-knuckling withdrawal. My instinct told me to get out of there. Run. It's not your problem. I could get triggered. I had a meeting to get to. My sobriety was on the line. But what if this guy needed my help? I was only five months sober. What the heck could I do? Then it just blurted out of my mouth:

"Listen, let's grab our coats and get some fresh air, ok? You look like you could use a break from the party."

I guided him down the driveway into the fresh night air, took a deep breath and exhaled. I racked my brain through all the ties anonymity had been described in a meeting. Don't break it unless it's necessary during certain amends, it is "the spiritual foundation of all our traditions," protect it at all costs... then I also remembered the principles of helping a fellow alcoholic and attraction, not promotion. I looked at my watch. One hour till the meeting. I had time and my gut told me to stick and not run.

"It is perfectly clear," says Bill, "that when delegated authority is operating well, it should not be constantly interfered with." Otherwise, he warns, "those charged with operating responsibly will be demoralized." For example, the General Service Board owns the two operating corporations and its authority over them is absolute. "Nevertheless, so long as things go well, it is highly important that the trustees do not unnecessarily interfere with or usurp the operating authority of these entities."

"To sum up: Let us always be sure that there is an abundance of final or ultimate authority to correct or to reorganize; but let us be equally sure that all of our trusted servants have a clearly defined and adequate authority to do their daily work and to discharge their clear responsibilities." 

*Copyright 1986 by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. All rights reserved.

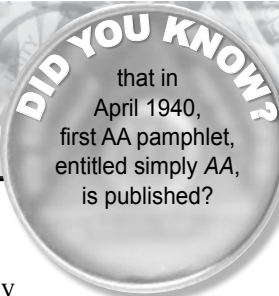
"Listen," he said desperately, "I am in really big trouble on all fronts and I am kind of desperate for options, to be honest. I can't go for more than a day without a drink and I don't understand how I got here. This is not me. I didn't plan this, it just happened."

"I am an alcoholic. I quit drinking five months ago because it was running my life, ruining my life and killing me. It is the hardest and best decision I have ever made."

"But how?" he pleaded.

(Continued on page 7.)

DID YOU KNOW... that in April 1941, Ruth Hock, Bill W.'s first secretary, reports that 1,600 letters have been received since the Saturday Evening Post article by Jack Alexander on AA?



info & events



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

Please help us celebrate
Kipling group's 40th anniversary!

Date: Thursday, May 17, 2018

Light food and party from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Open meeting from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Location: Olivet New Church
279 Burnhamthorpe Road, Etobicoke

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?

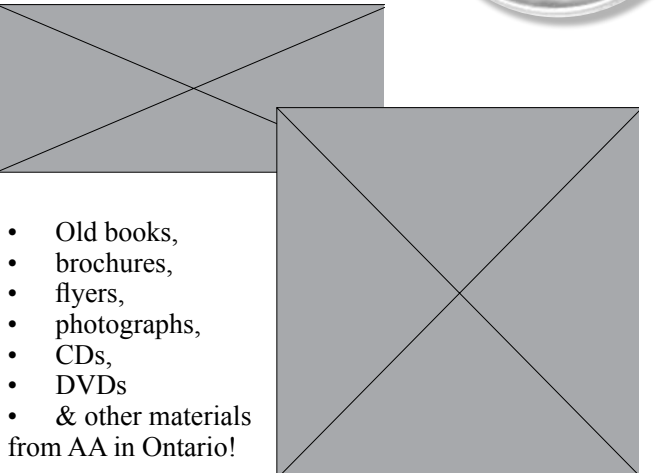
Contact us
bettertimes@aatoronto.org



DID YOU KNOW... that on April 20-22, 1951, the first General Service Conference took place at the Commodore Hotel in New York City, beginning a five-year experimental period, linking AA's Trustees with the Entire Fellowship?

MEDALLIONS			
Malle S.	5	Erin Mills	Mar. 26
Bob I.	1	East York	Mar. 27
Jim C.	25	North Toronto	Mar. 27
Don C.	15	Leslie	Mar. 31
Ann T.	5	Leslie	Mar. 31
Jackie B.	1	Erin Mills	Apr. 2
Barry D.	30	Sobriety Plus	Apr. 3
Angelica C.	1	New Anchor	Apr. 5
Byron S.	5	Silverbitch	Apr. 6
Michael S.	35	Aurora	Apr. 8
Scott M.	20	Bloordale	Apr. 8
Jeff S.	1	Erin Mills	Apr. 9
Lisa H.	35	Open Hands	Apr. 11
Bill B.	25	Rexdale United	Apr. 12
Martha W.	5	Six Points	Apr. 16
David B.	5	Erin Mills	Apr. 16
Dan M.	35	Kipling	Apr. 19
Dianna T.	35	Erin Mills	Apr. 23
Stanley G.	10	Erin Mills	Apr. 30

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



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

Old GTA meeting books are needed for the GTA Archives.

From the archives with GTA Archivist Eddy G.

Recent items donated to the GTA Archives:

- 3 GVs with special features from June 2004, June 2012 & July 2015 donated by Peter P. (New Anchor group)
- 9 Box 459: Summer 2012, Fall 2013, Summer 2014, Fall 2014, Spring 2015, 2 Summer 2015 & 2 Fall 2015 donated by the Thorncliff Park group
- History of the Secular Step Meeting (now Beyond Belief Secular Step Meeting) by Jo-Anne K.
- History of the Streetsville Action group, 12 photos of the discussion room setup, open meeting room setup, literature table, announcement table, coffee area, front table with table cover, slogan board donated by Peter B. (Streetsville Action group)
- March 2001 Meetings in the Greater Toronto Area (meeting book)
- 2002 AA Central Offices, Intergroups & Answering Services for the U.S. & Canada booklet
- Letter from Richmond Hill Public Library requesting AA literature (Dec. 2003)
- Letter from Withdrawal Management Services Spring Conference requesting PI Display Table (March 1999)
- GTA Intergroup Online - A Brief History (Feb. 2001) 7 pages
- 4 newspaper articles: 3 about police infiltration in the rooms of AA meetings (April 2002) & 1 regarding The Spiritual Heart of AA (Jan. 2000)
- PI Media Request (Nov. 2003), PI Committee Minutes (Feb. 2004)
- Better Times Feb. 2004 Issue
- New Year's Eve 1998 committee list, inventory, job descriptions, flyer, letter from GTA Intergroup thanking for donation
- TF day agenda (Sept. 2003). All items donated by MaryAnn B. (Night Owls meeting).
- Toronto Gratitude 2017 roundup agenda placard (11"x 17"), 50 years Nanaimo AA Rally 2018 Program (Jan. 26-28)
- CERAASA2017, Moncton, New Brunswick: program, agenda, survey, bookmarker & Remote Communities Workshop
- Presentation (8 pages) donated by Paddy A. (Frontrunners group)

Eddy G., Archivist

A call to service can be a whisper, not a shout

(Continued from page 4.)

"I stay sober by going to AA"

"AA, huh?" he said, staring at the ground. "It's a religious thing, no? I won't consider anything that pushes that."

"Not religious at all, actually. We like to call it spiritual. No God. No confession. Some prayers but none are mandatory. There is nothing forced about it. I had it all wrong when I walked in and now I can't imagine my week without it. And quite honestly, it's kind of amazing. But I am not here to recruit you," I chuckled. "You asked and I answered. That's how I did it."

We continued to talk for the next 45 minutes and I told him a good chunk of my

story: my despair, my self-hatred, my not being able to stop and my fear of losing my kids and marriage, my relationships and my life. I laid it out there and was honest. I just told him what it was like - one alcoholic to a possible other. When I was finished, I looked at him and we were both tearing up.

"I am going to a meeting right now, actually. You're welcome to come with me and check it out any time. Not now, not ever, if you don't want to, no pressure. This is my path only. I just got sick and tired of being sick and tired, ya know?"

"Yeah, I think I do. Not tonight though, I am going to head to bed. But maybe I will take you up on your offer sometime."

He shook my hand and headed up the

street. I got in my car and went to my meeting where I told my sponsor what had happened. My sponsor was supportive and simply suggested I pray that night for him and continue on my road to recovery.

I am not advocating breaking your anonymity to anyone. It's a personal choice. There are risks involved that must be considered. I am also not going to tell you that my friend called me the next day. He did not. He drank over the holidays. He got kicked out, moved to a hotel and then he lost his job. Four days ago he called me and came with me to a meeting. His first. He got a temporary sponsor. I am not sure what is going to happen with him but I am hopeful.

Peter H., Thornhill

History of the Streetsville group

The Streetsville group was started by Jimmy R., Mary and Byrnes F. on January 13, 1958, at the Erindale Community Hall on Dundas St. W., east of Mississauga Road.

Mary and Byrnes owned a funeral business and every Tuesday night, they would transport chairs from the funeral home to the AA meeting and back again after. Mary and Byrnes were both sober over 30 years before they passed away. Jimmy R. is buried in Streetsville cemetery. He made coffee for many years and was still sober when he passed away at age 90 in 1993.

The Fire Marshall condemned the floor of the Community Hall, forcing the group to move to Lee's Funeral Parlour on Queen

Street, Streetsville, until August 1968. They then moved to Streetsville United for two years and to Trinity Anglican Church, Streetsville, in 1970.

One member, Ken M., or Old Ken as he was affectionately called, took current member Ron N. to purchase a new amp to replace the existing one which was part of an old 1930s radio. Ken swore Ron to secrecy as he wanted to donate the new amp anonymously. There's humility in action. Subsequently, it was replaced about three years ago with donations from a handful of members. Early members were June P., Beril, Marge, Ron R., Murray, Marg B., Ester, Herb and Ruby S.

On April 26, 1998, shortly after the group's 40th anniversary, Trinity Angli-

can Church burned to the ground. The group moved to the Meadowvale West Church Centre and continues to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic every Tuesday night at 8:30 p.m. They also have a closed meeting on Thursdays at 8 p.m. at Eden United Church, Winston Churchill and Battleford.

The group's 60th anniversary was celebrated on January 16, 2018, with Annette from Stoney Creek sharing her message of hope and recovery.

Contributions by Darleen M., Moe D., Pat B., Bruce L., Ron N., Nancy R., and Robb W.

Compiled by Chris H.

Sponsoring with the Big Book

Some years ago, out in Hollywood, California, I was asked to sponsor a guy named Tom. However, I declined by informing him that I was only two years sober, to which Tom replied: “Well, that’s all I want!”

What to do? I had been studying the Twelve Step directions from the Big Book, so I decided it might work out if we stuck to those clear-cut instructions, page by page. After all, Step Twelve doesn’t say that I am to carry my message or my sponsor’s message or what I think the message is, but it says to carry THIS MESSAGE - I believe that means the one in the Big Book.

Confidence restored, I proceeded full speed ahead and the vital Big Book message was successfully carried. Since, I have only one authority as an

active sponsor: The Big Book program of action.

Being a history-minded sort of guy, I have spent many years studying the ingredients and suggestions of the AA Program. A place to start was a November 1934 kitchen-table meeting between Ebby Thacher and Bill Wilson (p. 9): Ebby told of a simple religious idea (a vital spiritual experience), and a practical program of action (The Oxford Group’s Four Absolutes, etc). Bill had the idea that his gin would outlast Ebby’s preaching, but it did not—a week or so thereafter, Bill checked back into Towns Hospital never to drink again.

On Dec. 14, 1934, Bill, while lying in bed, went through the essential elements of our now Twelve Steps (p. 13).

By 1936, these ideas (tenets) became what were then known as the six-step program (p. 263). Although similar, there were several versions of these.

Bill W. started writing the Big Book manuscript during the spring of 1938 and by December had completed the writing of all Twelve Steps. However, his manuscript was altered somewhat dramatically in January of 1939 and included our Twelve Steps of today.

But guess what - it worked! We then had maybe a hundred members, but now over two-million are staying sober by their use. Thank God I had these guidelines when I sponsored Tom so many years ago.

Bob S., Richmond, IN

