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"I could not believe that there were this many Alcoholics in a downtown hotel at one time – furthermore NOBODY was getting in trouble?"

See Story Right



The Fairmont Royal York

I'm sure that everybody remembers the words 'Last Call!' If you don't, you were in worse shape than I was! Because this is the March issue of **BETTER TIMES**, this is a 'Last Call' to register early/buy your tickets now, get your Group to donate tickets, get involved, volunteer, help out, be a Greeter, whatever. There are loads of things to be done and helping hands are always welcome!

This will be the tenth ORC I've attended and each one has been a diverse and stimulating experience. The first year I went (I think it was at the Sheraton that year) my Sponsor Tom G. said, 'Be a Greeter – tell people what they need to know!' How the Hell could I do that? I didn't know anything myself! Of course I didn't think that they'd TELL me what people needed to know. But I DID go down and went to several 'Alcohol and the Family'-type Meetings, as it appeared that I didn't have a family any more at the time. I remember seeing the Traders Bar and thinking how much money I'd blown there over the years.... but what impressed me most as a 'Newbie' was the

sheer SIZE of the ORC! I could not believe that there were this many Alcoholics in a downtown hotel at one time – furthermore NOBODY was getting into trouble? THAT was

the various Speakers and Sessions I wanted to catch. This balancing act has continued for the last eight years. Also, being at the Royal York, I keep getting hilarious flashes of 'Remember Whens' – I look around and compare my current crystal-clear ORC memories with fuzzy night recollections of shambling down these same halls with my so called 'Pinstriped Peer Group' as W. B. Yeats said "And what rough beast, its hour come round at last, slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?"

In our case, we were always shambling around looking for yet another Cocktail Party or Corporate Hospitality Suite and feeling God-awful for the next day, rest of the weekend, whatever!

My best 'Good Remember When' is from the ORC. I got yanked into the Sunday Morning Table and Countdown. There I was in a suit in front of more than 2500 people, with my face on those screens, telling them it was St. Patrick's Day and a few years ago nobody would have believed

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Last Call for the ORC!!

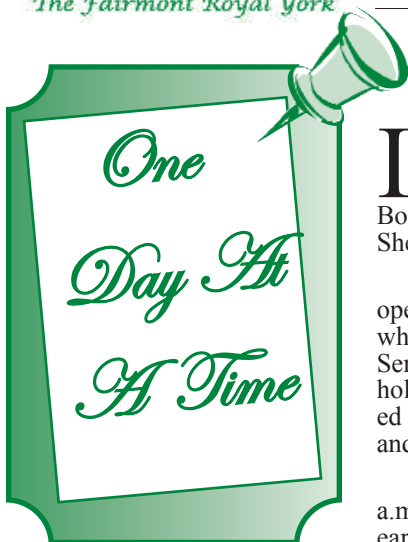


pretty different from any other Conference I'd attended.

Then the ORC moved back to the Royal York (my 'old stomping ground', so to speak). By this time I was involved in several Committees and working on the Committee Information Tables, so my weekends were split up into a balancing act between that and

"25 Years of Service"

Web Page: www.aatoronto.org/Events/Info_One.htm E-mail: AADay2004@hotmail.com



Information AA Day is being held on May 15, 2004, at Lansing United Church, 49 Bogert Avenue near Yonge and Sheppard.

Information AA Day is open to all. This day is for you, whether you are in General Service or Intergroup, an alcoholic or an individual interested in Alcoholics Anonymous and how it works.

Registration begins at 8 a.m. For those who like an early start to their day, there is

an Early Bird open meeting at 8:45 a.m.

The workshops begin at 10 a.m. and include local AA members talking about:

- How Intergroup and General Service work together to help the still suffering alcoholic in the Toronto area
- What service was like 25 years ago and what is coming in the next 25 years

After a terrific potluck lunch (included in the \$5.00 ticket

price) you will hear:

- Our Area 83 Delegate, Roy R., talk about his involvement in service at the 54th General Service Conference in New York
- Gayle S.R., the Public Information Coordinator at the General Service Office (G.S.O.) in New York, share her message of recovery along with a description of the G.S.O. and how it works.

See 25 Years Page 3

I have learned many things from AA, and I had an opportunity to put some of them to the test when I went on vacation last November.

I went to St. Martin for a week, with a fellow AA member (Karen B. of the *Thorncliffe Park Group*). It rained all week. In fact it didn't just rain, it POURED. The locals kept telling us that they had never seen anything like it at that time of year.

This was a perfect time to live 'one day at a time.' Because we have learned a thing or two about serenity, we were able to look on the bright side. Sure, it was raining, but it was warm enough to wear shorts and sandals. And probably tomorrow would be sunny – besides, someone else was cooking the meals and making the beds.

We both realized that we had never flown sober. Times have

The Editors Say...

AA on a Beach

changed and there is no longer the endless flow of free alcohol that there used to be on airplanes. Still, the plane ride was a 'remember when'. I could remember getting on an airplane (more than once) so hung over that I thought I would die. A few quick free drinks soon cured that (or so I thought).

Another 'remember when' came to me when I noticed that some of our fellow vacationers were dealing with the constant rain by spending all day at the bar. I realized how much I had missed on previous vacations by spending more time in local bars and pubs than actually seeing the sights.

Three or four days of rain can put a dent in even the most

hardcore serenity, so when we saw a list of AA meetings in the local paper, we decided that a meeting couldn't hurt.

The first one we went to was in the Red Cross Building, within walking distance of our hotel. There were a dozen people at this meeting, and as we went around the table introducing ourselves, I realized that in AA, you are indeed 'never alone.' Most of the members were expatriate Americans, but there was one man from Toronto (small world, eh?). It was a good meeting, which helped us maintain our serenity.

The weather was still not cooperating, and it continued to rain for two more days, until

the day of our departure, which, naturally, was bright and sunny. This was the weather we expected in the Caribbean.

We decided to take in one more meeting before we left, one recommended by the people we had met at the earlier meeting. This one was also within walking distance of our hotel, but was held on a beach in the next cove.

We arrived half an hour early, and, looking at the crystal-clear water, I decided to have a swim before the meeting. The water was warm, the sun was shining – what could be more perfect?

Six or seven people showed up in time for the meeting, including Patrick, the man from Toronto whom we had met earlier in the week. This was a Big Book meeting, so we

See Beach Page 3

One Day at a Time

When I arrived at the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous I already had a set of slogans in my life. 'A day without a drink is a day without sunshine.' 'The pause that refreshes.' And my favorite, 'Relief is just a swallow away'.

AA has replaced my old slogans with new ones. One of the most challenging slogans is 'One Day at a Time'. (I always say the slogan I'm currently discussing is the most challenging no matter which one it is.) I like to say I live one day at a time. I'm great at repeating what I've heard other people say in the program. To be honest, I find this very hard to do. I'm always thinking about a meeting at work next week or a problem I failed to solve last week. I think about the drive to work tomorrow morning or what's for dinner on Saturday. I say I live 'One Day at a Time', but my brain doesn't want to cooperate.

The only way I've been able to live 'One Day at a Time' is to live in the moment. The best way I've been able to live in the moment is at a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. It doesn't matter if it's an open or closed meeting. Get to the

comforting word or a handshake. To keep my overactive mind from wandering during the meeting, I look at the person who's speaking. I listen to what they are saying. I try my best to relate to what I hear. When I'm thinking about someone else I'm not thinking about myself. When I relate to someone else in the program it brings me closer to the fellowship. This is when I start to feel grateful to be sober. This works if you're talking to your sponsor or a sponsee. This works if you're on a 12 Step call, visiting a detox center or a treatment center. This works just great if you're carrying the message to jails or prisons.

I don't have all the answers to the mysteries of life or the mysteries in Alcoholics Anonymous. As a matter of fact I don't have very many answers for anything. But I do know what works for me. My serenity and soundness of

mind are directly related to my relationship with the God of my understanding. This relationship is reinforced with continuous action in our program. The bottom line is stay close to AA and let the miracle happen.

Peter C.



meeting early and help set up the chairs or make the coffee. Greet people at the door. Look for that person who's not doing very well and offer them a

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Opinions expressed in BETTER TIMES are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Greater Toronto Area Intergroup.

Archives Alley

Marty M.

Marty M. was the first woman member of AA to achieve lasting sobriety. She was a patient at Blythewood Sanitarium in Connecticut when she was given a prepublication of the Big Book in early 1939. On staff was a psychiatrist, Dr. Harry Tiebout, who was an ardent supporter of AA. He just happened to be her attending physician. Hoping that she would find the strength to stop drinking, he asked her to read the book. Initially she threw it out of the window in a rage, but when she eventually read it, she began to understand her alcoholism and started to work on the pent-up rage that was her downfall.

She was the original archetype in early AA who showed women that they could be alcoholic and could recover from 'a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body'. Always impeccably dressed and well spoken, she was the quintessential recovered alcoholic.

Marty M. went on to help thousands of alcoholic men and women. She became one of Bill and Lois' closest friends. Bill and Marty worked together to establish High Watch Farm in 1940, an institution for the treatment of alcoholics that used AA spiritual principles. The Wilsons also supported Marty in her efforts to start the National Council on Alcoholism. Although she relapsed briefly between 1959 and 1964, Marty continued her tireless work in AA.

Bill and Marty identified on many levels. Marty M., like Bill W. and many other alcoholics, suffered from depression. In the late 1950s, they both sought the help of a psychiatrist and were subjects of medical experimentation in attempting to find relief from their debilitating bouts of depression.

Marty passed away in 1980. Her story, 'Women Suffer Too' can be found in the second and fourth editions of the Big Book.

Bernadette MacL.

Have You Heard?

Recent Medallions:

Wayne S., 15 yrs., *Wexford Group*. Feb. 10.
Sharon T., 1 yr., *Twelve Steps Group*. Feb. 11.
Brenda H., 5 yrs., *Thorncliffe Pk Group*. Feb. 13
Ian H., 1 yr., *Thorncliffe Pk Group* Feb 20.
Ted G., 10 yrs., *Thorncliffe Pk Group* Feb 27.
Colette M. & Sandra U., 5 yrs., *Keep It Simple Group*. Feb 29.

Upcoming Medallions:

Klauss K., 25 yrs., *Weston Group*. Feb 29.
Bob D., 25 yrs., *Weston Group*. Feb 29.
Yvonne L., 45 yrs., *Bloordale Group*. Mar. 4.
Linda A., 1 yr., *Lawrence Plaza Group*. Mar. 7.
Marc H., 1 yr., *East York Group*. Mar. 16.
Ken M., 1 yr., *Agincourt Acorn*. Mar. 3.
Mike G., 15 yrs., *Thorncliffe Pk Group* Mar 5.
Jim B., 1 yr., *Sobriety Plus Group*. Mar 16.

Group changes:

Saturday Evening Crosstalk Group. (C) [Sat / 7:30 p.m.] Effective Feb. 7. This group which meets at the Church Of The Resurrection at Woodbine and Milverton will change its meeting time from 8 p.m.

Remember When Group (O) [Wed / 8 p.m.] 285 Shuter St, main Rec room TEMPORARILY CANCELLED UNTIL MARCH 3.

Daily Reflections (C) [Fri / 12 noon] is changed from 12:15 p.m. effective immediately.

New Meetings:

Milton's Sunday Night Live (C) [Sun / 8 p.m.] Milton Community Resource Centre, 917 Nipissing Rd, corner of Thompson Rd and Nipissing. Closed Discussion. Last meeting of the month an open speaker meeting. Non-smoking. Wheelchair access. Sign language interpreters allowed. STARTS MARCH 7.

Beach (from Page 2)

all sat at picnic tables under a palm tree and read from the Big Book, while the sun sparkled on the water. It was a meeting we will never forget, and a perfect end to our vacation. Where else but in AA could we sit on a beach in a foreign country and be at harmony with a group of people we had never met before?

AA has given me many things for which to be thankful: the ability to live life to the fullest, the fellowship of AA, and of course, my sobriety.

Elizabeth S.

25 Years (from Page 1)

At the end of the day there will be an Ask-It-Basket session and Sharing Time for those who want to know more. If you have a question regarding the 2005 International Convention Doug R., Coordinator for the 2005 International Convention, Rick W., the Alternate Coordinator and Gregg T., the Convention Consultant, will all be on hand to provide an answer.

Almost 50 years ago Bill W. said, "AA is more than a set of principles, it is a society of recovered alcoholics in action." So come and join us for the 25th Anniversary of

The Friends of Bill and Bob Meeting (C) [Mon / 12:15 noon] at YORK U York Campus, 4700 Keele St at Steeles Avenue. Meeting in Ross Building, room S102. 12 Step discussion. Non-smoking. Wheelchair access. Sign language interpreters allowed.

Crossroads Sunday Sharing (C) [Sun / 2:30 p.m.] Trinity Anglican Church, 26 Stavebank Road, PORT CREDIT. N of Lakeshore Rd West, on W side of Stavebank. Open Topic format. Non-smoking. Wheelchair accessible. Sign language interpreters allowed at closed meeting.

Special Events, Conventions & Conferences. More information on all these events is available on the bulletin board at the GTA Intergroup offices. Address below.

SOBRIETY AND MORE IN 2004. LAST CALLOntario Regional Conference March 19-21. Royal York Hotel. AA, Al-Anon & Alateen speakers. Panels, Meetings, Dance and lots of fellowship. Registration \$26 (Alateen \$12). Banquet extra \$50. Information (416)487-2677 or www.aatoronto.org. Preregister by mail **before March 4, 2004**, to ORC box804, 31 Adelaide Street E. Toronto, ON.M5C-2K1. Visa, Master Card or cheque (no cash via mail please).

Area 83 Eastern International Spring 2004 Assembly. March 26, 27, 28 Ambassador Hotel Kingston ON. (Reservations call 1(800)267-7880) for more info talk to your GSR.

SPRINGATHON 2004. 'Living In Sobriety Together' April 3. 2004 at Loafers Recreation Centre, 10 Loafers Lake Lane, Brampton ON. 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. For information e-mail springathon04@sympatico.ca, Registration \$15 (7th tradition for alateens).

Toronto Sunday Morning Men's Meeting Leaside [Sun / 10:30 a.m.] will be having a 55-year Group Anniversary on Sunday, April 25, 2004. For this special event, ladies are also welcome to attend this celebration.

Information AA Day and help us celebrate '25 Years of Service'.

Robb W.

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 previous month)**, mail to GTA Intergroup. 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 202, Toronto, ON, M4P 1K5, by fax 416-487-5855 or by e-mail to btimes@aatoronto.org. Only signed submissions with a means of contact will be accepted. For subscriptions call Alexx at 416-487-8110.

Members present: 23
Groups, 3 District Liaisons, 7
Subcommittee Chairpersons or
their reps.

Chairperson's Opening Remarks (Derek F., *St. Clements*). Derek's theme was A Vision of Responsibility through Service and Self-Support, Guided by Love and Service with God's Help. He explained that the Operating Committee, the Finance Committee and other committee members, "are truly just your humble, volunteer Trusted Servants." He also mentioned the 168 phone volunteers and their efforts.

Finance Report – Ron S. (*North Toronto*), **Finance Committee Chairperson**. Income for the month of December was \$26,420.84, which means there was a 'plus' for the year of \$73.

Subcommittee Reports

SELF-SUPPORT – Phil M. (*Bayview*), **Chairperson**. This committee needs volunteers.

ACCESS ABILITY – Donna M. (*Thorncliffe Park*), **Operating Committee Junior member**. This committee needs a new Chairperson! Resumes to 234. Access Ability will be participating in Mayfest, a cultural festival for

Intergroup Report



the Deaf. **Volunteers are needed for this event**, please contact 234.

TWELFTH STEP COMMITTEE – Donna M. (*Thorncliffe Park*) **More phone volunteers are needed!** Contact 234.

AD HOC COMPUTER COMMITTEE – Dominic A. (*Tuesday Night Disc.*), **Operating Committee**. Dominic stated, "In a nutshell, Toronto AA has been relying on the good graces of unpaid volunteers to do technical, professional work on computers, and it has finally caught up

with us." *Full report and recommendations from 234.*

ARCHIVES – Bob D. (*Weston*), **1st Vice Chairperson**. The committee plans to re-publish the *50 Years of AA in Ontario* [book] as it is. After that, the committee is going to re-edit it, and add to the book [a second edition]. They would like to have this ready [a 'fast print'] by this Fall.

NEWSLETTER – Kevin M. (*North Toronto*), **Chairperson**. Kevin has been elected as the new Chair of **BETTER TIMES** and that Gord MacK. (*New*

Anchor) has been elected as the Editor. Please send any stories, announcements, etc., to btimes@aatoronto.org.

PUBLIC INFORMATION – Kevin M., (*North Toronto*), **outgoing Chairperson**. *Report on file*. Tom S. (*Saturday Morning Disc.*) has been elected as the new P.I. Chairperson. District 14 needs a new P.I. Chair

CPC – Mary J. (*Saturday Morning Discussion*), **Operating Committee 2nd Vice Chair**. *Report on file*.

GRAPEVINE – Scott MacD. (*Bloordale*), **Chairperson**. *Report on file*. Requests for a Grapevine Display at your next group anniversary or medallion can be made to 234.

WEBSITE – Christina M. (*Welcome*), **Alternate Chairperson**. *Report on file*. December had a record number of visits to the site (4,492). This was a 35% increase from last year.

ORC – Clay R. (*Pine Hills*), **ORC 2004 Chair**. Clay reported that everything is in place for the event, to be held **March 19, 20, and 21 at the Royal York**. Clay asked Reps / members to encourage members to Pre-Register for the event – this would be much appreciated!

Are We There Yet? Are We There Yet?

Well not quite, but almost!!! We're *Marching* toward the 53rd Ontario Regional Conference and you can feel the excitement in the air. This celebration has been planned for almost 2 years and it's coming to a climax. We are going to have incredible speakers, panels and talk-a-thons. There is also a full Al-Anon and Alateen program for the entire family to enjoy. However the most prized commodity at the conference is the fellowship. Many a member has shared stories of being reunited with old friends and new memories created. In fact many people recalled their first conference experience with great warmth in the insert in **BETTER TIMES**.

But please remember, this is

your conference! It's where we proudly show off our sobriety and everyone can be involved. If you are interested in helping to carry the message at this years ORC we may have just the job for you.

Greeters - As any past attendee can attest, there are greeters everywhere. But that doesn't mean we can't use your help, too. There will be sign-up sheets at the conference for anyone who wishes to be a greeter.

Registration-The registration desk is arguably the busiest spot in the whole conference. Volunteers are needed to help in the processing of every attendee.

Literature-The literature table will need volunteers to cover two-hour shifts selling hard cover books and pam-

phlets.

If you are interested in any (or all) of these positions you can leave a message at 416-487-2677 or email us at orc@aatoronto.org. We'll get back to you as soon as possible.

Remember, it's almost here!!!! We look forward to having you celebrate your sobriety with us.

See you there. March 19, 20 & 21 at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel.

Clay R. ORC Chair

ORC (From Page 1)

I'd be sober THAT DAY! A guy I'd worked with and hadn't seen for about 20 years was in that audience. He agreed with my comments. (It's an honest program.) You never

know what can happen at an ORC...

Last year, we actually had some extra volunteers at the Committee Information Tables for a while (MIRACLES CAN HAPPEN!); so I played 'Hooky' for a few hours and became a 'Temporary Ad Hoc Greeter.' It was a Hoot and a great way to meet people from all over!

So, 'Sobriety And More...In 2004' is this year's Slogan. In my case the 'And More' is the memories and Fellowship that I take away from every ORC... always far MORE than any time I put in! I look forward to this year's ORC. Let's make it a Great One and a terrific kickoff for next year's World Conference. See you ALL at the Royal York, March 19, 20 and 21!

Kevin M.