

BETTER TIMES

May 2007
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Fellowship! Breakfast! & Two Longtime Speakers!

On **Sunday May 27, 2007** the 2nd Annual East Toronto Archives Breakfast will be held at Flipper's (in the Athenian Room) located at the White Shields Plaza (North West Corner of Kennedy Road and Lawrence Ave. East). Wheel-chair accessible. Free parking.

The Agenda-
9:00 am - 10:00 am there will be coffee, tea and fellowship. From **10:00 am - 11:00 am** Breakfast Buffet consisting of scrambled eggs, bacon, sausages, home fries, sliced tomatoes, toasted hot buns, juices, coffee & tea.

From **11:00 am - 12:00 noon** there will be an open AA speak-

er meeting with two AA longtimers (one male & one female). After the meeting there will be a sobriety count down and then door prizes and raffle prizes will be given out.

Each ticket is **\$15**.

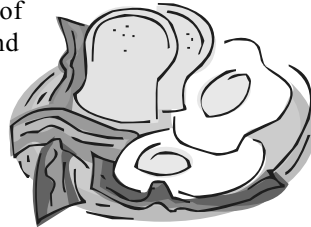
Tickets can be purchased in advance. There will be eight seats per table. Members and groups who want to sit together may consider purchasing a table.

The purpose of the East Toronto Archives Breakfast is to celebrate the rich history of the Fellowship in the East Toronto Area, to acknowledge the dedication of those who have gone before us to "pass it on" and to

bring awareness to the AA members of the East Toronto and other AA members about Archives.

On **Sunday May 27, 2007** come and join us at the 2nd Annual East Toronto Archives Breakfast. Tickets are available from District 18 & District 22 GSR'S or Committee Members. Eddy G. 416-536-7536, Matti H. 416-751-7715, Ed H. 416-750-0173, Cathie D. 416-693-1584, John M. 416-277-4285, Patrick F. 416-357-0553.

District 18 & District 22
East Toronto Archives
Breakfast Committee



breakfast not exactly as shown!

AA Information Day May 5, 2007

As summer approaches you may not be thinking of getting involved in service work within Alcoholics Anonymous. Do come and see what service is all about. Info AA Day is on May 5, to be held at Lansing United Church, 49 Bogert Ave., Toronto. The theme this year is "The Arms of Service". It is one of the best events of the year!

The cost to attend is \$5.00. All service Committees from Intergroup and General Service are represented on this day. Dot Dykstra our Area Delegate and Eva Sanchez from the General Service Conference in New York will give their reports. If you have ever wondered how Alcoholics Anonymous works outside of the group then this is a day for you!

Registration opens at 8:00 am and an early bird meeting at 8:45 am. There will be a potluck lunch. Members involved in service are happy. They are giving back but it is not just giving back to Alcoholics Anonymous that makes service so great. It is being a part of AA and being with service people.

Kim S.
(Incoming) 2008 Info AA Day Chair

Carolyn R. celebrates 35 years

Carolyn R. arrived at her first meeting of AA in May of 1970 with a burning desire to stay sober, yet it was not until 1972 that she was able to 'stay stopped'. On May 24 at the Recovery Group in Thornhill, she will celebrate 35 years continuous sobriety.

For 15 years, the Donwood Group was her home group but she left to help start up the Lighthouse Group. After two years she joined the Recovery Group. She has been a consistent and strong member taking many opportunities to grow the best of which was service with Correctional Facilities. An invaluable experience, she was

involved in prison meetings for years.

To Carolyn some standards are essential for AA recovery. Namely, sponsorship; carrying the message; meetings; listening to others; living it; and one day at a time.

All are welcome Thursday, May 24, at Recovery Group at Christ The King Lutheran Church, 149 Bay Thorn Drive, Thornhill, {South of Hwy. 7, North of Steeles, between Yonge & Bayview. Corner of Royal Orchard Blvd. & Bay Thorn Dr., across from Heintzmann House}

The meeting starts at 8 pm.

Bernadette MacL.
King City Group

*Tradition
Five*

*Each group has
but one primary
purpose - to carry
its message to the
alcoholic who
still suffers.*

For the Sake of Discussion...

The other night I decided to drop in on a Step Study Group.

It had been advertised on the website of a church I attended here in Florida as part of their outreach program.

Naturally I expected to find perhaps a dozen, maybe as many as double that number, seated around with Big Books and Twelve and Twelve Books at the ready.

You can imagine my surprise when over 300 folks showed up.

Now you do not have to be a member of AA to attend this group – but of course 98% of the people are – the rest are AlAnon.

The seating was theatre style and after a ‘routine’ opening, the facilitation was handled by two men, one of whom had been doing this at this location for 23 years, the other was a relative newcomer with slightly less than 20 years of continuous sobriety.

Now, my ego doesn’t take too kindly to being ‘lectured’ about the program by so called ‘experts.’ I’ve always felt quite capable of reading our literature myself and keeping any discussions to small gatherings.

Consequently, I spent the first half hour of the session trying to open my mind a crack just to see

if my brilliant self could learn anything at all from this experience.

The format is simple. The facilitators take turns, leading the discussion for 10 minute intervals. They adhere very closely to the text of our two principal publications, selecting thoughts and constantly inviting comment and input from the audience.

In fact, they not only invite it – they ‘require’ it.

It became obvious to me that many in the room were from area treatment facilities and among the others were those who might well have been ‘street people.’

Most listened closely to all that was said and many participated in the interactive dialogue.

Gradually, I was able to get my ears tuned to what was being said and discussed. It wasn’t too long before I reached for pen and paper to make some notes for further consideration.

Among other suggestions was one that we all take a moment now and then to finish the following sentence “I know I am alcoholic because...”

One of the audience reminded us that “being an alcoholic didn’t make you the person you

became – you became an alcoholic because of the person you were” and thus the steps are the tools we use to ‘fix’ that person.

Another defined God as the “Gift of Desperation” – a phrase I had never heard before.

I was constantly reminded that “just walking in the door didn’t fix us because our ‘deciders’ were broken”. And that it is necessary to remove responses beginning with the phrase “yes, but” in conversations with sponsors.

Just taking Step One means that the person has not changed and will probably drink again according to the folks.

As the one hour session flew to the conclusion I was engaged in conversation with Charlie, a transplanted New Yorker who had been around since the mid 1950’s. He shared with me the fact that he had been continuously sober for about 27 years at one point, and then one day he picked up a drink.

After a few years he managed to get back to the program and I gather he has now been here for about 17 years.

Of course I asked him, if he was ever able to figure out why he relapsed.

He said that the answer for him was relatively simple.

Once he got ‘straightened around’ again and had a chance to

review his situation he concluded that he had become complacent. He was considered a wise old bird by his many sponsors and friends in the fellowship. In fact he was a popular banquet and convention speaker.

He was ‘cured’ apparently.

In hindsight he concluded that he had become a ‘two stepper’, existing only on Steps 1 & 12 and largely ignoring the other 10.

As I left the church that night, I was troubled by a not so vague feeling of identification with Charlie’s comments.

Is it possible that I consider myself a graduate of this program?

My answer probably lies in the fact that I have not missed a meeting of this study group in weeks and I have re-opened the 12 & 12 and found myself in there again. It is odd how much I had forgotten and how many passages seem new and fresh.

My name is John and “I am an alcoholic because I am an alcoholic.”

John G.
Unionville Group

Better Times invites comments about John G.’s column. We hope to stimulate discussion and response, perhaps even a guest column. Please email your comments to “fsod@rogers.com.” – ed.

EDITORS SAY

Recently I attended a medallion birthday where the group of AA members who participated in the meeting was asked to gather together for a photograph. The backdrop was the group name, the circle and triangle and the slogans. Prior to this meeting, I was in attendance where the medallion celebrant of a fifteen year length of sobriety in AA posed as she cut the cake the Group had purchased for her. Her daughter and brother held their cell phone cameras in position for a photo to mark the occasion.

The latter part of Tradition Eleven states clearly that “we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.” I read that New York was contemplating adding “electronic media” to this tradition which I feel would be additionally beneficial. However nothing is ‘very helpful’ if AA members do not adhere to the Traditions as they were written, endorsed and adopted by AA in 1950.

Ignorance is bliss it would seem. When I approached members about the photos at the AA meeting, several explanations were made when I pointed out

that the Eleventh Tradition was being violated. One member said that it was not during the meeting but after the meeting had ended. Moot point when newcomers could see camera flashes in the room. Another member said that “each Group is autonomous” to which an astute member beside me during this conversation declared “when it affects AA or AA as a whole” and taking pictures in the rooms of AA affects all of AA.

Sean M., a longtime member of the Welcome Group pointed out one time ‘You don’t take pictures at an AA function’, to which I totally concur. Never

did it come to mind that all and sundry did not see this the same way. To my dismay, I noticed cameras being used freely at the ORC this year.

With the proliferation of cell phones, PDA’s, and digital cameras, I would hope that the Groups would take up the gauntlet and emphasize clearly what we do and do not do in AA. In a recent article by Jim A., of the Thursday East End Group, he begs the question: “If not us....Then who??” Who will speak for AA if we do not speak up?

Bernadette MacL.
King City Group

Dr. Emily Griffith

The relationship between Bill W. and his mother was one that psychologists would delight in analyzing. Abandoned by his father, Gilman, at age eleven when his parents divorced, Bill's mother had ambitions of her own. She literally deserted her children leaving them with their grandparents to move from Vermont to Boston to study and practice medicine. Emily eventually traveled to Vienna hoping to study under Sigmund Freud, however she had to settle for Dr. Alfred Adler.

Emily Griffith loved to regale Bill with tales of his painful and protracted birth and the great sacrifice she had made on his behalf. Later in her life, she revealed that she was not insensitive to the complexity of their relationship yet always pointed out her son's flaws.

Both she and her second husband, Charles Strobel, were medical doctors and moved to San Diego in the 1930s to set up a joint practice. Throughout the years of Bill's drinking, she did help out with some of his medical bills. Faithful in his love and respect for his mother, Bill wrote to her diligently, always seeking her approval.

In 1943, Bill and Lois traveled to the West Coast. His mother joined them in Los Angeles for Bill's big evening where more than a thousand AA members had gathered to listen to him. Lois stated that his mother was not only surprised at the fuss made of her son, but was actually jealous. Bill was very disappointed as he believed she would be very proud of him.

Emily lived in San Diego until the age of 85 when her family convinced her to return east where she lived briefly with her daughter Dorothy and then moved to a nursing home ten miles south of Bedford Hills.

She died in 1961 at the age of ninety.

Bernadette MacL.
King City Group

Recent Medallions

Eric M.	5	East York	April 3
Geoff C.	1	Twelve Traditions	Apr. 4
Clayton M.	1	Mississauga	April 8
Charlene S.	25	Anniversary	April 26
Dorothy	25	Lakeshore	Apr. 29

Upcoming Medallions:

Robert H.	1	Westmoreland	May 1
Sherry T.	5	Thursday East End	May 3
Audrey M.	10	Lakeshore	May 6
Trevor O.	1	Mississauga	May 6
Eddy G.	20	Beaches	May 8
John M.	10	Thursday East End	May 10
Victoria B.	15	Beaches	May 15
Carl S.	1	Westmoreland	May 15
Carolyn R.	35	Recovery	May 24
Brian D.	20	West York	May 27
Robbie R.	25	King City	May 28
Jo J.	20	Thursday East End	May 31

Meeting Changes:

Thursday Night Men's Meeting (O/C) 8 p.m. (EAST) - Correct address is Waverley Road Baptist Church, 129 Waverley Rd, N of Queen St E.

Brampton Recovery Saturday Morning 12 Step Meeting 11 a.m. (SUB.NW): New Name & Location: Now called **Recovery 12 Step Meeting (C)** - Loafer's Lake Rec. Centre, 30 Loafer's Lake Lane BRAMPTON. Sandeewood Pkwy E at Conestoga Dr, near Kennedy Rd. (wheelchair accessible).

New Meeting:

One-Twelve Group (O) 8 p.m. (NORTHWEST): C.A.W. Building - 30 Tangiers Rd, 1 block E of Keele, off Finch & Tangiers.

Meetings needing support:

All Hope Group (O) Saturdays 7 p.m. EAST: Ralph Thornton Centre - 765 Queen St E at Saultler (3rd floor). 2 blocks E of Braodview. Accessible. Meeting needs support in the form of attendance and speakers.

Event notices:

Information AA Day. Saturday May 5 at Lansing United Church, 49 Bogert Avenue.

42nd Annual Blossom Time Convention. Mother's Day Weekend May 11-13, 2007 at Niagara College - Glendale Campus, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON. For registration or info, go to www.blossom-timeconvention.com or write Blossom Time Convention, Box 831, Niagara Falls, ON L2E 6V6

28th Annual Eastern Ontario AA Spring Conference
"The Only Requirement" - May 11-13, 2007 Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario.

Spring Conference 2007 c/o Ottawa AA Intergroup, 108-211 Bronson Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 6H5
Telephone: Morris R. at 613-747-7150 (leave a message for Spring Conference).
Internet: <http://al-anon-ottawa.ca/Springathon07.pdf>
e-mail: springathon07@magma.ca

The 2nd Annual East Toronto Archives Breakfast. Sponsored by Districts 18 & 22 Sunday May 27, 2007 at Flippers Restaurant at White Shields Plaza (NW corner of Kennedy Rd & Lawrence Ave E) Tickets \$15.; available from the following members: Eddy G (416) 536-7536, Matti H (416) 751-7715, Ed H (416) 750-0173, John M (416) 277-4285, Patrick F (416) 357-0553, & Cathie D (416) 693-1584.

10th Annual BIG BOOK STUDY - Duff's Presbyterian Church, RR#3 Guelph, ON (Hwy 6 & Hwy 410, exit 299). Saturday August 18, 2007. Presented by James B (Jamestown NY) and Wes B (Toronto). Doors open at 8 a.m. Registration from 8 a.m. until 9 a.m. Coffee, donuts, and refreshments. Lunch is included. For tickets, call Dennis D (519)763-1599.

The Archives Subcommittee of GTA Intergroup invites you to attend the **23rd Annual Archives Breakfast** Sunday, Nov. 4, 2007 at the Oasis Convention Centre (1063 Lakeshore Rd E, Mississauga). 9 a.m. coffee, 10 a.m. breakfast buffet, 11 a.m. open meeting. Guest Speaker will be Amy Filiatreau, Archivist for GSO in New York. Tickets available from Intergroup Reps, GSRs, or the Intergroup Office (234).

Things we cannot change

Bill R. (Thornccliffe Park Group), over 32 years sober, passed away April 12.
Gordon MacN. (Church Street Group) passed away suddenly March 30.

May 2007 GREATER TORONTO AREA INTERGROUP Monthly Boardroom Bookings for SUBCOMMITTEES	
*Subcommittees meet at the Intergroup Office (234 Eglinton Ave E, Suite 202) unless indicated otherwise.	
Wed. May 2	Self-Support7:00 pm
Mon. May 4	Corrections7:00 pm
Thurs. May 10	Grapevine7:00 pm
Fri. May 11	Archives7:00 pm
Sat. May 12	Website1:00 pm
Mon. May 14	CPC7:00 pm
Thurs. May 17	Treatment Facilities7:30 pm
Sun. May 20	Access Ability11:00 am
	Monthly Phone Training Session1:30 pm
Mon. May 21	Public Information7:30 pm
Tues. May 22	Finance Subcommittee4:30 pm
	Operating Committee7:30 pm
Wed. May 23	Better Times Newsletter7:00 pm
Fri. May 25	TWELFTH STEP Committee6:30 pm
Mon. May 28	INFO AA DAY7:30 pm
Tues. May 29	Monthly General Meeting8:00 pm
	of GTA Intergroup - Workshop meeting for new Intergroup Reps.- at Glebe Rd. United Church...20 Glebe Rd. East (N of Davisville subway)
TBA:	Ad Hoc Recommendation Committee

Thank You ORC

Sometime back when the ORC was being announced, my friend and I talked about attending. Things get pretty stale in our own area, according to us, so we decided that we would register. I moved to Pickering and miss my old home group, the Saturday Morning Discussion Group in Toronto. At the Conference we saw

many faces with whom we did service. The speakers at the ORC were excellent! What we heard really hit home. Service has always been rewarding and I am slowly getting back into it. Thank you to all the volunteers who do service and are there to make this wonderful Conference available to us.

Mary J.
Pickering Village Group

Post ORC 2007 Wrap-Up

Here we are at the end of April and the ORC 2007 *Surrender to Win* has come and gone. Thank you all for making the conference such an overwhelming success. You could feel the magic of AA in the air.

Our attendance was up slightly from last year at 2670. The snowstorm and perhaps some concern over passport requirements resulted in our U.S. attendance being significantly lower. However, the large attendance from the local and regional AA communities did compensate.

Although the incentives for

pre-registering did not result in an overall higher pre-registration numbers, we did receive more pre-registrations earlier, which certainly helped with cash flow. We are in the process of computing the final revenue and expenditure numbers and the outcome looks very positive at this time. The final report will be given at the May Intergroup meeting.

The speakers were exceptionally well-received - each and every one of them did a fantastic job of conveying their experience, strength and hope and the miracle of *Surrendering to Win*.

I can't express enough how deeply satisfying and humbling the ORC 2007 service journey

or attend their monthly meeting; dates and times are listed in BT.

Or, you can attend the **Information AA Day**, Saturday May 5 at Lansing United Church.

The **Access Ability committee** will be carrying the message at Mayfest, an annual conference for the deaf and at the People in Motion Conference.

It is never too early to start thinking about the **Archives Breakfast**, November 4, 2007. The speaker will be Amy Filiatreau, the Archivist from GSO. Tickets will be available from your GSR or Intergroup Rep.

Attendance at this years' **ORC** was up slightly which means more people heard great speakers and enjoyed great fellowship. "Happy, Joyous and Free" is the



has been for me. What a pleasure it was working with such a wonderful group of service-oriented people. Our committee worked hard to put on the conference and had a fabulous time doing it. Fun and fellowship - what more could we ask for?

Thank you all, again, and remember that the ORC 2008 *Happy, Joyous and Free* will take place at the Royal York Hotel, March 15, 16 and 17. See you all then.

Barbara H., Welcome Group
Chair, ORC 2007

An Irish priest is driving down to New York and gets stopped for speeding in Connecticut. The state trooper smells alcohol on the priest's breath and then sees an empty wine bottle on the floor of the car.

He says, "Sir, have you been drinking?"

"Just water," says the priest.

The trooper says, "Then why do I smell wine?"

The priest looks at the bottle and says, "Good Lord! He's done it again!"

March '07 Intergroup Report

"Greater Toronto Intergroup is a co-ordinating body that supports the 12-step work of A.A. Groups in the Greater Toronto Area, providing a point of contact between individual groups, the public, and the still suffering alcoholic"

Intergroup continues to move in the right direction. Year to date net income is -\$567 but this is much better than last year at this time of -\$2,145. Remember if your group would like further details from the **Operating Committee**, **Finance Committee** or any other sub committee please call Intergroup to arrange for a member to visit your group

theme of the 2008 ORC. Please submit your ideas for graphics to 234 to win a registration and one night at the Royal York!

The newly elected **Treatment Facilities** chair has fallen ill and a new chair is being sought. Please submit your resume to 234 if you are interested.

Keep an eye out for the new website as Doug Y. and the **Website** committee have been working hard to make the site more user-friendly. The new site will make it easier to find local meetings and list all service positions available. Help is always needed so if you have any website building experience please contact the Website committee.

Volunteers are always needed for the phones and for the **12 Step committee**. Phone training

takes place the 3rd Sunday of each month.

The Ad Hoc committee that is working on presenting and implementing the ideas from the previous Ad Hoc committee has created a pamphlet for new Intergroup Reps. Samples were distributed with prizes for those who find ~~tipos~~ ~~typoes~~ ~~typose~~, oh darn, for those who find mistakes. They will also be listing the sub-committee meetings in the Meeting Book.

Look for the June issue of **Better Times** for results of elections at Intergroup. Thank-you to the current Operating Committee for your service. You have carried the torch well for the new committee to continue carrying.

Tim R.
Chartwell Group