

BETTER TIMES

June 2007
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Tradition Six
 An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A. A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

After 25 years, still a special 'Special Worker'!

Tradition Eight states the following: *'Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.'* When I was newcomer to AA and would encounter this Tradition at discussion meetings, I would often think *"How special is 'special'?"*

Greater Toronto Area Inter-group has been fortunate to have had hard-working and dedicated people serve as Executive Secretary; a loving legacy that was started with our first Intergroup Secretary, Marg M.

Our current Executive Secretary is Carole Keenan, a schooled business-woman, tennis player, mother and grandmother, who came to Toronto Intergroup in June of 1982 from employment in the private sector. Always of a gentle and caring nature, this non-AA was looking to engage in work that was meaningful and helpful for the community at large, and AA was a "fantastic opportunity".

Quiet-spoken and methodical, Carole is the very essence of 'calm, cool, and collected'. She is a skilled

bookkeeper, a natural diplomat, and she has a natural flair for solving problems quickly, quietly, and with grace. Her compassion and patience is boundless, and she is always willing to stop and listen to anyone who is going through a rough time. When invited to address the Intergroup Floor in June 2002, Carole stated: "I've enjoyed working at Intergroup for 20 years. It's been a challenge: sometimes happy, sometimes sad but always interesting!"

For almost seven years, I have had the honour and privilege of serving as a 'special worker' in the guise of administrative assistant. I have known Carole a little longer than that (I had a sponsor who was very adamant that I get my butt into 234 to stuff envelopes for Gratitude!) and was then impressed with her kindness and sincerity.

When I started at 234, I had not worked for a long time. To say that I was lacking in certain technical-type 'office knowledge' (*"Do I have to use that computer?"*) is a vast understatement! Carole graciously took me

under her wing, patiently schooling me in office-type protocol (including the ways of the 'evil computer'!). I am so very honoured to have been under her tutelage, as I have learned so much from her expertise and manner. I really don't think there would be very many bosses 'out there' that would have had the time and patience to deal with the likes of me. I will be forever grateful for Carole's patience and understanding in this regard.

Page 175 of the text *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* declares that *"Our Twelfth Step is never to be paid for, but those who labor in service for us are worthy in their hire."* Indeed, our cheerful, positive, and intrepid Executive Secretary has fulfilled this role tremendously in the last 25 years, and is the very definition of a special 'Special Worker'.

Thank you, Carole, for 25 years of selfless dedication and commitment in helping AAs to fulfill the essential spiritual task of carrying the message of hope!

Alexx V., Midtown Group

Hockey Teams in AA



Toronto was represented by 25 members of area groups in this year's Coffee Cup tournament in Windsor Ontario with 2 teams. The 22nd Coffee Cup brought together teams from Windsor (2), Hamilton (3), Cambridge, Toronto (2), Sudbury (2), Smith Falls, Ottawa and Brockville for a weekend of fellowship, on and off the ice.

Windsor was our host city and did an amazing job of organizing and welcoming the crowd of over 150 AA members and their families from across Ontario. Hats off to Link, Michelle and Steve Mc C for their tireless efforts to make us all feel welcome in true AA fashion.

Everyone was treated to an outstanding dinner followed by our speaker, Pat, whose message etched in stone what we share being together. We all knew that without the Steps, we could not have been part of the Coffee Cup experience or, life in general. The big winner from the weekend was a young man from Hamilton who was the last person standing after the Sobriety Countdown and received a beautiful leather-cased Big Book donated by Steve P. (Markland Woods Group).

A musical slide show of the Hamilton 2006 Coffee Cup and previous years was shown,

followed by skills competition which was held earlier Saturday. Congratulations to Rob B. (Beaches Group) on winning the shootout competition.

The serenity Prayer Circle was held prior to the games when both teams met at center ice to join hands. Toronto Red had a great tournament finishing half a point shy of the bronze championship game. Congratulations to Toronto Black on being tournament champions. Regardless of the wide range of ability, age and gender, everyone in attendance was a winner.

The 2008 Coffee Cup will be held in North Bay, Ontario. Toronto looks forward to bringing at least 2 teams. Anyone interested in participating in our weekly skates is welcome. Please do not hesitate to get involved.

Gary W., Twelve Step Group

HAPPY JOYOUS AND FREE! — AT THE ORC

The 2008 committee has been hard at work in preparation for the ORC conference March 14, 15, & 16th 2008. A number of great speakers have already been booked & we are looking into entertainment for Friday night. There will be discussion meetings as well as a 12 step workshop available for those that are interested.

We are looking for submissions for graphics with the theme of Happy Joyous & Free. The submission chosen will receive a night at the hotel, registration and banquet and the statement “graphics by” on all the literature. Submission deadline August 15th 2007. Email to reneorc2008@hotmail.com

There will be monthly draws for early registrants and for those who book through the hotel at the conference rate a chance to win their stay free. Stay tuned for more exciting updates over the coming months...until then “May the 4th be with you!”

Rene T., 2008 ORC chair

JUNE 2007 GREATER TORONTO AREA INTERGROUP

MONTHLY BOARDROOM BOOKINGS FOR SUB-COMMITTEES

*Subcommittees meet at the Intergroup Office (234 Eglinton Ave E, Suite 202)

Mon. June 4	Corrections	7:47:00 pm
Wed. June 6	Self-Support	7:00 pm
Fri. June 8	Archives	7:00 pm
Sat. June 9	Website	1:00 pm
Mon. June 11	CPC	7:00 pm
Tues. June 12*	Joint Meeting of Intergroup Subcommittees Chairs, Operating Committee, & the Dist. DCMs /Alternate DCMs (*Dist. 12 facilitates, at Glebe Rd. United Church)	7:30 pm
Thurs. June 14	Grapevine	7:00 pm
Sun. June 17	Access Ability	11:00 am
	Monthly Phone Training Session	1:30 pm
Mon. June 18	Public Information	7:30 pm
Tues. June 19	Finance Subcommittee	4:30 pm
	Operating Committee	7:30 pm
Wed. June 20	Better Times Newsletter	7:00 pm
Thurs. June 21	Treatment Facilities	7:30 pm
Mon. June 25	Info AA Day	7:30 pm
Tues. June 26	Monthly General Meeting	8:00 pm
	of GTA Intergroup –at Glebe Rd. United Church...20 Glebe Rd. East (N of Davisville subway)	
Fri. June 29	Twelfth Step Committee	6:30 pm
TBA:	Ad Hoc Recommendation Committee	

Liability Insurance Program Alcoholics Anonymous of Ontario

We have secured what we think is a very good low cost liability coverage that will both:

- Protect the members of the group
- Satisfy the requirements of the various landlords where the groups meet.

The program is issued on a master policy with certificates provided to each group. This allows us to reduce administration and get around the minimum premiums that insurance companies would charge to individual groups. We have set this program up with very little administration for everyone concerned. This should help keep the cost down also. Simply the various groups would contact our office and provide the name and location of the group and the number of members per the chart below. We would issue them a certificate which can be used as proof of insurance.

The policy is a \$1,000,000 Premises Liability Coverage covering operations at the meeting place only. It provides protection against bodily injury and property damage from third party litigation

The coverage would be as follows:
\$1,000,000 Owners, Landlords and Tenants Liability Coverage (Premises Liability Only) \$1000 Deductible Bodily Injury and Property Damage

\$250,000 Tenants Legal Liability Broad Form Coverage - \$1000 Deductible

The above deductibles are the minimum in our industry and this coverage is really to be used for the more severe type claims. The annual premiums for any group would be as follows:

2 – 15 \$150 annual premium
15 – 25 \$200 annual premium
25 & up \$250 annual premium
8 % PST is applicable

To increase the limit to a \$2,000,000 limit please add 40% to the above premiums.

We feel that the above segments will help the smaller groups obtain coverage at an affordable premium. We would suggest that all groups should have liability coverage and welcome all the chapters throughout Ontario to join in the program. We appreciate the support we are receiving.

We look forward to placing this coverage on your behalf and if you require anything further please contact us.

Regards,
Law Insurance Brokers Ltd.
14900 Yonge St. Aurora, On.
LAG 1M7
905-727-1913 or 416-969-8262
or 1-800-529-2235
Brian Murphy
bmurphy@lawbrokers.com
Tracy Sangwin
tsangwin@lawbrokers.com

This message is to help groups meet requirements at facilities they may use.

Alcoholics Anonymous: Preparation for Living

“I made it...I MADE IT!” Billy excitedly shouts to his mother as he return from school. “Made what?” asks his mother. “I made the baseball team at school! I can’t wait to see what Dad says. We have our first

game on Thursday, and you and Dad can come and see me play.”

His Mom feels a little worried, but hides this with a wide smile. “Okay! Sounds great, kiddo!”

She and Billy know that Dad joined AA five years ago, and goes out to a meeting almost every night. They are so proud of his sobriety...but they also wish they could be more of a family like their neighbours down the street. With Dad out to AA so much, they find they can’t count on him to be there

to share in their family’s happiness and good times.

The following story brings this question to my mind: As an AA member, are you ‘slicing your pie’ in the right way, living-wise? My feeling is no, if the family can’t really count on Dad (or Mom, or Sis, or whoever) to be there for family members like Billy.

I have been in AA for almost forty years, and have sometimes seen the freedom from alcohol turn into what I call *an AA*

escape from life.

I suggest that members take a look at their life today and see if they are giving back to their family, their employer, and their community what they had ‘robbed’ them of when they were actively drinking.

All these individuals don’t want to have you think that you ‘owe’ them what you took from them through the misuse of alcohol...*they just want you to share your sobriety with them.*

Walter C., Scarborough Group

James Houck

Although AA 'does not wish to engage in any controversy', there has been ample debate over the years. One such dispute has been whether or not the oldest sober living member of the Oxford Group was or was not a member of AA.

James Houck attended his first meeting of the Oxford Group at the local YMCA in New York City where, in despair, he felt he needed to make some changes in his life. The date was Dec. 11, 1934. He was 28 years of age.

He always referred to himself as a recovered alcoholic but never identified himself as a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. Well acquainted with Bill W., he pointed out that AA was a breakaway group (the alcoholic squad), originally comprised of Oxford Group members. As an example, he noted that Dr. Bob did not leave the Oxford Group until after the Big Book was written.

Despite all of this, James traveled throughout the country as an honoured speaker at many AA events. He was always recognized as an Oxford Group member that was later known as the Moral Re-Armament, a secular group with "an ideology inspired by God".

In 1996, my husband John & I attended a seminar at the Wilson House in East Dorset, Vermont. We met James in person there and I asked him the question. Was he a member of AA? His answer was that he was not: that his membership in the Oxford Group had provided the means for him to get sober and live his life according to the Four Absolutes: Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness, and Love.

He was however distinguished in that he was the last person alive who witnessed the formation of AA in those early days. He reached the age of 100 years acquiring 72 years of continuous sobriety.

He passed away on July 30, 2006.

Bernadette MacL.
King City Group

Recent Medallions

John R.	10	Lawrence Plaza	May 20
Bill N.	20	Friendly	May 21
Lynn B.	15	City Central	May 27
Kevin O.	1	Glenholme	May 28
Winston F.	5	New Anchor	May 31

Upcoming Medallions:

Elizabeth M.	1	Westmoreland	June 1
Steve B.	1	Twelve Tradition	June 1
Dennis P.	1	Westmoreland	June 2
Andy S.	1	Aurora	June 3
Tonya C.	1	Lakeshore	June 3
Corina M.	1	East York	June 5
John S.	5	Unionville	June 6
Jim M.	1	New Anchor	June 7
Paul B.	1	Chartwell	June 7
Gerry C.	5	Lakeshore	June 10
Dave S.	20	Sunday Northwestern	June 10
Diana M.	20	Danforth	June 28
Bob S.	1	Westmoreland	June 21
Ajay P.	25	Unionville	June 20
Alex S.	1	Unionville	June 27
Mississauga Group Anniversary	39 years		June 26

Meeting Changes:

Dry on Danforth mtg., Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs (EAST): CANCELLED until September (building undergoing renovations)

Sunday Serenity Grp. (EAST): DISCONTINUED

Orelta Discussion Grp. (Polish) Tuesdays (WEST): information change – Open Speaker meeting fourth Tuesday of the month

Frontrunners Grp. Saturdays (CENTRAL) LOCATION CHANGE: St Peters Church, 188 Carlton St, one block east of Sherbourne. Living Sober/Step/Big Book Closed discussion, Open Speaker first Sat. of the month. Gays/Lesbians welcome.

Thornhill Big Book Disc. at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Mondays (SUBURBAN NORTH): DISCONTINUED.

Thornhill Discussion Grp., Mondays (SUBURBAN NORTH) at Thornhill Presbyterian Church is STILL UP AND RUNNING.

Traditional Grp., Wed., Closed Disc. and Fri. Open Mtg. (NORTH): TIME CHANGE for BOTH meeting nights – now at 8 p.m., starting June 1.

Glenholme Grp., Monday (CENTRAL): as of June, the discussion meeting time CHANGES TO 7 p.m. (from 7:15 p.m.); the OPEN MEETING CHANGES TO 8 p.m. (from 8:30 p.m.).

Circle of Hope, Fridays (SUBURBAN NW): meeting no longer held at Knight's Table Restaurant. MEETING ON HOLD until new location info is received.

Brampton Bad Boys Grp., Tuesdays (SUBURBAN NW): correct address is Church of Christ, 750 Clarke Blvd., BRAMPTON.

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.

Meadowvale South Group New Streetsville Meeting. Sunday Night Meeting starting May 27 at -St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, 293 Queen St. N., Time: 7:30 PM

Maple Group, first mtg. - Tues. June 5, 2007 - 8:00 pm at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 9860 Keele Street, Maple, south of Major MacKenzie Rd. Tues./Thurs. - closed meetings.

Meetings needing support:

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

Things we cannot change

Paul I., City Central Grp, passed away April 22.
Daryl S., St. Clements, passed away recently.

Event notices:

The Greater Toronto Men's Retreat June 15-17. The Ecology Retreat Centre in Hockley Valley, Hwy 10 & 9 Junction. Contact: Mike W. 416-259-0370 or David H. 416-531-4945.

The 15th Annual Trillium Convention a great weekend of inspiring speakers, workshops, fellowship and fun with Al-Anon members from across Ontario and beyond! The convention will offer a full program of AA & Alateen meetings in addition to the Al-Anon program. June 22-24, DoubleTree Int'l Plaza, 655 Dixon Rd. Toronto

The Texas State Convention will be held in Fort Worth, TX, June 15 to 17.

20th Annual HCYPAA 'Prescription for a Miracle' June 22-24 in Houston, TX. Info: www.hcypaa.org.

Plum 19th Annual Courage Round Up. Halifax, N.S., Aug. 10, 11, 12, 2007. "AA – Anchored in Sobriety". Sponsored by gay men and lesbians in AA. Open to all alcoholics and those affected by the alcoholism of others. For more information, phone: 902-463-7895 or 902-425-8383 e-mail: Courage449@yahoo.com

10th Annual BIG BOOK STUDY - Duff's Presbyterian Church, RR#3 Guelph, ON (Hwy 6 & Hwy 410, exit 299). Sat. Aug. 18. 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.

Hamilton & Districts 39th Annual **AUTUMN LEAF ROUNDUP 'There is a Solution'** Sept. 14-16, at the Sheridan Hotel, Hamilton. For more info, call 1-800-514-7101 or Hamilton Central Office 905-522-8392.

Come to Believe... it Works! 11th Mississauga Fall Roundup 2007. Sat. Setp. 29, 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., St. Mary's Church, 3625 Cawthra Rd. Includes buffet lunch, refreshments, great speakers, great fellowship. Tickets \$20 – Contact Murray J. at 905-826-9409

A new definition for 13th stepping...

Steps 1+12, 'My life's unmanageable and I want to share it with you!'

Spiritual Progress Group Celebrates 23 years

Our group first met as a Saturday evening group on April 1, 1984. The group was an offshoot of a merger between two smaller groups. The name "The Spiritual Progress Group" was suggested by Steve D., who was a member of a group at a Senior's Residence, located at 1 Maple Street. The other group that merged had originally been started by employees of the Chrysler Corporation, at the CAW Union Hall on Beech St.

The founding members of the Spiritual Progress Group were Doug M., Chester K., Harold B., Adon D., Christie D., Murray E., Gerry B., Brian C., Phil L., Zeev Y., and Steve D.

In the fall of 1991, our group began holding five

weekday noon meetings at a community centre that once was in the Central Public school on Alexander Street.

In the fall of 1992, we moved to our present location at Grace United Church, 156 Main Street. Our noon meetings became one of the first groups to study both the steps and the traditions by studying each on alternate weeks.

At St. Anne's Church on Saturday evenings we have a closed Big Book Discussion at 7pm and an open speaker meeting at 8:30pm. Despite years of solid attendance, we are now in the process of seeking new accommodation for this meeting as St. Anne's Church now requires the use of all of its available space.

Our group's five-day noon hour meetings are important for AA as a whole as many members have found their start on the AA way of life at our noon meetings.

Also in well attendance are our two Saturday evening



meetings; the alternative being the Brampton bar scene.

Our group is unique in the Brampton as we sponsor seven meetings per week and we welcome members from any and all Brampton groups, as well as from neighbouring communities and, occasionally, we welcome members from other provinces and countries.

Darrel R. Spiritual Progress Group

The King City Group is 'Going Green'. In an effort to avoid non-biodegradable cups in our landfills, members and guests are requested to bring traveller mugs for their coffee.

April '07 Intergroup Report

A total of 61 members were present for the last meeting chaired by Rene T. (Silverbirch). The floor would like to thank Rene for her efforts and wish her the best in her next service commitment as the Chair of the 2008 ORC!

Stephanie L. (Erin Mills) was acclaimed as the next Operating Committee Chair with Barbara L. (St. Clements) to serve as 1st Vice. The 2nd Vice Chair position will be left vacant, as per the Procedures & Guidelines. Senior Operating Members: the three Junior Members moving into Senior positions are Arwen H. (Primary Purpose), Harold Y. (Port Credit), and Lyle G. (Thorncliffe Park). Election of Junior Members: There was a call for nominations / volunteers for the three Junior positions. The new Junior members (by acclamation) are Nonnie G. (Saturday Morning Disc.), Charlie C. (Silverbirch), and Brad H. (Bayview). Congratulations to all and hold onto your hats! You're in for a fun ride!

We learned that for the month of March we were in the black \$98 and in the black \$70 for the year. The Finance subcommittee continues to ask that we make sure all our literature invoices are paid as the Accounts Receivables (the amount outstanding) continues to be large. Also, please make sure that Lynn in the Literature Department at the Intergroup office has up to date information for your group's librarian. The committee is also in need of one new member.

The 2007 ORC announced a surplus of approximately \$7000. Overall attendance was up slightly despite the severe storms in the US which may have contributed to US attendance being down slightly.

The Access Ability subcommittee was able to provide a Braille Big Book for a member in the Barrie area thanks to a generous donation.

Readership is increasing for the Better Times Newsletter. Better Times carries the message of AA in the GTA. Look for the special insert featuring a summary of all subcommittees in the June issue in time for the May Intergroup Workshop!

The Archives subcommittee con-

tinues cataloging archival material in the repository.

The Corrections subcommittee continues to look for a chair.

Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) continues working on a variety of service initiatives including working with members of the clergy.

There was no Grapevine Report. There was no Public Information report.

At the time of printing, Information AA Day was a success with Adrienne Brown, from GSO, as guest speaker and a message from our Area Delegate 83, Dot D.

The Website subcommittee is in need of a chair and volunteers to help with the "rebuild" of the website, so if you have web building skills please lend a hand. Outsourcing this time consuming task will be discussed at the May Operating Committee meeting.

The Self Support subcommittee is currently working on a display to better carry the message of when and where spirituality and money meet.

The Treatment Facilities subcommittee is compiling a comprehensive list of treatment facilities

throughout the GTA, using the new government website, DART, and means they have discovered previously unknown "treatment" centers such as methadone clinics. Better Times would like to apologize for previously stating that this subcommittee is looking for a new chair. We wish Mike C. a speedy recovery from his recent illness.

Tim C. will be stepping down as chair of the 12 Step subcommittee. Tim came on at a busy time just before the International Convention and has done a great job. Resumes should be sent to the office for those interested in this rewarding position.

Please make sure that your District has subcommittee chairs and that they attend the monthly meetings at Toronto Intergroup; you could even attend with them!

Stephanie thanked members for their support as she begins her term as chair. She also reminded everyone about the upcoming workshop / social night, and that members are welcome to bring cookies, snacks, etc. for the workshop.

Tim R. Chartwell Group