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Those interested should contact bettertimes@aatoronto.org

Ontario Regional Conference '08

The time is almost here! We have been working on the 2008 conference "Happy Joyous & Free" for two years...and we have a great line up of speakers, both local and out of town. There has been an addition to the speaker line-up in that we have added more local speakers and have some discussions scheduled. There will be a workshop entitled "12 Steps: A Philosophy for Living". There will be a dance on Friday evening, and two on Saturday night.

The banquet tickets are going quickly... everyone must have heard about the great meal last year so we followed the old advice "If it works don't fix it" and we've ordered the same menu. Being an alcoholic, I know how resistant to change we can be so we have kept things as they were...simply

added a couple more things. For the Royal York Hotel to accommodate us, we have to guarantee a certain number of booked rooms. We have fallen short of that goal the last couple of years and booking is slower still. We have to pay a considerable penalty if we do not meet the requirements so it would be helpful if those of you who can, please, book a room and stay right in the heart of things.

If you do not have access to registrations and would like to be eligible for the next draw, contact me and I will try and get some out to you...or you can download a registration from the Toronto AA website. I can be reached at rene-orc2008@hotmail.com. We need an army of volunteers for greeters.

Having been involved in the

conference in different capacities over the years, I have watched chairperson after chairperson work diligently to bring the best conference possible on a very tight budget. This is your conference...it needs your support...attend...bring a friend...bring two or three...and hopefully when you leave the conference you will feel "Happy Joyous and Free".

I hope to see you all there...if you don't know me personally, someone will...come and say hello...as they say "I am only a friend you haven't met yet and you are for me as well." Anyone with a ribbon will be a friendly volunteer who would love to meet you as well.

Until the conference "May the Fourth Be With You"

*Rene T, Silverbirch Group
2008 ORC chair*

History of the Streetsville Group

The Streetsville Group was started by Jimmy R. and Mary & Byrnes F. on January 20th, 1958 at Erindale Town Centre on Dundas Street; East of Mississauga Road and West of Jarvis Street. Mary and Byrnes owned a funeral business and, every Tuesday night, they would transport chairs from the funeral home to the AA meeting and then 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 at the group for many years. Jimmy was still sober when he passed away at the age of 90 in 1993. The Fire Marshal condemned the floor of the building where they were meeting; it had to be reinforced, forcing the group to move in 1967.

The group then moved to Lees Funeral Parlour on Queen Street, South of Thomas, until August 1968. They then moved to Streetsville United Church for a period of 2 years. They then moved to Trinity Anglican Church in 1970.

One member, Ken M., or "Old Ken" as he was affectionately known, took Ron N., currently a member of this group, out when Ken left the Streetsville group and purchased a new amplifier to replace the existing one which was part of an old 1930's radio. Ken swore Ron to secrecy as he wanted to donate the amplifier anonymously. Now there's humility in action.

Early members were, June P., Beril, Marge and Don R. Murray

and Marg B., Ester and Herb and Ruby S.

Since the history that Darlene M. put together for the group's 40th anniversary, the Group has moved once again. On April 26, 1998, shortly after our 40 year anniversary, Trinity Anglican Church burned to the ground. At this time the group moved to its present location in the Meadowvale Church Center where it continues to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic every Tuesday night at 8:30.

On January 15, 2008, the Group celebrated their 50th anniversary with a large crowd in attendance.

Contributions by Darlene M., Moe D., Pat B., Bruce L., Ron N., Nancy R.

Compiled by Robb W.

Embracing the Negative

The other morning, I was listening to Joe and Charlie talking about spiritual experiences. They were saying that although Bill W. and perhaps some others had profound and immediate psychic changes, most of us find ours to be more along the lines of the educational variety. I like Joe and Charlie. They may be the best stand-up comedians I've heard and what makes them good is that they see the humour in the insanity of alcoholic behaviour. They help me see it, too.

I'm not sure I entirely agree with them, though, about Bill having had an epiphany. I wonder what Bill would say about that. Actually I know what Bill said about that. In a letter he wrote in the Grapevine in 1957, he said that sobriety is only the first gift of the first awakening; that if we are to receive more gifts, the awakenings must continue. He spent many years pursuing those awakenings.

The Heather that went to bed on August 23, 2000 was not the same Heather who woke up on August 24, 2000. Someone had, overnight, moved all the familiar markers in my life and I no longer had any idea who or where I was...the sand had shifted, and I was a stranger in my own life, and I didn't much like what I saw. I admitted I was an alcoholic and had my first intentionally sober day in a decade that day. Can you believe I thought that was pretty much the difficult hurdle over with?

Did you ever see that bit in the 12 and 12 - the first sentence of Step One? It asks "Who cares to admit complete defeat?" My hand went up like a shot at that; I just knew it was going to be smooth sailing. You know how that came about, that book? Bill's whining to Father Ed Dowling got Bill a serious homework assignment. Took him from 1948 to 1952 to finish it. Those old-timer sponsors were 'mean' dudes. If I grow up, I want to be just like them.

Back to that page in the 12 and 12. I didn't have to read too much further before my world was rocked. The 4th paragraph, in fact, "We know that little good can come to any alcoholic who joins A.A. unless he has first accepted his devastating weakness and all its consequences. Until he so humbles himself,

his sobriety - if any - will be precarious. Of real happiness he will find none at all. Proved beyond doubt by an immense experience, this is one of the facts of A.A. life." Huh? I hadn't signed on for that; I was scared. I had already humbled myself by accepting my alcoholism, admitting it in front of people, and taking the white chip. Dear God, I thought, now what?

Tom B., in one of his workshops asks "Do you ever wonder why some peoples' prayers seem to get answered and others' don't?" And he goes on to say something that is so simple, it's frightening, "Because those are the people who have stopped refusing to look at the negative qualities in themselves; they have accepted those negative qualities and gone to work to change them". So right back to complete defeat - not partial defeat; not conditional defeat; complete defeat. I had to be willing to surrender the old me and trust God to show me how and what to change. And - and this is the important part - I had to be willing to keep moving forward no matter what the great "I" was thinking or feeling. Right from the very beginning, I had to be as honest as I knew how to be with myself, sponsors, sponsees, friends...and, I had to do the work. There is continuous work; just as I drank every day, I needed to work on recovery every day. I still do. As I develop in one area of my life spiritually and emotionally, the path opens up and leads to new challenges, and I've found this to be the way it is for most who strive for progress.

I've had a lot of gifts since I stopped drinking. I've had sorrowful valleys and sunlit plateaus; classrooms of the heart and of the mind. I'm not alone. Stuff happens. What I've discovered though - and this has to be among the greatest gifts - is that once I've accepted I'm resisting looking at a negative quality, then, and only then can I truly become willing to get honest, ask for God's help, and do the work to change it. For me, there has been no other way to move forward. I've learned that I receive the gift of growth that only comes when I embrace the negative qualities in myself as the truly great opportunities for more awakenings and yet more gifts.

Heather H.,
Venture Group, Ottawa, Ontario

Over the Years at the ORC

My husband, John, has been attending the Ontario Regional Conference for 38 years. In 1970, he spoke on an all men's panel for Stag Al-non that year. He remembers being the newcomer at that time and over the years, many memorable events occurred. Topping his list was 'Henrietta'.

John's late wife, Marlene, was a member of the Richmond Hill group. For years, she and John would mind the adjoining suite for their Group. When they encountered a tearful

Henrietta from Buffalo, they offered her an overnight next door on condition that she make the coffee early and have the room ready for the day. Over the years, the hospitality suite afforded overnight accommodation for many financially strapped newcomers.

Years later, Henrietta, while attending the Bradford Roundup, asked me to speak in Buffalo at her group. John and I drove to Buffalo for that very exciting experience. Henrietta said she never forgot the kindness of John and Marlene. Again, in a chance encounter at the ORC, Marlene saw a dear friend she had lost track of way

back in high school. Bobby Y., with her husband Ed, caught her eye and they stared in astonished recognition. They were so surprised to find each other in AA. and a renewed friendship developed over the years.

There have been many highlights at the ORC for me over the past fourteen years, including the year my son and daughter attended. Short-lived that their attendance would be, my continued enthusiasm for AA has never diminished. John's grandson attended Al-teen many years ago at the ORC. It was our great pleasure.

We have continued the tradition of arriving early Friday to

welcome our friends and the many travelers who come to attend this great event. We have always stayed for the weekend at the Royal York, or wherever the convention is held and support and attend the dinner banquet. We love to see our old friends and look forward to the new friendships that we are bound to make at our annual AA event.

Bernadette Macl.
King City Group

**The Twelve Steps
are not multiple
choice.**

Founding Roles

In 1926, the wealthy Rowland H. traveled to Zurich, Switzerland to visit the famous Swiss psychiatrist, Dr. Carl Jung. After a year of treatment, the good doctor's advice was that he was doomed to a life of anguish unless he immersed himself in a life of spirituality. Rowland almost destroyed himself in the next seven years before finally surrendering to the Oxford Group. He never drank again.

In August of 1934, Rowland rescued an alcoholic by the name of Ebby T. who was being committed to an insane asylum. Two months after, in November of 1934, Ebby sat down at the kitchen table with his old friend Bill W. and talked about his new spiritual answer to his drinking. Bill's conversion experience started as he spoke to Ebby. The sight of his old booze pal looking so good and so composed made the 'scales fall from his eyes' and for the first time in his life he became willing to turn to prayer and meditation. The healing power began to restore his soul.

In December of 1934, Bill W. checked into Towns Hospital in New York. He never drank again after a flashing light spiritual experience. His confidence was strengthened by Dr. William Silkworth who told him to hang on to what had happened as it was much better than what he had only a few hours earlier. Rowland H. is one of many who played a founding role in the development of AA as did Dr. Carl Jung. Due to Dr. Jung's focus on spirituality in recovery from alcoholism, there started a series of events, some might call coincidences, which eventually brought Ebby T. to Bill W., who later traveled to Akron, Ohio to talk to Dr. Bob. These actions impress on us the fundamental need for spirituality to be front and center of AA recovery.

Bernadette MacL.
King City Group

Recent Medallions:

Agnes	35	Friently	Jan 28
Jim H.	35	Islington	Feb 1
Scott B.	1	Erin Mills	Feb 4
Steve S.	1	East York	Feb 5
Gus P.	5	Westmoreland	Feb 5
Barb M.	15	Bloordale	Feb 6
Ralph W.	15	Aurora	Feb 10
Laurie H.	15	Aurora	Feb 10
Catherine M.	1	Westmoreland	Feb 12
Jeannine C.	25	Newmarket	Feb 14
Ted B.	30	Bayview	Feb 17
Peter R.	5	Aurora	Feb 17
Mary R.	20	Birds of a Feather	Feb 17
Norma Z.	20	King City	Feb 17
Lyle G.	40	Thornccliffe	Feb 22
Lionel L.	20	Westmoreland	Feb 22
Cathy Z.	5	Amazing Grace	Feb 26

Upcoming Medallions:

Dick H.	25	Back to Basics	Mar 7
Jerome R.	25	Back to Basics	Mar 14
Terry W.	15	King City	Mar 17
Kathleens McD	15	Rox Glen Traditional	Mar 20

New Meetings:

Pourquoi Pas Mtg, 22 College St. Saturday Discussion 11 am

Meetings needing support

New Life Port Credit Mtg, Lion's Hall (Community Ctr), 20 Rosewood Ave, 1 Bldk E of Hurontario from the Lakeshore; Tuesday, Discussion Gr. 7pm, followed by an Open Mtg at 8:30 pm.

Meeting Changes:

Six Points Discussion, Sat. Mtg 8:30am (NW) – TIME CHANGE to 9 am. Closed mtg, Thurs., 8:30pm TIME CHANGE to 8pm

Crossroads Sunday Sharing (C) Sun, 2:30 pm (Sub W), TIME CHANGE to 1:30pm.

Pine Hills, LOCATION CHANGE to St. Paul's United Ch., 200 McIntosh St, Scar, ON, one light W of Midland Ave (Sandown Lane) on Kingston Rd; Ω Block N on Sandown Lane: use side entrance

Brampton Recovery, 12 step mtg, LOCATION CHANGE to Chris Gibson Rec. Ctr., Youth Rm., 125 McLaughlin Rd, N., Brampton, ON, Sat mornings at 11am.

Tuesday Night Big Book Discussion, Downsview United Church 2822 Keele Street, at 8pm is now CLOSED.

Thursday Night Big Book Discussion, Downsview United Church, 2822 Keele St, is at 7 pm, not at 8 pm.

Events:

2008 ORC at the Royal York Hotel on March 14-16. If you have never gone to

this uplifting event be sure to go this year. Here are some helpful ideas to survive the marathon that the weekend truly is: 1) Wear comfortable shoes & layered clothing. 2) Plan your meetings: There are always at least two mtgs going on at once. 3) Visit the hospitality suites, you will undoubtedly run into a friend or two. Some are renowned for their snacks. Check out the Info board in the Registration Area for locations. 4) If you don't go to the Banquet, make reservations at any of the many restaurants along Front St. Or even go up to King St to avoid the crowds of hungry AA's. 5) The closest Tim Horton's is in the next building up York Street. Plan your coffee run carefully or else you may miss a mtg.

50th International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (ICYPAA), July 3 to 6, 2008, Oklahoma City, Okl.

2008 Spring-A-Thon, Fri, Apr 25, 6pm to 10pm; Sat. April 26, 9am –midnight; Travellodge Hotel, 1376 Carling Ave & Queensway, Ottawa, ON.
www.ottawaaa.org ; www.travelodgeottawa.com/hotelhome.

21st annual Brampton Springathon, Saturday April 12th, 2008, Loafer's Lake Recreation Ctr, 30 Loafer's Lake Lane, Brampton ON, near Kennedy & Sandalwood. Exit new Hwy 410 ext. at Sandalwood, head W. to Conestoga, turn right & then turn left on Loafer's Lake Lane. \$17.00, hot lunch. Two AA Spkr spiritual panel & a keynote Spkr; parents share; sobriety countdown; email is springathon2008@mail.com.

Niagara Blossom Time Convention, May 2, 3 & 4 2008; Crowne Plaza Hotel, Niagara Falls, Canada; AA & Al-Anon Programs, all week-end. A.A. Opening Spkr: Jack C., Hagerstown, MD; A.A. Banquet Spkr: Mickey B., Santa Monica, CA; A.A. Closing Spkr: Theresa F., N. Hollywood, CA; Al-Anon Opening Spkr: Wendy C., Burlington, ON; Al-Anon Main Spkr: JoAnne G., Ottawa, ON; Additional Spkrs & Workshops or Panels: Mildred F., & Joshua H., Toronto, ON. 1 night hotel stay & 1 registration only (Value \$150.00) & Two (2) Sets of 2008 Convention Speaker Tapes/CDs.
<http://www.blossomtimeconvention.com>.

GREATER TORONTO AREA INTERGROUP MONTHLY BOARDROOM BOOKINGS FOR SUB-COMMITTEES

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

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES:

Every first Monday of the month at 7 pm

SELF-SUPPORT:

Every first Wednesday of the month at 7 pm

ARCHIVES:

Every second Friday of the month at 7:00 pm

WEBSITE and Better Times NEWSLETTER:

Every second Saturday of the month at 1 pm

COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (CPC):

Every second Monday of the month at 7 pm

ACCESS ABILITY:

Every third Sunday of the month at 11 am

PHONE TRAINING SESSION:

Every third Sunday of the month at 1:30 pm

PUBLIC INFORMATION:

Every third Monday of the month at 7:30 pm

TREATMENT FACILITIES:

Every third Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm

INFORMATION AA DAY:

Every last Monday at 7:30 pm

TWELFTH STEP:

Every last Friday of the month at 6:30 pm

FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE*:

Second-last Tuesday of the month at 4:30 pm
(*non-committee members: attendance by appointment only)

OPERATING COMMITTEE*:

Second-last Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm
(*non-committee members: attendance by appointment only)

THE MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING of GTA INTERGROUP is held on the last Tuesday of the month at 8 pm at the Glebe Road United Church - 20 Glebe Rd E, off Yonge St. (near Davisville subway)

Phone 234 to ensure the meeting you want to attend isn't cancelled during any particular month...

Brampton Springathon '08

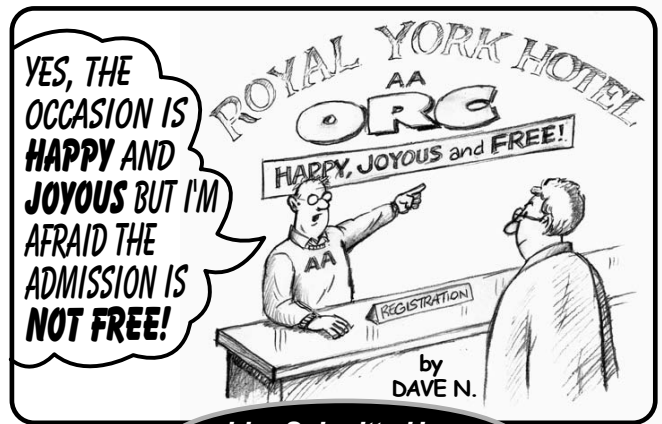
The 21st Annual Brampton Springathon will take place on Saturday, April 12th, 2008 at Loafer's Lake Recreation Center located at 30 Loafer's Lake Lane in Brampton, Ontario. It's near Kennedy and Sandalwood. Visitors can exit the new Hwy 410 extension at Sandalwood, then head west till Conestoga, turn right and the first left runs onto Loafer's Lake Lane. The cost of admission is \$17.00 and includes a fully catered hot lunch.

The day starts with the AA program in the big room and the Al-anon program in a classroom sized room. Our AA day begins with the spiritual panel with two AA speakers sharing from the heart on spirituality. Second on the program is the long timer's panel with two longtime AA members who will share their experience, strength, hope

and wisdom. We break for lunch and that is followed by AA and Al-anon members joining together in the big room for the Al-anon Keynote speaker. The event brings us all together in recover from this family disease of alcoholism.

The Al-anon family panel, usually husband and wife teams, bring their shared journey for us to hear. We have a sobriety countdown! Big Books are given to those with the newest sobriety, and for the very newest member, we give a book signed at registration by all attendees who choose to sign. We cap off our wondrous day with the

Humour At The ORC



Idea Submitted by
AUSTIN R.

AA Keynote speaker! Join us! Our email is springathon2008@mail.com.

*Eric R., 2008 Brampton Springathon
Committee Member*

January '08 Intergroup Report

Chairperson's Opening Remarks (Harold Y., Port Credit) Harold welcomed the large attendance. 7th Tradition - \$189.67 after coffee expenses.

FINANCE REPORT (Gregg W., Rox Glen Traditional) Gregg thanked former Finance Chair, Ida Y. (Glenholme). The Finance Committee is currently looking for two new members. Five years of continuous sobriety and some finance/ accounting background preferred. Send resumes to the Operating Committee c/o 234. Referring to the Bar Graph for December 2007: We ended up this year 'in the black'; however, the figure is not as good as what was reflected at the end of 2006. Expenses for the month were \$5,000 over the income received. The posting of cheques is yet to be done, so these figures may vary. The committee is currently working on the 2008 Proposed Budget; should be available next General Meeting. The Audit will be done in February.

ACCESS ABILITY (Donna MacQ., Sunnyside) The committee made an appointment with the Ann Johnston Health Centre; the centre was given meeting directories. This committee will be present at a Workshop at the Kingston Assembly (March) and the ORC. Next meeting: Sun. Feb. 17 at 11am

WEBSITE (Fran H., Kingsway) This com-

mittee has amalgamated with the *Better Times* Newsletter committee. Next meeting: Sat. Feb. 9 at 1 pm

BETTER TIMES NEWSLETTER (MarvW., Streetsville Action) ORC is the featured articles for Feb/Mar issues. Deadline for copy: 10th of every month. We need a secretary and a circulation person. Next meeting: Sat. Feb.9 at 1 p.m.

ARCHIVES (Roy R., Trial& Error) 100 less tickets were sold at this year's Archives Breakfast than in 2007. Next meeting: Fri. Feb. 15 at 7 pm

CORRECTIONS (Niels B., Hill) Will be present at the ORC and Info AA Day. All Districts are represented. The Corrections webpage needs updating. Next meeting: Mon. Feb. 4 at 7:30 pm at 234.

CPC (Courtney, District 14) 4 districts were present at the last meeting. CPC did a well received presentation at the St Augustine Seminary. This committee will also be present at the A.S.A.M. (scientific conference), the ORC, and Info AA Day. Next meeting: Mon. Feb. 11 at 7 pm

GRAPEVINE: Harold reported that there will be no Grapevine Committee at Intergroup, due to lack of support at this table.

INFORMATION AA DAY: (Brad H., OC Liaison) Event Flyers/Tickets were provided for reps to take to their groups. The event will be held Sat., May 31 at Lansing United Church. Currently looking for a 2009 Chairperson. Please send resumes to the Operating Committee c/o 234.

Next meeting: Mon. Feb. 25 at 7:30 pm
ORC (Stephanie L., Operating Liaison) Report provided by Rene T., ORC 2008 Chair. We still need people to chair discussion meetings; contact Rene at . The hotel coordinator reports slow hotel registration rate; ask your members to try and book a room; they are eligible to win two nights free accommodations at a time of their choosing. All the entertainment has been booked ... with a couple of surprises planned.

PUBLIC INFORMATION (Bryan W., Rox Glen Traditional) 7 Districts were represented at the last meeting. District 02 has started sending literature into Remote Communities. District 06 is looking to placing Big Books in senior homes. District 10 initiating placing Meeting Directories in all hotels. Bryan is asking members to sponsor the pamphlet holder/folder campaign for distribution to doctor's offices and pharmacies. New P.I. Events Coordinator: Romana K. (Rox Glen Traditional). Bryan was asked to go on a TV show recently (Tamil TV) re: alcoholism; he refused...Bryan spoke by telephone to a panel present on the show. Next meeting: Mon. Feb. 18 at 7:30 pm

TREATMENT (Mike C., Beverly Hills On Jan.19, the Krasman Centre for psychiatric survivors and their families contacted GTAI for AA Literature. Mike mailed them pamphlets and business cards. Next meeting: Thurs. Feb. 21 at 7:30 pm

WSOH: There was \$950 spent and

approx. 250 people attended.

Ad Hoc RECOMMENDATION COMMITTEE (Lynn B., City Central) The committee is working on putting the ad hoc Position Paper into ONE MOTION. There are 18 items to go through a 90-day referendum. Lynn asked for a 'straw vote' regarding the Incorporation idea for GTAI from members. It was in favour of further investigation. For any questions /concerns, please feel free to e-mail Lynn at bridgesover@sympatico.ca. Next meeting: Thurs. Feb. 7 at 6:30 pm

RECEPTION (Aaron K., Yorkville) 4 districts, 5 subcommittee chairs, and 54 group reps were present at this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

A member was concerned re: the action taken by the OC to combine Website and Newsletter as one committee, and cancel Grapevine and Self-Support due to lack of support.

TWELFTH STEP (Jim O., Markland Wood) thanks to outgoing 12 Step Chair, Mike K, for all his service. WE NEED MORE MEMBERS! One year of sobriety and a phone training session are needed to begin this service work. James' phone number is 416-937-4447. The next training session is Sun. Feb.18 at 1:30 p.m. The updated list for 12 Step Contacts should be done by next week.

NEXT GENERAL MEETING: Tues. Feb. 26 at 8 pm at Glebe Rd. United.