

BETTER TIMES

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*Does anybody really know what time it is? Does anybody really care!
 Know What Time It Is! The 11th Step Picnic Committee Knows What Time It Is!*

It's Sobriety Summertime, 11th Step Picnic 2009

As you are walking down the street on Saturday August 8th, please make sure your direction is toward the Toronto Ferry Docks (for ferry schedules and fares visit www.torontoharbour.com/toronto-island-ferry/schedules/summer.php.) for your departure to the **11th Step Family Picnic on Centre Island** (follow the signs to site #21 Olympic Island).

The 11th Step Family Picnic is a non profit fun day of sobriety for AA members and their families with Speaker meeting(s) at 1:00 PM Mike H. from the Last Chance Group and at approx. 2:30 Family Panel Speakers Jim K. And Ken K. from the Prince Edward Group.

The event runs from Noon to 5:00 PM, we welcome all, including volunteers to come early (10:00 AM) to help set up and stay as late as you like. Barbeque pits are provided and numerous snack bars are available within walking distance.

The picnic is once again **FREE** for all members and their families. We, the 11th Step Picnic Committee are cooking hotdogs and providing drinks.

Over the last nine years many AA members and their families have attended. We encourage past attendees to spread the word and bring members, new members or sponsee and their families.

Flyers are available for awareness of the 11th Step Picnic at www.11thsteppicnic.com

Anyone who wishes to volunteer or be a committee member please contact Barb at 905-264-6080, Rick 416-503-8552 or Marvyn W. at 647-221-7338 or send an email to info@11thsteppicnic.com

Saturday August 8th, 2009 11th Step Family Picnic is a great day of fellowship, new friendships found, hearing wonderful AA speakers, food and listening to some great tunes.

The 11th Step Picnic Committee welcomes all ideas and suggestions to make the 9th Annual 11th Step Family Picnic, another magical day of sobriety.

Yours In Service,

Marvyn W.
2009 11th Step Family Picnic Committee

Intergroup Operating Committee Changes Hands

The Intergroup Operating Committee elections were held on Tuesday, April 28th, 2009.

When asked by Better Times to share what service means to them, this is what some of the newly elected Committee Members had to say:

Florence B., Chair, (Noon Rap): "I have been attending Intergroup for a couple of years now. I also sit on the 12 Step, Info AA Day and Finance Committees. The privilege of sitting on committees puts me in contact with fantastic a teams of AA members who help wonderful AA members to help the still suffering alcoholic. It truly is a pleasure to serve in our amazing upside down structure".

Ed R., Senior Member (Rouge Valley Centenary): "I have been Intergroup Rep on three different occasions

and served on the Better Times Committee for four years as Desktop Publisher. I have always found service to be an opportunity to give back to A.A. what I am so grateful for having received. I promise to provide time and energy to the success of Intergroup as it is such an integral part of the program."

Karen K., Junior Member (Twelve Steps): "My past service work has been at the group level, until I became Intergroup Rep for my group. Now I am starting a new chapter in my service work and sobriety. I am looking forward to being of service and continuing to pass the message on."

Bruce L., Treasurer (Back to Basics): "I have held several positions in my home group; presently I am the Treasurer. I joined the Finance Committee in...

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Info AA Day – May 30th, 2009

The 30th Annual Info AA Day was a resounding success from start to finish. The day kicked off with an Early Bird meeting and continued with presentations from various committees throughout the day, potluck lunch and ended with two great messages: one from Sandy S. our Area 83 delegate and the second from New York Office rep and AA member Mary D.

Roy R. spoke about his service work on the Archives Committee and stressed the importance of preserving AA's historical roots. He suggested that one way to preserve our AA history is by obtaining group and long-timer histories and by taping long-timer talks (please obtain consent before taping anyone's talk).

Donna M. described how Access Ability aims to make AA meetings and materials accessible to those with hearing, visual and physical challenges. Access Ability also needs volunteers for The Buddies List of AA members who can aid elderly and disabled alcoholics by driving them to meetings, by visiting them in hospitals and

by contacting them by phone and email.

Grapevine Chair, Heather M. spoke about the Grapevine, describing it as a magazine with stories for alcoholics by alcoholics. How can you get involved with Grapevine? Join the committee, subscribe, donate old copies to sponsees or Treatment or Correctional Facilities, suggest getting the Grapevine at your home group, become your group's Grapevine rep, and of course, write articles. Heather said the Grapevine is an important part of our sobriety tool kit, calling it portable AA.

Dave T. spoke about CPC and explained how they educate professionals on AA. They attend professional conferences and provide information to lawyers, judges, social workers, hospital staff and doctors, suggesting ways they can help the suffering alcoholic.

PI Chair, Brian, spoke about how PI keeps in contact with public institutions such as school, libraries and hospitals. PI currently needs

young, recovered alcoholics to speak at GTA high schools. Presently PI is working on getting pamphlet holders with beginner's pamphlets into doctors' offices and pharmacies throughout the district.

The highlight of the day was when Sandy S. gave a humorous account of her experiences as Area 83 delegate at the 59th General Service Conference in New York, clearly demonstrating the dedication of our delegates to service.

Mary D. from the New York General Service Office finished off the day by describing a day in the life of a GSO employee, and finished with a very inspiring AA talk of her own personal experience, strength and hope. 2010 Info AA Chair, Marvyn W. thanked Mary for her talk, saying that her talk definitely encompassed this year's theme of "Service with Gratitude". Thanks to Terry D., 2009 Info AA Day Chair, and her fellow committee members, for all their hard work in putting together such a terrific day.

Elaine G.
Better Times Co-Editor

Tradition Five: Singleness of Purpose

My first drink of alcohol as a teenager introduced to me to the "elixir of life". While I was not a daily drinker in the beginning, I eventually became a daily drinker. Although I had started to drink for oblivion the last few years not once did I think I had a drinking problem. Eventually, I became socially unacceptable and was removed from the booze and locked up in the Palace for the Peculiar to dry out. I came to on August 20, 1972 and had no idea where I was or why I was there.

Upon my release from the hospital, I felt I had no reason to go to Alcoholics Anonymous and I didn't go. After all, alcoholics were skid row drunks and I had a good, well paying job, a wife, kids and a nice home with two cars in the driveway.

I remained dry for five long, hellish months before a member conned me into going to my first meeting. The only thing I remember from that first meeting was that someone said, "We admitted we were powerless over 'ALCOHOL'". I knew I was in the right place for the first time in my life. Very quickly, something caught my attention at the meetings. It was the sharing by AA members about their experience with ALCOHOL. I heard about the guilt, shame and remorse after a binge. I learned all about fear, resentment and lust. I heard about the soul sickness, dying from the inside out and the loss of self-respect.

From the beginning, it was impressed upon me that the traditions were just as important to

my sobriety as the steps. So not only did I read them, but I also read AA Comes of Age so that I would understand the history of AA, about how the traditions came into being, about why there was a SINGLENESSE OF PURPOSE, about who could actually be a member of AA and who could attend closed AA meetings. Yes, I found out that there were restrictions. Closed meetings are for ALCOHOLICS only and non-alcoholics cannot be members of AA. I found the criteria in the pamphlets Problems Other Than Alcohol, 44 Questions and A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous and AA Comes of Age: A Brief History.

"Shoemaker stick to thy last", is the line in the Fifth Tradition that says it all to me, and it goes on to say our only purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety. In my own day-to-day life, whenever I try to do more than one thing at a time, something suffers and usually everything does. To me, this is the basis for Tradition Five, the singleness of purpose. When I look back on my first meeting of AA, I often wonder where I might be today if they had all talked about something other than alcohol. I am of no use to a drug addict; conversely a drug addict is of no use to me. I simply do not relate to anyone other than another ALCOHOLIC who shares their experience with ALCOHOL. I have been to meetings that seemed to be drop-in centres for anybody who had any problem at all; the discussion sounded like an audition for

the Dr. Phil Show.

If AA is to change into a save-all organization, then it must come from AA alone. It does not come from treatment centres many of whom teach that all addictions are the same. Whether they are or not is an outside issue and we can argue that outside of AA. The point is AA has a singleness of purpose and that is why it is called ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS.

As long as I claim to be a member of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS I have the responsibility to try my best to live by the Twelve Steps and to do my best to uphold the Twelve Traditions. How about you???

Alcoholics Anonymous gave me the opportunity to earn my self-respect and self-esteem, to save my family, the ability to earn a respectable living, to be part of society, to contribute to life on life's terms and to try to give back to AA something that was freely given to me.

Bill W wrote.

"Sobriety – freedom from alcohol – through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps is the sole purpose of an AA group. We have to confine our membership to alcoholics and we have to confine AA groups to a single purpose. If we don't stick to these principles we shall almost surely collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone."

Harold W.
Port Credit Group of Alcoholics Anonymous

Origins of the Responsibility Statement

What is the history behind A.A.'s Responsibility Statement?

The Responsibility Statement reads:

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.

It was written by former A.A. trustee Al S. for the 1965 A.A. International Convention in Toronto. In the souvenir book for the 1965 Convention, Dr. Jack Norris writes:

"...We must remember that A.A. will continue strong only so long as each of us freely and happily gives it away to another person, only as each of us takes our fair share of responsibility for sponsorship of those who still suffer, for the growth and integrity of our Group, for our Intergroup activities, and for A.A. as a whole. It is in taking responsibility that real freedom and the enduring satisfactions of life are found. A.A. has given us the power to choose—to drink or not to drink—and in doing so has given us the freedom to be responsible for ourselves. As we become responsible for ourselves, we are free to be responsible for our share in A.A., and unless we happily accept this responsibility we lose A.A. Strange, isn't it?"

In a Grapevine article in October 1965, the Responsibility Statement is discussed, and Bill W. expresses his views:

Two major thoughts stood out in the remarks of the many speakers, alcoholic and nonalcoholic, at A.A.'s July Toronto Convention. The first was admiration and gratitude for A.A.'s startling success in sobering up hundreds of thousands of lost-cause drunks. The other was concern that

the success which has come to A.A. over the thirty years since its start in Akron, Ohio, in 1935 would not lead us to any complacency about the size of the job still to be done. A.A.'s co-founder, Bill, in his talk to over 10, 000 attending the major sessions of the Convention, stressed the need for cooperation with all who work on the problem of alcoholism, the more than 100 agencies in the United States and Canada alone now engaged in research, alcohol education and rehabilitation.

"Too often, we have deprecated and even derided these projects of our friends just because we do not always see eye to eye with them," Bill said. "We should very seriously ask ourselves how many alcoholics have gone on drinking simply because we have failed to cooperate in good spirit with these many agencies. No alcoholic should go mad or die merely because he did not come straight to A.A. in the beginning."

There have been two Advisory Actions from the General Service Conference regarding the Declaration of Responsibility since it was introduced. In 1971, the Conference recommended that:

The Literature Committee, following the general feeling of the Conference, reaffirm both the spirit and the wording of the "I am Responsible" Declaration from the International Convention held in Toronto in 1965.

And in 1977, the Conference recommended that:

The Responsibility Declaration not be changed, as it was made at the 1965 International Convention in Toronto.

Reprinted from **Markings Vol 28. No.2 – Summer 2008**

haveyouheard

Recent Medallions:

Bobby Y.	35	Roxglen	June 4
Ed Y.	35	Roxglen	June 4
Michelle W.	1	Unionville	June 10
Gino C.	1	Maple	June 11
Tony MacN.	15	Lansing	June 13
Geoff S.	25	Pefferlaw Action	June 16
Dave H.	1	Aurora	June 21
Brahm P.	15	Unionville	June 24
Steve A.	1	Rouge Valley	June 25
Bill N.	15	Bloordale	June 28

Upcoming Medallions:

Agnes O	1	Pathfinders Group	July 1
Norma M.	1	Bloordale	July 4
John P.	1	Unionville	July 8
Marion T.	1	Golden Mile	July 8
Ronald A.	05	Maple	July 9
Clark S.	10	Aurora	July 12
Tom W.	10	Aurora	July 12
Tony L.	5	Unionville	July 15
Ray W.	1	Golden Mile	July 22
Ed R.	20	Rouge Valley	July 23
Larry R.	5	Unionville	July 29

Meeting Changes:

Turning Point Group (C) Sundays (EAST): ASL Interpreters welcome at closed meeting.

Annex Women's Discussion (C) Thursdays (CENTRAL):

TIME CHANGE from 8 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Living Sober Group in Newmarket is moving locations for its Tuesday and Thursday meetings. Closed beginner meeting group. Trinity United Church, 461 Park Ave (at Main St.) Tuesday, 7:30pm, closed, Beginner discussion.

Lakeshore Group Sundays (WEST): Time change from 8:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. effective June 7.

DISCONTINUED MEETINGS

Oakville Odyssey (C) Mondays 7pm (SUBURBAN WEST)

August Discussion Group (C) Fridays 12:30 pm (CENTRAL)

Woodbine Group (O) Sat 8 pm (EAST)

Glenview Discussion Group (C) Mondays (CENTRAL)

NEW MEETINGS

Joyful Steps to Recovery (C) Wednesdays 3 p.m.(EAST): St John the Compassionate Church, 155 Broadview Ave, north of Queen St.

U of T Group meeting (CENTRAL): Tuesdays closed step discussion, Thursday closed Big Book discussion and Sunday open speaker meeting, starting June 2, 2009. Check at security desk for exact room location within OISE. U of T Step Discussion, U of T Group, OISE, 252 Bloor Street West, Tuesday, 6:00 pm, closed, Steps & Traditions

ANNOUNCEMENTS

36th Annual Francophone District 90-05 of Hull-Ottawa-Aylmer Congress: August 8 & 9. For more info visit www.aa-quebec.org/region90

Steps to Freedom: 39th Central West Ontario Convention Aug. 7-9. Participation by Al-Anon on Aug. 8th. University of Guelph Campus. Panel discussions, talkathon, sobriety countdown, speakers, Saturday dance & optional banquet. For more information visit www.cwoc.synthasite.com.

Joint Intergroup/District Meeting: Tues Sept 8 7:30 pm, 234 Eglinton Ave E, Intergroup facilitates

Stepping Stones Group (Wed/Sat) celebrating 30 year anniversary on Sept. 12, 2009. Special keynote speakers, pot luck dinner.

2nd Area 83/Area 86 Unity Day will be held at King City Community Centre Area, 25 Doctors Lane, King City, Ontario, Sat. September 26 2009. Come and be a part of Unity Day! There will be workshops, recovery talks, a banquet and a special guest speaker, Phyllis H., General Manager of the World Service Office. Admittance is free for the day. Tickets for the banquet dinner are \$25.00. There will be a lunch available for a separate cost. Seating is limited to 200. For more information and tickets email Rodney S. at rodney@ficomputers.com.

May '09: Intergroup Report

Chairperson's Opening Remarks: Florence B. (Noon Rap) – Florence welcomed the new OC members; all have been assigned their subcommittee liaison commitments.

Collection of the 7th Tradition: Total collection was \$161.66.

Finance Report: Bruce L. (Back to Basics) – presented the finance report for the month of April. In the month of April, donations were \$4,883: below budget by \$1,886. Year-to-date donations were \$30,627, over budget by \$4,505. April Income before Operating Expenses was \$13,028 (under budget by \$1,185). YTD Income was \$60,703. Total Expenses for April were \$14,900. Year-to-date total expenses were \$49,782, which was \$28,758 under budget due to deferred telephone, legal/audit expenditures. Net loss for April was \$1,872, close to budget, and year-to-date net income was \$10,921, over budget by \$29,390. Prudent Reserve as of April 30: Book Value + accrued interest: \$124,644.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Access Ability: Donna MacQ. (Sunnyside) – Attended Mayfest. Buddies List located at 234 in all 12-Step Volunteer books on Greeter Desks. It's a list of members willing to escort blind or disabled members to meetings and those willing to call/e-mail. Anyone willing to volunteer for this service can call at 234. Next meeting: Sun. June 21 at 11 a.m. at 234.

Archives: Roy R. (Trial and Error) – The 25th Annual Archives Breakfast will take place on Sun. Nov. 8 at the Oasis Convention Centre. Tickets (which are \$25) will be available only through Archives Committee members. Speakers at the event: Joy from St. Catherines (45 years of sobriety) and Father Peter W.

Corrections: Phil G. (Mississauga) Written report – Murray O.'s presentation to an assembly of P&P Officers at OCI was well received as some Officers are now considering getting meetings up and running in the various P&P Offices. Next meeting: Mon. June 1 at 7:30 p.m. at 234.

CPC: Debbie (Beaches) – CPC put on two meetings at the Sheraton Centre (April 23 and 24) for OPSEU Convention. We will also be participating at District 22 Service Day on September 12th. Next meeting: Mon. June 8 at 7 p.m. at 234.

Information AA Day: Jim A. (Leslie) – This event is a joint venture, sponsored by both Toronto Intergroup and the 9 Service Districts. The event will take place on Sat., May 30 2009 at the Lansing United Church, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Next meeting: Mon. June 29 at 7:30 p.m. at 234.

Ontario Regional Conference 2009: Wes B. (Longbranch) – 2009 Conference had a total number of 3,109 registrants. The proceeds of \$18,519 were forwarded to Intergroup treasury. The ORC prudent reserve was in the amount of \$15,000. Due to a June 2008 motion passed to increase the ORC prudent reserve by \$5,000, Chair requested their prudent reserve be increased to \$20,000.

Public Information: Bryan W. (Rox Glen Traditional) – The Folder/Holder campaign containing Beginner Pamphlet are to be circulated to Police Stations, Doctor's Offices, etc. Members interested in participating with this campaign to visit their district table. Next meeting: Mon. June 15 at 7:30 p.m. at 234.

Reception: Rick McC. (Six Points) – 64 members (reps/alternates/district reps/chairs) were present tonight.

Treatment Facilities: Steve – The committee posted information about "Bridging the Gap" program by the telephones at 234. We're promoting this program, and are looking for volunteers to act as an AA contacts for patients leaving treatment. Next meeting: June 18 at 7:30 p.m. at 234.

Twelfth Step: Jim O. (Markland Wood) – In the past month, the phones have been well-attended. Jim commented that work regarding the new phone system implementation is still in process. Next Phone Training Session: Sun. June 21 at 1:30 p.m. at 234. Next meetings of this committee: Wed. June 10 at 7 p.m. and Fri. June 26 at 7 p.m. at 234.

Newsletter/Website: Aaron K. (Yorkville) – Website Volunteer Forms are up. The desired subcommittees can be forwarded via the e-mailed volunteer information. For the Newsletter, we will need another Co-Editor. My apologies if we've missed some announcements in the past; we'll do our best to include them in our next Edition. Next meeting: Sat. June 13 at 1 p.m. at 234.

Implementation Committee: Dee T. (Streetsville) – The committee has reduced from 12 to 5 members; however, extra meetings have been added so that this initiative can be completed in due course. The next meetings will be held on Sat. June 6 at 2 p.m. and Sat. June 13 at 3 p.m. The committee will also be present at the June 9 Joint Sharing Session to get input on this project from the Districts. There will be a presentation to the Floor when completed.

Next General Meeting: Tues. June 30 at 8 pm at Glebe Rd. United Church.

Intergroup Operating Committee Changes Hands

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... November 2007 and became committee chair in January 2009. I've enjoyed being active at my home group and wish to experience AA service at the Intergroup level".

Past Chair, Bill M. (Westmoreland): "I must say serving as Chair was not only an eye-opening experience but it was also an honour and privilege. To be nominated to serve you was a truly humbling honour, let alone to be elected. I had served as Intergroup rep for a number of months, and had heard what a zoo it was 'down there'."

"The reason I did this was to help other alcoholics in any way I could. I was told and shown that service helps keep people sober and I wanted to do what I could. Now that this commitment has come to an end, I know that something else will come up to help me to help others at some point."

Better Times also welcomes Rick M. (Six Points) as 1st Vice Chair and John C. (Half Century) as 2nd Vice Chair, Glenn G. (East York) and Elaine G. (Port Credit) as Senior Committee Members and Sidrah A. (Stepping Stones) and Su McC. (Principles Before Personalities) as Junior Committee Members.

Elaine G.
Co-Editor, Better Times

