Courage To Change

AT THE MISSISSAUGA FALL ROUNDUP 2011

I remembered that courage was not the absence of fear; it was the ability to continue in the face of it. (from Grounded – The Big Book, 4th edition p. 526)

“Any change, even a change for the better, is always accompanied by drawbacks and discomforts.” – Arnold Bennett

It takes courage to change, because the real work of letting go of old habits to establish new ones, is an inside job. Letting go of the familiar (even if the familiar is full of consequences that hurt oneself and others) really does require courage. Why? The thought of change evokes fear and confronting a fear requires courage. We come to AA to change our drinking habit and learn that this is only a small part of the changes we must strive to make in order to live a life that is happy, joyous and free.

The theme of this year’s Mississauga Fall Roundup is ‘Courage to Change’. The panel of speakers will provide inspiration to those at any stage of their journey of change.

Learn from them, through their stories, how they were able to confront their fears and make changes for the better. Our all-day program includes six speakers, from AA, Al-Anon and Alateen.

One of the most popular and powerful features of the day is the Family Panel – members of the same family share their unique perspectives on dealing with alcoholism.

As always, the Sobriety Countdown promises to be a Roundup highlight.

Come join us on Saturday, October 1, 2011 at St. Mary’s Ukrainian Church, 3625 Cawthra Road, Mississauga, from 8:00 a.m. till 3:30 p.m. There is plenty of parking and the location is easily accessed by public transit. An elevator is available for those who need it.

Tickets are available from Committee members at meetings throughout Mississauga and the surrounding area beginning in August. The ticket price remains the same as last year at $20! And this includes coffee and snacks during the morning, as well as a hot and cold buffet lunch featuring perogies and cabbage rolls. Buy a ticket for yourself, your sponsee, sponsor or for someone else you care about. Hope to see you there!

Carol McP – MFR Publicity and Promotion Chair

Diversions at Meetings

(CELL PHONES, DOGS AND JOKES)

I received an email recently from a friend regarding cell phones at meetings. A great eye opener, especially when related to our traditions regarding “primary purpose” (Tradition 5)
Better Times thought it useful to point out that...“Any literature that pertains to the principles of AA or is approved by a Group Conscience - is perfectly acceptable to be read by any AA member or in an AA meeting. GSO Box 4-5-9 1978 (Volume 23, No 4) So, in fact there would seem to be no index of forbidden books...read on! Furthermore, we are pleased to print letters from our AA members in the GTA which express your concerns with regard to your sobriety, and AA as a whole; we simply ask our readers to “keep an open mind” and keep on writing.

Dear Sirs:

I am 23 years sober in A.A. When I first heard “Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow” things began to become more manageable for me. I was consumed with guilt about yesterday, and tomorrow was too overwhelming. So that left me today and I can manage today – there were times when I broke it down to minutes and seconds. This piece of prose along with the Serenity Prayer put things into perspective for me and I can manage today.

Last month’s Better Times article about “Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow” gave me an opportunity to seek knowledge – this is what I discovered. At the National Archival Conference in September 25-28, 2003 in sunny Florida: Introduction started with the following; “The three most published A.A. authors are Bill W., Richmond W. and Ralph P, in that order. Ralph wrote under the pen name of Father John Doe and wrote the fourteen Golden Books along with three other books, all of them still in print and read by A.A. people to-day. Richmond W. of Daytona Beach Florida Group published the “Twenty-Four Hours a Day Book” in 1948, which became the great meditational book of early A.A. from that point on. The Old Timers say without hesitation that they got sober by using two books: Bill’s “The Big Book” and Richmond’s “Twenty-Four Hours a Day Book”. Thank you for the opportunity to increase my knowledge about this wonderful programme and the fascinating people travelling the road to recovery.

Eleanor W. – Liverpool Group
and “money, property and prestige” (Tradition 6). My friend pointed out too, that not only is it a major distraction (for everyone at the meeting) if it goes off, but it also brings “dishonour” to AA – a place that is helping us to live a better life, a place that deserves utmost respect.

Equally distracting (and disruptive too) are dogs at meetings. I have wracked my brain trying to find a legitimate reason to bring one to a meeting. It is clearly an attention-seeking and ego-inflating behaviour that takes no account or consideration for others in the same room. Some folks love dogs, others hate them, some are allergic to them and others fear dogs. Whatever our individual feelings are, each of us has the right (and expectation) to choose our level of contact with dogs and not have them thrust upon us. This should hold true at AA meetings as well.

As we mature in AA, our ability to laugh at ourselves and humorous situations becomes progressively more acute. Oftentimes, a well-delivered message includes funny anecdotes and incidents appropriate to and related to the speaker’s experience, strength and hope. (As a newcomer, I can remember being almost shocked at the amount of laughter in AA rooms.) Some folks seem compelled to start their talk with a joke or one is delivered from the floor during announcements. Why? Just for the sake of telling a joke? And a lot of these jokes are off-colour, sexist, put-downs or sarcastic. I suppose they might be alright at a Toastmasters meeting or in a bar, but in AA where we deal with serious life or death issues, I suggest, they are misplaced.

I am not immune to the trappings of “money, property and prestige” but through the teachings of AA they are taking on a less prominent role in my life. As a steward of the AA program, these issues (cell phones, dogs and jokes) jeopardize and put at risk the message being delivered to the newcomer – “our primary purpose” and dilute “the joy of good living” to which we all aspire.

Norm P.
GENERAL MEETING – TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2011

ADOPTION OF MINUTES – June 2011: MOTION to adopt Minutes as presented
moved and seconded. MOTION CARRIED.

CHAIRPERSON’S OPENING REMARKS: Barbara H. (Rox Glen Traditional),
Chairperson: Barbara shared the following to Floor members:
• Barbara welcomed everyone to our new location, and announced general
housekeeping items.
• AA Service Manuals were provided for Group Reps (one per group); more will be available
next month.
• The Traditions Workshop announced at the June General Meeting is set for
Sat. Oct.15 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
• Barbara outlined which members have a voice on the Floor, and asked members
to come to the microphone when addressing the Floor.

It was then announced that one item of business needed to be addressed at this
time: With regret, Barbara announced that our Office Manager, Judy, has resigned for
personal reasons. The Executive Committee has extended an offer to a new candidate
(Gail). Our Procedures and Guidelines calls for ratification from the Intergroup Floor on
this item. Barbara then asked for a Motion from the Floor to hire Gail under the same
terms and conditions as Intergroup’s former Office Manager. MOTION CARRIED.
Barbara shared that a gift was purchased for Judy by the Executive Committee in
appreciation for her service. She stated that “We very much appreciated Judy’s service
over the past several years” and asked that everybody give Judy a round of applause
for her efforts.

Finance Report: Don M. (Hill), Finance Committee Member: GTA Intergroup Alcoholics

<table>
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<th>Income</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Net Ordinary Income</th>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>$9,464</td>
<td>$13,921</td>
<td>$-4,457</td>
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<td>Comp. to Budget</td>
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<td>Comp. to Budget</td>
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Total income before Operating Expenses for June was 29% below budget due to low
Group Donations. Year-to-date Total income before Operating Expenses is 15% above
budget and 14% over last year due to strong Group Donations in previous months and
increased ORC surplus. Total expenses for the month of June are 25% below budget due
mainly to staff position not filled. Year-to-date total expenses are 7% below budget but
14% more than last year due to hardware purchases and the database project.

Prudent Reserve as of June 30, 2011: Book value + accrued interest: $287,308
which represents 305 days (10 months) of budgeted Operating Expenses. An additional
$40,000 was transferred to the Prudent Reserve and $6,400 interest was accrued
on investments in June. Don informed those present that the postal strike did affect
somewhat distribution and sales in the Literature Department. He also emphasized that
there is funding available for subcommittees for any special projects they may have to
aid in carrying the message; please let the Finance Committee know if assistance is
needed. Phone System Update: more Twelfth Step volunteers are needed in order
to implement the system. Progress in this regard is ongoing.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS
The following reports outline the various subcommittees and their roles in
carrying the message.

ACCESS ABILITY: Cathy Z., Chairperson: We had our regular meeting on July 17.
We have decided to look for an alternative to Mayfest next year. The costs have gone
up considerably and we no longer feel our involvement is helpful. People in Motion was
a big success this year so we are hopeful we will be given the opportunity to return
next year. We have been asked to participate at District 22’s service day in September.
We will set up a table and give a brief presentation on what our committee does. Once
again I’d like to remind everyone to notify Intergroup if your meeting is wheel chair
accessible. It is important to ensure that the room the meeting is held in is accessible
and that there are accessible washrooms available. We cannot designate a meeting as
accessible without accessible washrooms. We would also like groups that do have wheel
chair access to post instructions on how to get into the meeting in the notes section
for their meeting online. Items like which door to arrive at and where the ramp is are
important to know ahead of time. Our next meeting will be Sun. Aug. 21 at 11a.m. at
234. Yours in loving service, Cathy At this point in the meeting, there was a collection
of the 7th Tradition, which totalled $130.19.

ARCHIVES – Gord H. (Blooddale), Chairperson: On July 17, an Oral Histories Workshop
was held. Maire O’B. (Past Archivist), Eddy G. (present Archivist), and Jim (assistant)
facilitated the Workshop. Gord has an Oral Histories Workbook available for anyone
interested. The committee is working on accessibility for members to archival materials,
and will create Procedures for this endeavour. On July 18, the Area 78 Archives Chair
(Area 78 includes Calgary area) was in Toronto, and was a given a tour of our Archives
display at 234. Four more boxes of archival materials from the late Tommy H. have been
received. Members who are interested in assisting with these materials are encouraged
to attend the next Archives meeting which will be held on Fri. Aug.12 at 7 p.m. at 234.
The 27th Annual Archives Breakfast “What was AA like back then?” will be held on
Sun. Nov.6, 2011 at the Oasis Convention Centre (Mississauga). The day will feature a
buffet breakfast and two long timer speakers (Audrey G. /54 years, Toronto and Don C./53 years, Oakville). Tickets are $25 and available from Archives members (see flyers).

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES: No report was given. This committee will meet again in
September.

COOPERATION with the PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (CPC): No report was given.
Next meeting: Mon. Aug.8 at 7 p.m. at 234.

INFORMATION AA DAY 2011: No report was given. This committee will meet again in
September.

ONTARIO REGIONAL CONFERENCE 2011: No report was given. This committee will
meet again in September.

PUBLIC INFORMATION: The Public Information Committee met on Monday July 18
at 7:30 pm. In attendance: Districts 2, 6, 10, 12, 14, and 18. Absent: District 4, 22,
and the P.I. Events Coordinator. All Districts present have been very busy with various
activities including getting Big Books into their public libraries and both public and
separate school boards. Beginners Pamphlets and holders were distributed to many
community centres, food banks and police stations throughout the Districts. We were
invited to participate in the Mount Pleasant Business Improvement Association’s
Fall Fair but declined. As the objective of this fair is to promote (advertise) the local
businesses, it is not appropriate for AA to participate as Tradition 11 states “our public
relations policy is based on attraction, not promotion…” Next P.I. Meeting:
Mon. Aug. 15 at 234 from at 7:30 p.m.

TREATMENT FACILITIES: Daniel U. (Welcome), Chairperson: Treatment Facilities has
adopted procedures and guidelines for their committee. Committee members are also
generating new ideas and ways of carrying the message into facilities in the GTA (i.e.
starting meetings in facilities that currently have no AA service meetings). Next meeting:
Thurs. Aug.18 at 7:30 p.m. at 234.

TWELFTH STEP: As no meeting was held in July, no report was given. Next meeting:
Fri. Aug.26 at 7:30p.m. at 234.

WEBSITE/BETTER TIMES: Aaron K. (Yorkville), Chairperson: The Better Times
is in need of another Co-Editor. If you are interested to be part of this vital team,
please see me or apply online. If you have a submission for the Better Times, please
have it in by the 10th of the month. Notices for the website will be posted promptly.
Next meeting: Sat. Aug.13 at 1 p.m. at 234.

RECEPTION: Bruce D. (Fifth Tradition), Executive Vice Chairperson: 70 members
were present this evening: 42 groups, 5 subcommittees, and 2 district liaisons.

CHAIRPERSON’S CLOSING REMARKS: Barbara and Floor members officially welcomed
the new Office Manager, Gail, with applause. Barbara also thanked those in attendance
for their dedication to service.

NEXT GENERAL MEETING: Tuesday, Aug. 30 at 8 p.m at Timothy Eaton Memorial
Church, 230 St. Clair Ave. West (west from St. Clair subway Station on Yonge line).
The meeting will be held in the Flora McCrae Auditorium.

To see the complete minutes go to www.aatoronto.org.