



The Eighty - Three

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Area 83 Archives Newsletter

Archives in Area 83
April 2023

HISTORY OF AA IN ONTARIO

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Of Special Interest

Contributions to Area Archivist
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1921—Rowland H saw Dr Carl Jung in Zurich Switzerland and was told he was a hopeless Alcoholic. Dr Jung told him his only hope was to have a spiritual experience sufficient enough to produce an entire psychic change in him.

November of 1934, Ebby T carried the message of sobriety to Bill W. which he had received from Rowland and the Oxford Groups.

Dec 11 1934, Bill had his last drink and returned to Towns Hospital for the last time where he had his Spiritual Experience which helped to establish the Program of Recovery. Bill joined the Oxford Groups in New York and Akron .

On May 11, while on a trip to Akron Bill made the telephone calls at the Mayflower Hotel to look for another drunk to work with. This led to Bill meeting Dr Bob at the home of Henrietta Seiberling the following Monday after Mothers Day.

Dr Bob has last drink on June 10th 1935.

Jan 1940 Rev Dr George Little, a minister of the United Church and a Non-Alcoholic reads a review of the Big Book by Rev Harry Emerson Fosdick, and orders a copy from New York and mimeographs copies to give to people with a drinking problem.. In June 1941 Rev Little orders 5 more copies and sold one to Rev Canon Quintin Warner of London, Ont.

In 1942 Rev Percy Price from the Metropolitan United Church obtained a copy of the Big Book and persuaded a

group to get together at a dinner held at the Little Denmark Restaurant on Bay Street in Toronto..

On Jan 13, 1943 6 alcoholics and the two ministers met to form AA in Toronto.

Out of this meeting started the first regular meeting in Ontario and in Canada was held at the Metropolitan United Church at 5:30 PM. The original 6 members were there.

Oct 22nd 1943—The first regular meeting in Windsor Ont

26 Nov 1943—The first regular meeting in London , Ont (from the Big Book sold to Rev Canon Quinton Warner by Rev Little)/

16 Dec 43—80 people attended first banquet in Toronto at the Royal York Hotel.

20 Sep 45—First regular meeting in Leamington.

26 Oct 45—First regular meeting in Hamilton

30 Oct 45—First regular meeting in Ottawa.

By the end of the year the following meetings were being held in Toronto:

Women's
Midtown
East End
Victor
Parkdale

In 1950 the Wives' Groups were formed in Toronto and this is the forerunner of Al-Anon. This was mentioned in AA Comes of Age and All Around Ontario. They were affectionately called "Non-Alcoholic Gals—NAG.

Start of Area 83 International

In 1951 at the Ontario Regional Conference the first Delegate to the General Service Conference. Adam C and Art L became the first Delegate and Alternate for all of Ontario.

District 66—Various Group Histories

From Jimmy G - Saturday Night Group History
Here's the Story as I know It

I woke up on Saturday Arpril 18th, 1959 after a very bad 3 days of drinking and decided I had to do something about my drinking.

We had seen an invitation in the Record News about 3 months earlier about an information meeting on AA at the Baptist Church Ministers Home on Beckwith St. The Minister at the time was Rev Frank Ward.

I phoned Rev Ward and he told me there were no meetings in Smith Falls, but he would call Central Office in Ottawa and get back to me. That was April 20, 1959.

Frank phoned me back in a couple of days and said Ottawa was sending a fellow to Twelve Step me. The man was Bill V and another fellow.

Bill asked me if I would go to an "AA" meeting at the "Y" in Ottawa on Sat Night April 25/59. It was called the Beginners Group.

We went to the AA Club afterward and met a lot of people.

The next week Frank W said Ottawa Central Office would send some people to hold an AA meeting at the Baptist Church Sunday School Hall on Sat May 2, 1959.

After the meeting, one of the men, Jack M, said he would chair an AA meeting on Saturday night at *:00 PM for a period of one year as long as somebody showed up to get the Smith Falls Sat Night Group started. I still have my 1 year medalion they gave me on April 18, 1960.

Jack M brought people with him every Sat Night and Ran the meeting. He chaired and his people did the rest and the speaking. We just attended and listened.

We went on our own after a year and members started coming from Perth, Carleton Place, and Rideau Lakes area to join the Sat Night Group.

You know the rest as groups started from the Sat Night Group in Perth, Carleton Place, as well as other meetings in Smith Falls.

I'm sorry I can't give you more names, but there were too many in that First Year to mention.

Easy Does It

Jimmy G.

Bob H. was the original person who started up the Sharbot Lake Land "O" Lakes Group in June of 1980. AA meetings have taken place in Sharbot Lake every Monday night since 1980 until today. The reason for the name given to the Sharbot Lake Land "O" Lakes Group was because of all the lakes in the area of North Frontenac County. Bob H. was given the nickname of "Bob the Barber" and all the AA old timers in the District when talking about Bob used his nickname. The Sharbot Lake Land "O" Lakes Group was officially registered as an AA Group at the AA GSO office in New York on January 1, 1982.

Bob H. was an inspiration to all of us who new him in the Golden Triangle District and also throughout Area 83. Bob H. helped hundreds of AA newcomers including myself to get sober . Bob H. has just recently passed away in March of 2023 at 82 years of age, what a terrible loss to AA.

One of the great things about our group is that we always have a significant number of American AA members attending our meetings throughout the summer Months and they also attend our hybrid Zoom meetings throughout the winter. The Sharbot Lake Group has lost many of our original old timers over the last number of years. I started attending the Sharbot Lake meeting in May 30th, 1988 and have been an active member ever since that date.

Cheers

Dave N

The Uplands AA Goup—CFB OTTAWA South— District 54

This “military” AA Group marks its anniversary from 12 Jul 1968. It was set up in the meeting rooms of the Protestant Chapel, modelling itself on the downtown Fireside Group, then one of two discussion groups listed for the Capital Area. The Uplands Group held closed discussion meetings for the first three Wednesday evenings and an open, speaker evening on the final Wednesday and to celebrate member anniversaries. The first anniversary of the Group itself was celebrated with a catered dinner to which key base authorities were invited.

Uplands founders were two soldiers and an airman. Master Warrant Officer Harvey (Sam) R went on to become a Presbyterian Minister and Corporal Helgi H to be an addictions counsellor while the air corporal, Bev B, a former teacher also went west so that there was a talented AA individual for each Prairie Province.

They had spared no effort to put the uplands Group on the map. When a 12-Step prospect surfaced on the base they’d say “Come to the meeting tonight.” If it wasn’t Wednesday, members called others and Presto, the newcomer found himself at a hastily convened meeting. They didn’t stop there. During Chapel repairs there was a sojourn or so in the library of the base grade school but the increased numbers caused a move to the Social Centre, a wartime hut refurbished for the purpose. The Chapel was used Friday nights for an additional discussion group, initially a step group, and also on Sunday evenings for the Family/Friend meeting with refreshments for Al-Anon was meeting in another room Wednesdays at the Social Centre and they shared Sundays at the Chapel. Occasionally there was a disco dance.

One big hitch in projects involving the military is that people are posted away or sent off on temporary duty or finish their time. So the Group lost more movers and shakers. Meanwhile AA in Ottawa was growing and Groups were being set up in the South End, handier to the base. Then came a time when the AAs on the Base preferred to head off the military environment for their AA. Later in the 1970s the Group was

Down to two, one of them who’d found his program in the school library years before. Finally they caved in and left the Padre a note saying they wouldn’t be back. But the wind changed and Uplands emerged from its doldrums within weeks when David T, Bill U and Joe DK arrived along with Harry S to revive the group. So uplands survived.

It was not until the ‘80s that the Group revitalized. It was down to two members again but rallied over the winter and hasn’t looked back since. Numbers and enthusiasm grew partly in response to the military program for rehabilitation of its problem drinkers, partly because the word was out that this was a good place to bring the newcomer, partly because servicewomen there encouraged other women to turn up, and partly because the old enthusiasm and vigor were back. The movers and shakers continued their efforts. A Friday noon meeting went on for a while across the road in the RC Chapel. Meetings were going on in CFB Ottawa (North), the old Rockcliffe base. There’ll be others. But it’s at the Protestant Chapel that the Steps are explored, topics examined on Wednesdays as of yore, with participants splitting into as many as four groups. There are no lack of greeters, the smokers guarantee a gauntlet of handshakes and hugs as one approaches the doorway. Inside is Fellowship with a proper military flourish!

Postscript:

The uplands carried on for a considerable amount of time but eventually closed around 2019 due to lack of support—only one or two appearing for the meeting and then down to one person..

The good news is that some of the early members are still around AA like Jerry H, David T and Barbara T who are now in the 50 year + of sobriety and still active.

**Area Archives March
2023**

Upcoming Events:

We are back in person at the Area Assembly April 14-16 at the Holliday Inn Hotel and St Lawrence College in Kingston.

The ORC in Toronto has just finished and this is the first major conference since the end of the Pandemic.

Roundups are back in full swing with District 48 and District 66 having their in-person Roundups and District 74—Pembroke preparing for their Annual Conference (Mothers Day Conference) in May.

Don't forget to participate in the Area 83 Pre-Conference Agenda Sessions on April 1st. This is to provide our Delegate James for the General Service Conference.

And Finally the History of Ontario AA is finished and available from Toronto Intergroup or from the GTA Archives Committee at a cost of 20.95. This book has been compiled by Jim C of the North Toronto Group with research from the Toronto Archives Committee

Keep a lookout for the next Area 83 Archives Workshop tentatively scheduled for June 10 in Toronto.
