



The Eighty - Three

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Area 83 Archives Newsletter

Our Area 83 history through the eyes of those before us... A legacy of gratitude

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See the Archivist's Blog:
<http://area83archivist.blogspot.com/>

Contributions to 'The Eighty - Three' should be sent to:
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Attention fo Detail

Paolo R
Kingsway Group

Attention to Detail (Part One)

When I became GSR of the Kingsway Group I was handed a blue and grey satchel full of papers. Once home I glanced inside and saw an untidy mishmash of stuff, so I promptly put the satchel down on the floor in my home office....off to the side....on the unmanageable pile of things that regularly grew until it reached depressing proportions. Usually when the mound was overwhelmingly ungainly some officious individual would require a persnicketty bit of information or document which I knew was somewhere in the heap so I would ultimately be forced to engage with the demonic mess and after a few days of struggling, feel incredibly satisfied and victorious, having sorted everything out. It was at such a time, when, I was wearing out the Serenity Prayer, and repeating "Easy Does It" in mantra style that the not bad looking satchel emerged from the pile. I happened to open it in front of my husband and I said "I really should look in this thing one day". My husband's curiosity caused his hand to reach in and pull out a rather small, old, weathered black binder. Instantly I was interested so I peered over his shoulder and together we discovered a handwritten document on small, yellowing pages.

The old, almost forgotten document turned out to be a complete history of the Kingsway Group up to 1980 from the very beginnings of A. A. in Toronto. We learned that one of the founders of the Kingsway

Group, Tom E., was one of the six alcoholics at the famous Little Denmark Restaurant meeting on January 13, 1943. Tom was instrumental from that time on in building many aspects of early A. A. in Ontario including eventually establishing the Kingsway Group. In the early days of the Kingsway Group, alcoholics gathered in Tom's office, closed meetings were later held in his home for many years, even after the Kingsway had a "permanent" location for their open meetings at Our Lady of Sorrows Church on Bloor St. near Royal York Road. Tom's wife Pearl held meetings in their home also, but for the wives, and these meetings were called the Wives Group. Goodwin G. and his wife, Eone also shared their home for the Kingsway Group alcoholics and their wives. Toward the end of the document there is a brief history of the beginnings of Al-Anon in Toronto as described by Joe O'R. and researched by Dodie D. of the Kingsway Group in 1980. Though many of the facts written in the short history can be disputed by comparing other histories and archival records of the time we can only admire the great care and fascinating attention to detail the Dodie/Joe team of researcher/historian, dedicated to preserving our heritage. What a treasure!

As my husband and I read the old pages it became clear that this document and the information contained therein needed to be shared and that if the Kingsway Group Conscience agreed, we would begin work on an Archives Display for our upcoming 65th Anniversary Meeting featuring this old historic document and anything else we could drum up from whatever was left in our group's various storage areas.

Paolo R., Kingsway Group

Why we do Archives

During my two years of service to Area 83 as Archives Committee Chair I learned a lot of “how” we do archives, for which I am grateful. Now I wish to address “why” we do Archives.

It is obvious how other committees – such as Treatment, Corrections, Cooperation with the Professional Community, Public Information – support our 12th Step work. At first glance, the activities we pursue in Archives are not as closely related to “carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.” As with many facets of the A.A. recovery program, a second or even third glance reveals the connection between Archives and 12th Step work.

“Carrying the message” has evolved, changed, and expanded since the day in 1935 when Dr. Bob first met with Bill W. at the Seiberling Estate gatehouse in Akron, Ohio. The establishment of groups and districts in Area 83 over time has been a result of the changing need to “carry the message” and keep A.A. unified while doing so. By knowing A.A.’s history – both as a whole and within Area 83 – we can track how that process has stayed the same, how it has changed, and, most importantly, *why* it has changed.

If we have questions about why we, as an Area, took a certain action a few years ago there are many people still here who were involved. These “long timers” – participants in our A.A. history – can recount to us the thoughts and ideas which went into making past decisions. But if we want to ask about actions taken 30, 40, or even 50 years ago, there are few long-timers still around to tell us. If we do not keep an archive, then we have no history (experience) to guide us.

The archival process preserves the record with which we can track that process. It also provides a record of what didn’t work and *why* it didn’t work. That is a valuable tool to help us not make the same mistake twice (or six times!). And, based on past experience, it can point us in the right direction to address situations occurring today and in the future.

We may not know what information we will need in the future to make informed decisions. If we keep a good record now, we can look at it later to help answer questions we haven’t even thought of while the “raw data” was being collected. And, besides, it’s just plain interesting to be able to look into the archive to see “what we were like then.”

In gratitude to Area 83 Archives,

Milner G., Panel 59 Archives Chair

One Member's Story

Back in 2009, I was the group service rep. for our Long Branch group. At the start of the year, at one of the district (06) meetings, people were asked to volunteer for the various committee positions. When archives was announced, I VERY reluctantly put up my hand, feeling like I should be doing something. I subsequently got the spot as archives chair. To anyone thinking of taking on a position you know nothing about, take heart! I had less than no idea what an archives chair did. I knew I liked history, and I knew I still had all my old hockey cards nicely in plastic pages in binders, so I thought archives might be interesting.

The fact is, it seems most of us who volunteer for these types of service positions have no clue what we are getting into. But thankfully, and certainly in my case, there was no shortage of people who would be put in my path and who could and would help me out, and steer me in the right direction. I’ve found that to be a recurring theme in AA in general. Whether it’s a problem in life, or with a service position, in AA, I know I am never alone.

It was suggested, among other things, that I try and get to each group in the district to fill out a group history questionnaire, and also take photos of their church/building, banner/tablecloth, and slogan board(s). This had never been done in our district. I soon realized that there are a lot of groups in our district, 33 if I remember right. Because I work shifts, time was something I didn’t have a lot of. But I kept at it, and about a year and a half later, I had made the rounds to all the groups.

I came to AA a little over 5 years ago. I would easily describe myself as a shy, self-conscious person, who did not go about the business of meeting new people well. I would go so far as to say I was the next best thing to being socially inept. If my higher power wanted me to work on improving in this department, then archives has been a great remedy for me!!

I went to each group, most often not knowing anyone. I would have to push myself to introduce myself to members of the group, explain what I was doing with my camera (which on it’s own caused quite a stir at some meetings!), and find a long term member who was agreeable to tackle the group history questionnaire.

I can tell you it did wonders for helping me to open up and come out of my self-imposed shell (not fully, but certainly to a large extent). I got more confidence in talking to people, and best of all, I met so many excellent people, who I never would have met if I had never volunteered for this position.

Something I have been trying to concentrate on is the idea of SUITING UP AND SHOWING UP. Beyond that, I try to do my best, and leave the results up to God. Although I can say I was happy with way the binder I put together (with much computer related help from my wife Colleen) turned out, I’m learning that the journey/process is almost more important and exciting than the end result.

Jim W. District 06

First Central East Area Conference—Kawartha District

Following a Social on Saturday Evening at the Stone School, the first A.A. Conference in Peterborough was held on Sunday, June 24, 1962 at the Empress Hotel. This Building is currently the home of Empress Gardens on Charlotte St., between George and Water. It was the **First Annual Central East Area Conference** and was appropriately themed "First Things First." **Central East Area** in Ontario was a geographical area bounded by Havelock, Peterborough and Lindsay to the North and Whitby, Oshawa, Bowmanville and Port Hope to the South, containing approximately 14 Groups. Although called an Area, it would be akin to a District as we know it today. Group GSRs at the Central East Area Committee elected George T. of Whitby as the Conference Chair. Committee members were Charlie W., Treasurer, Port Perry (Whitby Gr.) and later Peterborough, George T., Chair, Whitby, Dave T., Oshawa, Pat H., Speakers, Peterborough, Audrey G., Secretary, Whitby, Earl E., Oshawa, Syd C., Peterborough, Shawn B., Lindsay and Ray H., Havelock.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help others to achieve sobriety.

*God grant me the serenity to accept
the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference.*



Cleopatra White

" FIRST THINGS FIRST "

**FIRST ANNUAL
CENTRAL EAST AREA
CONFERENCE**

EMPRESS HOTEL, PETERBORO

JUNE 24th, 1962

First Central East Area Conference—Kawartha District

The Conference was held in the Imperial Room and started with a ***Spiritual Panel*** at 10:30 chaired by Syd C. Of Peterborough, a ***Recovery Panel*** at 1:00 PM chaired by Audrey G. of Whitby, a ***Panoramic Panel*** at 2:45 PM chaired by Gord H. of Havelock. A banquet was held at 5:00 PM chaired by Roy C. Of Lindsay and followed by a Guest Speaker, Jack F. of London, Ontario. Attendance was 469 Registrations with 446 sitting for the Banquet. Tickets were priced at \$2.00 for Registration and \$3.50 for Registration and Banquet. Advertising was done in local Newspapers, bulletins at the ***Ontario Regional Conference, All Around Ontario*** and on many radio stations (6 in Toronto, 3 in Hamilton, 2 in Kingston, 2 in London, 2 in Peterborough and 1 each in St. Thomas, Leamington, Belleville, Richmond Hill, Lindsay, Oshawa and Cobourg). Representatives from the Clergy were invited as well as from the local Press in Peterborough, Lindsay and Oshawa. The ***Panoramic Panel*** featured Crown Attorney Bruce Affleck. Several members of the clergy and social assistance attended the Conference, as reported by the Peterborough Examiner. The entire Conference was taped by Jack C. of Stayner.

The Format of the early Central East Area Conferences was influenced by the early Toronto Conferences. Following some Anniversary meetings of A.A. in Toronto in the 1940s, the first Conference that was to become the ***Ontario Regional Conference*** was held at the Royal York Hotel in 1950. In attendance that year from Central East Area were no less than 49 attendees (Havelock 1, Lindsay 5, Oshawa 21,

P R O G R A M M E

I M P E R I A L R O O M

Spiritual Panel - 10:30 - 11:30 A.M., Chairman - Syd C., Peterboro.

Acceptance - came to believe - Jack W., Killaloe.
 Presentation - we who doubted - James L., Sarnia.
 Prayer - toward a knowledge of His will - Fran McC., Agincourt.
 Contact - sought a conscious contact - Gib McE., Ottawa.

Recovery Panel - 1:00 - 2:15 P.M., Chairman - Audrey G., Whitby.

Admission - surrender and acceptance - Ted R., Cobourg.
 HOW - honesty, open-mindedness and willingness - Frank A., Chalk River.
 Anonymity - Mac McK., Hamilton.
 Carrying the message - Jim McL., St. Catherines.

Panoramic Panel - 2:45 - 4:00 P.M., Chairman - Gord H., Havelock.

A non-alcoholic Speaks - Bruce Affleck (County of Ontario Crown Attorney).
 Industry and the alcoholic employee - Carl J., Toronto.
 Al-Anon - Joan C., Toronto.
 Service - Russ M., Toronto.

Banquet - 5:00 P.M. Chairman - Roy C., Lindsay.

Guest Speaker - Jack F., London.