



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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Trusted servants

Maire O.B
Area 83's first Archivist

I was in the office at Toronto Intergroup and Tommy H. happened to be there that day as well. He had heard that my name did not come out of the hat for the DCM. As was his custom in those latter days, he was wearing his red Roots outfit. He approached me with his arms open and said "Please don't go anywhere, we really need you." His voice in those words lingers in my mind to this day. I knew of Tommy from going to Assembly. As I moved through my other service responsibilities, he was always present. We gave our reports to Intergroup he with Archives, me with Treatment Facilities. Then he passed away as did his peers Katie G., Bob E. and Dennis D. – all delegates of Area 83 like he was. The GTA Archives Committee floundered. John G. did a great job holding it together but the energy of the earlier committee had gone as one by one they passed away. The collection which had evolved from the earlier days of the Ontario General Service Committee was in real danger of being lost; it had been dispersed amongst committee members and a few others trusted servants in the aftermath of an unfortunate flood. I felt compelled to sit on the committee. I was honoured with the privilege of chairing that committee for a while but it was when John turned to me one day and said "Máire, we have been looking for an archivist all this time and you have been sitting right here all the time." I set to the task of securing a repository, gathering the dispersed collection

and organizing what could be one of the most important AA archives collections in Canada. Each of these tasks was completed with the selfless dedication of quite a few members over almost 10 years. The beginnings of AA in Canada, the evolution of the 4 Ontario General Service Areas and much of the "today in GTA AA" are all preserved and conserved in this collection. It has been my distinct honour and privilege to have carried on the legacy of those who went before me. A few years back, a decision was made to make Archives a sub-committee of the Area 83 service structure. As the first Archivist, I was able to be part of an enormous groundswell of interest in preserving the history of AA in this Area. Long timers oral histories have been recorded and shared amongst group members; group and other historical records are finding their way into secure storage; displays with photos of group table banners and locations are being shown at roundups and conferences; and the stories continue to be passed on from one generation to the next with vigour.

As I walk into the ballroom where we hold our Assembly, I can see in my mind's eye, in those very chairs they sat in, our early trusted servants, with whom we all shook hands and conferred with over matters of importance to our Fellowship. The language of the heart they shared with each of us I know with confidence will be Passed On as long as our Higher Power wills it to be so. Máire O'B.

Of Special Interest

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

Contributions to 'The Eighty - Three' should be sent to:
archivist@area83aa.org

I drove roads I've never seen before... Panel 51 delegate

A decade ago this month I, as alternate delegate, like many of my predecessors and successors, was nervous about the upcoming election at the Assembly in Kingston. Would I be the first alternate delegate in institutional memory from Area 83 to be not elected delegate?

We had just completed the Eastern Canada Regional Forum in Kingston and were awaiting the final results of attendance. I had had the wonderful opportunity and privilege of chairing the host committee for this event and working with Doug R., the forums coordinator from GSO, Debbie W., local District Committee Member and Ivy Riveria the forums staff assistant from GSO.

Our election assembly was heated. Toronto Intergroup had brought webpage issues to discuss, and we, as an area, were in the middle of creating a new district Humber 04. I was never in my life so grateful then to have been elected the Panel 51 delegate from Area 83, Eastern Ontario International. My friend Roy R from Mississauga was elected alternate delegate.

Many incoming delegates have heard the comments from their predecessors about which of the conference committees to avoid, as if having a choice. The decision is made at the December AAWS board meeting based upon regional representation and need mixed with chance as defined by in AA terms, the hat. "You don't want literature, you don't want finance, you don't want" All the while I was secretively hoping for literature or finance both areas being close to my "service" heart. I was so pleased and excited when I received my first communication from GSO with the preliminary background on International Conventions and Regional Forum suggesting I should arrange my transportation to arrive in New York in advance of the conference in order to participate in choosing the short list of three sites for the 2010 International Convention!! My first assumption was that I must be on the International Convention and Regional Forum conference committee. Three days later I received a beautiful letter from Doug R. welcoming me to the committee. At the same time, I received a letter and preliminary background material for the conference literature committee from Valerie O'N. I was extremely excited to be part of the committee that would be reviewing and ultimately approving the 4 edition of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous a process that began with Ray M our Panel 45 delegate.

Preparation for the 51st General Service Conference, theme "Love and Service" began almost immediately into 2001. Binders and books and large volumes a paper began arriving at my door. Information regarding the cities vying for the International Convention, background on 18 plus agenda items for the literature committee and 15 pounds of stories for the 4th Edition of the Big Book all began arriving much to the chagrin of my mail man!

Any and all details regarding the stories in the 4th Edition were private since not all copyright issues had been settled and this issue would plague the upcoming General Service Conference, where all conference members wanted to have the same opportunity to review the stories. The issue of conference approval of literature was to become a catch phrase and ongoing discussion of subsequent conferences. In fact, the number one question asked of me for the first year as serving as your delegate was: "will page 449 be present in the 4th Edition of the Big

Book", my response was: "yes, there will be a page 449, the details of which will be uncovered once all the legal issues regarding copyrights have been finalized and the book is published".

Travelling to the 51st General Service Conference was a challenge to say the least. I felt as prepared as I could have been, having read all the background for my committee at least twice, and the background of other committees at least once....what I was prepared for were issues that were out of my control. Leaving Kingston in the morning, suitcase at the maximum allowable weight of 50 pounds and being haunted by our Eastern Canada Regional Trustee's voice, Marne H ... "the conference is business casual, no jeans, no t-shirts, jackets for men" wearing jeans and a t-shirt and arriving in Toronto with a couple of hours between flights to New York – I grabbed a coffee. Just as I was to turn away from the condiments counter I spilled the coffee down the front of me. The staff tried to help clean up the mess, however, I knew the damage was done – these clothes would go right to the laundry upon arrival. The flight to New York and arrival at LaGuardia airport was uneventful until it came time to claim my luggage. I was the last person waiting, only to realize, sadly, that my 50 pound of clothes didn't make the trip with me....again, that haunting voice....."no jeans, no t-shirts" – all I had were the coffee stained clothes on my back. Thankfully the airline officials had located my suitcase in Toronto and hoped to have it me "within a few days".... I implored them to move quicker because in the morning I had the selection meeting for 2010 with the joint trustees and conference international convention and regional forums committee. Luckily my luggage arrived around 11 pm that evening saving me from showing up the next day in a coffee stained t-shirt and jeans (or worse having to shop in downtown Manhattan for a new suit) where we shortlisted the cities for the 2010 including San Antonio in the selection!

In addition to approving the 4th Edition of the Big Book, we approved the pamphlets "Can AA Help Me Too – Black/African Americans Share Their Stories and AA For the Older Alcoholics – Never Too Late.

The conference literature committee elected me the chair of the 2002 committee at the 52nd General Service Conference (Sharing the Steps, Traditions and Concepts) giving me the distinct honour of attending the January board meeting of the General Service Board and having the privilege of presenting to the General Service Conference the conference literature committees recommendations for advisory actions which included the approval of the publication "Experience Strength and Hope" where the 56 stories dropped from the First, Second, and Third Editions of the Big Book are found and that the text in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, written by Bill W., remains as is, recognizing the Fellowship's feeling that Bill's writings be retained as originally published.

Other highlights of my time as your delegate include speaking with many of our members across the area during delegate reports, conferences and service days. I drove roads I've never seen before and been to places I only hope to see again. We have some beautiful real estate in Area 83 on both sides of the border!

It was a glorious experience serving Area 83, Eastern Ontario International as your Panel 51 delegate. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity and privilege to serve you. Joe D

Should the Area Archives chair be appointed or elected...Panel 53 delegate

A Group is only as good as it's members.....A history of Little

March 2003, a week before the Spring assembly. My Delegate's report (the first one!) reads something like: You people don't realize the mistake you made electing me last October. I am not a Delegate. I don't know what I am, but I am not that.

I chatted with my service sponsor, and he agreed that although I wasn't much, I was all the Area had - the Panel 53 Area 83 Delegate, and off I went. It's now almost eight years later and I have been asked to reflect on some of my experiences as Delegate.

The best experiences were people. Meeting you guys - at your Districts, at Service Days, in your home groups. Working with the other 130 members of the General Service Conference. Meeting un-met friends who continue to be friends today. I was taken 20,000 kilometers out of my way to meet all of you and shared most of those kilometers with my wife Kate as co-driver and navigator - I got to know her again, and for that, I thank you.

Memorable debates - at Area and Area Committee meetings, but mainly at the General Service Conference. Should punctuation in Dr. Bob's story be changed in the fourth edition (that took two years and a floor motion to be decided as 'no'). Selling Grapevine subscriptions on non-AA websites (we ought not). Should the Area Archives chair be appointed or elected?

Most fun - giving a Delegate's report in an open air pavilion in the middle of the St. Lawrence River (Barnhart Island). It's my vote for the best Service Day venue, ever.

Some lessons learned Alcoholics Anonymous is alive and well. Period. We stumble and have pretentious discussions, but at the end of each day, God helps us make right decisions. On any given day, all I am asked to do by A.A. is my best; to try.

I thank you for the opportunity to have served Area 83, and through you, AA as a whole. My life has been immeasurably enriched and I am grateful for all the lessons I have learned.

Roy R

Bob C, Earl C. & I sobered up around the same time. Bob C, February 26, 1978 and myself December 26, 1977. I have forgotten what Earl's dry date was, but I know it was just before me, because I called Earl when I had had enough. Bob was a member in Omeme and Earl and I were members in the Lockview Group in Lindsay. We travelled to a lot of meetings together and it was mentioned that it would be nice to have a meeting in Little Britain or Oakwood. We looked into places to have it and came up with the hall in Oakwood. Since there were two from Little Britain and one from Oakwood, hence the name was Little Oak.

We went through the proper procedure though New York to apply for a meeting. Our first meeting was in August 26, 1979. Tuesday nights were decided on because there were no meetings Tuesday in the area.

The first was held in the kitchen of the hall with approximately 15 people. For the first few years we had to carry the water to the hall because the water there was not drinkable. We had 2 members join the group the first night. Marg H & Harvey K. We did a lot of travelling to other groups then and our meeting started to grow.

It wasn't very long and we moved into the main hall, it was nothing to have over 100 people to medallions.

The 12 Traditions were our guidelines, and thankfully, they still are. A group is only as good as its members and I believe that it is still the best group in A.A. I was told early that if you don't believe that you belong to the best group, then you probably don't. I know when I was Sec. Treasurer that our membership was close to 100, with about 30 active. I am not sure what it maybe today as I had that position for about 10 years. I know in the summer time that our attendance is bigger because of the cottagers up this way. The winter attendance is down a little because some of the snowbirds head south. I know that The Little Oak Group of Alcoholics Anonymous has saved and changed a lot of lives in this area and is just another spoke in the big wheel of A.A. Our primary purpose is still the same, to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. Earl passed away sober and Bob C. is still a member around Woodstock.

Pete W

Upcoming Events

Annual Archives Breakfast.
November 7, 2010. 9-12.
St. Catharine's. 1036 Lakeshore Road E.,
Mississauga. Tickets \$25

Annual Hamilton & District Archives
Breakfast. Sunday April 18, 2010. Carmen's
Banquet Centre (1520 Stonechurch Rd East,).
For more information call
(905) 662-4096.

6th Annual Area 83 Archives Workshop
Kingston, April. 2011 –more info to follow

The 15th Annual
AA National Archives Workshop,
Montana
September 2011

A message from the Archive Chair

The end of Panel 59 approaches and so also does my service as your Archives Chair. As with my previous positions in A.A. service, I have learned a lot about the subject and met wonderful and dedicated people beside whom I have served.

In January Cathy U. succeeded Máire O'B. as our Area Archivist. Cathy's enthusiasm, experience, and willingness to ask for help have continued the spread the word of not only how to archive our history but why we need to do so. She organized and presented at the 5th Annual Area 83 Archives Workshop, held in Peterborough in April.

Our efforts to preserve our Area 83 A.A. history continue on many fronts. In addition to the existing Intergroup archives in Toronto, Peterborough, and Ottawa, we have many active District Archives Chairpersons who are recording interviews with long-timers as well as collecting items of local historical significance.

Our continuing tasks at the Area Archives committee are to encourage this work at the districts and intergroups, to provide technical advice and instruction in collection and preservation activities, and to work toward a unified database of items contained in the various archives within Area 83.

As in other areas of my sobriety, I am re-finding that sustained effort is required to apply the knowledge gained at Assemblies, workshops, and other special events. Small accomplishments add up to major progress if continued over time. We are on that "road

From the Archivist

The National Archives Workshop held in Macon, GA was a 3 day event honoring 75 years of the AA story. Lots of enthusiasm and learning was in store for the weekend. Thursday evening started off with a great talk entitled "Over 60 Years of Living History" Mel B. filled the room with energy as he shared his experience, strength and hope, what a rare gem to be swooped back in time with this gentlemen. Friday offered Conservation and Preservation with Leader David C. WA and his team. This was a full day of hands on workshops including encapsulation, deacidification, paper preservation covering the basics of removing staples and tape to repairing and reconnecting torn and dislodged pages... What a great time of hands on learning, we are truly blessed with the care given by this Preservation and Conservation team. Another highlight was an informative talk on 75 years of AA History given by Michelle the GSO Archivist. Not to mention the final panel, "The Old-Timers" with Mel B. OH; Bill B. SC: and Bill R. GA. Such gratitude and love. Saturday brought its own special flare with a panel on researching, interviewing and writing history. A surprise tour of the newly created Georgia Archives Repository was a real treat. This repository is located within the Georgia Area office, well organized and stocked with GSO literature and books; it also offers a luxurious oversized meeting room. The walls boasted several archival memorabilia and District displays, an added bonus was the honor to see a picture of our own Canadian Lenard Blumenthal, past Class A Trustee and Chairman of AA General Service Board proudly hung on the wall. After a wonderful evening of Blue Grass entertainment, a Georgia meal of grits, hush puppies and greens we retired back to the hotel for a private showing of the Hallmark Film When love is not Enough: The Lois Wilson Story with

remarks by author / screenwriter Bill B.

Bill was also author / screenwriter for the Bill Wilson Story.

Sunday was a time of business and after three well presented bids were made, the final results lead us to Montana for the 15th NAAAW and North Florida for the 16th NAAAW. It was certainly an honor and experience to represent our Area 83 Eastern Ontario International as Archivist. With Gratitude I remain, Cathy U.

