



# The Eighty - Three

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## Area 83 Archives Newsletter

### AREA 83 ARCHIVES April 2024

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History of Area 83 Districts

When we first started in Service with the election of our first delegate to the General Service Conference in 1951, Adam C was elected at the ORC in March of 1951.

At the time, we had 4 Areas/Districts in Ontario (Haileybury, Owen Sound, Port Hope and Toronto ). No mention of Ottawa until later. The letterhead for the ORC read: New York State, Province of Ontario, Northern Pennsylvania—a very loose knit organization and Ontario was one area for all Ontario.

Districts were called areas and the District Committee Member was known as an Area Committee Member.

Starting in 1955 we had 8 districts: Central East Ontario, Central North Ontario, Hamilton and District, Niagara Peninsula, Northern Ontario, Ottawa and District, Toronto and District, and Western Ontario.

A second delegate and Ontario split into East and West Ontario and we had eight districts in East: Central East, Quinte, Ottawa, St Lawrence US, Upper Ottawa Valley, Toronto West, Toronto South Central and Kawartha were not yet formed.

Under the first committee with Ontario General Service Committee Toronto and Ottawa were the only two regional districts. We also had the first eight in the mix.

In 1976 the delegate returned from the General Service Conference with the suggestion that districts with over 20 groups consider re-organizing into multiple districts. The Alternate Delegate agreed and tried to force the current districts to re-organize but ran into opposition from the District Committee Members who said they could not be told what to do in their Districts!

Eventually by 1980 all of the original districts agreed to re-district and we changed 10 districts into 19 and then 22 by the end of this process.

At the same time, Tom H, our new Alternate Delegate was asked to develop a new naming convention to allow for expansion and he developed a 2-digit system which was accepted by the next General Service Conference and is in place in all of North America today!

Re-organization of Ottawa involved “Discussions” from 1976—1980 when it finally agreed to division into 4 districts: Ottawa Rideau, Ottawa Bytown, Ottawa West and Golden Triangle. Bob E who was to become delegate in 1985 helped co-ordinate the re-organization of the Ottawa Districts into the four new ones and they exist to this day.

**History of the Golden Triangle District 66**

In 1949 Arnold from Carleton Place caught a train in Almonte to attend an AA meeting at the “West End Group” in Ottawa , this was his first meeting. In 1950-51 Arnold met with Joe P who was a few years sober at the time. They started up a group in the old Almonte High School in Almonte, however the group did not last.

Bill V also came to AA in 1951 but didn’t stay. He came back to AA in October 29, 1952, he and his wife tragically died in a car accident October 28, 2022, one day short of his 50th anniversary date.

The “Mississippi Group” in Carleton Place was the very first group established and registered at GSO in New York on September 21, 1953, and meetings have been held there continually for over 71 years.

In 1980 the Ottawa District was re-districted into 5 suggested Districts. Subsequently from this the Golden Triangle District was designated as its own District in 1980. It is also important to note that while discussing AA business at that time in his basement rec-room one of our long time members of the Mississippi Group

of 1980 and we became the "Golden Triangle District" by a vote of 5 out of 9. There were originally 14 groups when the Golden Triangle District was formed and now today we have a total of 27 Groups. Over the years the Golden Triangle's District boundaries have changed with a number of the original groups being transferred in to other Districts, and also we have had other District's Groups transferred into our District.

## Area 83—Scarborough District 22 History

As the end of 1978 Toronto East split to form two districts—Toronto City East and Toronto Suburban East.

Redistricting was headed by an area committee by Rolly P the delegate for the area. Not all groups supported the redistricting.

The split would officially take place January 1st 1979, Pat O'B who was the alternate District Committee Member (DCM) for Toronto East was elected by the General Service Representatives of the new district. Toronto Suburban East as DCM Murray D was elected as the alternate DCM and John N was elected as Secretary.

In late 1980, a decision was made to request GSO to change the name to Scarborough District 22. The request was made and approval was received and approval was received effective January, 1981. The District is now known as Scarborough District 22.

The District 22 boundaries are as follows:

From Lake Ontario North along Woodbine Avenue to O'Connor Drive; along O'Connor to Eglinton East; East Along Eglinton to Kennedy Road; North along Kennedy Road to Steeles Avenue; East along Steeles to Pickering. The Eastern boundary is Pickering; the Northern boundary is Steeles Avenue; the Southern boundary is Lake Ontario; and the Western boundary is Woodbine/O'Connor/Eglinton/Kennedy

During the District's history, the meeting location has changed as follows:

### Location

West Hill—Highland Creek Lions Club Bldg .....Jan 79 to 1984  
4285 Lawrence Ave E, Scarborough

St George's Anglican Church..... +/- 1984 to June 1992  
5765 St Clair Ave E at Brimley  
Scarborough

St Maria Goretti Church.....July 1992 to June 2006  
717 Kennedy Road, Scarborough

Mid Scarborough Community Centre .....July 2006 to Nov 2007  
Don Montgomery Community Recreation Centre Dec 2007-2016  
2467 Eglinton Ave East  
Scarborough

## Area 83 - Lakeshore East and West

During the transition to the new Districts in the Lakeshore Area (Pickering, Whitby, Ajax and Oshawa) split into Lakeshore East and Lakeshore West. Initially these two districts were allowed to attend the Area Assemblies during their initial establishment of the new districts and vote as Co-DCMs of the two districts. Today these districts are known as Districts 26 and 28. This region (Durham) has also an established Intergroup which services this region on a part-time basis but is also able to have a website to display service related events and meeting lists. They have also been able to support a local conference which moves around the local areas.

## Area 83—Districts 30, 34, and 36

Initially the Quinte Area had Quinte East and Quinte West which also included Kingston with all of its Penal Institutions and has the largest collection of Penal Institutions in Canada. In 1993 a split was made to create district 36 to comprise Kingston and its area into a separate district.

Early on in Area 83 the problem was always how to supply volunteers to put on meetings in our Institutions including two maximum security installations in Kingston and the newer Millhaven Institution.

During the time of the Ontario General Service Committee one Coordinator was appointed to look after all institutions in Eastern Ontario. The funding for these institutions was coordinated by the Ontario General Service Committee but eventually the districts wished to take over these facilities which were primarily in the Eastern Area. Eventually it was decided to disband the Ontario General Service/Ontario Provincial Committee and these were absorbed into the Area 83 Committee and funded by the Districts within Area 83. Support for the Institutions in Kingston came from the Quinte Area and Ottawa districts who would travel to Kingston to put on meetings inside these Institutions.

Today District 36 exists to manage the groups and institutions in Kingston and area and is the location of the Area 83 Assemblies currently at St Lawrence College in Kingston held twice a year.

The current Archives Chair is exploring ways of documenting the history of AA in Kingston and is willing to accept any information from members relating to the start of AA in Kingston and the surrounding municipalities.

## Area 83—Districts 38 and 66

For many years our American cousins attended Area 83 Assemblies and Committee meetings on a regular basis. However, issues started happening when members of AA had other issues and could not travel across the border to attend meetings. Initially Districts 46 and 42 would meet regularly and have conferences with the Brockville and Prescott

Groups. This was not only a problem for the US members but also Canadians. Those of us with impaired driving convictions or drug offences could not get a passport unless we obtained a pardon. In 2005 district 38 separated from Area 83 as it could not provide enough members with passports to attend meetings. In 2009 District 46 also separated from Area 83 and joined an American Area. However, District 42 has remained part of our Area and regularly supports our Area financially and still attends our Assemblies. Some of the members from the current Districts 66 and 48 still participate with Service Days with District 42 as well as helping to provide meetings in Ogdensburg.

### Area 83—District 48—Kempville and Southern Ontario

In 1991 the groups around Kempville and area established District 48 and the first District Committee Member was David G. David had already been involved in the Area as a Public Information Chair in 1983-84. David has been a member in Ottawa and became involved with the local AA Groups around North Gower and Osgoode when he moved out to North Gower.

District 48 is an active District but sometimes has difficulty finding members willing to step up and volunteer to join the local district committee but it is still active in both local communities and Area 83.

It was from District 48 and area that I was able to recruit some volunteers for the meetings in Ogdensburg when District 42 was struggling to find members to put on meetings in the Ogdensburg Penal Institutions. Besides the proper legal screenings, members also had to be willing to traverse the border on a regular basis.

I was also able to come from Ottawa on a bi-weekly basis to put on the meeting for the incarcerated clients. I was escorted out very quickly during an escape at Dannemora in 2015 which also shows how valued volunteers are for the penal institutions where we put on

Meetings.

### Area 83 in the Ottawa Valley

The first meeting in Ottawa was in 1945 when two united ministers organized a meeting with some local alcoholics. They were also supported by visitors from Toronto who helped them get on track and introduced them to saying the Lords Prayer at the end of their meetings.

Ottawa was initially one large district but in 1976 when re-districting was suggested for the larger groups. The "Discussions" carried on for 4 years with much arguing back and forth but eventually the GSRs agreed to split into 4 districts locally—Ottawa Rideau, Ottawa Bytown, Ottawa West, and Golden Triangle.

As a member at the time I attended some of these meetings and can attest to some of the "discussions" but cooler heads eventually prevailed when Bob E joined the discussions and helped the District change from one large district into 4 smaller ones.

These districts are still members of the Area today and have contributed many committee members and two delegates from the surrounding area.

### Area 83—Upper Ottawa Valley

Originally the Upper Ottawa Valley was one District which split into three districts—District 70, 74 and 78.

Some of these new districts were small but have grown and provide services to the whole of the Upper Ottawa Valley and contributed people and finances to the Area 83 Committees. The communities of Pembroke/Petawawa, Douglas, Bancroft, Renfrew, Arnprior and the Madawaska Valley.

There are many conferences and roundups put on by these Districts and many long-term sobriety members as well as younger members. In particular, members from the military base at Petawawa often are called to serve their country as well as the United Nations as peacekeepers in many foreign lands and have done so as loners on their peacekeeping missions and sometimes are able to start groups while away.

I got sober when I was 17 and within my first year I had started participating in general service. I started doing service because I was told to. My sponsor was starting a new group and I saw a pamphlet that mentioned something about a GSR being the most important person. I asked what that was and my sponsor directed me to the next district meeting where I could find out. So my service journey started in District 62.

That first district table I attended was a bunch of old big men, they were loud and pounding their fists on the table. Everyone was involved in the conversation, and I didn't have a clue what was going on, but I felt at home. That was what I grew up with, loud big men pounding on tables. I continued to attend even though I had no idea what was going on.

Shortly after that Dave G. who belonged to the Share and Care Group that met at the Bayshore hotel told me "I'm picking you up on Friday and we are going away for the weekend". That's when I landed at my first area assembly. I sat there not having a clue what was going on, but I saw all those people sitting up at the podium and they seemed to know "stuff". I had to ask "How do they know this stuff?" I was told, they just keep coming around. It was at that time I decided that I was going to stick around because I don't like not knowing, I'm too nosy. That was essentially why I stayed in service. At that assembly we were putting our nomination in for the trustee at large and all I could picture was "only the shadow knows", and I thought, I'm going to be a trustee at large. I also decided I would make my own sweater with the "only the shadow knows" shadow saying "trustee at large" on it. That's what kept me in service. Because I wanted to know, and I didn't like not knowing what other people seemed to just know.

Area 83 seemed busy when I first started coming around. There was a lot going on. It was good because I was young, hyper and energetic so I could be everywhere and gleaming as much as I could. I was surrounded with service people like Tommy H, Don S, Barb S, Joe D. There was always conversations on growth and encouragement happening even when you don't know it's happening. Around 15 years passed and by the time I got through different groups and different positions at district and became a District Committee Member for District 48. My service sponsor then told me if I wanted to move in service, I was to allow my name to stand for everything, not just the position I thought I wanted. As foolish as I felt I did what I was told and stood for delegate right out of the gate. "I'm standing because my service sponsor told me I needed to stand for every position, I'm not qualified, don't vote for me." These are the words that came out when I gave my resume at the Assembly. For my first 5 years in AA I didn't do anything that I was told to do, once that stopped working for me, I started listening to what people said. At the time I thought I would like to be grapevine chair, that didn't happen as I was I ended up becoming the area secretary. I then went through the rest of the area officer positions.

I got to help co-ordinate and sit in on a delegate's luncheon at the international conference in Toronto. I was the Area Chair at the time. That was very interesting, and I haven't been to an international conference since.

As an Alternate Delegate we were able to clarify for the area operating procedures that the Alternate Delegate would be responsible for remote communities so that it wouldn't continue to get lost in the shuffle. Tommy H inspired me to get interested in remote communities along with Boyd S who

was I think the Delegate or a past delegate from out east.

I became Panel 59 Delegate 2009 at the age of 42. The only way I can describe the feeling of those first few months was - Terrifying. Everything I thought I knew seemed to vanish for that first little bit until I started meeting people and really getting into the position. I was able to attend a lot of remote communities' events for area 83 during my term as Delegate. I got to go to remote communities committee meeting in Winnipeg in February. Strangers pick you up, technology wasn't a thing then, so you don't know what people look like when they came to pick you up. You just trusted that someone would be there.

Getting ready to go to my first conference I was once again terrified, people seemed to know what they were doing, and I felt so lost. Once the conference got started and I got in my committee I started to meet people and get settled in. The First conference I attended felt like a bad experience and I wanted to quit and never go back. It felt like there was a conflict with personalities. I had to listen like I had no opinion. I remember calling my sponsor saying I wanted to leave. I remember her saying if everyone that got frustrated with the way that things are and just left then who'd left to get it back on track. I had to practise keeping quiet. I realised it doesn't matter where you are in AA people still bring their personalities with them and I can't have expectations of how I think people in AA will act. This situation had the biggest impact on my sobriety and for my growth in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Since I came to AA almost everything seems to have changed. Change is good and we have been forced to change since covid. It feels like the fellowship is lacking because of people not going to meetings because they can go online instead. Membership and participation in the home groups is dwindling. Some of our biggest changes are mostly technology. One thing that doesn't happen as often these days is people show up, but they don't participate/contribute. When I can show up and take part or contribute it makes me feel more involved and like I am a part of. I went my first Alkathon in my first few years of recovery, all I could afford to contribute was a jar of pickles. But it made me feel like I was a part of, and I belonged.

Service is still important to me, one day I still look forward to the opportunity to be able to stand for a trustee position, but not until I would be able to fully commit to the time allowance required. When you get into service you will be amazed at how your bubble grows. From the group level to the district level, every step you take through your service journey your bubble grows larger. With the more people you meet and the more knowledge you have your bubble continues to grow until it's a worldwide thing. The thought of how we went from 2 drunks to what it is now still gives me goosebumps it amazes me that this is where we are.

If you are just getting into service, my advice would be. Shut up, listen and then ask questions. Talk about the emotions that come up when you are doing service. If I felt like my knees were being pulled out from under me and I felt like I wanted to quit, I was told if you don't want people like that in service then people like you need to stay in service. When you are upset about something or have a question talk to your service sponsor and most importantly, do it afraid!

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Sandy S Panel 59 Past Delegate