

# KAWARTHA DISTRICT A.A. HISTORY

“Coincidence is God’s way of remaining anonymous.”  
Albert Einstein

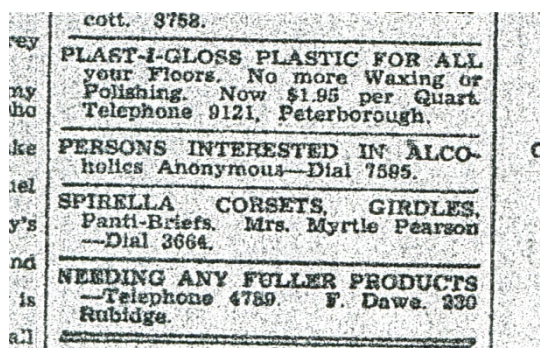
## From 1170 Yonge St. to Peterborough

In 1947, Norm G. of Peterborough attended A.A. meetings at 1170 Yonge St. in Toronto. (An unused RBC building was rented to accommodate the expanded membership of the first A.A. group in Toronto.) By coincidence, Norm G. met Bill H. of Port Hope and Neil M. from Grafton at these meetings. Bill H. and Neil M. decided to put a classified advertisement in the Port Hope and Cobourg Newspapers. One man from the Trenton Airbase answered the ad. There followed a meeting in Port Hope of three people: Bill H., Neil M. and the newcomer.

Soon after that, Norm G. was doing a flooring job in Port Hope so he called on Bill H. After an animated discussion, they decided to put an ad in the Peterborough Examiner. Norm G. invited Neil M. and Bill H. to bring their wives and come to Norm’s home in Peterborough to meet his wife, Bernice, to socialize and to make plans. The wives must have been a little dubious, having experienced other wild and wonderful schemes by their husbands while they were drinking. Norm’s wife would not allow Norm to use their home phone number as a contact number in the Peterborough Examiner ad. Based on Norm’s many

previous fine promises and subsequent poor performances, Bernice felt that she just couldn’t trust him.

Fortunately, Norm G. worked for a Mrs. Mason who allowed Norm to use her phone number. She took the incoming phone calls in response to the newspaper ad. Mrs. Mason acted as a telephone answering service; she wrote down the names and phone numbers and had Norm call them back later at the end of the workday. A.A. has always been indebted to “Third Party” assistance. The list of new recruits with a drinking problem grew.



This ad appeared in Peterborough Examiner on April 1st & 3rd, 1948.  
"PERSONS INTERESTED IN ALCO-holics Anonymous - Dial 7595."

## Lift Lock Group

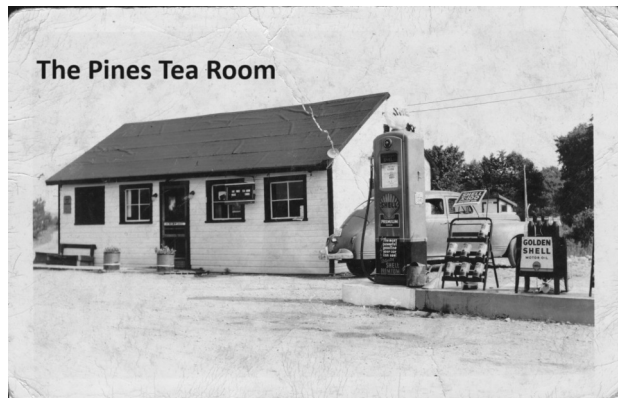
At some point they decided to establish an A.A. group in Peterborough, the first A.A. group between Toronto and Ottawa. This first meeting of the Lift Lock group was held at the residence of Mike T. in April of 1948. Membership quickly grew and, over the first year of existence, included the following; Mike T., Neil M. of Grafton, who was the uncle of Mike T.'s wife, Bill H. of Port Hope, Norm G., George H., Norm S. and his brother Harold S., Jim M. of Keene, Gord H., Percy T. of Coe Hill, Hazel F., Harry A. of Havelock, Pat H., Perce C. of Trenton, Mike R., Jim W., Reg C. of Lakefield, Red 'Gyp' F., Lou L., Russ M. and Mike M.

The early members of the Lift Lock group came from every walk of life: a saw shop owner, a Bakery owner, a confectioner, a labourer, a clergyman, a mayor, a taxi cab owner-operator, a barbershop owner, a dentist from the nearby town of Lakefield, an undertaker, a salesman, a floor sander, a roofing contractor, a bartender, a launderer, and two barbers.

They met first in the homes of some of the members, such as at George H.'s restaurant. Called the Pines Tea

Room, it was located on Highway #7 just east of Peterborough. It was a restaurant associated with a Shell gas station. George H. also built and rented cabins for the growing tourist business. The old white frame home still exists sitting back in the field. But the Shell Gas Station, the Pines Tea Room, and the tourist cabins are all gone. They formerly existed just beyond the junction of Highway #134 and the Keene Road. On the wall behind the counter in the restaurant,

Jim H., the son of George H. as a youngster vividly remembers seeing his father place some A.A. slogans on the wall, where they permanently stayed. George H. was a strong promoter of tourism



in the Kawartha Lakes region and in particular of the famous Lift Lock. One alcoholic brought his trailer and parked it in the field behind The Pines Tea Room. In a moment of fond reminiscence, the son Jim H. recently laughed and remarked, "Why, we didn't even need a guard dog. Early one morning I went into the Pines Tea Room and a newly recovering alcoholic crawled out from under the counter where he had been sleeping." George H. was one of the early A.A. members in Peterborough who got a One-Year Medallion from the newly formed Lift Lock group. His son Jim H.

still has in his possession this unique archival piece of early family and A.A. history. On special occasions, like a recent Lift Lock group Anniversary, Jim H. shows the medallion with great pride, talks proudly about his father, George H., the formation of the Lift Lock Group, and the early history of A.A. in the good old days.

Some meetings were held in Keene at the home of Jim M. and at the Keene Town Hall. Jim M. came to A.A. by answering an ad in the Peterborough Examiner in early April, 1948. George H. made the twelfth step call and another member, possibly Norm G., came with him. At the time Jim M. was isolated to the west side of the house where they lived. That house is still there on the SW corner of the main intersection in Keene and is basically divided into two residences. It was known as the Victoria House at one time. (A previous house that they had lived at in Keene has been relocated to the nearby Lang Pioneer Village. At one time it was the Keene Hotel.)

While Jim M. was recovering, many supportive A.A. members called upon him in the isolated part of the house. His mother, who was visiting at the time, noticed all these comings and goings. She said to Thressa M., probably in a tone of disgust, "What is going on now? Is Jim bootlegging?"

Later, he and his wife, Thressa, took a trip to Akron, Ohio. They were very impressed with the work of Dr. Bob

and Sister Ignatia at St. Thomas Hospital. Since 1940, Dr. Bob and the diminutive, but saintly, Sister Ignatia had ministered to thousands of recovering alcoholics. Together they had also indoctrinated all who would listen to the A.A. approach as portrayed by the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, recently off the press.

When Jim M. returned from Akron, he had a fervent desire to do service work. He set aside the second half of the house, where he had once recovered himself, to be used to help new recovering alcoholics. In 1950 there were no alcoholic rehabilitation centers, and no recovery programs such as we see today. A big part of the recovery program and the hope for continued sobriety depended on carrying the message to other recovering alcoholics and doing service work.

They were very impressed with the work of Dr. Bob and Sister Ignatia ...

Jim tried to start an A.A. group in Keene. It was registered with the Toronto Central Office as the Rice Lake Group in 1950. They sent him a letter of encouragement on Dec. 4, 1950, congratulating Jim M. on the formation of the new Rice Lake Group. They also advised Jim that Neil M. of Grafton could be relied upon to help him get started. Jim wrote to GSO in New York and sent money on several occasions. The 1958 & '59 Ontario A.A. Directories list the Rice Lake

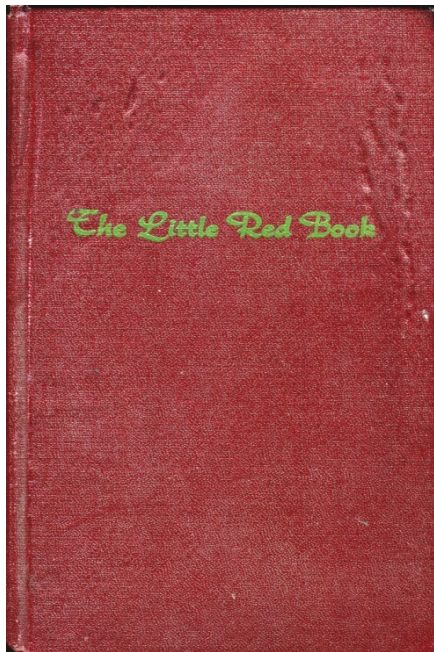
Group with phone number and states "Meetings whenever anyone calls." Keene was too small and 'pride' kept new members from joining. Both Ontario Central Office in Toronto and GSO in New York eventually listed Jim M. as a 'Lone Member'. He was furnished with the names of other solitary members in other isolated geographical areas. A lively correspondence took place between Jim M. and other "Loner" Members" in Ontario, New Brunswick, Florida, Akron and Cleveland Ohio, Minnesota, and as far away as California. He got regular letters and Christmas cards from his new A.A. distant friends. The Spring, 1967, World Directory listed the Rice Lake group as having 4 members and meeting on Saturdays with Jim M. and Robert M. as contacts.

By Aug., 1948, Norm G. found a more permanent meeting place at the Dixon House where they stayed for more than eight years. Norm G. registered the new group with GSO as follows: "Peterborough Lift Lock group.' The group is four months old and has a membership of eighteen. Our meetings are held Tuesday and Saturday evenings in the 'Dixon House' and our chairman is Gord H." Norm's wife, Bernice, had a women's apparel shop on George St. a few doors north of the corner of Brock St. on the west side. She sold women's fashionable apparel, lingerie, girdles, and hats that were much in fashion at that time. Bernice had a presence that was described as 'elegant' by people who

knew her. There is an arresting photograph of Norm G. wearing a dark grey pinstriped three-piece suit. On his head is a fancy wide brimmed fedora. Girdles and wide brimmed fedoras are no longer in fashion; clothing fashions do change. However, what does not change are the spiritual principles which animated the early growth and success of Alcoholics Anonymous. Norm G. and a few early members were enacting here in the Kawarthas exactly the same sort of spiritual principles that had recently been discovered and put into practice on a larger stage by Bill W. in New York City, and by Dr. Bob S. in Akron, Ohio.

"... what does not change are the spiritual principles ..."

On occasion, A.A. members from Toronto came to Peterborough to speak at meetings or to show the new members how to run a meeting. When the Lift Lock Group was six months old, they decided to advertise in the Peterborough Examiner and put on a Public Information Meeting. One member recalled one such meeting held at Peterborough Collegiate scheduled for noon and evening on October 17, 1948. At the beginning, literature was scarce. A member recollected that the Group had copies of the Big Book, the Little Red Book, which was a breakdown of the Twelve Steps and "Birds of a Feather" pamphlet.



**The Little Red Book** was first published in 1946 and was originally called **The Twelve Steps**. An early first edition book was signed by Dr. Bob. A further interpretation of the 12 steps was in demand and it became very successful.

Shown here is a book from the 24th printing in 1970. It was a supplement to the Big Book for many early A.A. groups, including those in the Kawarthas.

### *Birds of a Feather - -*

We too did some good social drinking. Then the day arrived when liquor was no longer a social lubricant but an absolute necessity. We who were then possessed with shakes, cold sweats and jitters flocked together and did a fine job of drying up.

### *Just What Is Alcoholics Anonymous?*

It is a non-sectarian group of men and women who had an honest desire to break away from habitual drinking, and who joined together in fellowship, secured a charter from the Alcoholic Foundation in New York City (known nationally as Alcoholics Anonymous with a membership of over 300,000 men and women in all walks of life).

Membership in the AA is open to any true alcoholic who will just take one simple first step—a definite and wholehearted decision to try to stop drinking!

#### *Thousands of Others Have Made the Grade—and So Can You!*

No, your reasons and excuses for continual drinking are not one bit different from any of the thousand and one "explanations" each one of our present members made before they came into the AA. They too tried "everything"—doctors, churches and cures. Then they found themselves, through ex-drinkers who just naturally know all the answers.

AA, as we call our work, provides a simple but sound program that anyone can follow through, if he or she really wants to. Yes, it's as simple as all that! For each one of us has been through the mill. Some had been drinking for only a few years, others for as long as thirty years. And yet we made the grade, and so can you.

#### *Your Willingness to Cooperate Is All That Is Needed*

Here in fellowship with other AA's you will find complete, perfect understanding. We talk your language. There are no "period" pledges, no commitments and no promises, except those that you make to yourself. Membership with us, however, offers you a new lease on life that will help restore you to normalcy and to your normal place in life.

We know what you have been through, and are going through right now. We know how you have tried time and again to stop. How your friends and relatives have tried to help, but their efforts too have failed. But here we understand your problems, for we have found their solutions in AA.

So, if you really want to quit—if you can be honest with yourself, that's all you need to start with. Furthermore, if you are like the rest of us (at least as we were before we understood the principles of the work) just read the next two pages carefully and then THINK!

We have no one to  
guide . . . only a  
common objective!

**The Birds of a Feather** pamphlet was part of early A.A. Beginner's packages. It stressed the medical view of alcoholism at that time. Pamphlets used in the Kawarthas included 35 "musts" written by Dr. Robert Seliger who, at the time, was a faculty member in the Department of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins Hospital. He also developed the **Twenty Questions: Are You An Alcoholic?** They were intended for use as a self-assessment questionnaire to determine the extent of one's alcohol use and not intended for use by professionals.

Norm G. and Mike T. were invited by Dr. Gordon Bell to speak at A.A. meetings at his Addictions Clinic in Toronto, likely at Shadow Brook that opened and operated between 1947-1954. The Donwood Institute, located at 175 Brentcliffe Road, Toronto, Ontario, opened in March, 1967 at the instigation of Dr. R. Gordon Bell. Beginning two decades earlier in 1946 when he opened his first clinic in his own home, Dr. Bell had sought to provide an alternative setting for people in need of mental health services. Bell approached the Minister of Health who suggested he take advantage of an old statute that allowed doctors to take up to four patients into their own homes for treatment without a hospital license. His first clinic, Glenmaple, was open briefly in 1946-47. His only patients, much to his surprise, were alcoholics. Mary Epp answered Dr. Bell's ad for a nurse. She was at Glenmaple when the first patient was admitted and she stayed for the next 29 years. It soon became necessary to move to larger facilities. Thus Shadow Brook, Bell's second clinic, was open from 1947 to 1954. His third treatment facility, the Bell Clinic, admitted patients from 1954 to 1966.

Ads appearing in the Examiner during Oct. and Nov. of 1948 indicate the group was meeting at the Dixon House on Tuesdays and Saturdays. A March 4, 1949 ad indicated the Lift Lock group was meeting twice per week at the Dixon House, on Tuesdays and

Fridays.

The First Anniversary of the Lift Lock group was celebrated at PCVS on March 27, 1949. Within the first year and a half, eight members of the new Lift Lock Group of Alcoholics Anonymous were presented with a one-year medallion, including George H., Gord H. and Jim M., who received the 8th one year medallion awarded by the Lift Lock group.

Jim R. recalls that in the early days it would not be unusual to go to a meeting at 8:30 pm and leave at 10:30 pm. One speaker, he recollects, spoke until almost midnight with not one member leaving the meeting hall. In his closing remarks, this lengthy speaker noted, "I know I spoke quite long, but I don't have a watch." Clair G. immediately quipped, "Well, there's a calendar hanging on the wall!"

" ... there's a calendar hanging on the wall!"

11—Coming Events

ATTENTION! LEGIONNAIRES — A zone meeting will be held in the Peterborough Legion on Sunday, October 17 to elect a new zone commander. Meeting to start at 2 p.m.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS HOLD their regular meetings Tuesday's and Saturday's 8:30 p.m. sharp, at Dixon House, Park St. N. For information, Post Office Box 850.

BAZAAR AND BAKING SALE UN-

Telephone 7431 — Residence 4978

11—Coming Events

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS HOLD their regular meetings Tuesdays and Fridays, 8:30 p.m. sharp, at Dixon House, Park Street North. For information, Post Office Box 850.

BRIDGE PARTY, 8 P.M., MARCH 7, Recreation room YWCA, Sponsored by Peterborough Business and Pro-

This ad appeared in the Examiner during Oct. & Nov. of 1948.

"ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS HOLD their regular meetings Tuesday's and Saturday's, 8:30 p.m. sharp, at Dixon House, Park St. N. For information, Post Office Box 850."

This March 4, 1949 ad indicates the Lift Lock group was meeting twice per week at the Dixon House, on Tuesdays and Fridays.

"ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS HOLD their regular meetings Tuesdays and Fridays, 8:30 sharp at Dixon House, Park Street North. For information, Post Office Box 850."



The Lift Lock Group celebrated 75 Years on April 25, 2023.

They continue to carry the message at the A.A. Intergroup Office at 625 Cameron St. in Peterborough at 7:00 pm Tuesdays. It is an Open Speaker meeting.

## The Dixon House



The Dixon House, 661 Park St. N., as it appeared in 2010. It originally was the William Dixon House and was built in 1837 on an earlier 1829 foundation. The Dixons were one of the founding European families of Peterborough. It is one of the earliest surviving houses and one of only a few surviving stone houses. It has been stuccoed on 3 sides. The Dixon House was home to A.A. in Peterborough from mid-1948 until early 1957. The Lift Lock Group met there.

The Dixon House played an important role in early local history. During the Second World War the Canadian Government bought the Dixon House. Being near the CNR railway line that ran northwest out of Peterborough along Jackson's Creek, the house had its own telegraph line. During the war, the Canadian Government needed to send high-priority (and very sensitive) information about equipment production and transportation for the war effort. Dixon House turned into a "clearing house" for classified messages. A special telegraph key that had a signal scrambler was installed. These secret messages could only be decoded by another special key in another "clearing house" in Ottawa, Toronto, etc. The telegraph station was likely concealed in the attic; it was used for "intelligence" purposes, but probably not as a training ground for spies.

On the first floor of the Dixon House (acting as a good disguise) were the offices of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Red Cross. On the second floor were the offices of the Peterborough branch of Wartime Housing Limited – set up by the Canadian Government to provide affordable "temporary" housing for men and women working in the important wartime defense industry. Wartime Housing Limited was established in 1941 and lasted until 1946. 45,000 homes were built across Canada at a cost of \$253 million dollars. A total of 560 wartime houses were built in Peterborough (many still exist).

Once the war was over, in 1946 the production of these houses was turned over to the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation – a newly created government agency to help find housing for returning veterans and



their families. The homes were re-named Victory Houses. In 1947 Dixon House became the hub for local community and social welfare groups. There was a baby clinic in 1948, as well as Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and later weaving classes in the early 50s. In more recent years the Canadian Hearing Society was located at the Dixon House.

### Norm G.

George H. and Norm G. often traveled out of town to other meetings. Norm would show up in his new DeSoto and off they went to Toronto, Montreal, and even Akron, Ohio. Many early members, just as today, made the pilgrimage to Akron, the Birthplace of A.A.

Norman G. was the individual most responsible for A.A. coming to Peterborough. Born in 1900, he was raised and educated in Peterborough and served overseas during WW1 with the Queens Medical Corps. He spent time in Western Canada after the war but returned to Peterborough where he worked with his father in the building trade. He eventually opened his own business on George St., a flooring and paint supply store. Norm's wife, Bernice, also operated a ladies lingerie store on George St.

### "Doc" and Ada K.

One sober A.A. member, named Doc K., from Dover, Ohio, and his wife Ada had a cottage at Trent River and came each summer for their holidays. Doc wasn't actually a doctor and ran a skin therapy center in Dover, near Akron, Ohio. A.A. members from Peterborough and surrounding district, with their wives and children, all went. Jim H. fondly remembers that it was like a big happy family gathering. Ada is reported to be the originator of "The A.A. Way" supplement to the 12 Steps. Kathy K. has an original copy signed by Ada K. protected by a glass plate in a wooden frame. Once they rented a bus and took all the A.A. members and families to Minden to see the Shrine and have a summer outing.

The A.A. Way was written by Ada K. who lived in Dover, Ohio, near Akron. A nonalcoholic, she attended meetings with her husband, known as Doc. They operated a skin therapy clinic in Dover and had a cottage at Trent River. They used to host local members at picnics and, in the 1950s, they supported the Belmont group in Havelock and also supported other local groups.

## The "A. A." Way

☒ ☒ ☒

I found myself in a bottomless pit, Of sorrow of woe and despair.  
When a ray of light revealed to me, The steps of a winding stair.

In vain, I tried to reach those steps. Of myself it could not be done.  
When I cried for help, A voice replied, "You are standing on step number one".

Whose voice it was I could not tell, And I asked, "Just who are you?"  
"Please don't go away, You are helping me." He said, "You are standing on step number two".

I had found a Friend, who could help me out, I knew He could set me free.  
I trusted in Him, Whoever He was, And He led me to step number three.

I sat on this step and thought of myself, As I never had thought before.  
Of my wasted life, and the harm I had done. He showed me to step number four.

Then I said to this Friend. "Whoever you are, I would be better dead than alive,  
For I am a cheat, A liar and thief". He said, "You are standing on step number five".

"With you as a Friend, A helper and guide, I can rise from this terrible fix,  
I'll do as you say, if you'll lead the way". He said, "You are now on step number six."

"I know I am not worth the help you are giving, To me its like Manna from Heaven.  
I'll do my best to mend my ways". You are standing on step number seven."

"I harmed my wife, My children, My friends, But will amend before it's too late".  
Then the voice by my side, so gently replied. "You are standing on step number eight."

"I will make amends wherever I can, When the power to do so is mine."  
Again came the voice, more clear than before. "You are on step number nine".

"I'll admit I've been wrong, but want to go right, And stand as a man among men."  
Again came the voice of the Man of my choice. "You are now on step number ten".

This Man by my side, such a wonderful Friend, He was surely sent from Heaven.  
I shall always be thankful for what He has done, Then He led me to step number eleven.

When Lo and Behold, I had reached the top, The day was bright and fair,  
Then I thought of those, I had left behind, In that bottomless pit of despair.

The ray of Light, which came to me, And revealed the winding stair,  
Came from a torch in the hand of a Friend, I must throw my light in there.

This torch is a guide to show the way, I must see that it's always lit,  
Without this light, I can easily fall, To the depth of that bottomless pit.

I must never forget this wonderful Friend, In whose joy I now can delve.  
He is with me each day and I hear Him say, "You are now on step number twelve."

To steer ourselves clear of this bottomless pit, Where woe and sorrow are rife.  
There is one sure way, "Take it day by day, follow the A. A. way of life."

Father Charlie was an A.A. member and used to wear an old-style bathing suit at the picnics at Trent River. The more fashionable younger people, wearing skimpier bathing suits, found this very amusing. Earlier, when Father Charlie was a Parish Priest, he had been sent to Albuquerque, N.M., to a Treatment Centre to get sober.

### Other Early Groups

Several Examiner ads reveal what was going on at the Lift Lock group level. Ads in October and November, 1948, state that regular meetings were being held on Tuesdays and Saturdays at the Dixon House. A March, 1949 ad indicates the Lift Lock Group was meeting twice per week at the Dixon House, on Tuesdays and Fridays. According to Jim H., son of George H., during a business meeting following a regular Lift Lock A.A. meeting, a fight broke out between George H. and another member. Harsh words were spoken, the conflict escalated and blows were exchanged between the two men. George H. and some of his followers decided to start their own new group called the Trent Valley Group. The Monday, Nov 28, 1949 ad in the Peterborough Examiner is the earliest regarding the Trent Valley Group. This ad indicates their meeting would be on Tuesdays, the same day and time as the Lift Lock Group.

The actual Trent Valley ad states  
"Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting

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Tuesday Nov. 29 8:30 p.m. Anyone who has a drinking problem will be given a warm welcome. Trent Valley Group YMCA George St. at Murray."

This would seem to indicate some friction and competition with the Lift Lock group. Pat H.'s recorded history indicated that the Trent Valley group meetings were held Sunday nights at the YMCA, so maybe they eventually changed meeting nights. GSO listed the Trent Valley group for a couple of years, 1950-52, before it lapsed into obscurity. When the Trent Valley group stopped meeting at the YMCA, perhaps this was the time frame when some meetings were held at the Pines Tea Room. Possibly this was when George H. placed the slogans on the wall behind the counter.

The actual Trent Valley Ad states:  
"ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETING  
Tuesday, Nov. 29, 8:30 p.m.  
Anyone who has a drinking problem will be given a warm welcome.  
Trent Valley Group, YMCA, George at Murray."

Another group, the Centre group, flourished for a short time circa 1950-51. Located at 408 1/2 George St., it may have been a drop-in Centre or Club.

Harry A., a barber in Havelock, was the grandfather of Cathy K. and the father of Shirley, Cathy's mother. Shirley was about thirteen years old at the time and remembers her father being in rough shape. Reverend Vanderberg was the new minister of the Havelock United Church. Like other ministers of that era, he knew about A. A. and he felt that it was his social and religious duty to help Harry get sober. He went to Harry's home every day for three weeks to encourage and support him. After a tough struggle, Harry A. stayed sober and joined the Lift Lock Group in 1948, at a time when meetings were held at the Dixon House. His own father, also a barber, had a car and drove him to meetings.

Norm G. drove a DeSoto car and often drove around and picked up new A.A. members and took them to a meeting. Some were living in trailers behind the Pines Tea Room that was owned by George H. Harry A. became very good friends with George H. and his wife Edith. Harry knew Marguerite H. earlier when he used to live in Hastings. Pat was dating Marguerite at that time. Later, after they were married and Pat H. developed a drinking problem, Marguerite would say, "If A.A. could help Harry, it could help Pat!" Pat and Marguerite did not have a car so they used to travel by train to Havelock. Three couples: Jim and Thressa M., Harry and Isobel A. and George and Edith H. hung around together and used to attend meetings at George

H.'s place. Many years later, Edith H. attended Pat H.'s 40<sup>th</sup> medallion in Peterborough. All of them recalled how they had very good fellowship in the old days.

Harry had a bag-pipe band. Jim H. remembers Harry A. in his kilt and uniform marching up and down on the lawn at the Pines Tea Room, playing his bagpipe. Sometimes, Harry A. used to hold A.A. meetings in his own living room in Havelock. Eventually he started the Belmont Group in Havelock in 1957. Cathy K., Harry's granddaughter, remembers A.A. meetings in the Havelock Town Hall. This meeting was listed in the 1957 Ontario A.A. Directory and also the 1959 World A.A. Directory.

Harry's Doctor had prescribed Valium for the treatment of his Parkinson's disease. Harry became addicted to Valium; he eventually started drinking. Harry had over 20 years of sobriety and then went out. On one occasion, Harry was at the Holiday Inn in Dalton, Georgia in a confused state. When they were phoned, Shirley and her brother flew into Chattanooga, TN and drove Harry back home through a blinding winter storm with vehicles and transport trucks in the ditch everywhere. Harry died of a brain aneurysm in 1978 after being on a bender. Ron L. of Hastings, came to the wake to express how much Harry had helped him in his search for sobriety. Harry was a popular individual and the streets of Havelock

were lined with people when he passed by on his last journey in a hearse. This might serve as a cautionary tale for any alcoholics who are prescribed addictive drugs.

Gord H. owned a wholesale business, c/o Charlotte & Bethune. Gord always drove a nice Buick and he used to drive with some other recovering alcoholics to distant meetings, even as far as Akron, Ohio. Mike S., who was quite young at that time, was a Salesman for Gord's business.

New Year's A.A. dances were held in a hall on Water St., across from the current Bank of Montreal and also at the Stone School. Live bands were hired.

Another interesting character was T. Norman G. After he lost his job at the TD Bank due to drinking, Norm went to a tavern called the Montreal House and made it known that he was going into business as a chartered accountant: doing books for small businesses, income tax, etc. His first client gave Norm a manual typewriter and an adding machine with a hand crank right there in the Montreal House. Farmers for the first time circa 1952 were required to file income tax, so business picked up for T. Norman G. Eventually, Norm joined the Lift Lock Group. T. Norman G.'s dry date was Apr. 9, 1953. He stayed sober until he passed away on May 10, 1986.

As an accountant, T. Norman G. did the books for Norm S.'s business. Norm S. became the sponsor for T. Norman G. Norm used to hand out marbles and Get Well cards to newcomers. Marbles were presented to newcomers as early as August, 1948 at the Artesia, New Mexico group. The present day Lakefield Road to Recovery meeting still presents chips and marbles at the completion of each meeting.

When Pat H. arrived at the doors of A.A. in March of 1949, the Lift Lock group meetings were held at the Dixon House. They were still meeting at the Dixon House five years later when Pat Hogan was the first member of the group to be presented with a Five-Year Medallion. However, when Pat H. had been sober exactly eight years, in April of 1957, the Lift Lock group found a new home at the Stone School on Hunter Street.

" ... the Lift Lock group found a new home at the Stone School ... "

By this time the membership had grown, but there was only one group with meetings on Tuesday and Friday evenings at 8:30 pm.



In April of 1957, the Lift Lock group moved into the Stone School at the corner of Hunter and Rubidge St. Coincidentally, the rear entrance had 12 steps leading to the door.

### Lift Lock and Stonewall Groups

At the end of the summer, Pat H. went to the Toronto Exhibition. He stayed overnight, and in the morning he went to an A.A. meeting in Toronto at the West YMCA. This gave Pat an inspiration. When he returned to Peterborough, Pat phoned the parish priest at St. Peter's to see if they could use the Stone School on Sunday mornings. (There are twelve steps on the staircase that leads up to the meeting hall in the Stone School.) When he was granted permission, Pat went down to the Saw Shop, an informal meeting and socializing place at 264 Simcoe St. at the corner of Bethune. He talked it over with Joe H., who was there. They both agreed it

sounded like a good idea. So, on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1957, thirteen members had a trial Sunday morning meeting of what would eventually become the Stonewall Group. Pat H. said, "At this time we had decided on an extra meeting only. We weren't going to register the new group because we felt it would distract from and be in competition with the existing membership of the Lift Lock Group." But the response was so great that eventually they registered the new Stonewall group with the General Service Office in Nov., 1957. Original members were Pat H., Joe H. and Ed T. The group was originally listed with our General Service Office as a closed meeting "to all but members" but eventually switched to an open speaker format. The group name was obviously influenced by the Stone School.

Both the Lift Lock and Stonewall groups continued to meet at the Stone School until 1971 when the Lift Lock group moved to the Lions Centre, located at 194 George St. Their meetings were held on Tuesday evenings at 8:30 pm. The Stonewall group moved to the YMCA Stevenson Hall at 216 Simcoe St. at Aylmer, across from the Salvation Army Temple. They continued to meet Sunday mornings at 11:00 am at Stevenson Hall until 1974 when they also moved to the Lion's Centre on George St.

When the Canadian Tire Store needed more parking, the site of the Lions Centre became a parking lot. (The old Canadian Tire Store is now a 'No Frills' Store at 230 George St. N.) So, in 1982, the Lift Lock group moved to Sacred Heart Church at the corner of Romaine Street and Aylmer. They eventually changed their Tuesday evening meeting time to 8:00 pm. And, also in 1982, the Stonewall Group moved to the Labour Centre on Princess St.

### Lift Lock Group continued

After many years at Sacred Heart, the Lift Lock group decided to move to the A.A. Intergroup office on Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2020, meeting at 8:00 pm.

When the pandemic struck in early 2020, Intergroup announced it was closed on Sunday, March 22. The Lift Lock group started their meetings on Zoom on April 14 which continued until July, 2020, when limited in-person meetings were allowed in the Intergroup following COVID protocols. COVID variants caused Intergroup to close again in late Dec. The Lift Lock group went back on the Zoom platform until July, 2021, when in-person meetings were re-established following COVID protocols. The Lift Lock group changed their meeting time to 7:00 pm on Oct. 19, 2021.

On Tuesday, April 25, 2023, the Lift Lock group celebrated 75 years as a group. From inception until present

day, countless members suffering from alcoholism have been freed from their addiction.

The Lift Lock group currently continues to meet every Tuesday evening at 7:00 pm at the A.A. Intergroup at 625 Cameron St. From the original Lift Lock Group which started in 1948, there are now, in 2023, 20 groups in Kawartha District. As Pat's wife, Marguerite H., once commented wryly when asked why there were so many groups, she replied: "Because there were too many Chiefs and not enough Indians." Strong personalities with firm convictions resulted in splinter groups forming. One man with a sense of humour commented dryly, "All you need to start a new group is a resentment and a coffee pot."

### Stonewall Group continued

In 1986, four years later, the Stonewall group moved for a short time to St. Alphonsus Separate School, from January until March of that year. It became apparent that this place was too small. Roy F. headed a committee that found a new home for the Stonewall group at St. John's Separate School in March of 1986.

When the Separate School Board instituted a smoking ban on all school property for health and insurance reasons, a very real crisis arose. After much debate and agonizing, part of the Stonewall group broke away and formed the Freedom group. Some

members felt this might spell the end of the Stonewall group, but it did not.

After nineteen years at the same location, on July 3, 2005, the Stonewall group moved to the new St. John's School (not far away) at the corner of Park St. and Braidwood. Some meetings were held in the library, which was a little small. The Stonewall group was given permission to meet in the auditorium, especially for anniversaries.

Eventually another problem arose. A custodian had to be assigned to open and close the doors. This required the Separate School Board to pay overtime wages to the custodian. Consequently, the meeting time was changed to Thursday evenings at 7:00 pm.

In the fall of 2013, the Stonewall Group moved to Holy Cross Secondary School where they met on Thursdays at 7:00 pm.

The outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020 caused dramatic changes in how A.A. meetings were conducted with closures beginning on March 26 at Holy Cross School. Immediately, our group switched to a Zoom online meeting beginning on Apr. 2, hosted by Bruce B. Initially, some members had problems getting logged on to the Zoom meetings and some members did not like the format, but Stonewall meetings ran continuously on Zoom for

several months. Bruce B. Received his 10 year medallion online on 4 March, 2021.

As COVID conditions improved, the Stonewall group decided in Sept., 2021 to relocate their meeting to Activity Haven and they conducted a hybrid in-person and online meeting.

As the Intergroup Office on Cameron St. began to open up, Friday night became available and the Stonewall group decided to take that time slot. Our very first meeting there was on Oct. 29, 2021, and we celebrated Barrie C.'s 25 year medallion.

On Sept. 28, 2017, the Stonewall group celebrated their 60th Anniversary with a special meeting and cake. Bernie S. gave a verbal history of the group during that meeting. Sept. 30, 2022 saw the group celebrate a 65 year Anniversary with a special cake.

In addition to the early founders, early members included Harry E., Frank B., Bing D., Imelda M., Fred C., Neil C., John A., Roy F., Fred G., Bernie S., Don O., Dennis M., Brian B., Jack and Marie B., Paul R., Blanche C. and Jack G. to name only a few.

The group continues to thrive and to carry the message to the alcoholic.





### Friendly Friday Group

In January of 1961 two local members of Alcoholics Anonymous, Bill S. and Ed T., drove to Port Hope every Friday night to attend an A.A. meeting. On one of these weekly excursions, the two co-founders decided to form a new group which would meet in Peterborough on Friday nights. Appropriately, they named it the Friendly Friday group.

The first meeting was held at St. Alban's Church on the southwest corner of Monaghan Rd. and Cameron St. After only a few meetings, they relocated to the Quonset hut, the site of the present day Intergroup Office, situated on the same property. After boycotting the new meeting for a period of time, early A.A. member Pat H. showed up to see how the Friendly Friday group was doing. Reassured, Pat H. became a strong supporter of the group, and was frequently found in attendance. A GSO 'Handbook' form states that the Friendly Friday group was first listed with them on July 12,

1962. Ed T. was listed as the group contact person. The Friendly Friday group first appeared in the 1963 A.A. Directory. William S. and Ed T. are listed as group contacts. At that time there were 15 members. The Friendly Friday group was the third active group listed in Peterborough. The other two groups were the Lift Lock group and the Stonewall group, both of which met at the Stone School at the corner of Hunter and Rubidge St.

Every Friday night after the meeting, friendly fellowship continued. A.A. members got together socially at someone's house for coffee and sandwiches, lots of laughs, and sometimes card games like euchre. Some early members who participated in this manner were Jack and Norma K., Gerry and Aileen B., Jimmy and Joan R., Pat and Marguerite H., Blanche C., Hugu G., Ed and Joyce T., Bill S., Larry and Jan F., Jim and Shirley W. (Cathy K.'s parents).

The Friendly Friday group was still listed at St. Alban's Parish Hall (Quonset hut) in the 1967 Ontario Directory as an 8:30 meeting. It's possibly a typo, but the group was listed briefly as Friday Friendly at that time. Murray O. was listed as group contact person. Murray O. had 58 years of continuous sobriety when he passed away in 2008.

By 1971, the group had moved to St Andrew's United Church, 441 Rubidge St. The Ontario Directory of March, 1976, listed Beatrice S. as GSR and

Steve L. as a contact person for the Group. For many years, the Friendly Friday met at St. Andrew's United Church.

In mid-2018, the Church announced that it had a conditional offer to sell the property and that it would be decommissioned and sold. This started the process of the group finding a new meeting place. Following a group vote, the Friendly Friday group moved on Jan. 4, 2019 to a new location at the Peterborough Armoury at 220 Murray St., meeting at 8:00 pm.

The Friendly Friday speaker meeting joined the global online community of zoom in March of 2020. Two satellite, online meetings were also created, The Lunch Club step/tradition discussion meeting Monday to Friday at noon eastern time, and the Home Away From Home Group speaker/discussion meeting Saturdays at 12:30 pm.

Since this trio went online group membership has grown, especially after voting to allow people outside the district to join. This has resulted in members from Dublin, Ireland, France, North Carolina, West Virginia, Washington State, California, Mississippi and British Columbia joining new local Friendly Friday members and creating an international bond of A.A. fellowship.

Friendly Friday is now serving, not just Peterborough, but the entire global AA

community. People from around the world are now commonplace in our rooms and we are most honoured to share our experience, strength and hope with them while they do the same for us.



### Central East Area

In 1961 Pat H. was elected as a Committee Man for the Central East Area. (Central East Area would be like a District is today.) After 3 or 4 ballots, neither Pat H. of Peterborough nor Mike M. of Oshawa had a two-thirds majority. They were essentially tied. Their names were placed in a hat, and Pat's name was drawn. Pat H.'s new position was the equivalent of a DCM. Mike M. became the Alternate DCM. This original Central East Area was much larger geographically than our present day Kawartha District. There were a total of 10 groups from the following locations: Havelock (Belmont), Keene (a Lone member

listed), Peterborough (Lift Lock, Stonewall), Lindsay (Kawartha, Victoria), Whitby (Whitby), Oshawa (Central, Friendship), Bowmanville (Bowmanville) and Port Hope (Hope).

At the first meeting in 1961 with all the GSR's present from all the groups in Central East Area, several motions were voted upon. It was decided that they had depended too long upon Toronto for guidance and speakers. Although they were grateful to Toronto for all its help in the formative years, Central East Area felt it was now time to stand on their own two feet. They also felt Toronto had many groups of its own to look after.

An Institutional Committee was formed to go into prisons. A chairman was elected to head a special Speaker Committee. He would get names of people who were willing and capable of speaking on special occasions. Since the groups were widely spread out geographically, they had to travel great distances. They passed a motion to meet once each month in different locations. One month the GSRs would meet in Lindsay, the next month in Peterborough, the next month in Oshawa, the next month in Port Hope, and so on. They also established a Service Panel comprised of four people who were GSRs and who were already involved in Service Work, as well as Pat H. who was the Committee Man and could also speak for what was going on in Peterborough and the surrounding area. Mike M., the

assistant Committee Man who lived in Oshawa, could report on developments and service in the west. Apparently it was a great success. Each speaker was allotted ten minutes. As Pat H. reported in a talk he gave at the Thirty-Fifth Anniversary of the Lift Lock Group (1983), "We had Service at the Individual level, Service at the Group level, Service at the District level, and we concluded with a report on World Service."

At a Service meeting in Whitby in 1961, a question and answer session followed the meeting. Mike M. addressed a question to Pat H. He asked, "Why couldn't we have a one day Central East Conference like they had recently in Belleville?" Pat answered, "There's no reason why we couldn't have our own Conference." We can assume there was a much excited talk and many suggestions from those in attendance. As Pat reflected on the moment much later, "Right there and then our Kawartha Conference as it is constituted today was born."

"Right there and then our Kawartha Conference ... was born."

At the next GSR's meeting there were three nominations advanced for Conference Chairman: Earl E., George T., and Pat H. All three were sent out of the room and a vote was taken. They chose George T. who went to Toronto and borrowed the 'Book Of

Experience' from the Toronto Conference. This collection of practical suggestions based on actual experience was a great help. A Conference Committee was chosen, and the Empress Hotel in Peterborough was selected because it had a new air conditioning system, a built-in PA system, as well as the capacity to accommodate and feed hundreds of people from Ottawa to Hamilton at the proposed One Day Conference.

### Central East Area

Central East Area by 1963 had a total of 17 Groups including Havelock (Belmont), Port Hope (Hope), Peterborough (Lift Lock, Stonewall, Friendly Friday, Thursday Discussion), Lindsay (Kawartha, Victoria), Bowmanville (Bowmanville), Oshawa (Oshawa Breakfast Club, Central, Friendship, Motor City, Active Area Club House) and Whitby (Eight O'Clock Discussion, Turning Tide Ontario Hospital, Whitby).

### First Central East Area Conference

Following a social at the Stone School on Saturday night, the first Central East Area Conference was held in the Imperial Room of the Peterborough Empress Hotel on June 24, 1962 and was appropriately themed "First Things First." It started with a *Spiritual Panel*

at 10:30 am 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 of Whitby. 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, Peterborough 22).

**ANECDOTE:** Jim L., a gifted orator from Sarnia, was asked to speak on the Spiritual Panel at the first Conference. However, another man from London Ontario, Jack F. was chosen as the main banquet speaker. Perhaps the man from London was admired by some for his graphic story. (We have all heard speakers who had an unusual, stirring or adventurous tale to share. One speaker I heard in the early days had been the driver for a mobster... machine gun and all. Another speaker I heard at a Kawartha Conference was from Ottawa. In his talk he shared with the audience that his experiences with drinking took him to a hobo jungle beside the railway tracks. He also had a gritty story. The audience could actually sense the cinders and flying grit as the trains thundered past his little encampment in the hobo jungle.)

Perhaps, in an attempt to show the insanity of drinking, the man from London, Jack F., related a story in which he fell asleep, or more likely, passed out in bed while smoking a cigarette. Unfortunately, the bed caught fire. He was awakened by the smoke and heat of the flames. His immediate reaction was not that of a sane man. He jumped up and controlled the conflagration by urinating on the fire in the bed. When

the blaze was finally extinguished, and the crisis was over, he lay down on the bed and went back to sleep.

Some people of a sensitive nature must have felt that this gritty talk by the man from London reeked of the language of the gutter, and that it was totally inappropriate for a Conference. Apparently, a few left in disgust. Pat H. later commented wryly about the London speaker: "He was a regular one-man fire department."

But Pat H. and other old timers often emphasized to the newcomers that, "A.A. is the language of the heart and not of the gutter." Pat was also fond of saying, "A.A. is the soil in which all good things grow."

"A.A. is the soil in which all good things grow."

## 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Central East Area Conference, Sunday, June 24, 1962

### Chair Report

"As chairman of the 1962 Conference committee, I am pleased to report that the conference was a remarkable success. On the 20th June registration numbered 200 and only 4 days to go. However, by midnight the 23rd registration had passed the 320 mark and the success of the conference looked brighter. Last minute registrations on the day of the conference brought the total up to 469 registrations with 446 sitting down for banquet.

Due to the overall efforts of everyone participating in the conference, everything ran quite smoothly. The day was clear and bright. Registration opened at 9:00 am officially, although registration had been taking place most of the night at room 328 occupied by the treasurer Charlie W. and the chairman, George T."



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.*



*Claremont Miller*

**" FIRST THINGS FIRST "**

**FIRST ANNUAL  
CENTRAL EAST AREA  
CONFERENCE**

**EMPRESS HOTEL, PETERBORO  
JUNE 24th, 1962**

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.

## Subsequent Central East and Kawartha District Conferences

The first 8 *Central East Area* Conferences were held at the Empress Hotel. The first 4 Conferences were one day only; Sunday. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> were held on Saturday and Sunday and the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> were held on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> were *Central East District* Conferences and were held at the Rock Haven Motor Hotel. Carl Burton had been Catering Manager at the Empress Hotel and then assumed ownership at the Rock Haven and took the Conferences with him, except for the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Conferences, which went back to the Empress Hotel. See the Appendix for a list of all 60 Kawartha Conferences to date.



Ticket for the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. 1970, was the first time the Conference was referred to as Central East District and the first of many to be held at the Rock Haven Motel on Lansdowne St. W.

## Norwood Round-Ups

Norwood Group used to host an Annual Round-Up. The first was held on Sept. 24, 1977, at the Norwood District High School. Eventually the Round-Up moved to the Norwood Town Hall. They were well attended, drawing from a wide area. The 31st Annual Round-Up held in 2007 was the last one.

### NORWOOD & DISTRICT 31<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL A.A. ROUND-UP

At

NORWOOD TOWN HALL

SAT. SEPT 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2007

THEME: JOY OF LIVING

A.A. & AL-ANON SPEAKERS

STARTS AT 1:00 PM SHARP

DINNER AT 6:00 p.m.  
(Cost of Dinner is \$15.00)



## Kawartha District 86

As A.A. grew in Ontario, the Service Structure changed accordingly. By 1970, Central East Area was referred to as Central East District. Redistricting occurred in 1972 with the formation of the Lakeshore District. That year, there was a Conference held both by Lakeshore District in Oshawa and Central East District in Peterborough. In 1973, the Peterborough Conference was a Kawartha District Conference. Kawartha District at that time included what is now, in 2018, Kawartha District 86 plus Victoria Haliburton District 82. GSR meetings alternated between Peterborough and Lindsay. Prior to the lease of the Intergroup Office on Cameron St., GSR meetings were held at the "Coffee Club" located above the Parklaine Variety at the corner of Park and Braidwood. GSR meetings in Lindsay were held at the Queen St. United Church Annex.

## Recovery Residences

### **81 Alexander Ave.**

The house at 81 Alexander Avenue, referred to as the Recovery Residence, was opened in March, 1973. It was felt at that time that a facility was needed in Peterborough to offer assistance to the chronic alcoholic. Until the opening of the Recovery Residence, the life of the

chronic alcoholic was a merry-go-round of jails, emergency wards, court appearances, and flop-houses. A Provincial study revealed that it cost society \$20,000 per year to pay for all the medical, legal, welfare, and social cost of each chronic alcoholic. Funding for the Recovery Residence came from the Ontario Ministry of Health, the City of Peterborough, the Social Welfare Department with additional donations coming from industry and private citizens. Some of the residents, who were financially able, paid a small weekly sum for room and board. The operating budget for the Recovery Residence was a mere \$40,000 per year. Charlie W. took a leave of absence from his job. When the residence was first opened it had 1 bed for Detox and 6 beds for residents. The capacity soon increased to 2 beds for Detox and 8 beds for residents.

**Detox:** When a person was picked up by the police for being intoxicated, usually in a public place, and there were no other charges, such as impaired driving, or willful damage to property, the drunk was taken to the Recovery Residence and put into a Detox bed. He could stay for a matter of hours or for a few days depending on his condition. This procedure also applied to individuals who ended up in an Emergency ward, or who were brought to the house by Social Workers, by family or A.A. members. The Detox room was attached to the house, but had a small washroom, so the recovering sick alcoholic did not

have to go through the rest of the house. Prescribed drugs were kept to a bare minimum; the medical profession was very much in agreement with this principle. If the person in Detox showed signs of deterioration, such as convulsions, the emergency ward of the Peterborough Civic Hospital was very close at hand.

**Residence:** After Detox, and when the client was rational enough, he was interviewed by the house manager, Charlie W. If there was a bed, and if he wished to abide by the house rules, the new person could sign a form that contained a limited number of rules and regulations. Meals were served at prescribed times. The doors were locked at 11:15 pm. One could not bring alcohol into the house. If a client returned from an appointment and was drunk, he would be refused entry. Each resident had to help with the chores, cooking, and cleaning. Once a week they all had to attend a house meeting. The Peterborough Civic Hospital staff took an active interest in the members of the Recovery Residence. Each week they had group counseling sessions at the hospital.

According to statistics kept by the house staff, 60% of those admitted between September, 1975 and March, 1977, were 'single admissions.' Some of these men may have stayed at the house, got sober, returned to work, and become productive members of society, before moving back home to their wives and families. 40% of those

admitted were more resistant to change and were consequently re-admitted on several occasions.

Charlie W. spent 4 years as manager of the Recovery Residence before it closed in March of 1977 due to lack of funding from the Provincial Government. Before he came to Peterborough, Charlie W. was a member of Alcoholics Anonymous and belonged to the Whitby Group. Always active in Service, he was a member of the first Central East Area Conference Committee in June of 1962. Charlie W. helped start the Lakefield United Group of A.A. after he came to Peterborough. Former residents of the Recovery Residence at 81 Alexander Avenue still fondly call the place Alexander House.

### **Kawartha House**

Kawartha House was operated by the Salvation Army as a Correctional Half-Way House. It was originally, in 1976, located on the North side at 168 Antrim St. before relocating to 14 Murray St. in 1978. Bill P. went through there a couple of times, the first soon after it opened. He recalls that Gordon Holnbeck and Brigadier Hickman were involved in starting up the House. (They were both Salvation Army members.) The House was mainly run by Brigadier Hickman. Bill P. recalls that there was a one-armed cook there who made the news when he was caught stealing food. Bill also recalls

that there were A.A. meetings held there. He recalls that Roy F. was involved from A.A. 14 Murray St. served as a Half-Way House until 1999.

Gary C. went through there in December, 1977, being released on Christmas Eve. Gary also recalls Brigadier Hickman being in charge. Gary recalls that Institutional A.A. meetings were held there on Thursdays by invitation only. Gary recalls Leo D. and Stan C., among others, attending A.A. meetings from outside A.A. groups. Gary also recalls that A.A. members worked in the kitchen. Ray G. and Jim W. both came in to clean the kitchen. Gary recalls Ray G. used to whistle when he was cleaning the pots and pans, which prompted Gary to think that "maybe there's something to this A.A. after all!"

### **OZANAM COMMUNITY HOME**

Had it not been for the inspiration and determined effort of Tom R., Ozanam Community Home in Peterborough would never have become a reality. Tom R. got sober on Oct.4<sup>th</sup>, 1981. As a by-product of his newfound sobriety and spiritual growth, Tom took a more active interest in at his parish church in Peterborough. A coincidental and timely appearance was made by Father Jim W., a recovered alcoholic from Toronto. Father Jim W.'s alcoholism had taken him on a journey that ended by living in boxcars behind the St. Lawrence Market. In 1983

Father W. was invited to speak at his Church. So powerful was his message of recovery that he inspired the congregation and consequently instigated a rejuvenation of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at the Church.

Tom R. who was also inspired by Father Jim W.'s message became more active in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at his Church. Tom recalls one memorable, life-altering Sunday later in 1983. At the conclusion of the service, as Tom was leaving the church, he innocently glanced toward some pamphlets just inside the front entrance of the church. He had never paid any attention to these pamphlets before. For some strange reason, his interest was captivated by a solitary pamphlet in an isolated slot. He picked up the brochure and absently began to read about the life history of Frederick Ozanam (1813-1853) and his Christian Ideals of helping the poor. Frederick Ozanam was the Founder of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

Tom's interest quickened as he read about two Ozanam Community Homes in present day Toronto and another one in British Columbia. The Mission Statement sent his pulse racing: Ozanam Community Homes existed to provide housing and personal support to individuals recovering from alcoholism and/or other addictions, with a focus on the transition from treatment to the individuals' becoming aware of their full potential in the community.

Tom was so excited that he could hardly wait to tell his wife and his sponsor, Norm C. Later he went to Toronto on two separate occasions, once with his sponsor, and once with his wife. He was given a guided tour of the Ozanam Community Homes. He researched and gathered more information. Back in Peterborough everyone with whom Tom talked was very impressed with his concept and even non-alcoholics were very supportive. Tom remains to this day very humble about his own contributions to the project. He said recently, "At every opportunity, 'third party individuals' (i.e. non-alcoholic members) appeared mysteriously and put their shoulders to the wheel, and somehow the movement took on a momentum of its own."

On June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1984, Tom made a presentation to the Particular Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. He explained the need for an Ozanam Community Home in Peterborough. The members of the board listened with interest and gave Tom unanimous consent to advance the project to the next level. Tom assembled a board of directors (a steering committee) to advance the Ozanam Community Home project. Tom R. was the director, while his wife took on the role of secretary. Lawyer John C., of Peterborough offered his legal services for free. Each month Tom attended the regular business meetings of the Peterborough Council Of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and gave a report

on the progress of the Ozanam project. Money had to be raised; a home had to be found. Government grants were sought after. Tom went to Toronto and was given an interview at the head office with the Director of the Trillium Foundation. The director was very impressed with the Ozanam Home concept and thought that it was a noble undertaking. The Trillium Foundation gave Tom financial support because they were convinced that this new Transition Home would have a positive social impact in the city of Peterborough.

Finally, after much planning, hard work, and financial hurdles overcome, Ozanam Community Home opened in the fall of 1986 at 1039 High St., Peterborough. The Peterborough Chapter of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul provided the financial support to get the necessary down payment for a mortgage for the new home. Eventually, the Social Services Department, City of Peterborough contributed a per diem for each resident residing at the Ozanam Community Home. And in 1988 Ozanam became a Member Agency of the Peterborough and District United Way. Even private citizens contributed. John Bournoit was the Manager/Owner of the Canadian Tire Store on George St. where Tom worked. He listened to Tom's excitement about the Ozanam Home, decided that it was a worthy cause, and without hesitation he wrote out a cheque for \$2,000 and presented it to Tom.

On March 31<sup>st</sup>. 1993, Tom R. resigned from the Board of Directors of Ozanam Community Home. The parish priest at St. Alphonsus at that time was very supportive of Alcoholics Anonymous, and believed in the spiritual principles advanced long ago by Frederick Ozanam of helping the downtrodden to get back on their feet. He had been the chaplain at Warkworth Prison and he had also visited other prisons. When Tom R. resigned, the priest then became the Director of the Board of Ozanam Community Home.

Danny S. was the first manager of the Ozanam Community Home. He was a good role model, a mentor, even a father figure for some of the young men. Jeff B. was one of the early residents who stayed at the Home for perhaps a year and gradually put his life back together. Since he went almost daily to meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous, he must have heard the A.A. message from Old-Timers like Leo D. who often quoted his own sponsor's advice, even though Leo didn't like the advice the first time he heard it. "Get a lunch pail, get a job, and become a productive member of society."

Jeff got a job, first working at a car wash which was a humbling experience. Other jobs followed as his confidence and strength returned. Eventually he worked at NHB, and because of his success in Alcoholics Anonymous, and his desire to learn, he was given the responsible position as

the Alcohol and Drugs Representative for the plant.

One day Jeff met his old high school girl friend. During the course of the ensuing animated conversation, Sally was impressed with how much Jeff had changed. They got back together as a couple and got married. Later, Jeff enrolled in the Alcohol and Drug Program at Fleming College, graduated, and is at present working in an Alcohol Treatment Centre in the Toronto area. Jeff B. would have to be considered a success story associated with the best intentions, philosophy, training, and mandate of the Ozanam Community Home.

Ozanam Community Home closed its doors after twenty-two years of operation, a record for longevity of all the other Recovery Homes which have existed in Peterborough history. When I asked Tom R. recently about all the years and all the energy he personally devoted to the Ozanam Community Home, he looked at me reflectively, smiled as he remembered the amazing spiritual journey and said, "I've been blessed."

"I've been blessed."

## Early A.A. Drop-In Centres

The earliest known drop-in Centre or Club in Peterborough was called the Centre Group. Located at 408 1/2 George St., it served for a short time circa 1950-51. Mike S. of the Liftlock Group recalled attending meetings there.



In the 1950s, The Saw Shop was an informal meeting and socializing place located at 264 Simcoe at the corner of Bethune. The proprietor was Joe H. Joe became one of the founding members of the Stonewall group.

122 Park St. S., prior location of a Bakery, became an A.A. Drop-in Centre. The first meeting of the Coffee Club took place on Nov. 18, 1970 at 122 Park St. S. which was a building that used to serve as a Bakery. It was used as an A.A. drop-in Centre or Club. The markings of the ovens were still evident in the building on the south wall. In early 1971 the Coffee Club moved to the corner of Park and Braidwood above the Parklaine Variety store. The Mid-Day group also met

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there, starting in early 1973. This location also served as a drop-in Centre or Key Club until Oct., 1977 when the Key Club was dissolved. A.A. Members in Peterborough had tried a Key Club above the Parklaine Variety Store for a few years, which did not work out very well, and finally folded in Oct., 1977.



## Kawartha District Intergroup Office

The Kawartha District Intergroup Office evolved from very meager beginnings in Oct., 1977, to a Central Office and drop-in Centre which is the envy of a lot of members who visit from out of town.

Leo D., who was Chairman of the now extinct Key Club, had an idea that an Intergroup Office with volunteers to answer the phone might work. He went to the Kawartha General Service Committee with his idea, and they

agreed with him. An election was held and Leo was chosen as Chairman of Intergroup in Nov., 1977.

A lot of footwork was done looking for a suitable place to settle, and the Committee finally rented what (then) St. Alban's Church was using as a hall for Rummage sales and other Church events. We moved in on Feb. 1st, 1978. A Telephone Answering Service was set up in an office within the building. The Telephone Answering Service was previously handled by Anglesey's (which later became TAS-Page Communications).

There was a lot of work to be done. A committee made up of George B., Tim D., Leo M., Alec S. and Bill M., worked very hard with Leo to get things going. They cleaned up, painted, repaired the plumbing, had the furniture repaired, etc. Norm F. did some electrical wiring. All Members at that time chipped in, donating furniture and lamps and kitchen utensils. The Kawartha District General Service Committee started meeting here once a month, and paying rent for the use of the building.

At that time we had shifts of volunteers manning the phone, with the doors open from 9 am to 11 pm. At first this worked well, but within 9 months it became harder and harder to get volunteers. Once again, Leo approached the GSR Table. His idea this time was to pay girls \$10 a day to answer the phone. General Service Reps., with their Group's conscience,

went along with the idea, and it still works well today.

In Oct. of 1979, Ruth C. and Leo D. got their heads together and planned to have a library for easy access to A.A. Literature for the Groups using the Intergroup Office. We took this idea to the Group Conscience and all agreed. The GSR Committee gave Ruth a cheque for one thousand dollars to start the Literature Library. This worked from the start and all the Kawartha District Groups now buy their Literature and Medallions from the Central Office Library.

Our Intergroup Office, where the phone and Library are situated is a small but very important part of the whole building. We have a kitchen where breakfast was served on Sunday morning, before the 11 am meeting. The oven and breakfast were recently retired. Also there is a good-sized hall where there are meetings every night of the week, and day meetings for shift-workers. The Groups that meet here pay rent every month. We do not have many sources of income, but as long as we can pay the rent to St. Alban's (now "the Parish"), keep the coffee on and the building in good repair, we are quite happy.

As of 1985 there were three girls doing the phone and housework, from 9 am to 6 pm. Volunteers from the groups filled in from 6 pm to 11 pm, with groups taking turns for a week at a time. All calls are kept in a log book on

## The New Life Group

a daily basis, with the time and nature of the call written in.

As of 1985, the coffee was still 25 cents per cup and was on from 9 am to 11 pm every day. A lot of people dropped in to chat, to play cards or just to put in some time. It keeps them out of the beverage rooms.

Through the years, the price of coffee has worked its way up to \$1.25 and hours of operation at the Intergroup before COVID was 9:00 am until 9:30 pm and men, as well as women, perform the daily paid work. There are currently a total of 15 meetings being held per week hosted by 8 groups, including the original Coffee Club and the Mid-Day groups, plus several other meetings. The Church that owns the building is now "the Parish."

In the words of Ruth C., "Just to know there is a place to go, where someone will take the time to talk or just to listen has, I know, kept some of us from picking up that first drink. God has blessed our project, and as long as we don't abuse it, I am sure He will continue to Bless us, every one of us."



In the spring of 1967, two relatively new A.A. members; Al R. and his friend, Robert M., decided to start a group in East City on the east side of the Otonabee River. The New Life Group was the fourth of today's existing groups to register after the Lift Lock, Stonewall, and Friendly Friday groups.

A May 22, 1967, 'Group Information Card' disclosed that the New Life Group was holding open meetings on Saturdays. Our General Service Office states that the New Life Group was first listed on May 24, 1967. The New Life Group first appeared in the 1968 A.A. Directory. There were 10 members; with Robert M., Al R., and Ray G. serving as group contact persons.

Rob and Al were able to rent a large hall at Immaculate Conception Church on Rogers Street. Before long this became one of the largest groups in Peterborough. The first meeting was held on June 10, 1967, to coincide with AA's founding date. For years the anniversary was a big occasion, and the original speaker was Ted P. from Toronto, who spoke at a few of these early anniversaries. Some other early members were Leo D., Ray G., Sam A., Ken P., Paul B., Maureen H., Don R., Sylvia W., Gord D., Bob and June F., Jack K., Wayne and Lorraine E., Jean K., Randy B., Don P., Lloyd C., Tom McG., Trudy B., Norm D., Vince



O'B. and Gord W.

After a few years at Immaculate Conception Church Hall, the group moved in 1972 to St. Luke's Church Hall on Armour Road, staying in East City. By 2003 the group moved to the Kawartha District Intergroup Office at 625 Cameron St., Peterborough, ON. This move seemed to breathe new life into the New Life Group; no more stairs to climb! 'World famous' egg salad sandwiches started appearing in the 1980s made by Cathy F. On Sept. 6, 2014 the group changed the meeting time to 7 pm instead of 8. The group celebrated its 50-year anniversary in June, 2017.

When the Intergroup Office announced it was closed on March 22, 2020 because of the pandemic, the New Life group was quick to respond with a meeting on the Zoom platform. Their first meeting on Zoom was March 28. Ron C. celebrated his 30-year medallion on Zoom on July 3, 2021. New Life were online during Jan. through March, 2022 with a step meeting format. Eventually, they returned to in-person open speaker meetings during 2022, when it was safe to do so.

Life being life, the group recently lost some long-time members, as in Cathy F., Stan C., Carole L. and Rose R. However, the group has gained new members with some long-timers returning and new members joining. Currently, in mid-2023, about a dozen

members call this group home. Come visit us at the District Intergroup Office, 625 Cameron St. on any Saturday night at 7 pm.



### Monday Night Discussion Group

The Ontario A.A. Directory lists this meeting as beginning in 1962 at St. Alphonsus Hall, Western Avenue, with Fred L. and Jim R. as contact people.

The group banner states May, 1969, as their start date. The New York General Service Office's first record of the group is in January of 1970, with the General Service Rep listed as Ben C., and Don G. listed as a contact person. Whether the Monday night discussion meeting was continuous from 1962 to this start date is unknown. However, Fred L. and Jim R. are listed as contacts for the group in 1970 and 1971.

By 1973, the group was called the Kawartha Discussion group and was meeting at the All Saints Parish Hall at the corner of Rubidge and Sherbrooke Streets. By 1975 the group was meeting upstairs above the Parklaine Variety store at Braidwood and Park Streets and continued to be the only step group meeting in Peterborough.

When Intergroup opened on Cameron St. in February of 1978, the group was among the first to move to the new site. At these early meetings there was always a small room set aside for Steps 1 to 3 and this group regularly welcomed newcomers. During this period there were usually 3 to 5 regular group members with long time sobriety. The meeting attracted about 25 people on a regular basis. In the mid-1990s the group passed a motion that if there were not 25 people in attendance then they would not split into 2 groups but that they would always do one of the first steps. The group initially read from the 12 and 12 book but then moved to using an Ohio pamphlet on the 12 Steps which gave a synopsis and more time for discussion.

By the late 1990s, as attendance decreased, the group moved to identifying 3 topics for discussion each night with one of the first steps always included as a topic.

This group has always been small and business meetings have been informal. There are some early minutes from the

'80s, some from the '90s and some from the early 2000s but minutes have not always been kept. The group is inclusive and several times there are records of votes to allow a member to chair with less than 1 year's sobriety, sometimes with 3 to 6 months of sobriety.

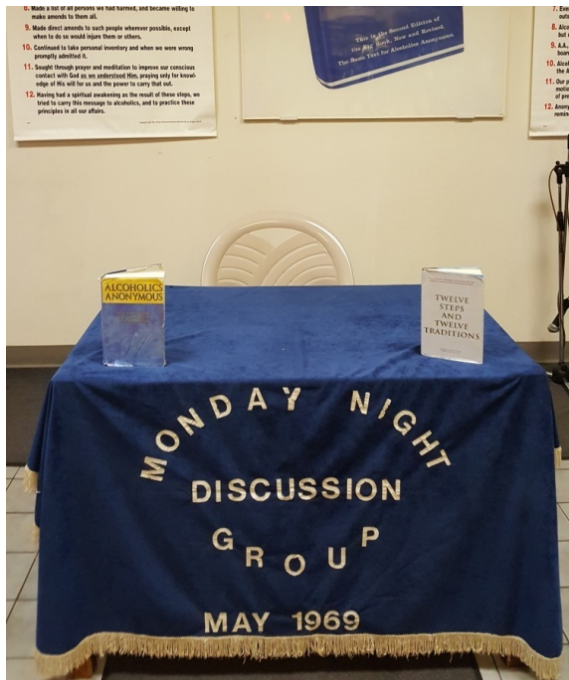
During the pandemic, the group went online when the Intergroup office closed in March, 2020 and then opened back up to in-person meetings in September, 2021 while still having an online meeting available. The online meeting was discontinued in late 2022 and the group kept the in-person closed discussion meeting.

As of Dec., 2023, the meetings are fairly large with well over 25 in attendance. There are a lot of newcomers with early sobriety and there are over 15 group members who attend business meetings regularly.

The format is a discussion meeting with attendees asked to identify topics related to alcoholism which they wish to have discussed. If there is someone new attending then one of the topics includes either Step One, getting started, or a similar topic to help the newcomer.

Business meetings are held monthly and are informal, minutes are not usually taken. Any surpluses in revenue are discussed and the group continues to support, as funds permit, the local A.A. Conference, Intergroup,

Area 83 and New York. Meetings are held Mondays at 7:00 pm at the Intergroup Office at 625 Cameron St. in Peterborough. All are welcome.



### Coffee Club Group

The first meeting of the Coffee Club group took place on 18 November, 1970, at 122 Park St. S. in an empty Bakery which also served as a Club for Peterborough A.A. members.

Information available from Ken P. in Dec., 1998, lists people instrumental in getting the Club started as Clare G., Jack D., Tom McG. (who did a lot of work converting the Bakery into a Club), Leo D. (for many years a strong supporter of establishing a place where A.A. members could gather),

Frank B. (a very active A.A. member), Joe F., Norm S. (a salesman), Joe D., Fred L., Harold M., Jim R., Fred C., Harry E., Rita & Jim H., Pat H. and Al R.

Early Coffee Club group members were Jack D., Norm S., Henry "Hank" D., June F., Tom B. and Jack L.

The Bakery, which still had the marks of the large ovens visible on the South wall of the club, served them well for only a short period. In early 1971, the Coffee Club moved to the corner of Park & Braidwood above the Parklaine Variety Store (upstairs at c/o Park and Braidwood) where they flourished for the next 7 years.

Because the building owner needed the space for other use and the location had become too small for Club use, the Coffee Club Group became one of the first groups to move into 625 Cameron St., the Quonset hut building, when it became the Kawartha District Intergroup Office in Feb., 1978.

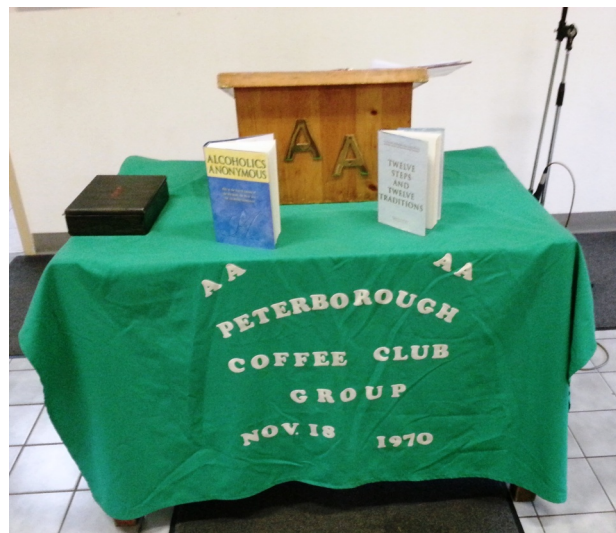
In addition to the Wednesday night Open Speaker meeting, a few group members started a Newcomers Open Discussion for people new to AA and/or wishing to support and learn more about us. Friday nights at 6:30 was strategically chosen so they might also attend the 8:00 Friendly Friday meeting, thus covering a most difficult night of the week (the start of the weekend) for the newly sober individual. The first meeting was Jan 3,

2003 and members of Coffee Club continue to chair and support it.

When the COVID pandemic became a reality in March of 2020, the last in-person meeting held at Intergroup, before lock-down, was the Newcomers on Friday March 20th. A few group members immediately addressed the situation, set up a zoom account/training and the very first online zoom meeting of the Coffee Club was held on March 25th. This coincided with a one year medallion celebration, maxing out the attendance limit of 100 people! Over the next two years, both meetings were held on zoom and many international speakers were invited to share on Wednesday nights. Approximately 15 medallion celebrations were held online, with 10 of those celebrants never having been to an in-person meeting. Our very first zoom baby celebrated their one year on April 15, 2020 and the group had its 50th Anniversary online on November 28th of 2020.

When Intergroup began to open the building to meetings, Coffee Club remained online until early summer of 2022 and the decision was made to keep Newcomers as an online meeting only. The Coffee Club Wednesday night speaker meeting became the first hybrid meeting in District 86. With a television screen mounted on the wall and a laptop at the podium, members at Intergroup and those at home could all participate in the one meeting. This has kept the meeting 100% accessible

to all its members and guests, extending a welcoming hand from both platforms to the alcoholic who still suffers.



### Norwood Sunday Night Group

In Dec. of 1970, Dan S. of Peterborough brought A.A. to Norwood. There were many talks around his Grandmother's kitchen table with Warren 'Bud' W., Lillian S. and Joan M. (Joan wrote the original history of this group. Bud was very active in A.A. and took part in the Peterborough Conferences and other events.)

Dan S. then contacted Rev. Bates of the United Church and the first meeting was held at the minister's house. The meetings then moved to

upstairs at the Legion. About 2 meetings were held there and then Reverend Neilson of the Presbyterian Church opened up the doors to A.A. The group registered with the General Service Office in Oct. of 1973 as the Norwood District group.

First members were Warren 'Bud' W., Dec. 19, 1970; Lillian S., Dec. 25, 1970 and Joan M., Feb. 17, 1972. The group received a lot of support from the groups in Peterborough and sometimes there were only 3 in attendance but the doors were always open. The meetings were held in the kitchen at first and, as the group grew, moved to the main hall. At one time they had approximately 35 members.

Ron L., Dave B. and Jack B. were early members along with Ken and Harriet P. Bud W.'s brothers, Rod and 'Liz' also came into the group. 'Liz' had been the "town drunk" and was often seen sleeping in doorways around town. In what is considered a 'miraculous' recovery from alcoholism, 'Liz' was presented with a one year medallion a couple of days early because of his poor health. He passed away less than a week later.

The pandemic of early 2020 resulted in the Church being closed and meetings canceled starting on Sunday, March 22. In April, 2022, just after COVID, the meeting relocated to Norwood United Church at the corner of Hwy 7 and County Road 45, where they currently meet at 7:30 pm on Sundays. The

group is now, in Dec., 2023, 53 years in existence and they hope to continue for some time to come, one day at a time.



### Mid-Day Group

During 1972, two A.A. members, Jack L. and Paul B., were working on night shifts and felt the need for a meeting during the week for themselves and others in the same position. Meetings were held above the Parklaine Variety at the corner of Park & Braidwood on Wednesdays. As the attendance was small, the meetings were discussion. Soon after the meetings started, both Jack and Paul ended up with day jobs. However, the meetings continued. Later in 1972, Leo D. brought this meeting to the attention of the GSR Table and this helped in getting members to chair these meetings.

The first meeting of the group was considered to be Wednesday, Jan. 17, 1973. Although correspondence with our General Service Office (GSO) is scarce for this early date, the meeting reportedly became a group with the first 2 members being Paul M. and Felix F. They were the first 2 members of the group to receive a one year medallion. The original group banner was made by Paul B.'s sister-in-law, Rosemary.

When the Kawartha District A.A. membership took over the Quonset hut at 625 Cameron St. on Wed., Feb. 1, 1978, the Mid-Day group moved with them. Attendance varied over the next few years but the group held together. Information supplied by the General Service Office for 1978 lists Paul M. as a contact and the group with 10 members. The Ontario Directory for that year indicates the Mid-Day meetings were open meetings held at 1:30 pm. on Wednesdays.

By 1980, Joe F. had joined the group and was contact person in the GSO Directory. GSO indicated the group now had 15 members. Joe was very active and introduced the poem "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." The reading of this poem has continued to this day in his memory.

At some point the meeting was changed to 1:00 pm on Wednesdays. The membership varied through the years and at times they were down to a very few members. At one point in

2006 they were down to a single member but a call for help from Ollie R. brought in new members.

Following the COVID pandemic outbreak of early 2020, the Intergroup office was closed on Sunday, March 22, which ended all in-person meetings at Intergroup. So, the group tried a temporary Big Book study in-person meeting under limited conditions starting in late August. (The office closed again in late September because of the rising number of COVID cases and reopened in early May, 2021 under limited conditions.)

The group continues to thrive and has continued for 52 years as of Jan. 17, 2024.



## Lakefield United Group

Reg C., a Lakefield native, was an early member of the Lift Lock group and was listed as a phone contact under Lakefield in the Ontario A.A. Directories of the early 1950s.

In the early 1970s, a member was doing volunteer work with the Addiction Research Foundation, and determined that there was a need for a meeting outside the city of Peterborough. The area they started to look at was to the north and included Lakefield and Curve Lake. Previously, there had been a meeting at the church at the junction of Highway 507 (now Buckhorn Rd.) and the Curve Lake Road but the attendance did not support it. The village of Lakefield was chosen as the location to start one. The Lakefield United Church Minister was approached to see if a meeting room was available. The minister, the church committees and the congregation supported the idea. Although there is evidence that meetings were being held as early as Feb., 1973, the first meeting is considered to have been held in November of 1973.

The founding members included: Bob and June F., Margo H., Jim S., Jim W. and Charlie W. Jim S. was able to give Charlie W. some information concerning the actual starting date. Charlie W. wrote the basics of this history early in Nov., 1998. Charlie

passed away later that same month, on Nov. 18, with over 41 years of sobriety.

In the beginning, meetings took place in the Nursery School Room, which had to be partially dismantled from its Nursery School setting to accommodate the older (and dare I say more mature?) participants of a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. Then, after the meeting was over, the school decor had to be restored. I wonder if the early group members had to sit in the "little kid's" chairs?

Well, according to Cathy C., an early member of this group, members indeed used the "little kid's chairs" for their business meetings until they moved to a larger room in late 1974.

Ray H., a long time member of this group, took his one-year medallion in early 1976.

Interesting to note that when the group first started, the Lakefield locals who were already members of A.A., stayed away, choosing to attend meetings in Peterborough. Perhaps they feared their anonymity would be lost if they were seen entering the church for a meeting. However, they eventually started showing up in Lakefield at the Tuesday night meeting.

Over the years, membership has fluctuated greatly, as is the case with most groups. The number attending usually increased in the summer

months due to the cottagers and people on vacation. Charlie W. remembers the 7th Tradition being as low as \$3.00 per week!

The pandemic that started in early 2020 resulted in the Lakefield United Church being closed from March 10, 2020 until Oct. 12, 2021 and then again from Dec. 21, 2021 until March 1, 2022. Sadly, Larry D., a long term member of this group, fell victim to this pandemic in 2021. Of necessity, many A.A. members resorted to meetings on zoom during this period.

On July 9, 2022, 4 medallions totaling 110 years were presented at an outside meeting in a park in nearby Warsaw, Ontario. 2022 also saw the loss of a couple of long time members, Joanne H. and Ray H.

Group relationship with the Church has been good over the years, and they have dealt with several different ministers. They have a contact person, sometimes a person who is, or was, a church member as well as a member of the group. This has worked well, allowing group members to deal with any issues in a timely manner.

Members are very grateful to Alcoholics Anonymous and to the founding members of this group, which has supported many recovering alcoholics over the years. The group meets on Tuesday nights at 7:00 pm at the Lakefield United Church on Regent St. in Lakefield.



### Liberty Group

In the early 1970s Liz B. met several old-timers from different Liberty A.A. groups in various cities, including Joyceville Institution. The seed was planted for Liz to start one here in Peterborough.

On May 30, 1974, Liz B. wrote to the GSO: *“Just a few lines to advise you that we are soon starting a new A.A. group here in Peterboro. The Liberty Group will open July 7, 1974, 8:30pm at St. Paul’s School. Contact either myself or John MacD.”* Liz was sent a group information card that was returned on June 24<sup>th</sup>. It lists Liz B. and John MacD. as the contact people for the group. They met on Sundays with 5 members.

July 7 was Liz’s “belly-button” birthday and the first speaker was Ruben B. from Toronto. During the first few years members from various Liberty groups such as Hamilton, Toronto, London



and Guelph helped support the Peterborough Liberty Group.

By 1976, the Group had moved to St. Paul's Presbyterian Church at the corner of Water and Murray Streets and met there until 1983 when they moved to St. George's Church at the corner of Roger Neilson Way and Braidwood. A change in meeting time to 6:30 pm helped the attendance at that time. The Group used Slogans made by an inmate of Millhaven and there were enough that they were interpreted by 2 members. These finely crafted slogans are currently mounted in the Intergroup Office.

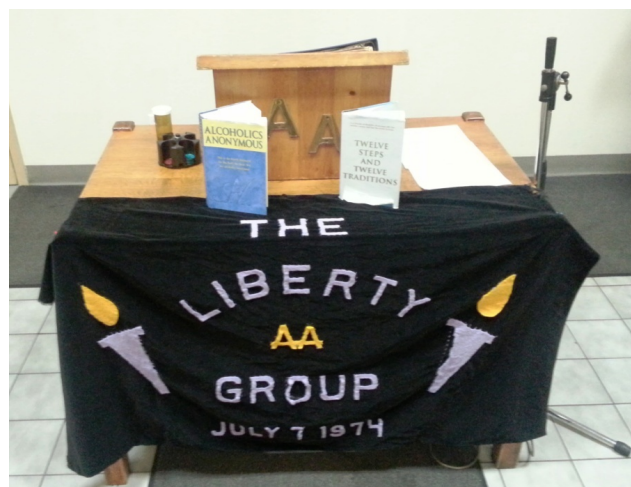
Some early members who were active with the group included Dennis H., Ken C., Sean H. and Jack B. There are a number of members who are no longer with us that were active at one time with the Group. This includes John MacD., Jerry H., Marlene G., Claire H., Bob E., Paul McF., Margot H., Bill C., Helen B., Barry L., Lorne M. and Sharon & Jerry P.

In 2008 the Group moved to the Intergroup Office at 625 Cameron St. and on Mar. 1, 2009, the group changed their meeting time to 7:00 pm.

The outbreak of the pandemic in early 2020 resulted in the Intergroup Office being closed on Sunday, March 22. The Liberty group was quick to switch their meeting to the Zoom platform, starting on April 5. The group stayed with online meetings until early Oct.,

2020. In-person meetings started up again in the fall of 2021, when it was safe to do so. Sadly, the pandemic claimed 2 longtime members of the Liberty group; Ken C. in February and Dennis H., in April of 2022.

The group now holds a Closed meeting Big Book Discussion on Sundays at 7:00 pm at the Intergroup Office. The Liberty group has carried the message of Recovery for over 49 years now as of early 2024, One Day at a Time!



### Buckhorn Step Group

It seems the roots of the Buckhorn Group can be traced back to around 1971 or 1972 when Art W. moved to Buckhorn, Ontario. Art W. got sober on June 19, 1967 and, at the time, was attending the Lakefield Group. In late 1973, Rev. John B. asked Art W. to

start an A.A. group at the Wesley United Church located at Curve Lake Road and Buckhorn Road, just outside the hamlet of Buckhorn, Ontario. The group met for a few months in the summer of 1974 and then faltered due to poor attendance.

Later in the year, Art W. decided to open a meeting at the old Purser Hall in Buckhorn. The first meeting was at 10:00 am on Sunday, November 3, 1974, which is the official start date of the Buckhorn Group. The first known listing of the Buckhorn Group in the 'Ontario General Service Directory' is March, 1976: "Buckhorn Group, Purser Hall, Sunday at 8:00 pm (O), GSR Art W., Bill C."

The first recorded group listing with General Service Office in New York (GSO-NY) is on April 27, 1977. Keeping in mind that Ontario had its own General Service Office for many years could account for the late entry to GSO-NY. In 1977 a group information sheet from GSO-NY discloses that Buckhorn Group met on Sunday night and had five (5) members. At the time, Art W. and Bill C. were listed as contacts for the group. Original members of the Buckhorn Group included Art W., Len M., Ozzi W., Art C. and Wendell G. The first female visitor was Marlene I. who is still sober today. Art W., the founding member, has maintained his sobriety since 1967.

Members from the Bobcaygeon Group were invited to help support the Buckhorn Group in its early years. Support from the Bobcaygeon group members continues to this very day. Local residents Don & Gloria C. joined the Buckhorn Group in the early 1980's and were active A.A. members for many years. They too have remained sober throughout the years.

The first tablecloth was made by Margery McN. who was sober 19 or 20 years at the time. The tablecloth was replaced in the late '90s by Shelley B.F., sober since 1987.

Marking Milestones: The group gives out a special 24 hr. chip to 'those with a desire to stop drinking, or just coming back' then continues with monthly chips during the first 11 months of sobriety. On a member's one-year anniversary there is a medallion celebration night. These yearly milestones are celebrated at 1 & 5 years, then again every 5 years thereafter. The meeting format is at the discretion of the member celebrating the anniversary.

The Group's anniversary has been celebrated now and again over the years and original members have been invited to come back and share some group history, as well as their own experiences with the current members.

Contributions & Service: Buckhorn Group is self-supporting and committed to sending regular

contributions to District, Intergroup, Area and GSO. We also give out *Big Books* to newcomers, and do outreach in our community to inform doctors, police and community services of our presence in the area, by distributing *Big Books* and meeting directories. Service positions are filled at the group level and at the District table and we have been well represented at the Area Assemblies for many years. Our 'Back to Basics' approach to A.A. and outreach to new members has been a pillar of strength in our community.

**Meeting Locations:** Over the years, the group has met in various locations starting out at the Purser Hall in 1974; Buckhorn Public School around 1979; Harvey Township Library sometime before 1993 until 2001; St. Matthew's Anglican Church (Parish Hall) 2001/2002; back to Harvey Township Library from 2003 to mid December 2011; Buckhorn Yacht Harbour from December 2011 until early 2012. Finally, the group settled at Wesley United Church where they have been meeting since early 2012.

**Meeting Format:** The Buckhorn Group originally started as an open discussion meeting, changed to a speaker format, and is now a closed discussion meeting. The group, as of early 2024, has a speaker meeting on the first Monday of the month and subsequent meetings alternate between Big Book readings, Steps, Traditions and Promises as per group conscience.

Buckhorn Group switched to a Monday night meeting prior to 1998 and now meets every Monday at 7:00 pm at Wesley United Church (Parish Hall), located at the corner of Buckhorn Road (Hwy 23) and 16<sup>th</sup> Line (Curve Lake Road), just south of Buckhorn, Ontario.

After the COVID pandemic began in early 2020, the group was quick to go online on March 23. By Aug., 2020, the zoom meeting was referred to as the Buckhorn Online Discussion Group. Following the return to in-person meetings, the online meeting became an online group of its own, called the Focus on Recovery.

In 2024, the Buckhorn Step Discussion group has approximately 20 active members with a range of One Day At A Time sobriety.



## Seeing Is Believing Group

The women's group originally met at the former St. Joseph's Hospital, in Peterborough, starting in 1975. Margo H. was the original organizer. There are records of this group with the GSO from March and April, 1978. It shows that Joan R. was the GSR and there were 15 group members.

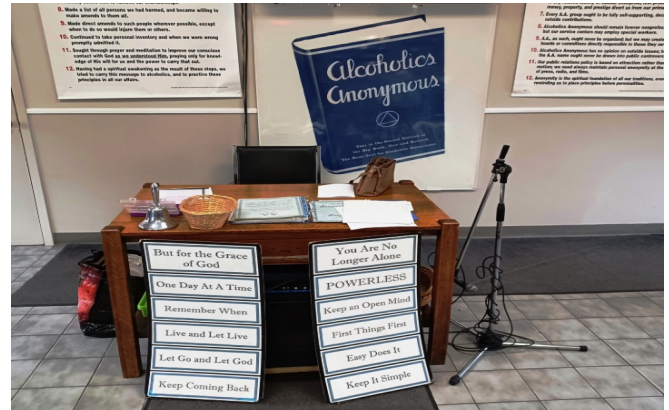
The original members were Margot H., Helen R., Rita H., Carol M., Helen M., Helen D., Carol C., Belle R., Marie C., Sue Mcl. and Peggy A. This group started as a women's closed discussion and continues with the same format. The original start time of 1:45 pm was decided upon to enable women who had children to arrange babysitting.

By 1983 the group had moved to the Parish Hall at St. Alphonsus at the corner of Frank and Ford Street. The group moved in Feb., 2018 to The Parish Hall at 567 Monaghan Rd. and in Nov., 2018 moved to The Mount Community Centre at 1545 Monaghan Rd.

The Mount closed in March of 2020 because of COVID and group members stayed safe until Sept. of 2021 when the group resumed their meetings at the A.A. Intergroup Office at 625 Cameron St. Because of meeting schedules, the group now meets at 3:00 pm on Wednesdays.

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There is definitely still a need for a women's discussion group. The group has expanded from the 11 original members to present day 24 in April of 2023.



## Erin Group

Erin group was founded by Bill C. with the help of his wife Laura and son Dean, and Carl L. Carl had first attended A.A. meetings in 1965 on a Thursday night in Willowdale, but only attended for about 4 months. Later, on Nov. 30, 1977, he rejoined the Willowdale group with the assistance of a friend he had gone to school with and also worked with. Eventually, Carl moved to Ennismore and his friend came down and attended meetings with him. Through a priest in Ennismore, Carl was put in touch with Bill C. who was trying to start a group in Ennismore, Ontario.

Although both Carl and Bill had only a few months sobriety, they decided to

go ahead and start a group to service the immediate area. Carl was the first member to sign up for the new group. The group was founded on the 17 March, 1978 (although that was not a Saturday). The GSO in New York was contacted in Dec., 1979, and they had 10 active members at that time. Other early members were Larry L., Jack G. and Joe M. The group met at St. Martin's School in Ennismore, holding open meetings on Saturdays at 9:00 pm. By 1983 the group had changed their meeting time to 8:30 pm. In 2010 the group moved to the Bridgenorth United Church on Charles St. in Bridgenorth, Ontario, where they continue to meet at 7:00 pm with a closed discussion meeting. On 17 March, 2018, the Group celebrated their 40-Year Anniversary.

Policies were changing regarding community use of schools so, in 2010, the group moved to the Bridgenorth United Church at 832 Charles St. in Bridgenorth, Ontario, where they still meet. On 17 March, 2018, the Group celebrated a 40-Year Anniversary with an open speaker meeting for the occasion and the meeting was followed up with an Anniversary cake.

Because of the COVID pandemic, the group could not meet from 21 March, 2020 until 11 June, 2022. They now, in early 2024, meet at 7:00 pm in a closed discussion meeting that features the Big Book and the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. A closed meeting is for A.A. members or anyone

with a desire to stop drinking.



### South End Group

When this Group first started, there was only one meeting being held on Monday Night in Peterborough and it was a Closed Discussion meeting. Milt G. went to Jim R., who was District Committee Member at the time and discussed the possibility of starting an Open meeting on Monday nights. Along with other members, they decided to start one on Dec. 4, 1978. The members involved in getting this Group started were Milt G., Jim R., Paul B., Norm C. and Mike C. These members each chipped in \$10 to get the group started. In following our Traditions, each member was repaid.

The first members of the Group were Nancy B., Larry B., John O., Marilyn C., Milt G. and Gary C. The first meeting was held in the Cafeteria at

Kenner Collegiate with well over 50 in attendance. Gary C. was in the chair and the first speaker was Stan F., who had not been feeling well but nonetheless gave an inspirational talk.

Meetings continued to be held at Kenner until the group ran into a problem when the School was closed for holidays and there was no Custodian to let them in. The meeting moved to Confederation School for a couple of meetings but ran into the same problem there as at Kenner. The group was able to rent St. Alphonsus Parish Hall on Western Ave. during 1979 and have been there ever since. Marilyn C. lived near the meeting Hall, had a key and looked after setting up the meeting for the first few months. She became the group's first GSR (General Service Representative) and took her one year medallion there in April of 1979. Although not members of this group, Long-timers such as Paul B. and Jim R. gave good guidance to the group members in the early days.

Although attendance and finances were pretty slim for the first couple of years, it has now grown to be a fairly large group. The founding members were absolutely right when they said there was a need for an Open Speaker meeting on Monday nights.

In the spring of 2020 the Pandemic halted the weekly in-person meetings. On March 9 Howard and Lori G. set up and hosted the first online Zoom Meeting. On March 7, 2022 the in-

person meetings resumed at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Hunter St. W. The first meeting was chaired by Pat G. at the new start time of 7:00 pm. The South End Group is again vibrant, growing and welcoming new members.



### New Dawn Group

The New Dawn Group held their first meeting on Sunday, September 14, 1980. The group was founded by Leo D. & Rip V. The A.A. General Service Office received information on the group dated December 1, 1980 with Jack L. as GSR and Garry T. as additional contact. At that point the group had 15 members. The group was originally an Open Speaker format and started at the Intergroup office, 625 Cameron Street, Peterborough. Unfortunately, because of declining attendance, the group made a decision to "fold" during 2018 and held their final meeting on October 28. However, starting at 11:00 am on Sunday, May

## Freedom Group

19, 2019, the meeting resumed as a trial Closed Discussion meeting. Pat S. and Doug G. were instrumental in getting the group restarted. Cathy C. served as the group GSR during the 2021-2022 term and Mike O'B. during the current 2023 term.

During the COVID pandemic, which started in March of 2020, the Intergroup office operated under provincial restrictions and sometimes would close completely, such as in September, 2020, in February, 2021 and again in December, 2021. Intergroup opened up a final time in February of 2022. After the pandemic, the group "came to life" and attendance flourished.

As of August, 2023, the group has about 10 active members with 20 to 30 attending on a regular basis. The New Dawn group is listed as an in-person, 12 Steps and 12 Traditions Closed Discussion meeting at 11:00 am on Sundays at 625 Cameron St., Peterborough.



The Peterborough Catholic District School Board notified the Stonewall group, which held their meetings at St. John's School, 746 Jane St., Peterborough on Sunday mornings at 11:00 am, that a by-law had been passed by the Board that there was to be "no smoking in premises or property in its jurisdiction, effective Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>, 1987." This caused a lot of concern to a number of the Stonewall group members and they started looking for a new meeting place. In that era, it was not uncommon to have an alcohol plus a cigarette dependency and longtime A.A. members would advise against dealing with both addictions at once, with the alcohol addiction certainly viewed as the most serious.

A city-owned building was available in Morrow Park and keys were obtained for review. Following a Stonewall business meeting on Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>, where the decision was conflicted on what to do going forward, a group of members who regularly met at a coffee shop decided to "keep the keys" and form a new group. After confirming with the City, they advised our General Service Office via a letter dated Feb. 4, 1987. The new Freedom group meeting location was at the Morrow Centre, located at the corner of Lansdowne and Park St. in the R. A. Morrow Memorial Park property.

On Feb. 22, 1987 at 10:00 am, Donny O. chaired the first meeting of the Freedom group while Phil E. was the speaker. A total of 33 were in attendance. A photo taken after the first meeting shows founding members Pat M., Dan H., Terry C., Phil E., Gunther C., Donny O., Fred C. and Wayne G. with Gerry M. taking the picture. Some other early members were Richard M., Donny L., Ray S., Wayne E. and Mike F. The first GSR for the new group was Pat M.

When the North End group was formed in May of 1989, Phil E. drew a few members from the Freedom group to help build the new group. The Freedom group members were supportive as they have been of A.A. in general. For example, there is a story of a newcomer who didn't receive a first-meeting chip as the group were out of that particular chip on that particular day. A group member in attendance happened to have one and it was passed along and ended up being presented to the newcomer. That's really called "Pass It On!"

The Morrow building was set to be renovated so the members set out to find a new location. While looking at the Peterborough Lions Centre, someone noticed a beer cooler on the premises. Rather than abandon this as an option, one of the members commented wryly, "Well, we know what that's all about!" The first meeting was held in Dec., 2000 at this new location.

The Freedom group celebrated a 33-year anniversary on Feb. 23, 2020. Not long afterwards, on March 22, 2020, the group meeting was closed following an Emergency Declaration by the Ontario Government regarding the looming COVID pandemic. Quick to respond, the Freedom group was holding their meeting online on the Zoom platform on Sunday, March 29. The group was back to in-person meetings, while following COVID protocols, in the fall of 2021. In early 2022, it was necessary to go back to online meetings as COVID variants arose. By March, 2022, the group was back to in-person meetings.

The group currently meets at 10:00 am at the Peterborough Lions Community Centre, 347 Burnham St., Peterborough. It is an Open Speaker meeting. They have become a large and active group and are supportive of the District, Area and General Service structures as well as our local A.A. Conference.





## Open Mind Discussion Group

The Group's first meeting is reported as being in March, 2010, organized by Pat K. It is a closed discussion meeting on Thursday nights at 8:00 pm in the United Church at Union & Ontario Streets in Havelock, Ontario.

During COVID, the current members managed to stay in contact with one another for support.

Although not always continuous, there is a long history of A.A. meetings in Havelock. The Belmont group met in the Havelock Town Hall starting in 1957. This was a Sunday 8:30 pm meeting and Harry A., Don F., Gord H. and Carl L. were early members. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the meetings were known as the Belmont-Pineridge group and held in the Masonic Temple and then moved back to the Town Hall. Cecil L. was an active member.

In the 1980s, a group known as the First Step met on Thursdays at the Knox Presbyterian Church on George St. in Havelock. Gord P. was an active member.

In 1993, the Belmont-Knox group was formed and met in the Knox Presbyterian Church on Thursday nights.

## Kawartha Freethinkers Group

The Kawartha Freethinkers Discussion meeting came into being when three members of A.A. in Peterborough, Ontario, felt that a meeting was needed in their area that was more inclusive of all members' beliefs or non-beliefs and values. The founders of the meeting were Jim M., Oliver C. and Valerie C. They travelled several times to the Whitby Freethinkers Discussion, once to a 15 Year Medallion for Oliver's friend Craig C., and on another occasion to a Group Anniversary.

In the spring of 2017, Oliver C., Valerie C. and Jim M. went again to the Whitby Freethinkers Discussion Three Year Group Anniversary. During the car-ride back to Peterborough they discussed the prospect of starting a new Freethinkers Discussion Group of their own in Peterborough. Oliver contacted his friend Craig C. in Whitby who forwarded the Whitby Freethinkers meeting format.

Ollie C. attended the Area 83 Spring Assembly. Ollie C. met with Joe C. along with other Secular, Agnostic and Freethinker A.A. members and GSR's from Toronto, Kingston, and Ottawa. They discussed the support and/or rejection experienced by these other groups in their respective Districts and Intergroups.

The three founding members of the new Freethinkers Discussion Group in Peterborough felt that the timing was perfect. There were several organizational meetings held on Tuesday evenings at Oliver and Valerie's home to finalize a format. Finding a hall for the meeting was the immediate challenge. Valerie searched the internet on her cell phone for a meeting hall during the meetings. Several of Jim's own attempts were fruitless. Finally, Jim located a good central location at the Mount Community Centre (formerly The Mount at Saint Joseph's Convent) at 1545 Monaghan Road, Peterborough.

The name Kawartha Freethinkers was selected for the meeting and Tuesday evening was chosen at 8:00 pm in part because there was no other A.A. discussion group on Tuesday nights in Peterborough. Copies of all the readings intended to be used were laminated and ready to hand out at the first meeting on Tuesday, May 2, 2017. A logo and format for the Kawartha Freethinkers Discussion Meeting was agreed upon and created by Valerie, printed and ready for the first meeting. A coffee maker and supplies were purchased, and Valerie said, "All we need is a coffee pot, even if we do not have a resentment, and we are all set to start our own meeting."

After a decision was made on the meeting space and the rent was paid for the month of May, 2017, the meeting particulars were forwarded to

the local DCM and PIC chair. Ollie ensured the meeting was listed on the Kawartha District website and included in the April and May announcements. Craig C. and Bob K. from the Whitby Freethinkers Discussion attended the first ever secular A.A. meeting in Peterborough on May 2, 2017 in an act of solidarity and support. The meeting attendance was an impressive 21 A.A. members. The second meeting on May 9, 2017, was equally successful with 20 members in attendance. The third meeting was held on Tuesday, May, 16th. Twenty one were in attendance.

On October 31, 2017, the Kawartha Freethinkers registered as a Closed Discussion group with GSO, Area 83 and District 86. On Tuesday, September 3, 2019, the group moved from The Mount to Activity Haven at 180 Barnardo Ave. in Peterborough.

Following the onset of the pandemic in early 2020, Activity Haven announced they were closing the meeting space which affected the Freethinker's meeting of March 17. Quickly, the group announced they were switching the meeting to the Zoom online platform starting on March 24, 2020. The Freethinkers shared their knowledge of the Zoom platform with many other Peterborough groups and members so that all meetings in Peterborough who wished to remain open online could do so. Meetings were maintained online for the balance of 2020 and into 2021 until early September when in-person meetings

## The Believers Step Study Group

started again (initially for group members only) at Activity Haven. Covid safety protocols were observed at these meetings. An increase of Covid cases in December 2021 again caused a temporary closure of in-person meetings which started again in 2022 when it was safe to do so. Throughout the pandemic there was not a meeting missed.

The group celebrated its 5 year Anniversary on 21 June, 2022 with an Open Speaker meeting. Currently, as of August 2023, the meeting averages between 12-22 members who share their experience, strength and hope with each other in an open and inclusive format. They meet on Tuesdays at 7:30 pm in Activity Haven, 180 Barnardo Ave., Peterborough, ON.



For many years the Friendly Friday group met at St. Andrew's United Church on Rubidge St. in Peterborough. In mid-2018, the Church announced that it had a conditional offer to sell the property and that it would be decommissioned and sold. This started the process of the group finding a new meeting place.

Following a group vote, the Friendly Friday group moved on Jan. 4, 2019 to a new location at the Peterborough Armoury at 220 Murray St., meeting at 8:00 pm.

A number of group members were dissatisfied with this move and continued to meet at the church and, as of Jan. 4, 2019, referred to the meeting as Friendly Friday at St. Andrew's and also met at 8:00 pm.

Eventually, however, the church building was considered sold and on Aug. 2 of 2019 the members moved to Murray St. Baptist church. They registered a new group with the A.A. General Service Office and called themselves the Believers and conducted a Step Study discussion meeting. Originally, the Believers meeting was on Friday at 7:00 pm.

As the pandemic progressed in early 2020, the meeting was closed in March and went online in June using Zoom software, meeting at 4:00 pm on Sundays and featuring a 12-Step Study.

In July, they went back to Fridays at 7:00 pm with the online Step Study meeting. In Aug. of 2022, the group met in-person on Thursdays at 7:00 pm at Murray Street Baptist church. Beginning on Feb. 2, 2023, they switched their meeting time to 5:00 pm on Thursdays. The group believes in the 12-Step approach to sobriety and do one step per meeting by breaking down the step a paragraph at a time. They find that this method helps lead to a healthy and fulfilling sobriety.

### Focus On Recovery Group

After the COVID pandemic of early 2020, the Buckhorn group was quick to go online on March 23, 2020. By Aug., 2020, the zoom meeting was referred to as the Buckhorn Online Discussion Group. Following the Buckhorn group returning to in-person meetings, the online meeting became a separate online group in Nov., 2022, called the Focus On Recovery. This group conducts a Closed Discussion Online Step Meeting on Mondays at 8:00 pm.

### Inactive Groups

In addition to the aforementioned Trent Valley, Keene and Central Groups, a number of other Groups have come and gone through the years, some of them staying active for quite a few years.

The Apsley Group was active in the 1980s, meeting at the Trinity United Church. A meeting existed in Curve Lake for a period of time circa 1979 called Last Chance and then the Curve Lake Group existed circa 1998.

In addition to the two Institutional Groups, the Hilltop and New Hope, a meeting existed in Millbrook for quite a number of years. Called the Millbrook Valley, the Group was meeting as early as 1970 in the Anglican Church Hall, but soon moved to the Municipal Hall on King St. In the 1990s the meeting moved back to St. Thomas Anglican Church Hall. Gabrielle 'Gabe' B. was a very active member both in this group and also the Institutional Groups. Other early members of this Group were Ralph W., Ron W., Tom P. and John T. Many members traveled to this Group from places like Orono, Newcastle and Oshawa.

A service meeting that existed in the latter half of the 1980s was the Hutchison Serenity Group that met in the Hutchinson Wing of the Civic Hospital. Tom R. and Teresa O'H. were active with this meeting.

The Kawartha Young Peoples Group existed for many years, starting circa 1967 on Thursday nights at the Stone School at Hunter and Rubidge. About 1972 they moved temporarily to the George St. United Church and then moved for a couple of years to All Saints Hall at Rubidge and Sherbrooke. In 1975 they moved to Knox United Church at Wolfe and Rubidge where they met until they became inactive in January of 2004. Barb L. was a long time member as was Jack L., Ernie D. and Cliff E.

Keep It Simple was a Tuesday afternoon meeting for Gay Men and Women that met circa 1983. Shki Waabang Anishnabe was a group that met on Thursdays for a couple of years circa 1998.

The Three Legacy was a Saturday night meeting that started on June 10, 1995, at the Intergroup Office. (This was a replacement meeting for a previous Saturday night meeting at the Intergroup that used an Open Discussion format, called the Seekers of Serenity.) They then moved to the Church of the Open Bible on George St. N. and subsequently to Murray St. Baptist Church in Feb., 2009. The Group was active until July, 2009.

### Inactive Institutional Meetings

The Hilltop and New Hope were both Institutional Groups within Millbrook Reformatory that met on Wednesdays.

These meetings ended when Millbrook Reformatory was replaced by Central East Correctional Centre located outside of Lindsay.

In 1974 and '75 an Institutional meeting called Crossroads was active at the Peterborough Jail. The meeting was called Peterborough Jail Institutional after that and was active until the mid-1980s.

In 1977 Kawartha House was a Halfway House operated by the Salvation Army. It initially was located on Antrim Street but then relocated to 14 Murray St. It operated until 1999.

### Women in Kawartha District A.A.

One woman stayed sober long enough to convince the first 100 members that women could also be alcoholics. According to the 2022 A.A. survey, women made up about 35% of the A.A. membership at that time.

According to Pat H.'s recording on the history of Peterborough A.A., Hazel F. was the first female member, joining the Lift Lock group in 1948 or '49. About the same time, Dorothy "Dot" B. attended meetings here, traveling from Lindsay. In Dec., 1948, the first group in Lindsay, the Kawartha group, was established with the help of A.A. members from Toronto. The first Ontario A.A. Directory in 1953 shows

Dot as a contact for the Kawartha group. The group met on Mondays at the Moose Hall. Dot was later a contact for the second group in Lindsay, the Victoria group, which met at the Red Cross on Cambridge North on Fridays.

When Bea H., a member of the Friendly Friday group, took her One Year medallion on Friday, Feb. 25, 1972 at the Lions Centre (St. Andrew's were doing their floors), she had her picture taken with a dozen other women in attendance. Six of those women had preceded Bea in the Kawartha District at that time. They were, in order of sobriety; Helen R., Marilyn W., Rita H., Nancy B., June F., Margo H. and then Bea.

Other early female members were Patricia A., Ruth C., Shirley C., Thelma C., Yvonne H., Lillian S., Molly M., Sylvia W., Imelda W., Gayle M., Belle R., Elizabeth 'Liz' B. and Blanche C.

Helen R. was an early member who achieved over 50 years of sobriety and helped countless members along the way. Along with Helen M. and Helen D., they formed what was affectionately known as "the 3 Helens."

Ruth C., Kay B., Rita H. and Marlene G. were very active at our Intergroup Office as was Bernie J. They helped carry the message to many.

Currently, there is a Women's group, Seeing Is Believing, which is a Closed

Discussion meeting on Wednesday afternoons at 3:00 pm at the Intergroup Office at 625 Cameron St. in Peterborough.

Although no longer active, a women's meeting had existed on Tuesday evenings at the Intergroup Office for quite a number of years. It was a Ladies 12 Step Discussion meeting in the 1990s and a Wake Up Women's Discussion in the 2000s and then Serenity Now, which was a women's Closed Discussion group starting in the late 2000s. A Women's 12 & 12 Discussion meeting also existed for a time on Thursday evenings in Peterborough.

Female members have always been active in our Peterborough Conferences, starting with Audrey G., who was a member of the very first Central East Area Conference Committee in 1962. She also chaired the Recovery panel at that Conference and took part in several subsequent Peterborough Conferences. Audrey recently celebrated 60 years in A.A. at her home group in Whitby. Although now deceased, she attended meetings well into her 90s.

Dot B. from Lindsay chaired a Spiritual panel at the 1963 Conference. Holly M. from Detroit, Michigan, was the Banquet Speaker at the 1966 Peterborough Conference. Helen R. was a member of the 1968 Central East Area Conference Committee and was active in many others. Bea H.

worked on the Registration Desk at our Conferences for many years.

Although we don't have a complete list, female members have chaired a number of Conferences such as Linda T., George-Ann B., Elizabeth 'Liz' B., who chaired a couple of Conferences including our 50th in 2011, Ruth W., Terri M., Sandra B., Jan McG. and Jan MacA.

### Kawartha District A. A. and the Pandemic

In January of 2020, there was a health-threatening outbreak caused by a then mysterious virus in Wuhan, China. Soon after, this mysterious outbreak quickly spread around the world. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. During March and April, shutdowns occurred as Hospitals became overwhelmed. Schools closed, sports venues closed, borders closed, travel was restricted and attempts were made to "flatten the curve" of the number of cases by implementing masks and social distancing. A.A., long known for face-to-face meetings with the customary handshakes, was facing a huge challenge to carry its message.

In Kawartha District A.A., closures happened quickly. The March 12, 2020 District Announcements made no mention of meeting closures. However, just 4 days later, on March 16, a Special District Announcement made

mention of closures and was followed later that same day by a follow-up Announcement advising that the Lakefield, Freethinkers, Hope in Recovery, Wednesday 12 & 12, Stonewall, Hospital, North End, South End, Friendly Friday, and Seeing Is Believing meetings were all at least temporarily canceled. In a hint of things to come, the Announcement urged members to "keep spreading the message of A.A. through phone calls, emails, online meetings and face-time chats." A further Special Announcement on March 17 extended the list to include the Freedom group and Road to Recovery meetings.

Also on March 17, a list of Online AA Meetings was circulated by the District Secretary/Registrar which included links to the General Service Office, Area 83 and our local website. Also included were links to Speaker Tape websites and Speaker tape apps available through the Google Play and the Apple app stores.

The first announced meeting on the Zoom platform was the Home Away From Home Group meeting announced on March 18 by Kathy M. with a speaker meeting on Friday at 7:00 pm and a discussion meeting on Monday at 7:00 pm. On March 15, a Zoom training session was announced by our Area 83 Delegate and was circulated to District GSRs. The training session happened on Saturday, March 21. Almost immediately, further A.A. meetings on

the Zoom platform cropped up in our District, hastened by the announced closure of our Kawartha District Intergroup office on March 22. The first District business meeting to be held on Zoom was in April of 2020. A list of District online meetings dated March 23, 2020, being held on Zoom totalled 16 and covered every day of the week with at least one meeting. By April 2, this list had expanded to 17, by April 21 through June 4 the list totaled 32 online meetings.

### **So, what is Zoom?**

So, what is Zoom? Zoom is an online audio and video web conferencing platform. It took on new importance during the pandemic and became a favourite for A.A. meetings. Not without growing pains, however, as early online A.A. meetings were plagued with so-called zoom-bombers, or unwanted intruders. This was gradually solved by the use of passwords in addition to the meeting id and taking control of who could enter the meeting room. Also created were a whole host of anonymity issues as some members seemed to think nothing of appearing on the world wide web using their visage and full name. The use of passwords and controlling who could enter the room also helped with this issue. The amazing part of the pandemic and A.A. is that some members actually attended their first meetings and got sober without meeting another alcoholic face to face,

except digitally! It is, of course, easy to exchange phone numbers privately on Zoom using the chat option. Some members actually attended A.A. online Zoom meetings from a Treatment Centre! Members have achieved a one year medallion totally online. Many larger functions, such as the Area 83 Service Information Day and the Founders Day celebration of June, 2020 were held virtually on Zoom.

By August, 2020, restricted openings were being allowed in Ontario. On Aug. 26, the Mid-Day group started back in-person at Intergroup under the restrictions of wearing masks, using sanitizer and social distancing, which limited the attendance in the main room to 15. Under these circumstances, the group held a Big Book study meeting.

On September 8 there were still 32 online District meetings. Another Special Announcement came out on September 20, 2020 that, because of a decrease in attendance numbers permitted by provincial regulations, the Intergroup would be closed to in-person meetings indefinitely. Volunteers would regularly check the phones for messages and it was possible to phone the Intergroup and arrange to purchase chips, medallions and literature. Large events such as the National A.A. Archives Workshop were held online via Zoom. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that outside meetings were arranged by individuals. Such meetings were held



in Nicholls Oval park in Peterborough and ran from spring until fall, when the weather got too cold for outside meetings. Online events continued such as the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual GTA (Toronto) Archives Breakfast in November and our own Virtual Candle Light Memorial meeting on December 20. All in all, the year 2020 ended with some grief and a lot of gratitude. As of December 31, there were 31 online Zoom A.A. meetings in Kawartha District.

The pandemic lingered through 2021 with virus variants posing a problem. As of June, 2021, the Intergroup office was still closed except for picking up supplies. Outside meetings in Nicholls Oval park started up again on Saturday mornings.

Starting in July of 2021, the Intergroup began to open again on a restricted basis, as in wearing a mask and sitting 6 ft. apart. The Liftlock group returned to face-to-face meetings in July. During July through October, several groups returned to in-person meetings, many initially meeting with their group members only. The Stonewall group moved from Activity Haven to Friday night at Intergroup on September 29, just in time to have Barrie C. celebrate his 25-year medallion. As another sign of the times, the December Memorial Candle Light Meeting was presented as a hybrid, meaning both in-person and on Zoom. The Memorial Meeting of late 2021 was extra somber because of the loss of Larry D. to COVID. Larry was a long-time member

of the Lakefield United group. Sadly, Larry's wife was also a victim of COVID.

December 27, 2021 heralded yet another shutdown of our Intergroup building because of rising caseloads caused by the omicron variant and tightening provincial regulations. The January, 2022 District Announcements reiterated that Intergroup was closed temporarily and that some other meetings outside of Intergroup were also closed. Some groups went back to online Zoom meetings.

The February Announcements stated that "Intergroup is open!" and groups started filtering back to in-person meetings. It certainly was a busy time for the District Committee members, especially the Intergroup chair, Secretary/Registrar and also the Webmaster with a whole mixture of in-person, online and hybrid meetings and with changes coming in fast and furiously. Kudos to all those involved!

**Kudos to all those involved!**

Over the next few months, the situation improved and A.A. gently started to settle in to the new normal. However, the loss of a long-time member of the Liberty group, Dennis H., to COVID made members aware that the danger had not entirely passed. The District GSR meeting continued on Zoom throughout 2022 as did the Area 83 Assemblies.

Currently, as of Feb., 2024, there are 20 registered groups in Kawartha District holding 28 meetings. Additionally, there are 16 service meetings for a total of 44 meetings per week. Of these, 17 are online meetings, 26 are in-person meetings (including 1 that is a hybrid online and in-person meeting. Despite all the challenges, A.A. is alive and well in Kawartha District.

**A. A. is alive and well ...**

## What is A.A.?

**Alcoholics Anonymous** is an international fellowship of men and women who have had a drinking problem. It is nonprofessional, self-supporting, multiracial, apolitical, and available almost everywhere. There are no age or education requirements.

Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about his or her drinking problem.

## Contact Information for A.A.

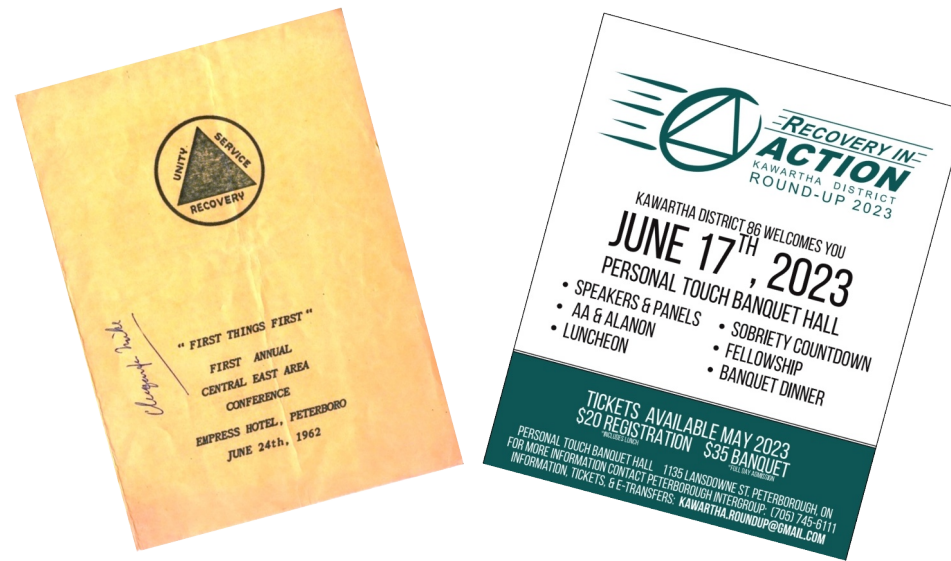
### Contact for more information:

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625 Cameron St.  
Peterborough, Ontario K9J 3Z9

705-745-6111

[https://peterboroughaa.org/  
district86aa@gmail.com](https://peterboroughaa.org/district86aa@gmail.com)

## Appendix – Kawartha District Conferences



Conf	Date	Chair	Location	Theme
60th	June 17, 2023	Roger O.	Personal Touch Banquet Hall	Recovery In Action
59th	May 28, 2022	Jason A.	Personal Touch Banquet Hall	Together Again
X	2021	COVIDCancelled		
X	2020	COVIDCancelled		
58th	June 22, 2019	Cathy C.	Personal Touch Banquet Hall	Unity
	June 22, 23, 2018	Gary C.	Evinrude Centre	Let Gratitude be Your Attitude
	June 23, 24, 2017	Leonard B.	Evinrude Centre	Past, Present, Future
55th	June 24, 25, 2016	Jan McG.	Evinrude Centre	You Are Not Alone
	June 26, 27, 2015	Leonard B.	Evinrude Centre	Celebrate The Miracle
	June 20, 21, 2014	Jan MacA.	Evinrude Centre	Let Gratitude be your Attitude
	June 28, 29, 2013	Jim G.	Evinrude Centre	Acceptance Is The Key
	June 29, 30, 2012	Sandra B.	Evinrude Centre	New Beginning – New Life

## Appendix – Kawartha District Conferences

<b>Conf.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Theme</b>
50th	2011	Elizabeth B.	Evinrude Centre	Memories
	June 25, 26, 2010	Dave U/Fred G.	Evinrude Centre	A Vision of Hope
	June 26, 27, 2009	Larry F.	Evinrude Centre	Keeping the AA Vision Alive
	June 27, 28, 2008	Terri M.	Evinrude Centre	Unity In Numbers
	June 29, 30, 2007	Joe H.	Evinrude Centre	Courage To Change
45th	June 30, July 1, 2006	Bob O.	Evinrude Centre	Pass It On
	June 17, 18, 2005	Gary C.	Evinrude Centre	A New Freedom
	June 18, 19, 2004	Larry F.	Holy Cross S. School	The A.A. Journey Continues
	June 13, 14, 2003	Ken G.	Holy Cross S. School	Sobriety, not a Destination; but a Journey
	June 14, 15, 2002	Jim R.	Holy Cross S. School	Keep It Simple
40th	June 22, 23, 2001	Ruth W.	Baker's Hill Banquet Centre	In the Solution
	June 2, 3, 2000	Fred G.	Holy Cross S. School	Walk the Walk, Talk the Talk
	June 18, 19, 1999	Elizabeth B.	Baker's Hill Banquet Centre	Our Primary Purpose
	June 26, 27, 1998	Roy F.	St. Peter's S. School	Unity - A Message for All to Carry
	June 20, 21, 22, 1997	Bernie S.	Trentwinds	Back to the Basics
35th	June 21, 22, 23, 1996	Jack B.	Rock Haven	Preserving Our Fellowship - Our Challenge
	June 23, 24, 25, 1995	Dennis M.	Rock Haven	Traditions Use Them or Lose Them
	June 24, 25, 26, 1994	Jim R.	Rock Haven	Keep It Simple
	June 18, 19, 20, 1993	Ken F.	Trent University	A New Beginning
	June 19, 20, 21, 1992	George-Ann B.	Rock Haven	Gratitude - The Path To Recovery
30th	June 14, 15, 16, 1991	Bob O.	Rock Haven	Courage To Change
	June 22, 23, 24, 1990	Barrie L.	Rock Haven	Together We Can Make It
	June 16, 17, 18, 1989	Linda T.	Rock Haven	Steps To Freedom
	June 17, 18, 19, 1988		Rock Haven	Surrender
	June 19, 20, 21, 1987		Rock Haven	There is a Better Way

## Appendix – Kawartha District Conferences

<b>Conf.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Theme</b>
25th	1986			
	June 21, 22, 23, 1985		Rock Haven	The Joy of Sobriety
	June 22, 23, 24, 1984	Bob O.	Rock Haven	A New Beginning
	June 24,25, 26, 1983		Rock Haven	Keep It Simple
	June 4, 5, 6, 1982		Rock Haven Motel	Courage to Change
20th	June 19,20,21, 1981		Rock Haven Motel	Love In Sobriety
	June 20, 21,22, 1980		Rock Haven Motel	Sobriety - Key to Serenity
	1979			
	June 23, 24, 25, 1978		Rock Haven Motel	This Is AA
	June 24, 25, 26, 1977		Rock Haven Motel	Seeing Is Believing
15th	June 18, 19, 20, 1976		Rock Haven Motel	AA The Twentieth Century Miracle
	June 20,21, 22, 1975		Rock Haven Motel	Finding The Key
	June 14, 15, 16, 1974		Rock Haven Motel	A Search for the Truth
	June 1, 2, 3, 1973		Empress Hotel	Today Is The First Day Of The Rest Of Your Life
	1972		Empress Hotel	
10th	June 18, 19, 20, 1971	Murray O.	Rock Haven Motel	Learning To Live
	May 22,23,24, 1970	Al R.	Rock Haven Motel	Sobriety and Beyond
	June 20, 21, 22, 1969	Pat H.	Empress Hotel	A New Way of Life
	June 21, 22, 23, 1968	Ivan P.	Empress Hotel	No Graduation From AA
	June 24, 25, 1967	John K.	Empress Hotel	The Power Of Example
5th	June 18, 19, 1966	Lew D.	Empress Hotel	Understanding Thru A.A.
	Sept. 12, 1965	Earl E.	Empress Hotel	Remember When
	June 14, 1964		Empress Hotel	Our Primary Purpose
	June 16, 1963		Empress Hotel	Keep It Simple
1st	June 24,1962	George T.	Empress Hotel	First Things First