

NewsGram

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Montreal 1992

Le Premier Congres Internationale

a landmark decision at the 1990 World Service Conference has awarded the bid for the 1992 World Service Convention to Montreal, Canada. Cheers and high spirits filled the room as the overwhelming majority vote was announced by WSC Chairperson, Lucy B. This milestone event will mark the first gathering in our history that confirms Cocaine Anonymous as a TRULY international organization.

In honor of the WSC decision, Newsgram requested the following interview with Roberto V., the colorful and passionate Quebecois who represents the Canadian fellowship in World Service. It was his sparkling presentation and dogged determination which won the confidence of the WSC delegation.

NG: How did C.A. in Canada come into being - how was it born?

RV: Two or three Canadian Narcotics Anonymous members had gone to L.A. for a visit and heard about Cocaine Anonymous. Needless to say, it was just what they were looking for. They brought it back and held their first C.A. meeting in August, 1986 in Montreal.

NG: In terms of numbers, how large is the C.A. Universe in Canada today?

RV: Total numbers - just over 100 meetings in Canada: 80 in Montreal, of which only 16 are English speaking meetings, 15 in Ottawa and 8 in Toronto and Vancouver.

NG: What about the rate of growth - do you experience a strong need to

extend the program?

RV: Membership has doubled in the last year. We have one new meeting in Quebec which could easily grow to over 100 in the next year.

NG: What is the general timbre of C.A. in Canada - what are your meetings like?

RV: We have a few meetings that are quiet and reserved, usually the Rehab Center meetings. But the rest are CRAZY - our people are FULL OF

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ENERGY! Why? First, that's just the way we are. Secondly, we believe that the essence of the Program is within the STEPS; that the meetings are merely support. We don't take ourselves seriously, but we take the Program seriously. We have the regular speaker, participation and step-study meetings like you do, but we also have "couples meetings" on Saturday and Sunday nights. The couples, usually one addict and one co-anon, need an alternate place to go on weekends and this is one of our answers to that problem. We

have 2 speakers, 2 leaders, (one couple each), and the content is usually geared to pertinent issues within those relationships. From Thursday through Sunday we have 3 or 4 "bars sobre" (sober bars), where people get together and dance, share, party and have fun without drugs or alcohol. We have bilingual meetings and 4 co-anon meetings in our area. Montreal area also gives out free chips, literature and starter kits to new meetings. We do everything we can to support C.A. in our country. AND WE REALLY ENJOY OURSELVES DOING IT!!

NG: Tell us about the format of the French-speaking meetings.

RV: After the Traditions and Steps are read, we have what we call a "12-step rap": A designated person gets up and gives a "rap" to the newcomers, explaining what happens at the meeting and what to expect. He welcomes them and tries to make them feel comfortable. We have about 5-10 newcomers at every meeting, and we want them to know what's going on. I want you to understand, we are a very warm, demonstrative people, the French Canadians. Very expressive. So, then we go on to the GSR report. Then we have the speaker, the 7th tradition, chips and birthdays. We have a different person who gives out the newcomer chips, and that commitment changes every month in order to get people involved. Then we have participation.

NG: What about the French-speaking population? You now have French chips and literature, *n'est-ce pas*? Has this had a profound effect on the fellowship?

RV: The Big Book and the 12&12 were translated from the very beginning. It was a necessary task

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Why are we here?

The following statement of purpose was approved at the last World Service Board of Trustees meeting.

"Our primary purpose is to stay free from cocaine and all other mind-altering substances and to help others to achieve the same freedom."

which was lovingly done by some local members. The French chips made us all very proud and happy. It has made us feel more a "part of" the C.A. international family, and we are very grateful.

NG: Tell me about your plans for conventions and other C.A. "support activities".

RV: Naturally, the biggest event is our bid for the 1992 World Service Convention. That will be an enormously exciting experience for us. As for our local events: About every two months, we have picnics, dances, snowball parties, white-water rafting, "spaghetti day" (kind of like Thanksgiving), and something we call *Cabane Sucre*, or "sugaring-off" parties. This is where we have a meeting and a dance which includes a meal in celebration of the maple-sugar harvest. In addition to the regular food, we serve lots of dishes which contain the maple sugar and the "piece de resistance" is an unbelievable dessert made from maple sugar. We are continually looking to do more and more events for the entire family.

NG: Do you interact with or have the support of other 12 step programs in the U.S. or Canada?

RV: The others helped us out a bit in the beginning, but the C.A. World Service Office has been our strongest support and connection to the fellowship which we hold close to our hearts.

NG: Is there much interaction between the members of C.A. Canada and C.A., USA - have you exchanged speakers or participated in events?

RV: We MUST work closely with World Service of C.A. Everything that is done in Montreal is done with the full approval of the CAWSO. We also continue to seek further guidance for structure and the betterment of service to Cocaine Anonymous and its participants. As far as the exchange of speakers, we haven't had the honor of this experience yet. We certainly look forward to more interaction with individual members who can share their experience, strength and hope with us.

NG: What do you see as the the future of C.A. in Canada?

RV: The fellowship is growing at such an enormous rate that it's almost perplexing. The need for C.A. is widespread. We wish to carry it from shore to shore. Everyone in Canada wants to be helpful: Our main purpose is to be of service. And the 1992 WSC Convention will be an event to be remembered. We are already working hard to organize the most exciting and unusual convention possible. We are hoping to get permission to hold it around the first of July in order to coincide with our Canadian Independence Day celebrations. The Canadian fellowship is extremely grateful and excited for this event.

— Nancy T.
NewsGram Editor

"Keep Calling Back"

Lines of Communication

I recently went through a misunderstanding with my sponsor due to a lack of communication. I had been calling her and leaving message after message, to no avail. Normally, I do see her once a week at our home group, but lately I've been "on the road" and meeting up with some of you at C.A. meetings in different parts of the country.

Since I hadn't seen or heard back from her in several weeks, I got all worked up about it in my mind. "I'm not getting what I need". "She started smoking again, anyway". "I haven't talked about the steps with her in quite a while". "She doesn't love me anymore". "She is favoring her other sponsees". I went on and on.

To make a long story short, we finally met up at home group and found that her answering machine is broken. Within three days, she fixed it and actually called me! (I'm from the school of sobriety that teaches me to initiate the call to my sponsor and not the other way around!) What a delight to know that I am loved and that someone is "here for me" again.

Chair's Corner

Can you say CHANGE? Well, we at the World Service Office certainly can!! The Board of Directors has really gone through a lot in recent months. First, I would like to say farewell to Helene H., our former chair. The experience and support that she brought to the Board has certainly not been forgotten and I really miss working with her.

The 1990 Conference went very well and the representation of the C.A. areas across the country and Canada was the best yet. It was very exciting to participate in this year. At this Conference, I announced that the WSO was looking for a new board Director. I received many fine resumes from which we will fill the position. I also announced that we were looking for a paid office manager for the WSO to do bookkeeping, management, inventory, etc. We didn't get any feedback on this request at all. We recently put an ad in the L.A. Times and some responses have come in, but the job hasn't been filled yet (in case any of you are interested!)

Shortly after the Conference, the Secretary on the Board, Bunny B., also resigned. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her service to the WSO Board. We will miss you, Bunny! The resumes we received at the Conference came in handy for our search in replacing her, as well. We currently do not have a full Board and we still need a new office manager, but we believe wholeheartedly that our Higher Power is working out "the plan" for us and all we need to do is stay open to it.

I would also like to congratulate Bill Z., the Vice-Chairman of the Board, who was selected at this last Conference as the WSO Trustee. I am very excited about watching this new Board develop and "the plan" unfolding. I feel certain that there will be a lot of positive results. Thank you for letting me be of service and allowing me to participate in "giving it back".

In love and service, Pamela K.

I'm sharing this story for a reason: I think this happens often when dealing with World Services in general, and also within the committees between World Service conferences. My new "job", if you will, is to "keep calling back" and to keep those lines of communication open between groups, districts, areas, regions, and yes, countries. As far as I'm concerned, this has always been an obligation in all areas of my recovery, not just in service.

C.A. is growing every day. We are no longer a fellowship of small areas with little sobriety. Our service structure is probably the most up-to-date of all the 12-Step fellowships, with one exception. Our delegates are carrying the message of C.A. World Services back to the groups, and addicts are listening. "We're here, we're free, and we're one." That's the message.

I love the anecdote about the old game of telephone tag. One person says something and whispers in another's ear and on around the circle it goes. By the time the story reaches the last person, the original reality is so distorted it's funny - hardly recognizable. When it comes to C.A., there's nothing funny about losing the original message. Listening is the "art of the 90's", so they say. I personally

have worked on this one, and it's not easy - but it's simple.

Let's reach out, communicate and listen to what each other is saying. All of our groups have a lot of experience, strength, and hope to share with one another. World Services is HERE to serve those groups. Let it happen, in God's time. We've come a very long way in a very short time. Thank you, God! The Conference is an excellent forum for this type of exchange, but I see it even at Area Service Meetings between committees. If we spend more time loving one another and listening to one another, there will be less time for telephone tag.

Thanks for allowing me to be of service to C.A.

*- Debbie Breed
Trustee at Large*

Pearls of Wisdom

Protecting the Fellowship with Liability Insurance

as Cocaine Anonymous keeps growing and growing, (at last count, our worldwide growth rate was almost one new meeting every day), it seems appropriate that we also grow in ways to better

serve and protect the members, groups and fellowship overall. One of the ways to do this is to make sure our different activities are covered by adequate liability insurance. With liability insurance, the group can be assured of being protected should something happen during an event which might lead to a lawsuit.

In the early days of Cocaine Anonymous, our name alone caused us great problems in getting anyone in the insurance industry to even talk to us. Now more and more of our members are finding insurance agents/companies who are willing to write us insurance protection.

The World Service Board of Trustees urges all fellowships to obtain insurance for their various activities (e.g. dances, conventions, and any other service or fun/fundraising activities).

While some of the fellowships have found insurance to be far more reasonable if they "band together" (several areas join together & purchase the same policy), you should consider that by doing this, it may cause all the of the groups to be held legally responsible for the acts of one specific group.

If you do not currently hold liability insurance, consider this at your next service meeting. If you have any questions regarding this, ask your regional Trustee for details.

– Very Truly Yours,
Cocaine Anonymous World Services
Board of Trustees

Bill Saw It- Now we can too!

Cocaine Anonymous recently received permission from A.A. World Services to make use of a pertinent segment from the book, "As Bill Sees It": Page 67

THOUSANDS OF "FOUNDERS"

"While I thank God that I was privileged to be an early member of A.A., I honestly wish that the word 'founder' could be eliminated from the A.A. vocabulary.

When you get right down to it, everyone who has done any amount of successful Twelfth Step work is bound to be the founder of a new life for other alcoholics."

C.A. Trustees applied for permission to use this copyrighted material in hopes that it's significance would shed some light on the controversial issue of "foundership". Hotly debated and over-publicized in recent months, claims of "C.A. Founding Fathers" have **no place** in either the media or within our 12-step fellowships.

Debbie B., Trustee-at-Large, reports that official word came in just last month from AAWS in New York granting permission to use the quote. Expressing excitement and gratitude on behalf of the entire Board, she enthusiastically submitted the excerpt for publication. Ms. B. encourages all C.A. members to refer to the humble words of Bill W. when confronted with the issue of C.A.'s origin.

AAWS's only stipulation is that the source and page number be quoted in usage of their copyrighted material. Contact the World Service office if you have any questions.

Information Numbers

Canada

Calgary (403) 245-0750
Montreal (514) 849-9999
Ottawa (613) 776-1088
Toronto (416) 444-7042

Alabama

..... (205) 320-9998

Arizona

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Missouri (314) 768-2544

Nebraska (402) 978-8881

New Hampshire (603) 889-6681

New Mexico (505) 984-9207

New York (212) 496-4266

North Carolina (919) 333-1054

Ohio

Cleveland (216) 586-9500

Toledo (419) 249-0543

Youngstown (216) 783-1833

Oklahoma (918) 660-8665

Oklahoma City (405) 949-5060

Tulsa (918) 660-8665

Oregon (503) 256-1666

Pennsylvania (215) 270-3036

South Carolina (803) 686-8093

Tennessee

Memphis (901) 766-9798

Texas

Austin (512) 397-6700

Houston (713) 668-6822

Utah (801) 488-2151

Washington (206) 722-6117

Washington DC (301) 530-3020

Wisconsin (414) 771-8898

Identity Crisis!

In the spirit of unity and identity, the Public Information Committee of the World Service Office has proposed that Cocaine Anonymous adopt a slogan. The intention is to look for something "catchy" to identify our fellowship to the public.

The P.I. Committee wants YOUR PARTICIPATION in this endeavor. After the results of this poll have been calculated, the results will be presented to the fellowship for a final vote to elect the official slogan.

Please fill out the attached form and return it AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!
Please check your top TWO choices.

☐ I Can't. We Can.

☐ C.A. – The Solution.

☐ We're Free.

☐ We're Here and We're Free

Other Suggestions: _____

Please Mail To:

WSO Public Information Committee
3740 Overland Avenue, Suite G
Los Angeles, CA 90034