



12 Steps to Freedom – Group History

The 12 Steps to Freedom Group, like many groups, started as a meeting. The idea of holding a morning 12 Step meeting in Welland was hatched at the Penny Lane Ostrich Farm in Port Robinson. Gary L. had taken a van load of newly recovering alcoholics to the Beach Group on a Friday morning. The Beach Group has a 12 Steps & 12 Traditions format and Linita T-G. thought this was a great idea to replicate in Welland. While chewing on some ostrich pepperettes, she asked about the process for setting up such a meeting and felt someone should take the initiative to do so. Gary L. outlined a suggested procedure in starting a meeting, and in the same breath, suggested that she might be just the person to do so. So she did. She checked with various churches in the downtown Welland area that would meet the need for such a centralized meeting and finally decided on a Thursday morning at the Holy Trinity Anglican Church - 77 Division St. @ 10:00 am [Parking lot side door].

She enlisted [read: took as hostage] the help of Jim S. to act as treasurer, four others agreed to show up on a regular basis to help establish the meeting. Niagara District Intergroup provided a start up kit; the meeting was added to the district meeting list, and the first meeting was held on Dec. 5, 2002. Linita remained the driving force, along with Melissa K. & Ray F. for a couple of years. Then Gui/Guy J. & Ron L. continued to set up the meeting – attendance had ballooned from 4-5 per meeting, to about 25-30 on a regular basis. During the spring/summer of 2006 several regular attendees felt it might be time for a morning A.A. group in Welland. Experience showed that as some of us get older our night driving skills deteriorate, the bus system in Welland stops running in the evening, and some AA members when they move to retirement/senior's residences often stop attending their home group.

On Jan. 5, 2006 we had our first meeting as a group with 22 A.A. members in attendance. The first six members signed our new book on that day: Gui/Guy J., Kevin S., Josie L., Marilyn W., Gary L., & Bert B. – seven if you count Gui/Guy as two. Since 2009 we have provided a break off meeting for those interested in learning about the foundation steps of our program of recovery.

Submitted: Feb. 2011 by Gary L.