



DRY TIMES

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF ARID GROUP HOMES NIAGARA – FALL 2004

FACTS & NEWS

BED NIGHTS:

Sep: 305–73 percent full
Oct: 373–86 percent full
Nov: 367–87 percent full
Budget: 86 percent occupancy

ARID IMPROVEMENTS:

Our meeting hall will be enlarged and refurbished, thanks to contributions from local businesses. All work will be completed in early 2005.

ANNUAL DINNER:

Our annual dinner, silent auction, and dance was held on October 29 this year. More than 150 tickets were sold and 112 attended, raising \$1,126.

AA MEETINGS at ARID:

Thorold: Wednesday 10:30 a.m.
Ft. Erie: Wednesday 10:30 a.m.
Thursday 8:00 p.m.

DRY HUMOUR DEPT.



A drunken man gets on the bus late one night, staggers up the aisle, and sits next to an elderly woman. She looks the man up and down and says, "I've got news for you—you're going straight to Hell!"

The man jumps up out of his seat and shouts, "Good heavens, I'm on the wrong bus!"

HE WAS DYING FOR A DRINK



Like many alcoholics, Al V was first fingered by his spouse. Worried about his binge drinking eight years ago, she prodded him to try AA. "I went to some

meetings, but not willingly," he told *Dry Times* recently. "Arrived late, left early. Not a good recipe for success."

Al's drinking continued for another two years—to the point where he found himself locked out of the house. At the time he and his wife had been married 14 years and had three kids, all under 10. "It wasn't a good week," he recalls. "The car dealership where I worked was set to close on Friday. So I suddenly found myself with no home, no family, no job and no car."

The combination forced him to try AA again. After five days in detox, he spent a couple of months in a recovery home, attending day treatment during the second month. "I figured I'd get back

into our house if I cleaned up." It worked, but his homecoming was eventful. "In one week, I graduated from day treatment, got a new job—a good job—and lost my father-in-law."

Al stayed sober through that week and the next 10 months. But still he was no model of recovery. "I never joined a group, didn't get a sponsor. Really made no investment in the program," he said. "Eventually I stopped going to meetings, and four or five months later I picked up." Al had heard about premeditated slips in day treatment, and his fit the bill. "I could feel it coming. We went to church one Sunday and then had friends over. At some

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Seasons Greetings!

Greetings on behalf of Arid's Board and Advisory Committee. So far in 2004, 68 residents have benefited from the opportunity to recover at Arid. We are currently at full occupancy in both the Thorold and Fort Erie homes.

TRILLIUM GRANT AWARDED

We are very pleased to report that Arid has been awarded a \$71,500 Trillium Foundation grant, the result of an excellent effort on the part of staff and volunteers.

The grant is earmarked for a number of purposes, including major foundation repairs at our Fort Erie home, other capital improvements in Fort Erie and Thorold, administration and strategic planning.

THANK YOU PARTNERS

The Trillium evaluation committee was very impressed by the contributions of our 28 Arid Partners. Part of the Trillium funding is dependent on our ability to expand this program to 100 partners over the next three years. Please go to page 2 to see how you can help.

My job was made enjoyable by the efforts of all who volunteered their time and talents during this past year. Thank you for your help!

Sincerely, Carl Johnson
Arid Board Chair

— continued over

point I realized I was going to get drunk. Sure enough, as soon as the company left, I went out, bought a bottle of sherry and drank it.”

Then came four years of that special Hell known to toppers as ‘controlled drinking’. “Somehow I managed to hide it most of the time,” Al recalled. “But every year I’d have at least one really bad weekend. Labour Day was usually disastrous.”

By October 2003—after a typical Labour Day performance—Al’s wife had had it again. He’d managed two car accidents in one week and found himself locked out once more. After a third mishap, sliding off the road and down an embankment, he found himself in a cheap motel, trudging back and forth to a convenient liquor store.

“It’s hard, looking back, to think how low I’d got,” he said, shaking his head. “It had rained for several days, so I was always wet. One morning I showed up to buy my first bottle and had to wait an hour because daylight savings had ended. Another day I remember having chest pains and hoping I was dying of a heart attack.”



Finally, with the help of a friend, Al made it back to detox. This time he was steered to Arid House. “Arid was the best thing that could have happened for me,” he told us. “I was off work for four weeks and stayed at the Ft. Erie house. Then I moved to the Thorold house and was able to return to work.”

Al credits Arid with letting him get back to work while providing support and structure. “The people at Arid were really helpful and approachable,” he said. “They understood I needed a balance between work and AA. They insisted I attend three or four meetings a week—which by this point I was more than willing to do—and let me feel useful by taking along other residents.”

This past October, Al celebrated a year of sobriety at his home group in St. Catharines. He has reunited with his family and is doing his best to make amends for the time lost to drinking. No longer in the car business, he now works in the city’s hospitals, where he shares his recovery story with those who can benefit from it.

“I owe a lot to Arid,” he said. “Thank God it was there for me.”



Arid Gave Him a Chance

Most people get their start living at Arid, but Tom says working there changed his life.

By 43, it looked like Tom V’s life was washed up. He’d been to three treatment centers, but had never been able to stay clean and sober. Now his employer of 18 years had fired him and he was headed to jail—not for the first time. The year was 1990.

Tom (no relation to Al V, whose story leads this issue) did his time and managed to get into another treatment program. A chance encounter there got him fired up about AA.

“This guy exuded confidence,” recalled Tom. “I really wanted what he had.” The man’s advice to Tom was simple: Join a group, get a sponsor, go to meetings. “I’d heard it all before, of course. But this time I took it to heart. I really had nothing else to do.”

After six months on the outside and a year clean and sober, Tom was approached to work at Arid. “In those days, some residents needed 24/7 supervision,” he said. “So I worked the graveyard shift. Helped keep the place tidy and lent a hand where I could.”

Tom credits Arid with helping to set him straight. “I wouldn’t be the person I am today without it,” he said. “The fact that people were willing to trust me at that time in my life was very important.”

A couple of years later Tom was able to win back his old job. Today, he manages part of that organization and is a valued employee. But he stayed connected to Arid, serving as an active board member for 11 years, before retiring last year.

“Arid’s not a free ride to sobriety,” Tom said, looking back. “It’s a temporary safety net for guys trying to get well. And it sure helped me—even though I never lived there.”

Join the Cause: Become an Arid Partner

A great way to support Arid is to Partner with us. We started the Arid Partner Program to help cover operating shortfalls caused by declining Bingo revenues. Every dollar we collect goes to providing a safe supportive place where alcoholics and addicts can start their road to recovery with dignity.

Becoming a partner is easy—simply agree to contribute \$1 a day (less than the cost of a small coffee) to Arid Group Homes. Your commitment is especially important right now. Our Trillium Grant is



partly contingent on signing up 100 partners over the next three years—so every new partnership contribution is effectively matched by Trillium funding.

Individuals and businesses are eligible to become partners, and the contribution can be made as a one-time gift or as monthly debits to your Visa or MasterCard account.

Want to know more? Just call or email us (see below for contact information) and we’ll have someone get in touch. Your contribution will help save lives and build a better community.

ARID GROUP HOMES NIAGARA is a Canadian Registered Charity 0612085-57-16 • www.aridhomes.org

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FT. ERIE HOME: 89 Queen Street • Fort Erie ON L2A 1T9 • 905-871-7041 • arid2@becon.org • Contact: Ken MacKenzie

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