



Alcoholics Anonymous
(705)725-8682 BARRIE AND AREA INTERGROUP

www.barrieaa.com

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Contact us

www.barrieaa.com

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Barrie & Area Intergroup Newsletter May 2010



Next
Barrie & Area
Intergroup Meeting
Friday May 7th at
7:00 pm
Central United
Church
54 Ross Street,
Barrie

Georgian Bay South
District 8
District Committee
Meeting
Sunday, May 9th at
1:30 pm
St. Georges
Anglican Church
corner of Burton Ave
and Granville St, from
1:30 to 3:00 pm

Recovery Prayer

This prayer is based on a section of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous:
Thank you for keeping me straight yesterday. Please help me stay straight today.

For the next twenty-four hours, I pray for knowledge of Your will for me only, and the power to carry that through.

Please free my thinking of self-will, self-seeking, dishonesty, and wrong motives.

Send me the right thought, word, or action. Show me what my next step should be. In times of doubt and indecision, please send Your inspiration and guidance.

I ask that You might help me work through all my problems, to Your glory and honor.

This prayer is a recovery prayer. It can take us through any situation. If we pray this prayer, we can trust it has been answered with a yes.

Today, I will trust that God will do for me what I cannot do for myself. I will do my part - working the Twelve Steps and letting God do the rest.

One Day at a Time!

Set aside Prayer

God, please help me set aside everything I think I know about myself, my disease, these steps, and especially You;

For an open mind and a new experience with myself, my disease, these steps, and especially You. Thank you.

Upcoming Events!

For more detailed listing of events, Members Birthdays & Updated Meeting List

www.barrieaa.com

May, 2010

Name	Anniversary	Sober Date	To Be Celebrated	Meeting
PETER B	40 YEARS	MAY16	June 4th	GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY



Happy Birthday to those celebrating milestones of sobriety... those 24hrs add up!



Featured Articles

The Alcoholic Prisoner

Of What Value Is A.A.?

OF interest to many who are engaged in A.A. work, as well as to progressive penal authorities, is the question of the value of Alcoholics Anonymous in connection with the alcoholic prisoner.

I happen to have the rather dubious privilege of fitting into the category to be discussed. I have been alcoholic for ten years; I have been a prisoner for over three; and I have been a member of A.A. for almost two.

From the many figures and statistics that I have read, I find more than ample evidence to substantiate my first observation, that as many as 80% of the inmates of most penal institutions have an alcoholic history. Of this number, I feel that it is more than conservative to say that a half can trace their confinement directly to alcohol. Therefore we can safely say that there are enough alcoholics in prison to warrant extensive A.A. work among them.

If it is possible for a man to continue to be an alcoholic while he is away from liquor, it is every bit as feasible for him to be returned to mental sobriety from an already physically sober state. If anything, the alcoholic prisoner has an advantage over the majority, who enter A.A. foggy and confused. He is, at least, dried out enough to partially understand what he is being told.

All of what I have so far said has been pretty much theoretical. The question in each of your minds, I know, is "Does it really work?" To that the answer can only be a loud and resounding "Yes."

I have been fortunate enough to be in a position where I have been able to see the results of A.A., as applied to the alcoholic prisoner. Some of them are highly intangible, but many others are of a sufficiently concrete nature as to be apparent to even a casual observer.

Men who have been, over an extended period of time, chronic disciplinary and conduct problems within the prison, have shown remarkable improvement after becoming active in our A.A. group. This personality improvement in many has been observed not only by the authorities, but by fellow inmates as well. And most important of all, a change has been felt by the individuals themselves.

IN the writer's own case, there has been far more self-control, far less anxiety about minor problems, and far more contentment than would have been possible for me to find within prison walls before coming to A.A.

It can easily be seen that A.A. has more than proven its worth even to the individual who is still confined.

After confinement is over, the really important aspects of this new way of life become even more apparent. Almost weekly we receive reports of those who have left these walls and are making a success of their lives, both socially and financially. In addition to the freedom from alcoholic affliction, these men have found that they are received and treated by the outside groups without any of the stigma that attaches itself to the average discharged prisoner. Many, without family or friends, have been given the necessary incentive to "get a start" by sympathetic members of A.A. groups. Our own parent group in Milwaukee has been instrumental in giving the first boost that has started many men on the upgrade.

THE very spirit of desire for approval and acclaim that caused many originally to follow criminal trends now leads them to be among the most active and energetic workers in their new groups. Their "sense of values" having been changed, they will work harder than most to make the new ideals a reality.

One more important aspect of A.A. in prison is worthy of mention. For various reasons, A.A. draws many inmates who either have no alcoholic problem, or are not at all inclined to do anything about it. Even for these A.A. is serving a worthy purpose. In the minds of these men is instilled just a seed of A.A. philosophy and thought. Although most may never again have contact with A.A., it will be a known refuge for those who later develop into alcoholics, or who realize that life has become unmanageable. Perhaps someday in the far distant future, some one of them will remember something that we said in one of our group meetings and it will be the cause of his turning to A.A. and to peace. If that happens, in only one case, we have accomplished enough to make our efforts worthwhile.

There is no need for praise or recommendation of A.A. in prisons. The highest praise and the loudest commendation is the evidence of the hundreds of men that it has saved. I can but be thankful that I have been one of those lucky enough to have found A.A., and myself, before it was too late, and hope that the opportunity will be given to more and more men as A.A. forges still further into the ranks of the prisoners.

Dan, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 1949. **Reprinted with the permission of the AA Grapevine inc,**

Change Is Possible

An alcoholic confronts fear and finds freedom

My name is mark and I am an alcoholic. I have been incarcerated for the past seventeen years.

I think that some people on the outside might think that a prisoner would be able to maintain sobriety more easily on the inside. But as an active alcoholic, I have always found a way to make or obtain a substance to remove the pain that has been with me since early on.

Today, there is no way on God's green earth that I would allow my life to return to the way it was.

My life was full of mistaken beliefs and the desire to be removed from my own skin. I wanted to be left alone and put into my own little world. I was unaware that life could be anything other than dreams, never to be fulfilled because I wasn't willing to put forth the effort to make them come true. I was only interested in getting drunk to hide my feelings. I was scared that I would not be liked, and then I was scared that I would be liked--and I'd have to be a friend. I didn't know what a friend was. I thought a friend was someone who would drink with me or supply it.

I was afraid that the reality of life would reach up and bite me on the backside. I was afraid that people would see that I was a nice guy and then would use it to their advantage. Or I was afraid they would see the insecure person who stood before them.

I spent so much time hiding my true self that I got lost somewhere in the abyss of lies and stories of grandeur. I was lost in my thinking. I wanted to prove that I was a tough guy, so after graduating high school I joined the Marine Corps.

Throughout my tour in the Marines, drinking was second nature, but from day one, it was a problem. I remember standing on the top of a cliff overlooking the Mediterranean Sea on the island of Sicily, and instead of looking at the beauty of it, was thinking of where I was going to get more booze.

I never felt like I fit into the mold of what I was supposed to be. I hid behind the booze or played the "I don't remember" card when it suited me.

I always believed that saying "I'm sorry" would make everything okay. In time, those words became as hollow as a reed. One day, drunk and out of control at a keg party, I was flirting with the girls there--this was nothing new; when I drank, I believed I was a "ladies' man." My girlfriend was a little peeved. She told my brother; he believed that he needed to defend her honor, and he attacked me.

Drunk and incapable of conscious thought, I fought back, and in doing so, took my brother's life and seriously injured another man.

Reality came full circle and the result was a thirty-two-year prison term. I didn't take it to trial because my family had suffered enough. Besides, I think actually remembering that night would have taken me out of this world.

I am currently incarcerated in a facility that provides meetings and guides folks through the Steps. Here, I met my sponsor and started my journey of recovery. I have lost a lot of freedom, but I have gained a total picture of the way that things are. I thank God for Alcoholics Anonymous and the people in my life.

I have chaired, co-chaired, and been secretary for meetings. Because of overcrowding, the facility was choosing inmates to be moved to Virginia. I was one of those selected to be shipped out, because by then I had some time sober and was not a "problem child." I am active in the Alcoholics Anonymous program, and I have changed my life. Now that I have been sober for a while, I understand that life will throw challenges at me. But there is a way to remain in recovery and stride forward. I also have Jim T., an outside AA, in my corner today--or, at least, on the other side of a fifteen-minute phone call.

I was denied parole in February 2006, and one of the wonderful people in my life told me that I showed "strength of character." This was harder to accept than being denied parole. But low self-esteem no longer holds me back--it has been a part of the growth over the years. On the evening that I was denied parole, Jim was there to help me shed some of my self-pity.

Today I understand that freedom is a state of mind, not a physical attribute. In the freedom of recovery, I have found a peace to be with myself. In helping other alcoholics, I can see what was freely given to me: Hope.

When my time is up and I can once again walk among the free, I will thank my Higher Power for the people who have held my hand and guided me through this. My Higher Power has put them along this path I walk.

In the beginning, I followed all the suggestions, whether or not I wanted to. My sponsor has been my greatest source of strength toward living life on life's terms.

He has given me the ability to understand that the pain in my life is inevitable--it is the suffering that is optional. I can change my mistaken beliefs and walk a path of recovery one day at a time. So I continue to do what is suggested and what has worked for many of the people who have walked the path before me.

Throughout my incarceration I have heard fellow inmates say, a million times, "I won't be back." But drinking wasn't looked at nor were any changes made to beliefs. It was important for me to do that, for it allows me to live in the here and now.

I will be incarcerated until 2012. It is my punishment for my crimes, and I own that. But change is also mine to own. If I listed everything recovery gave me, it would go on for infinity. The greatest gift is, was, and always will be, hope--hope for a brighter and better future.

Mark G., Connecticut, July 2007. **Reprinted with the permission of the AA Grapevine inc,**