



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

# **Barrie & Area Intergroup Newsletter**

## **JUNE 2010**

**Barrie and Area Intergroup/ Central Office:**  
**622-80 Bradford St.**  
**Barrie, ON, L4N 6S7**  
**(705) 725-8682**

Literature Hours: Tues. & Thurs 12-4 & Mon. & Fri. 4-7p.m.



### **Barrie & Area Intergroup Meeting**

**JUNE 11th** at 7:00 pm

Central United church, 54 Ross Street, Barrie

**&**

### **Georgian Bay South District 8**

**Committee Meeting**

**Sunday, JUNE 13th**

**St. Georges Anglican Church**

Corner of Burton Ave and Granville St, Barrie ON from 1:30 to 3:00 pm



**2nd Annual Georgina AA Convention  
& Campout at Eaglewood Park**  
25, 26 & 27 June 2010  
Pefferlaw, Ontario



**75 Years of Alcoholics Anonymous in  
San Antonio**  
**A Vision For You**  
1 to 4 July 2010  
San Antonio, Texas

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

**[www.barrieaa.com](http://www.barrieaa.com)**

## FEATURED ARTICLES



### **Founders' Day**

#### **An anniversary celebration in Akron, Ohio**

Since the early days of AA's history, members have gathered in Akron, Ohio, on the weekend nearest June 10--Dr. Bob's sobriety date. This year, that weekend fell on Friday, June 8, and it dawned warm, bright, and clear--an auspicious beginning to Founders' Day and AA's 72nd anniversary weekend in Akron, Ohio.

A horde of early-rising volunteers opened registration at the University of Akron's Student Union Building at 8 A.M. Annually, about 13,000 AAs and Al-Anons from around the world gather in Akron. Although the official registration was just above 10,700, an additional few thousand folks showed up at the sprawling campus just to enjoy the weekend. They didn't attend the meetings or go to hear the speakers, they just came to meet and interact with AAs. Besides the formal meetings and other events, part of the magic and joy of Founders' Day is simply hanging out with the many alcoholics who come from all over the world.

Bill W. best described the significance of Akron in 1945: "It was here that the miracle really happened. This is the hill where the AA beacon was lit ten years ago. From here, the light spread outward to guide others" (Grapevine, July 1945). Akron, a Greek word meaning "summit," sits on a ridge overlooking the surrounding Ohio countryside.

The first event of the weekend was a one-step-an-hour meeting that stretched from 10 A.M. to 10 P.M. The weekend was also filled with a variety of meetings: Old-timers; Young People; Al-Anon/Alateen; Spanish-Speaking; Traditions; Alkathons; and Speaker meetings. In addition, plays, skits, historic presentations, and dances, dances, dances provided attendees with plenty to do.

Akron's attraction as the birthplace of AA puts historic tours high on the priority list of many attendees. Founders' Day offers bus tours of the historic sites in Akron, such as the Mayflower Hotel, the Gate Lodge of the Seiberling Estate, St. Thomas Hospital, and other sites. The Gate Lodge of the Seiberling Estate (Stan Hywet), where Bill W. and Dr. Bob first met, is now a museum. Visitors are sometimes startled when they see the library where AA's co-founders first talked. In some minds, a grand room is envisioned--one with fine wood bookshelves, expensive carpets, and other expected furnishings found in a gate lodge belonging to the very wealthy (the Seiberlings founded Goodyear Tire). In reality, the library is a small room where the hungover doctor gave "this bird fifteen minutes" and ended up talking for hours. Somehow, the humility of this simple room makes the story all the better.

When Bill first came to Akron, he stayed at the Mayflower Hotel. Here, he made the phone calls that resulted in his meeting with Dr. Bob. A replica pay phone and church directory hang in its lobby. Today, the Mayflower Hotel is a private residence providing low-income housing.

No tour is complete without a stop at Dr. Bob's house. The volunteers greet you with "Welcome home!" At times, the small size of the house and the large crowd waiting to see the inside makes for long lines.

Tours end at the Akron Intergroup Office. Here, volunteer guides share in the awe of several thousand visitors to the office during the weekend. Dr. Carl Jung, who figures in our history, penned the term "synchronicity" to define happenings where many unrelated events come together and make something wonderful. Old-timers and newcomers alike visit the Akron Intergroup Office. A young woman visiting the archives curiously asked, "Were Bill and Bob brothers or something?" An archives volunteer asked how long she had been sober, and she proudly replied, "Two weeks!" She had a little time, so the volunteer told her about the story of the founding of AA and what the early members did so that she and others would have the opportunity to recover. Before the story was finished, both were crying. That is one of the miracles of Founders' Day: a spiritual experience that occurs when one member with twenty-

five years of sobriety cries with a young lady with two weeks. For, despite the vast difference in sobriety and age, both are exactly the same. Both are recovering alcoholics.

The James A. Rhodes (JAR) Arena at the university can seat nearly 5,000 and was big enough for the Friday night crowd to hear the AA/Al-Anon stories of Chuck and Sandy L. from Wisconsin.

On Saturday, however, the JAR was not nearly large enough to contain all who wanted to attend the "Big Meeting," so the event was simulcast to five other university venues. Total seating at all the venues was close to 10,000. Jack C., from Maryland, told the crowd his story. One of the highlights of the big meeting was the sobriety count up and countdown. First, the Akron Intergroup chairperson asked anyone with twenty-four hours or less to stand. A large number stood, and the crowd went wild. The count up continued until one year was reached, and then everyone else was asked to stand. Kent K. continued to count up the years, and everyone sat as their year was called. Eventually, "old-timer" territory was reached. Many in the arena had over thirty years of sobriety. Saturday night ended with two dances, one for teens and one for everyone else.

For many visitors to Founders' Day, Sunday mornings are special. Beginning at around 7A.M., motorcycles start to line up for the procession to Dr. Bob's gravesite. This practice, started in the 1970s, consists of hundreds of bikes and vehicles gathering in a line so long that when the first vehicle arrives at Mt. Peace Cemetery, the last vehicle has yet to leave the university. Afterwards, the weekend was closed with a spiritual talk given by Mildred F. from Ontario.

Our tribe, the children of the bottle, share a commonality--many of us have witnessed events that few people really know about. We have seen human behavior about which we rarely speak. However, when we come together in these kind of numbers at Founders' Day, we can feel magic. The notebook we carry in our minds never fades, for remembering the insanity is important, and celebrating the recovery is vital. Just as we once found those who drank the way we did, today we find others who are recovering--they carry the same notebooks in their minds. And that is what Founders' Day is all about: alcoholics and their friends coming together from all over the world to celebrate recovery.

**Origins of Founders' Day Bill's 10th anniversary talk on June 10, 1945, at the Mayflower Hotel was a precursor of Founders' Days to come. It finished with a weekend gathering that hosted Dr. Bob and Bill in Cleveland's Music Hall. 2,500 AAs from 36 states, Canada, and Mexico attended. These anniversary meetings continued in Cleveland in 1946 and 1947, moving to Akron in 1948, where 5,000 AAs attended. In 1949 neither Dr. Bob (his wife Anne had just died) nor Bill W. came. Meetings continued through the 1950s, taking place mainly at Goodyear Hall until 1957, when a meeting was held at the University of Akron and events covered two days for the first time.**

Jay M., [September 2007](#) Reprinted with the permission of the AA Grapevine inc.

## From the Outside, Looking In

*(How do we look to total strangers, to people who have never suffered personally from pangs of alcoholism, or who have never even lived near enough to an alky to know how violently it can effect life? Here's one answer to that question, penned by the secretary of John D. of Manhattan, who attended a meeting led by her boss at his invitation, so that she might see at first hand the people and the work that make up his extra-curricular interests.)*

Some months before I became associated with Mr. D., I had read a number of articles and editorials applauding the work of A.A. but I never really understood what "alcoholic" meant, until Mr. D. put me right. Now I think I know, as well as any non-alcoholic can, just what a disease is alcoholism. Since starting to work for Mr. D., observing his activity and absorption in the program, I have wanted to attend a meeting, so when the invitation was extended nothing could have kept me away.

I may as well start at the beginning. After a good dinner (at very small cost) in the club cafeteria, Mr. D. introduced me to several of his friends, all of whom seemed glad to have me present--and this impressed me, for it seemed to me that I should probably not have felt the same if positions were reversed. Personally, from what I've seen, I think A.A. puts up with an awful lot from a bunch of "holier-than-thou" non-alcoholics who simply do not know what it's all about. . .and I think the injection of a little A.A. philosophy into all of us would help a great deal.

I have been very definitely instructed by Mr. D., not to indulge in any "laudatory exegesis," but, working with him as I do, I've gotten kind of used to his brusque, business manner, and I couldn't help noticing how he bloomed, as soon as he hit the door of the cafeteria. . .he glowed with pleasure at all of his friends, and, somehow, his manner relaxed.

Mr. D. spoke generally about his early experiences with alcohol, during the occupation period in Europe after the last war, then during his college and post-graduate periods, and, finally, of his really serious trouble in the roaring thirties (by "serious trouble," I mean that he himself then realized he had a drinking problem). He has the faculty of making his escapades extremely amusing, but, all the while, his listener is aware that he is listening to a serious man, who is not making light of a serious matter. He made me understand what is meant by "remorse," as it applies to alcoholism, and, on the whole, I got a picture of how A.A. helped him, where other methods failed. I somehow felt, listening to Mr. D., that here was another side of his personality, and I felt very deeply his honesty and sincerity, and his very earnest wish to make the program work for others as it had for him. I knew, too, from what he told the meeting, and from little things he's said to me from time to time, that A.A. was responsible for the blossoming of his friendliness, and humor, and his warmth, and I began really to understand what might have been, had he not grasped the A.A. life line.

I want to make it very clear that I did not attend the meeting as a "sightseer" or to be "amused," but, even if I had, I should have realized, as must anyone, before any time had passed at all, that here is a way of life which *anyone* can practice to his profit. . .it does not take an A.A. to practice the principles of the 24-hour program; and certainly both A.A.s and non-A.A.s need a practical relationship with God. I had been assured, when I started for the meeting, that I was not going to hear a lot of "God stuff"; but I had qualms, nevertheless, about "this religious business." There isn't an A.A. in the world who is fussier than I about his religious affiliations, and I have yet to meet a friendlier, more practical, or easier-to-know God than I met at the A.A. meeting. Charlie H., the third speaker on Mr. D.'s program, introduced me to this God, and I want, somehow, to get to know him better. I recalled particularly that, when my father and I read Douglas' *Magnificent Obsession*, we were so fascinated by his suggested philosophy that we spent our evenings reading and studying the Bible until we found the passage which formed the subject for the book. All this made Charlie's talk just so much easier for me to appreciate, and A.A.--always allowing for personal opinions and individual understandings and my very limited knowledge--it seems to me, elaborates on Douglas' theory and improves it. I like the thought, "Do unto others as *I have done to you*" a little better than, "Do unto others as *you would have them do unto you*"; I think it fits in a little better with "You must not give it back, for I have used it all up." And I like the 24-hour principle. . .as I listened to Charlie, I realized that too much of my life has been spent worrying about what's going to happen tomorrow and the day after, and I made a resolution to follow the precept "Let *this* be a good day, and tomorrow will be a better one."

I cannot possibly cover all that I have in my mind to reflect on: what I want to make clear is that I benefitted in no small degree by something every one of the speakers had to say. . .and that somewhat surprised me at the time, but it doesn't any more; I suppose I had the usual erroneous impression that the program (as I understood it) couldn't possibly be of any use to anyone but an alcoholic; I do think that a good many of its phases, now that I know a little more about it, would be no end helpful to all of us. . .and I'm speaking of the practical, as well as the spiritual side of the program.

As Marty M. spoke, I wondered if, perhaps, I were not an alcoholic at heart, if not in fact, because almost everything she said hit me right between the eyes. She it was who really made me understand what made an "alcoholic" tick. . .she it was who told me why alcoholism is, in fact, a disease and not a habit.

Ed S. helped a lot to make me understand what A.A. means, and he showed me a man who had learned, the hard way, to laugh at himself (and enjoy it as much as the other fellow) and, by laughing, to conquer his own particular devil. I admired his sincerity and unselfconsciousness, and his humility. It's pretty hard to be humble, but, from what I saw, A.A.'s humility is not craven, it's a proud humility; for while it recognizes that each individual is only a small segment of an enormous pie, still it is aware that the pie is only as good as each of its ingredients. And so I bumped into self-examination again, and found it good.

I don't want to say much more about Bill than that I'm not at all surprised to find that he is one of the founders of A.A. It seemed to me, as I listened to him, that the word Mr. D. used in introducing him--"modest"--was the only one which really described him. And, here again, I think that a fellow who needed a friendly hand, and wise counsel, whether he suffered from alcoholism or not, could be sure of truly sympathetic understanding and the right answer, if he just asked Bill about it.

I went home feeling quite certain that I'd made a lot of new friends who had shared with me an unforgettable evening, and permitted me to take something of each of them home with me. . .and all I want to know is: "Please may I come again?" **Jessica Bove, New York, [February 1946](#), Reprinted with the permission of the AA Grapevine inc.**