

BETTER TIMES

Produced for A.A. members, by A.A. members in the GTA



AKRON OHIO

FOUNDERS DAY



Alcoholics Anonymous

JUNE 2021

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NAME	YEARS	DRY DATE	GROUP	CELEBRATION
Dan J.	5	April 26 2016	Fifth Tradition	June 5
Daniel H.	20	May 1 2001	Bayview	June 6
Jeff N.	20	Jun 19 2001	Friendly	June 21
Frank U.	20	May 27 2001	East York	June 29



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GTA GROUPS BEGUN IN JUNE:

June 11, 1946 [North Toronto Group](#) started in the home of Mac H. and today is the 2nd oldest group in the GTA.

Mac H. and a few members decided to hold a discussion meeting on Friday nights in people's homes in the village of North Toronto. A few of the early members felt that an open meeting was needed so the wives could join them. In those days, A.A. members were mostly men. At North Toronto, alcoholism was already recognized as a family disease and a large contingent of spouses faithfully attended Tuesday night open meetings. Mac who lived on Lytton Blvd. and who had hosted those first informal meetings, phoned St. George's United Church to ask if a meeting could be held there. Rev. John Short had already heard from some American colleagues about the A.A. phenomenon in the U.S. He said "We've been waiting for you." He wanted to know how many people to expect.

North Toronto's first official meeting was held at St. George's in October 1946. For some time after its inception, only the Tuesday night open meeting constituted the North Toronto Group. Friday night discussion meetings continued on a less formal basis until approx. June 1981 when they started to have the discussion meetings at the church. Marg M. was North Toronto's first new member. Her dry date was one week after the first meeting. When the Central Committee (now GTA Intergroup) was formed in October 1947 she became the first secretary. Marg retired after 25 years of service. When Marg passed away she had 45 years of sobriety.



Opinions expressed in *BETTER TIMES* are those of the authors and don't necessarily reflect those of the GTA A.A. Intergroup. The Editor reserves the right to edit for length, content and grammar in accordance with layout and quality purposes. Submit group news, medallions, other event notices to:

communications@aatoronto.org

Letters or articles to the Editor (200-500 words) for *BETTER TIMES* at bettertimes@aatoronto.org

WORD search

TRADITION SIX

An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

C	K	I	I	U	W	Y	T	R	R	X	O	G	U	B	H	Q	L	A	E	Tradition
B	R	B	R	A	J	N	B	T	C	K	D	T	F	V	W	S	H	S	Y	Answer
D	C	T	K	V	K	M	J	M	Q	R	M	T	D	Z	G	V	U	Q	P	Reform
O	E	G	K	T	R	E	V	I	D	T	I	V	E	Z	S	A	G	R	C	Six
R	U	R	L	C	L	A	C	I	D	E	M	M	V	C	C	D	O	J	I	Group
U	H	T	E	N	F	V	S	H	N	U	T	Y	I	F	U	P	W	Q	K	Endorse
O	A	Q	S	L	P	E	S	I	R	P	R	E	T	N	E	D	L	L	R	Criminality
O	Q	G	A	I	I	P	M	P	Z	N	X	O	S	R	A	G	B	N	F	Addiction
W	Q	I	S	X	D	C	J	P	R	N	T	N	T	N	Y	L	D	O	N	Education
N	M	D	U	J	V	E	T	N	U	I	K	Y	G	R	K	P	I	I	U	Finance
L	O	I	O	X	U	J	D	S	Q	U	M	A	F	W	N	E	J	T	U	Lend
P	N	Z	I	X	T	P	H	C	E	I	H	A	H	P	L	X	R	A	Y	Facility
A	E	S	R	H	V	C	N	X	O	A	R	Q	R	K	A	D	Y	C	L	Enterprise
R	Y	R	O	H	C	P	B	A	D	K	C	E	C	Y	U	I	W	U	E	Money
K	Y	M	T	O	U	M	N	D	N	A	S	S	P	I	T	F	B	D	N	Property
D	D	V	I	O	T	W	I	O	X	T	H	U	M	S	I	E	R	E	D	Outside
U	O	A	R	Y	J	C	M	P	I	J	I	K	I	H	R	H	A	O	E	Prestige
Q	T	G	E	F	T	L	V	G	P	T	Y	T	A	A	I	I	M	E	I	Custody
V	S	E	M	I	M	J	E	Q	T	O	I	K	K	N	P	Y	R	F	T	Divert
Y	U	L	O	Y	H	X	O	J	C	U	J	D	C	X	S	S	O	I	Q	Primary
T	C	N	J	H	Y	F	V	H	L	W	I	W	A	I	D	W	F	A	M	Purpose
D	F	Q	K	G	U	K	J	L	B	E	N	D	O	R	S	E	E	U	I	Alcoholism
T	Y	T	I	L	I	C	A	F	P	R	E	H	S	G	T	C	R	R	D	Sick
F	I	N	A	N	C	E	F	Z	V	H	X	V	Z	N	U	Z	D	T	X	Meritorious
A	N	O	N	Y	M	O	U	S	U	Z	X	Z	U	A	C	P	P	Q	M	Derelicts
B	W	X	D	U	B	Z	U	X	Y	A	L	C	O	H	O	L	I	S	M	Spiritual
X	R	Q	U	P	U	R	P	O	S	E	W	Q	T	Q	R	C	N	Y	C	Medical
G	X	Z	Q	C	Q	X	X	S	B	Z	B	A	K	T	O	H	W	A	C	Cause
K	V	R	X	P	U	W	B	Q	U	I	P	C	L	N	V	P	L	Q	R	Anonymous

YOU CAN'T PLANT CORN AND PICK PEARS

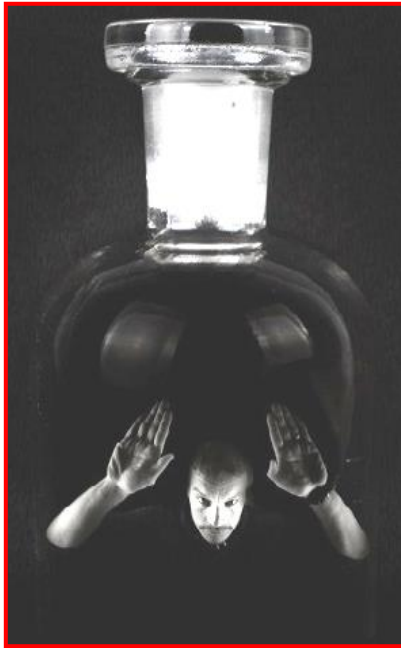
I grew up on a farm in Guyana, with eleven brothers and five sisters who were all from the same mother and father. I was the tenth child. I cannot blame my parents for my alcoholism. We are Hindus, but my parents hosted Christian Sunday school at our home for people from different races and religions.

I came to Canada when I was 21. Before that, while in Guyana, I started to drink and when I did I would occasionally have blackouts.

I could not remember where I was, when I woke up, or how I got there. My memory of some of those times is not so good, but I do remember swearing that I would never do it again but I did. I kept on repeating myself, even though I said I would not.

One night while driving home drunk, I parked my truck on someone else's lawn two houses away from mine. I was so drunk I didn't realize where I was and spent several hours walking up and down the street looking for my home.

The police were called and put me in a paddy wagon before carting me off to jail for the evening. I can tell you that I would rather die than go back to that place.



I didn't sleep at all that night.

When I was in denial, I did not know if I was going, coming, or what I was doing. Thanks to Alcoholics Anonymous, today I know what I am doing and I have a purpose: to be a real person, and be a contributing member of society. If I do not take a drink today, everything else is a bonus.

Today I am able to be a productive member of society. I went back to school and earned my diploma in addictions studies. Today I am able to speak victory, not defeat. I see the positive, not the negative. When I was drinking, all I could see was the bottom of the bottle; nothing else mattered. I craved the bottle; the bottle did not crave me.

When I first came into the program I was unable to read, but now I can read. Every action has a reaction. You cannot plant corn and pick pears. Ten seconds of pleasure can provide a lifetime of misery but the Lord's Prayer tells me that if I follow the words contained in this simple prayer, I cannot go wrong. Like Bob Marley says, you cannot hide from the Father of Creation. I cannot change the past, but today I can overcome me. I can live a life without destruction or obstruction and live a clear life. I keep going to meetings to learn from you. Today, I am responsible for my actions. My Higher Power is always with me. Today is a gift. Today I can accept me, and that is the greatest freedom. Doobay (D.B.),

[Back To Basics](#)

DO.BE.ISMs

1. You can run, you can hide, you can cover, but you can't get away
2. You can't change your disease but you can overcome it
3. There is one original; the rest is carbon copy
4. To win the race you've got to win you first
5. It's not what you eat; it's what's eating you
6. So little time, so much to love
7. You can't plant corn and pick pears
8. Speak victory, not defeat
9. The journey is long, the time is short
10. You can look back, but but don't go back
11. Time is not a commodity; time is a gift
12. Celebration is good but support is better

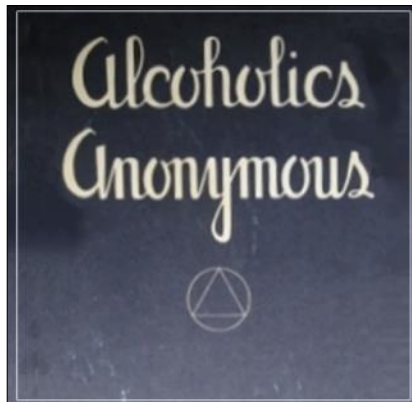
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AAGRAPEVINE

The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous

On June 10, 1935, Dr. Bob had his last drink and that day marks the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous. Since so many meetings are still closed, and groups have limited ability to celebrate our founding, **Grapevine and La Viña will help mark this important date by giving everyone free access to our websites for two weeks.** You'll be able to read stories from current and past issues, access our sobriety calculator, read the daily quote, learn how you can contribute your story, and find ways to serve others using Grapevine and La Viña magazines. (The audio to Grapevine's and La Viña's stories will be available as well, so people can listen to the stories if they like.)

Please share this news with other members. For free access from May 26 to June 10, 2021 visit:
aagrapevine.org | aalavina.org



In June 1939, the appearance of Morgan R. on Gabriel Heatters' radio program gives A.A. wide recognition. Before the show, Morgan was kept under round-the-clock surveillance to make sure he didn't drink.

On June 28 1935, Bill W., Dr. Bob and Eddie R. visited Bill D. *The Man on the Bed* whose Big Book story is *Alcoholics Anonymous Number Three* at City Hospital in Akron Ohio. Bill D., a prominent attorney in Akron was hospitalized eight times in 1935 for his drinking. It took five days before he would admit he could not control his drinking.

In June 1953, the book [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions](#) (12 & 12) was published. Bill W. described the work as, "This small volume is strictly a textbook which explains A.A.'s 24 basic principles and their application, in detail and with great care." Betty L. and Tom P. helped Bill in writing the 12 & 12. Jack Alexander also helped with editing. Jack wrote an article on A.A. for the Saturday Evening Post which was published March 1941.

In June 1974, in order to maintain subscriber anonymity, the legal name of the publication A.A. Grapevine was changed to Box 1980 to comply with postal regulations requiring the corporate name of an organization be placed on official envelopes and on the magazine itself.

In June 1996 the first issue of La Vina was published on a bi-monthly basis

In June 1948, Dr. Bob's cancer was diagnosed as terminal. He closed his office and retired from practice so that he and Anne could live their last days together quietly. In his last year 1950, Dr. Bob fulfilled a life-long dream of obtaining a convertible automobile which was a black Buick Road-master.

CONTACT ARCHIVIST EDDY G. 416-536-7536 TO DONATE A.A. ITEMS INCLUDING OLD GTA MEETING BOOKS.

PERPETUAL STRANGER

I've been in A.A. for five years and I've somehow managed to stay a stranger. I've made some friends in the program but not many, and that worries me. Because at this point, five years in, sobriety has become a way of life. There is no struggle where booze is concerned, I don't lust after it, I rarely give it a thought. And that worries me too, because if I'm feeling like I got this thing licked, and 90% of my social circle is made up of non-A.A. people, I just might go out. Who knows?

I've spent most of my adult life being a rebel, an arrogant brat with low self-esteem. Plus I hoard resentments like Scrooge McDuck and his stacks of gold coins. I still have a lot to learn. I could so easily saunter off this path and straight into a blackout. The more friends in recovery I have, the stronger my safety net.

I've been thinking about it more and more this year, as we come closer to the world reopening and Zoom meetings likely diminishing in number. We get closer to seeing each other in real life again and I realize I need to make some stronger connections. Because A.A. friends tend to not always be forever - we are in and we are out, we disappear and sometimes we die. Because of that, it's good to have a large crew.

I've been a stranger in these rooms for a long time. It's time to open up. Ivy, [Birds Of A Feather](#)



REMEMBERING DAD

I can remember a time when my father was the most revered person in my life. We did a lot of things together; he was my best friend. Then I became a rebellious teenager, and I also found alcohol. Slowly alcohol became the most important thing in my life. It became more important than my dignity, self-respect, family and friends. My father passed away during the heyday of my alcoholism, and I can remember going on binges for several weeks at a time, burning a lot of bridges behind me.

Then I got sober and began to put the Twelve Steps into my life. It was difficult looking at my fourth step, realizing the person alcohol had allowed me to become. It wasn't so much the things I had done to my Dad; it was the things I wish I had done more of. I wished I had told my Dad I loved him more, wished I had hugged him more. I thought making amends in step nine to my Dad was not possible. However with my sponsor's help, I was able to make the best possible amends I could.

I wrote all my stuff down in a letter, in preparation for a trip back home. I sat down in the back garden, and read my letter to Dad.

On a quiet morning alone while on vacation, I went to the back garden and read my letter to Dad. I just wanted to say I love and miss you; you are the best dad ever. I find it funny that I periodically catch myself saying or doing something that is totally you. For that, I'm forever grateful. I said everything I wanted to say. A peaceful calm came over me.

Sure, it wasn't an ideal amends, but it was an amends that enabled me to live with myself. The baggage of the past has gone. When I think of my Dad, I think of the fond memories I have. I owe all of this to Alcoholics Anonymous, and to my sponsor who said "I don't care, write it down anyway!"

Love you Dad.

Dave R., [The Dogs](#)

TRADITION SIX PROTECTS A.A.

"An A.A. Group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose."

I find it tempting to praise all sorts of political and, religious activities that I have been involved with through the years. I believe it does not violate the spirit of [Tradition Six](#) to mention them—even by name—during an A.A. meeting. However, if I find myself trying to convince other A.A. members that they should join my church or political party, I have then gone a bridge too far. The same goes for a treatment centre where I once worked. I believe competition is fine in the outside world, but it does not belong in A.A. rooms. Such is sure to provoke friction.

As for finances, I believe all money placed in the A.A. basket belongs to A.A. and nowhere else! Contributions should support **only the Intergroup; District; Area or GSO**. Recovery clubs are considered as "outside enterprises" as well as detox centers and hospitals. Of course, according to [Tradition Eight](#), a group can pay for services

rendered, such as printing informational flyers, newsletters etc. I also believe finances from the group's prudent reserves are approved for group picnics, conferences, and gas money for out-of-town speakers, etc.

What if the treasurer of a group donates the group's funds to outside enterprises? Well, is there no retribution? Page xix from the FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION, states: "None of these principles have the

force of rules or laws." Of course, there will be rotation and elections. But what if the entire group decides to donate some of its prudent reserve funds to an outside enterprise? This violates the [First](#), [Fourth](#) and [Sixth](#) Tradition. What to do? Maybe nothing. However, I have seen one instance where the Intergroup Office refrained from listing an A.A.

group that stood in violation of [Tradition Three](#).

[Tradition Six](#) allows A.A. to remain autonomously free from outside influence or domination, but we must remain aware of consequences if not followed.

Bob S. Richmond, Indiana



A.A. EVENTS LEADING UP TO FOUNDERS DAY JUNE 10, 1935

In November 1934, while in Vermont, Rowland H. introduced Ebby T. to the Oxford Group and later took him to the Calvary Rescue Mission in New York City. While Ebby was at the mission, he heard of Bill W.'s drinking problem. He phoned Lois who invited him over to dinner at 182 Clinton Street in Brooklyn. Ebby visited Bill and shared his recovery experience "one alcoholic talking with another." A few days later, Ebby returned with Shep C. and they spoke to Bill about their experience with the Oxford Group. After Ebby's visit and after a drunken visit to Calvary Mission, Bill returned to [Towns Hospital](#) for the fourth time on December 11, 1934 and had his last drink which was four bottles of beer purchased on the way.

On December 14 1934, Ebby visited Bill at Towns Hospital and discussed with Bill the principles of the Oxford Group, which enabled him to find sobriety. After Ebby left, Bill fell into a deep depression which he later called his "deflation at depth". Later, he had a profound spiritual experience which has sometimes been called his "white flash" or "hot flash" experience. Bill called Dr. Silkworth to ask if he had gone crazy. Dr. Silkworth assured Bill he was not crazy and told him to hang on to what he had because it seemed so much better than what he came into the hospital with.

On December 15, 1934, Ebby T. gave Bill W. a copy of William James' book [The Varieties of Religious Experience](#). It deeply inspired Bill by revealing 3 key points for recovery:

- 1 Calamity or complete defeat in a vital area of life - or what we call "hitting bottom".
- 2 Admission of defeat - or what we call acceptance.
- 3 Appeal to a higher power for help - or what we call "surrender".

These key points are also the basis for [Steps 1, 2 and 3](#).

On December 18 1934, Bill W. was discharged from Towns Hospital and began working with drunks. He and Lois attended Oxford Group meetings with Ebby T., Shep C. and Rowland H. in Calvary Hall at Calvary House on 4th Avenue in New York.

In late December of 1934, Bill W. joined with Oxford Group alcoholics who gathered at Stewart's Cafeteria in New York after regular Oxford Group meetings.

From December 1934 to early 1935, Bill W. worked with alcoholics at the Calvary Mission and Towns Hospital, emphasizing his "hot flash" spiritual experience. Alcoholic Oxford Group members began meeting at Bill's home at 182 Clinton St. in New York. Bill had no success sobering up others. In April, Bill talked with Dr. Silkworth who recommended that he stop preaching about his "hot flash". He told Bill to hit the drunks hard with the medical view, and break down their strong egos by telling them about the obsession that condemned them to drink and the allergy that condemned them to go mad or die. It would then be much easier to get them to accept the spiritual solution.

In March 1935, at the urging of her friend Delphine Weber, Henrietta Sieberling organized a Wednesday night Oxford Group meeting at T. Henry and Clarence Williams' home on 676 Palisades Drive in Akron Ohio specifically to help Dr. Bob with his drinking. Dr. Bob eventually openly admitted his drinking problem but could not bring himself to stop.

In April 1935, Bill returned to Wall Street and was introduced to Howard Tompkins of the firm Baer and Co. Tompkins was involved in a proxy fight to take control of the National Rubber Machinery Co. in Akron, Ohio.

On May 10 1935, Bill went to Akron and attended the annual stockholders meeting of the National Rubber Machinery Co. in an attempt to take over the company and lost the proxy fight. He remained behind at the Mayflower Hotel very discouraged.

On May 11 1935, in poor spirits and tempted to enter the hotel bar, Bill W. realized he needed another alcoholic and phoned clergy members listed on the Mayflower Hotel lobby directory. He reached Rev. Walter Tunks who referred him to Oxford Group member Norman Sheppard who then referred Bill to Henrietta Seiberling. Bill contacted her by phone and introduced himself as "a member of the Oxford Group and a rum hound from New York." Henrietta invited Bill to meet that afternoon at the gatehouse at Stan Hywett Hall on the Seiberling estate. She viewed Bill's arrival as the answer to her prayers for Dr. Bob and called Anne Smith to arrange a dinner the next day.

On May 12 1935, Mother's Day, Bill W. (age 39) first met Dr. Bob (age 55) his wife Anne and their son Smitty (age 17) at Henrietta Seiberling's gatehouse at 5 pm. Dr. Bob was so badly hung over he could not eat dinner and planned to stay only 15 minutes. Privately, Bill told Dr. Bob of his alcoholism experience in the manner suggested by Dr. Silkworth. Dr. Bob then opened up and he and Bill talked until after 11 pm. Dr. Bob's planned 15 minutes turned into 6 hours.

A.A. EVENTS LEADING UP TO FOUNDERS DAY JUNE 10, 1935 *cont'd*

In May 1935, Henrietta Seiberling arranged for Bill W. to stay at the Portage Country Club in Akron, Ohio. Bill wrote to Lois that he and Dr. Bob tried in vain to sober up a Dr. McK. who was a "once prominent surgeon" that became a "terrific rack and drunk."

In June 1935, Bill moved into Dr. Bob's house at the request of Anne. Bill insisted on keeping 2 bottles of liquor in the kitchen to prove that he and Dr. Bob could live in the presence of liquor. They all went to the Oxford Group meetings at the home of T Henry and Clarace Williams. T Henry, an executive with the National Rubber Machinery Co. lost his job due to the proxy fight that brought Bill to Akron. Favored scripture readings at the meetings were *The Sermon on the Mount*, *First Corinthians Chapter 13* and the *Book of James*.

Dr. Bob, off the booze for about a month, left Akron by train to attend a week-long American Medical Association (AMA) convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. He started drinking soon after boarding the train and continued binging and blacking out at the convention for 2 or 3 days. Bill and Anne received a call to come pick up a very drunken Dr. Bob at his office nurse's home. Bill helped Dr. Bob through 3 days of sobering up to prepare for a scheduled surgery. On the day of the surgery, Bill gave Dr. Bob his last drink (a beer) and a "goofball" (a barbiturate).

Bill W.'s sobriety date is December 11, 1934. Dr. Bob's sobriety date is June 10, 1935. The beginning of Alcoholics Anonymous is celebrated on the day that Dr. Bob had his last drink: June 10, 1935. This is when 2 alcoholics came together with the mutual goal of attaining contented sobriety. Eddy G., [GTA Intergroup Archive Committee](#)

GROUP SPOTLIGHT: PINE HILLS

The [Pine Hills group](#) was founded on April 9, 1956 and has been called that from the start. I think they gave members a choice of the *Pine Hills Group* or *Live or the Pine Hills Cemetery and Die* (in deference to the cemetery was just a block away).

The group was started by a few men who got together in Robert Owen's real estate office on Eglinton Avenue. They put an ad in the local newspaper that read: "If you have a problem with alcohol, we have the solution." Robert's office number was included because they held a few meetings there 'till they could get a place to meet.

The first place where two meetings a week were held was at Scarborough Junction United Church at 3572 St. Clair East. They were here until mid-2000. The second site was Cliffcrest United at 1 McCowan Road where they continued with two meetings a week until February 2008.

Our third and current location is St. Paul's United at 200 McIntosh Street in Scarborough where we tried adding a Friday meeting to our Monday and Wednesday schedule but reverted to the two. Monday open meeting begins at 8 pm, and Wednesday closed step/discussion/tradition/topic meeting runs 7:30 - 9:00 pm. We hold a business meeting on the 3rd Wednesday of every month which is pretty well attended. In 1982 there were 106 members, 2011 there were 60 members, and now we have 47. The group holds a candlelight

meeting at Christmas and for many years also held a New Year's Eve sober dance. In the early days we used to pay a couple to make sandwiches for the new comer and of course always had coffee. The church ladies would cook a complete turkey dinner for us at Christmas for a nominal amount. A member's son ran a dance studio and after dinner he would have his students put on a concert for us. It was something everyone looked forward to.

Our member Mary B. would host a pizza night at her house and invite all the female members. We found it helped us support each other because the group was mostly men. It was also a very active group, you had to be nominated for every position and there was nearly always more than one nominee and so they had to be voted in. Front row was the SINNERS ROW; if you were suggested (strongly) to sit there, you sat there but not in the number 1 seat; that was reserved for one of the regular members who always insisted on sitting there, and you dare not take that seat.



I did attend their virtual 65th anniversary celebration, a wonderful occasion. Four longtime past and present members, each gave a ten-minute share on their experience of Pine Hills in the early days. My biggest takeaway of this meeting was the gratitude members had for the Pine Hills Group members carrying the message to them. It was something special.

With gratitude to:

Ruth P., Wendy H., Debora K. of the [Pine Hills Group](#)
Dave R., [The Dogs](#)