

## Athens Biscayne Group History

The Athens Biscayne Group was founded in January 1970 by Russ and Margaret R. and one other. They first met at Baxter and Church St., in a building leased to one of the members for \$1 a year on the condition that the group keep the owner's wife sober. She did stay sober for some 7 years, while she divorced that husband and married someone in AA. She returned to drinking after she left the second husband, who started drinking again when he moved to Florida.

That first building was condemned and cold: water dripped in buckets when it rained. In 1972, the group moved to a building on Rowe Rd., in an industrial area near a chicken plant. Although chickens sometimes wandered into the meetings, rent jumped to \$300 per month. There were 10-12 members at that time including Gip P., Cuz M., Russ and Margaret R., Luke D., Dr. Ben, Jim H., Bill S., Calvin M., Frank D., Raile D., and Jean A.

The group stressed unity and tough love. "If you don't want to be here, don't be here!" "The essence of the problem is irresponsibility." Many people relapsed early, although most of those early members achieved long term sobriety. The group had a rule that drunks couldn't be kicked out. For some years, before medical facilities were available to take care of drunks, the building was used as a 72-hour drying out place. Since treatment centers started, that is no longer necessary.

In 1984 the group moved to its current location on Chase St., a former barbecue restaurant. At that time, there were approximately 50 members.

A big increase in people attending meetings during 1992 was handled by knocking out walls and moving the kitchen to the back of the building, where the once-a-week women's meeting had been held and many a sponsor-sponsee one-on-one was held at all hours of the day and night. To replace the former "back room", the old barbecue pit across the parking lot was converted into an additional meeting room. This is where the women's meeting was held, as well as a new Saturday morning "As Bill Sees It" meeting and spur-of-the-moment overflow meetings, usually for newcomers.

The meeting place for the group is also a clubhouse called the "Biscayne Room," with a requirement for membership of 30 days sobriety and fees of \$10 a month or \$100 a year. The club members have keys, and the building is usually open about 14 hours a day. The group still has a number of people who get sober "off the street," without benefit of a treatment center. Many a drunk has found early sobriety in the Biscayne Room by spending all their free hours in a safe space, reading AA literature, drinking pots of coffee, and "shaking it out" in the company of sober members.

As of June, 2013, the Biscayne Room is open for fraternization from 8am to 10pm daily for members and for a period of thirty minutes before and after meetings for nonmembers. Regular AA meetings are held nightly at 8:30, with Sunday's meeting being devoted to a Big Book study and Friday's to a speaker meeting. Birthdays are celebrated on the last Friday of each month and a Candlelight meeting is also held each Friday at 10:30. Women's meetings are held on Sundays at 2pm in the Biscayne Room proper, as the little building "out back" is now serving as a residence.

ATHENS BISCAIYNE GROUP  
Athens Church Shopping Center  
10 Huntington Rd, Unit A-40  
Athens 30606

