



Tom Ross remembers the enjoyment of carpooling to far-away meetings such as Lima, Piqua, Akron, Ohio, and to Batesville, Indiana. The regular visits to the Indianapolis Breakfast meetings were continued through the 1950s, and probably later. *Roy Hirshburg* loved to bring along his lovely little daughter to these different meetings in his perpetually near-new Cadillac, so the ex-drunks rode in both beauty and style. Everybody loved this generous, exuberant, fun loving, prize winning photographer.

Tom was eventually surrounded by new ‘Buckeye’ traveling companions. To name a few: *Norb Deloie* (DOS 1949); *Tom Downey* (DOS 1950); Tom’s sponsee (often tagged as “cookie” or sometimes “pigeon”) *Ralph Hiatt* (DOS 1953); *Don Baker* (DOS 1955) and *Aubrey Tyson* (DOS 1957). They would often attend the Dayton Monument Street Meeting where *Charles Christopher* (DOS 1949) was a regular. Charles and many other Dayton members also visited Richmond, Charles, died in 2008 with 58 years sobriety at age 90, attending meetings daily to his last days. A Xenia treatment center “The Christopher House” was named after this respected and loved individual.

The “**Big Book**” and “**Little Red Book**” continued to be popular reads, and also a small pamphlet “**Who Me?**” The two AA meetings in Richmond continued to meet on Sundays and Wednesdays. There were 12 step discussion meetings where three steps were discussed per meeting. This practice continues today. Tom mentions a local minister, who attended some of those meetings, was quite impressed with the spirituality he felt in room #205!



Norman Vincent Peale

Shortly after Tom’s sobriety, a 12-Step meeting began at Ula Murphy’s home for the non-alcoholic wives. Among those in early attendance were Thelma Ross, Hilda Meier, Ester Fitzpatrick and Mary Jane Behrman. There became 15 to 20 involved in this movement! Eventually, this became a regular meeting at the Club. They read all the available AA literature, also books and pamphlets by **Norman Vincent Peale**. This fledgling group had no name, but then a book was ordered from Arizona which explained the steps for non-alcoholics. This book had an unknown and mysterious name: **Al-Anon!** The name stuck, and the Richmond group eventually became part of the mainstream movement. *In other words they were Al-Anon before Al-Anon!*

Jerry Markey came to AA during this period, but stayed sober for only short periods. Another very sincere member was a dentist called Doc Thompson, who by that time had been sober about five years. Jerry relates how Doc stopped smiling or even paying attention to him when Jerry returned from his regular sprees. Jerry finally sobered up in 1953, but Doc’s response toward him remained about the same. But the ice broke in 1955. Bill and Hilda Meier invited Jerry and Hazel to join them as they attended the now famous 1955 International Convention in St. Louis. Something like that could set anyone on fire, and probably did so with Jerry. Jerry tells that upon return, Doc told him he had decided that he had finally become serious. They remained close friends forever afterward. Jerry never drank again.



International AA Convention
in St. Louis—1955