



The Suffolk Intergroup

BULLETIN

Volume 41, Number 1

MAY 2014

OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE

In the beginning of Tradition Five in the 12 & 12 I read "... better do one thing supremely well than many badly." This reminded me of a gift I received long ago from my daughter when she was just seven or eight years old. It meant the world to me because she got it on her own, clearly put a lot of thought into it, and it probably cost just about all the money she had. It was a one-tool-does-it-all screwdriver. It had bits that

would fit into the end and were supposed to be held in place magnetically. One end of the bit was for Phillips



head screws and the other for flat head screws. There were bits of other sizes and types conveniently stored inside the handle under a screw-off cap. It could even be used as a nut driver. Truthfully, the magnet didn't really hold the bits in place nor did the bits ever fit properly. They wobbled terribly and it was just about impossible to drive a screw straight and true. The storage cap on the handle was also reluctant to stay in place and it wasn't unusual for the stored bits to make a break for freedom at the most inopportune times. As a gift it was priceless. As a tool... pretty much worthless.

I think that's part of what we're talking about in Tradition Five. We have been blessed in A.A. with the gifts and ability to reach other alcoholics as no non-alcoholic can. We do one thing supremely well and sometimes the temptation is great to let success in one area convince us we can be effective in projects and areas better left to others. This only

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I Am Responsible...

*When anyone, anywhere,
reaches out for help,*

I want the hand of A.A.

always to be there.

And for that:

I am responsible.



ViewPoints: SIA and the Fifth Tradition

The Alternate Chairperson

The main job of the Alternate Chairperson is to conduct the New Representative Orientation Meeting before each regular meeting of the Suffolk Intergroup Association Meeting. This has been a pleasure and it has been great to meet the new reps and get them acclimated to the SIA. This is where our new reps learn about the many committees and activities of SIA and how their group members can become involved in a lasting service that makes a difference.

I also assist the Chairperson and can co-sign checks for the organization. My experience as a past treasurer allows me to assist when needed and prepared me to chair the finance committee which prepares the audit and budgets for the year. All of our budgets are approved by the SIA Group reps and we need all of you to help us choose the direction that the SIA Committees will

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take in the coming year. Your input places our resources on the areas that the groups feel will make the most difference in carrying the message to the alcoholic.

When needed, I also function as Chairman of the ad hoc committees: the By-laws Committee, Speaker Exchange and the Special Needs committee. It is a pleasure to serve on the SIA and to meet enthusiastic and caring AA members from all over Suffolk County.

Vikki B.

Alternate Chairperson

SIA Hotline Update:

The 12 Step Call Lists were due to the SIA Office by April 1, 2014. As of today April 15, I am in receipt of 74 lists, some disconcertingly short. That is approximately a 25% return rate. Now I have a problem.

How do I work my program? Do I accept 25% as I have been taught..."and acceptance is the answer to all my problems today". Do I adopt the suggestion from AA Comes of Age:"... sometimes the good is the enemy of the best."? Do I dive "Into Action" and bombard the recalcitrant groups with weekly reminders and attempt guilt-inducing techniques. Do I write off non-

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compliant groups as unwilling to "help the sick and suffering alcoholic"? I had expected the return of 250 lists- a 75% rate. My sponsor tells me to have no expectations, that "My serenity is inversely proportional to my expectations. The higher my expectations of other people are, the lower is my serenity." (AA p.452) Well, I clearly need to work on that!

Truth be told, I do have expectations and a desire to do my best work. It is through Alcoholics Anonymous that I learned to follow through on a commitment and to do it to the best of my ability. I realize that it doesn't matter what anyone else does or doesn't do; it only matters what I do. Still- I need others to step up if this job is to be done right. How do I encourage other alcoholics to do service? I hear "Oh, look who you are working with....drunks." Well, I look at myself as a person in recovery; a person who is changing the person she was. The overall theme of Alcoholics Anonymous is love and service. Am I striving towards a life of love and service? Are you? Would putting your name and phone number on the 12 Step Call list be a start in that direction?

Dolores K., Hot-Line Chair



The Fifth Step

I was less apprehensive about my fifth step than many other recovering alcoholics. I had been in therapy for twelve years prior to entering AA and I was accustomed to discussing my hang-ups with another person. I just assumed that, this time, I would be discussing my hang-ups with another alcoholic. Sort of like a lengthy therapy session, but with a non-professional.

Boy, did I get that one wrong! For openers, my therapist never interrupted me to point out that she had done the same things I had done and felt the same way I had felt about them. My sponsor, on the other hand, did this constantly. I realize now that he was trying to make me feel comfortable. The result, however, was to initiate a game of Can You Top This? Every time I mentioned I had done something I was ashamed of, my sponsor countered with a more extreme example of the same type of behavior on his part. This, of course, elicited a more extreme example from me, which was then countered by my sponsor, etc.

Often after a therapy session I would feel like a hand grenade with the pin removed. I would be furious with my parents and significant others about the

treatment I had received from them. Throughout my fifth step, in contrast, my sponsor insisted that I keep the focus on myself. What kind of a son or brother had I been? What kind of husband was I, or employee? Every time I complained about someone else my sponsor told me their behavior was irrelevant. Our sole focus was on understanding what role I had played in creating the problems that led to my drinking.

I took my fifth step more than twenty-five years ago. Since then I've had the opportunity to sit on the opposite side of several other fifth steps. Almost invariably, the people I've sponsored have had a hard time discussing trivial, unimportant incidents that they thought made them look foolish. They've rarely had problems, though, discussing questionable ethical behavior. This was also true in my case. I agonized over telling my sponsor about compromising situations in which I got caught, but I had no difficulty discussing my efforts to ruin the reputations of coworkers or to destroy other peoples' marriages. In fact, I almost bragged about these things. After all, who wouldn't take advantage of the opportunity to create a little mischief?

This highlights the most important benefit I've received from AA: a solid moral education. After my fifth step

I realized the wrongs I had committed (six and seventh steps), admitted my responsibility for them (eight step), and set about repairing the damage I had caused (ninth step). Today I can look back over my past and not cringe when I think about my behavior. This had alleviated a great deal of inner turmoil. I can look back, but I don't have to stare.

I quit therapy shortly after my fifth step. After thirteen years, my problems had only gotten worse. My therapist never expressed any judgment about my behavior. Then again my sponsor has continually insisted that I "do the next right thing." I believe psychotherapy often provides enormous advantages to people who suffer from emotional problems. In my case, frankly, it was a waste of time. My problems did not stem from a lack of coping skills; in the words of my sponsor, I was "a moral idiot."

Over the course of my recovery I've come to realize that my emotions are automatic responses based upon my deepest values. Since I've been sober, my emotional reactions to people, places and things have progressively become healthier. This is the ultimate payoff of my fifth step. It enabled me to develop healthy moral values. In so doing it has enabled me to become the man I've always wanted to be. Pete M., Smithtown Group

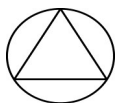
OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE (Continued from page 1)

diverts us from our primary purpose and makes our own work less effective. I used to hear that there's a wrench for every nut in A.A. I realize that today many "projects" require a number of tools for their successful completion. But A.A. is only the wrench. We are fortunate today that there are so many other resources where we can pick up the hammer, saw and screwdriver.

I'm also struck by the seriousness with which the 12 & 12 describes our responsibility to carry the message. Comparing it to finding a cure for cancer, we have a moral obligation to see that as many sufferers as possible are not left in the dark. And having found the solution, it is not something that can be delegated to others. We are the

ones uniquely equipped to transmit the message where others can't; and, as the 12 & 12 says, it doesn't depend on "learning, eloquence, or any special individual skills". The only thing that matters is that we have found a way out and can share the "language of the heart." Then the importance of doing this is hammered home by the realization that, we have to carry the message to stay alive ourselves.

And perhaps lastly, by sticking to our primary purpose, we have the benefits so wonderfully described in the preamble. We don't need any of the requirements of a "normal" organization. We have only one membership requirement; we have no dues or fees; we ask no one to support any cause or join an organization. "Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety." Anonymous former DCMC



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The Bulletin

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Please note:

Inclusion of articles and announcements in The Bulletin does not constitute endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous or Suffolk Intergroup Association. Rather, members of Alcoholics Anonymous have been encouraged to share their experience, strength and hope through this publication. Opinions expressed are those of the writer unless otherwise noted. Suffolk Intergroup makes these articles and announcements available solely as a service to the reader.

Brian C., Editor

Next Up on the HotLine:

May Commitments

District 30- John K, Phone Captain

Northport Free at Last

District 250- Rich W, Phone Captain

Southampton

District 220- Bob P, Phone Captain

Mt. Sinai

District 40- Bob L, Phone Captain

Huntington groups

Thanks to April's Hotline volunteers:

District 100- Dave: Steps to Life; District 80- Donny: West Islip; District 240-Donald C. Sunrise Serenity; District 210- Willie: Riverhead groups
District 90- Dave: Patchogue Big Book.

Intergroup Officers

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June Meetings

Archives Committee: 6/4/2014 8:00 PM SIA Office

Institutions Committee: 6/18/2014 7:00 PM SIA Office

Public Information Committee:
6/17/2014 7:00 PM SIA Office

SIA Monthly Business Meeting:
6/10/2014 Cleary School

6:30 PM New Group Rep Orientation

6:30 PM Share-a-Thon

7:00 PM Hot-Line Captains

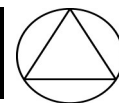
7:30 PM Intergroup Meeting

SIA Officers & Chairs: 6/3/2014 7:00 PM SIA Office

Suffolk General Service: 6/20/2014 8:00 PM

Trinity Lutheran Church,
Rocky Point

Third Legacy Committee: 6/24/2014 7:30 PM SIA Office



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SIA – ARCHIVES IS HAVING AN



**FOR AA'S WHO ENTERED THE ROOMS OF SUFFOLK COUNTY
IN THE 50's, 60's & 70's**

We want to record your experiences in the rooms for the future.

When: Saturday June 14th Time: 10am to 1pm

!! GROUP ANNIVERSARY !!

**PLEASE JOIN US TO CELEBRATE
BABYLON MID-ISLAND'S GROUP
ANNIVERSARY!**

June 14th, 2014, 6 to 11 P.M.

United Methodist Church

21 James St., Babylon

Meeting Changes

Starting in May, the Intergroup Third Legacy Committee will be meeting on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Intergroup Office on the corner of Bay Ave. and Terrell Ave. in Patchogue. For May, the fourth Tuesday is the 27th.

The Huntington Group at Old First Church

125 Main Street, Huntington, NY 11743

presents

BIG BOOK UNPLUGGED

Led by Richard H., a Trustee of Dr. Bob's Home in Akron Ohio. This 12-week series will look at the history and program of Alcoholics Anonymous as it appears in the Big Book. Beginning June 15th, we will meet every Sunday through August 31st from 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM in the downstairs room of Old First Church, 125 Main Street, Huntington, NY 11743.

BYOBB

(bring your own Big Book)

Contact information available through the SIA Office



Group History of the Month

Sobriety Unlimited
Brookhaven Recreational Center
Defense Hill Road
Shoreham

Sobriety Unlimited was started by Pat S, who, when fairly new to Alcoholics Anonymous, had joined another group. That group turned out, according to Pat, to be very "clique-y". Although the regulars would say hello to her, they "wouldn't go out of their way". Pat never felt comfortable, despite trying hard to fit in by doing service and taking commitments, which she loved to do. She felt like an outsider at her own meeting and that took its toll over the year or so that she was part of the group. So she did what many an A.A. had done over the years--- rechanneled what might have become a resentment into a more positive action---she started a new meeting.

With this in mind, she approached the recreation center where the Shoreham Big Book (now known as Big Book and Step) had been meeting since February 1989 and signed the necessary papers. The original name of the group was As Bill Sees It and it first appeared in the May 1991 meeting list. It was designated as a non-smoking closed meeting which met every Monday evening at 7:30. As might be gathered from the group's name, the focus was on the A.A. book, *As Bill Sees It*. Everything was all set to roll but the people weren't showing up. "There were 3 or 4 of us and we would sit outside and discuss the little book".

A friend of Pat's suggested one day that its non-smoking approach might be an impediment. These were the days when smoking was still very much a part of the meeting scene. The meeting was changed to smoking status "and people started coming".

By the February 1992 meeting list, it was now called Big Book Monday Nite, a very short-lived idea since in the very next meeting list its name was changed to Sobriety Unlimited, the name it is known by to this day. It expanded around February 2002 and added a Friday step meeting, also at 7:30.



THE BULLETIN ENTERS ITS FIFTH DECADE

This May ends the 40th anniversary year of Suffolk Intergroup. With the publication of the volume 41, number 1 issue of the *Bulletin*, we start our fifth decade in print. Has much changed? See for yourself: the entire first issue is reproduced on the next two pages.

The original of the first issue has been safely preserved by the Archives Committee and is stored in the Intergroup office in fire-proof, water-proof cabinets along with many other items of historical or archival significance. The work of collecting and preserving the history of AA in Suffolk County is ongoing. If you have old issues of the *Bulletin*, or of the meeting list, or any of the many publications that Intergroup has printed over the years and would like to contribute them to the Archives, contact Jimmy O., the Archives chair through the Intergroup office. The Archives and the *Bulletin* are collaborating to interview members with 40 or more years. If you would be willing to be interviewed, contact the Archives or the *Bulletin*.

One thing your editor noticed about the first issue: on the second page, at the bottom, my predecessor asks for writers to contribute articles. Some things, it would seem, never change.

We're on the Web!

www.Suffolkny-aa.org



THE BULLETIN

OF THE

A.A. ANSWERING SERVICE

AND

INTERGROUP ASSOC. OF SUFFOLK CO.

(516) 653-5353

P.O. Box 422, East Quogue, New York 11942

May, 1973

NEW OFFICERS - Your delegates have elected the following trusted servants for the next year---Dorothy P. Chairman---Greenlawn Huntington Group; Martin F. Co-Chairman---Comack Group; Carol C. Secretary, St. James Group; Ruth C.---Treasurer, Westhampton Group. They need and deserve all of your support!!!

S.E.N.Y. CONVENTION - Your editor attended his first convention and can only say that it was a very rewarding experience. There were so many fine speakers that to mention some by name would be an injustice to the rest. The message of the "Thank you for my Life" panel was especially inspiring. I must, however, mention Tom M's hypothetical phone call from a drunk with which he started the Friday evening session entitled "Dial A.A. for help" --- some of you comedy writers, move over.

EXCHANGE MEETING - The next exchange meeting of the Nassau/Suffolk area groups will take place at the Hauppauge group meeting place, Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, at the corner of Brookside drive and Nesconsett Highway, on Monday evening, June 4th at 6:30 P.M.

DELEGATES MEETING - The next meeting of the delegates to the Suffolk answering service will be held the following evening---same place as above June 5th at 7:30 P.M. All are invited.

NEW GROUPS - "GUYS AND DOLLS" closed meeting at 9:00 P.M. every Friday evening at Grace Presbyterian Church at 425 Hawkins Rd., Seldon.

"LINCOLN AND LEE" open house meeting at 9 P.M. every Monday---Church on North side of Main Street, Wainscott.

"BLUE POINT" closed meeting at 8 P.M., Tuesday evening---open meeting at 8:30 P.M. Saturday---Our Lady of the Snow Church, Blue Point.

"EAST SETAUKET" closed meeting at 9 P.M. at Methodist Church, Route 25A and Old Field Road.

"LIVE AGAIN" 1 P.M. open afternoon meeting at St. Luke's Church, Wicks Road, Brentwood.

ANNIVERSARY ---The 12th GROUP ANNIVERSARY of the Greenlawn Huntington Group will be held on Friday evening, June 8. A buffet will be served at 7:30; Meeting at 9:00; Dancing to live music from 10:00 P.M. ---MONEY TREE RAFFLE---Broadway and Pulaski Road---Greenlawn.



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR:"WHY ME?"

I never knew I was an alcoholic; in fact, I didn't know what an alcoholic was. I remember the army classifying me chronic alcoholic but, I just did not give it much thought. It was not until I wound up in an alcoholic rehab. unit that I found out what alcoholism was. Then, after awhile and a little self honesty, I admitted that alcohol played a major role in my life. My next question was "WHY ME".

Today, looking back over my drinking and sober life, I can come up with some sort of answer.

All during my drinking days, I thought I was having a good time. In reality, I was rationalizing away the difficulties I had or laughing them off. When others I drank with went home or to church and I remained glued to the seat, I said they were henpecked. As progression set in, I thought of myself as a god and blamed everything and everybody for mistakes or imperfections. It wasn't until I was laying on the floor of some cheap hotel, physically hurting, that I could rationalize no more. For you see, I had to quit running away from myself.

When I came to A.A., I found that I had to build a whole new life through sobriety. A life in which I could never again run to the bottle again. I immediately said "WHY ME".

Today, I think I have the answer. When I was Drinking, I had no human emotions. I was like an animal.

As my dependency on the bottle increased, I became more vicious. And, like a forest fire, it wasn't until I burnt myself out that I was willing to admit defeat.

Through A.A. I learned a little about myself both bad and good. I slowly regained my sense of values, self confidence and self respect. I learned that I was not unique, just a plain Indian and that my chief's days were over. I found a higher power who would guide me if I was willing to let him. I became a person who is willing to practice the principles in all my affairs. (Love of God and Love of Fellow Man) (Service to God and Fellow Man).

Today, with a life reclaimed from the hell of alcoholism, I can honestly say that I'm part of my community. I have a true relationship with people and that I no longer walk alone---due to the program. I've learned I'm human and from living in reality, I'm able to experience and grow and cherish all the joys and sorrows that life offers. Only, this time, I'm not alone and drugged.

Mike O'S---Islip

HELP! Your editor needs News. Please send anything of interest to:

BUTTONWOOD, 97 W [REDACTED], N.Y. 11787

or call

(516) 5 [REDACTED]