



The Suffolk Intergroup

# BULLETIN

Volume 41, Number 3

JULY 2014

## SELF-SUPPORT

As I understood the concept of Tradition Seven - *AA is self-supporting through our own contributions*; however, I never really felt it in my heart how spirituality and money connected with each; until I was given the gift of being the SIA Treasurer.

During my tenure as the SIA Treasurer, my main roles and responsibilities included paying bills for the SIA Office and Committee Officers expenses, depositing and recording the groups' contributions, creating and managing the annual SIA Budget and producing the monthly SIA Financial Report. It was a lot of tedious work on a monthly basis.

After awhile, you get to know the basic monthly expenses to pay and the groups who made regular contributions. One month, I was recording the groups' contributions and I realized that there were groups who made large contributions on a regular basis. Then, I was opening an envelope and there was a money order for \$10 with a note that said something to the words of: *"We are a new group struggling to make ends meet; however, we know the importance of the 12 Step Work SIA does. This is all we can afford at this time."* This was one of my moments when it clicked how spirituality and money work together. I sat there and tears flowed down my face. Even right now I get emotional writing about this. Both groups understood the importance of the service work being performed by the SIA Committees and Reps. My lesson learned, regardless if is a \$1,000 or \$10 contribution, it all counts towards *the work of carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic*.

Another moment that clicked in my heart: At our monthly SIA Officers meetings, each Officer will give an update. One evening, I was sitting in the back of the room and I truly was listening to the words that were spoken. These were the words I heard:

The School Committee needed monies to purchase literature for a speaking engagement at a local high school. *Carrying the message to High School Students.*

The Public Information Committee needed monies for printing and mailing letters out to the local medical centers and purchasing literature and racks to display at the local libraries and a Senior Wellness Event. *Carrying the message and educating the Medical Professionals, Public, and Seniors.*

The Institutional and Correctional Committees needed monies to purchase big books and literature to take with them to the meetings at Riverhead jails and the local rehab centers. *Carrying the message to those who are still suffering from alcoholism and giving them hope when they are released, there is Hope and a Home waiting for them.*

I have a lot of moments that touched me; however, I want to share with you this last one, from when I went to Arizona to the annual SIA Convention:

(Continued on page 4)

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

### Intergroup Information

#### July Meetings

Page 5

### "Forgiveness and Step Seven"

Page 3

### Monthly Group History

Page 4

### Hot-Line Update

Page 3

### Announcements

Pages 6, 7, 8

### Tradition Seven

Page 1

### "We Atheists"

Page 2

*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: We Atheists

As soon as I saw the word God in the third step I knew I was in trouble. My life was in shambles and AA was my last chance. If I had to convince myself that there is a God in order to stay sober, I was sure to drink again.

Reading the literature made things worse. I especially resented the patronizing tone of the "We Agnostics" chapter in the big book. What was the message; If I allow myself to be brainwashed sufficiently, I would eventually accept a metaphysical position to which I had profound objections? Would I have to go through the rest of my life in a benign stupor, not letting myself question or challenge any opinion that was put forth as part of AA's program of recovery?

Well, I'm happy to report that, with over twenty-six years of continuous sobriety, I consider myself as much of a member of our fellowship as anyone else. I'm also happy to report that I've been able to reconcile my atheism with the program. Along the way, I've learned some valuable lessons.

First of all, I had to look at myself. My atheism was not primary - I didn't believe in God

*I didn't believe  
in God because  
I didn't believe  
in anything,  
either spiritual  
or material*

because I didn't believe in anything, either spiritual or material. I had been educated carefully to believe that there are no universal principals, that certainty is impossible, and that ultimately "the end justifies the means." A quarter century as a financial executive had reinforced these beliefs to the point where I accepted them as dogma. I was convinced that nothing is long-term. ("If you don't make your quarterly numbers, you're out.") The term loyalty is meaningless. ("What have you done for me lately?") And there's always someone out there who will take the fall for you. ("A sucker's born every minute.")

In short order I realized that this cynical, skeptical worldview was a major threat to my sobriety. If I was going to

avoid a relapse, I had to believe in something. Also, if I was ever going to get through the steps, I had to stop adding to my list of eighth-step amends. First and foremost, I needed a completely different set of fundamental beliefs.

I now understand why membership in an established, organized religion can be so beneficial to recovering alcoholics. A set of religious doctrines provides a person with an integrated view of existence. Christians, for example, hold very definite ideas regarding man's place in the universe. They also subscribe to a well defined code of values that one is expected to pursue. As a result they do not have to engage in exhaustive inner debates regarding their choice of action in the face of the myriad situations that confront them every day.

*First and  
foremost, I needed  
a completely  
different set of  
fundamental  
beliefs*

As enviable as this position is, I knew I would not be able to accept it. Faith is belief in the absence of evidence. I had never been willing to agree to any position on any topic without either verifiable evidence or a fully consistent, logical proof.

Instead my solution was to use substitution. In place of a nonmaterial God, I believe in the Universe itself as an objective entity. Despite all of my wishes, hopes and fears, my higher power is absolute and final; if I fail to follow its principles, it will become an implacable foe. If I try to evade or conceal any truth, I know I will pay an enormous price. I do my best to be rigorously honest today to preserve the integrity of my mortal soul. Without that my staying sober would be impossible.

Over the course of reconciling my atheism with my recovery, I've developed a great deal of admiration for AAs who profess a religious outlook. If you were to compare my daily actions with those of any other successfully recovering alcoholic, you would likely find our behavior to be virtually identical. In fact, the only real difference between our programs is that my higher power is a "What" instead of a "Who." In all other respects, I'm just another recovering alcoholic.

*Peter M. is a member of the  
Smithtown group.*



## ***FORGIVENESS AND STEP SEVEN***

My AA story is qualifying to say the least. I picked up alcohol when I was sixteen and continued to abuse the use of it for twenty-five years.

As a kid, my experience seemed to suggest to me that I was sinful. Guilt seemed to follow sin and fear seemed to follow guilt. Such was my psychological make-up.

What was I to do with that "unholy trinity" of sin, guilt and fear? Ego told me the best way to get rid of it was to project it onto other people: they were the guilty ones, not me. Then I started to look around for scapegoats. I wanted to see in others the very defects that were in me. Then I needed a technique to keep distance between myself and those I resented and this is where anger came into the picture.

As long as I stayed angry at others, I didn't have to look at myself. This anger prevented me from having healthy relationships and it certainly got in the way of my being able to forgive. I had to forgive before I could come to the realization that I had hurt others with my attitude. I realize today that anger is nothing more than an attempt to make someone else feel guilty. Anger is seldom justifiable. I still have bouts of anger now and then, but I am willing to have this anger removed with the helpful intercession of my Higher Power.

I've learned in AA that I can help free myself from anger and hatred through forgiveness and love.

Ed H., Coram Steps to Life

## **HOTLINE UPDATE**

As of June 19<sup>th</sup> the SIA Hotline is functioning well. The Hotline is continuing to serve the sick and suffering alcoholics of Suffolk County 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. I am grateful to the area phone captains who are diligent in making sure the phones are covered each week and, of course, to my fellow AAs who are willing to give a mere 12 hours on the Hotline to Alcoholics Anonymous every couple of years. As I have learned in AA, "Gratitude is not merely an emotion; it is an ACTION". Thank you to all of you who demonstrate your gratitude to AA.

We are in the process of confirming telephone numbers on the 12 Step Call lists. The books are being revamped and reorganized to make them easier to use and simpler to update. It is my hope that they will be completed by August.

There is a 36% return rate of 12 Step Call lists from Home Groups- 118 groups of the approximately 330 groups in Suffolk County responded to the request to support the sick and suffering alcoholic by taking the Hotline. Some towns are very well represented; other towns have **no** names and numbers available to take a 12 Step call; still others have a disconcertingly low amount of volunteers. I am grateful for those who have stepped up.

As of now, the Hotline continues to be a viable entity in Suffolk County. We should all be very proud of that. Thank you for your service.

Dolores K., Hot-Line Chair



**AA without your support is like a house you don't maintain...useless.**





## Group History of the Month

### Southold Settlers

The group was formed because there was no meeting on Monday night in the area. There were meetings in Greenport on Thursday night, Riverhead on Friday night, Shelter Island on Saturday night and Cutchogue on Sunday night. The group was started by Tom and Marcel W., a couple who had met each other in the program.

The first meeting was held January 12th, 1976 at 7:30pm in the First Universalist Church basement in Southold. Monday is a closed discussion meeting and anniversaries are celebrated in an open meeting on the first Monday of the month. After several months, the group moved to the Methodist Church in Southold.

A few of the original members were Harry R., Vinnie, Charlie and Mezzie, Ziggy and Ann, Jack L., Bea L., Irene and Jim S., Carol and Pete G., Howie Y., Bobbie "Boots," and Sue. "Black Suzie" was never actually a member, but was always there! Suzie didn't drive, but somehow made every meeting in the area.

A beginner's meeting has been added (and removed at times because detracted from the regular meeting). It has now been a regular meeting for at least ten years and is held in the same large meeting room at 6:00pm on Monday nights. The format for the beginners meeting was suggested by Virginia F. incorporating ideas from a beginners meeting in Chappaqua, N.Y., where the co-founder of AA, Bill W., was often in attendance. It is chaired by a man and a woman and they alternate choosing a topic. Sharing begins with those who have 0 to 90 days sobriety, then 90 days to 6 months, 6 months to a year and then opens up to all. A Step meeting was added on Thursday nights and is held in the small conversation area beyond the large meeting room. A Step is read each week and after all twelve have been read one of the Traditions is read.

In 2002, a Living Sober meeting was added at 11:30 on Wednesday mornings. We read a chapter from the Living Sober book and then continue around the room sharing on the subject of the chapter.

The group anniversary in January puts a celebration at the mercy of the weather, so they were put aside for a while particularly after one was attempted during an ice storm. No electricity and the food brought made for a precarious situation. Interest in celebrating the group's anniversary has since revived and they have been having a gathering each year.



*Southold Methodist Church,*

## Tradition Seven

*Continued from page 1)*

There were representatives from each county, city, and state. We went to the numerous workshops. Of course, I went to the ones regarding 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition, SIA Treasurer and Spirituality and Money. Many SIA Treasurers were sharing their stories and struggles on how they needed to do bake sales, car washes, garage sales, raffles to raise funds to keep their SIA running, open, and pay the appointed staff their salary. I raised my hand and proudly shared the following:

*"I am Maria from the Suffolk County Intergroup Association in NY. We are very fortunate that our SIA office and Committees are self supporting/funded from the group contributions. We do not need to do any fund raisers.*

*In addition, all our officers and staff positions are all trusted volunteers of AA. We do not pay anyone for their service work. I can't tell you how proud I was to represent YOU - SIA at this convention."*

The next time you hear a group member questioning the expenditure and work of the SIA Officers and Committees, suggest to them to become a member of a SIA Committee. They will understand the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition and how spirituality and money works. *Maria C., Centereach Open Door*



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## **The Bulletin**

Is published monthly by the Suffolk Intergroup Association of Alcoholics Anonymous, PO Box 659 Patchogue, NY 11772. "Alcoholics Anonymous" and "AA" are registered trademarks of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Quotes from AAWS literature and AA Grapevine are used with permission.

## **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:**

### **July Commitments**

District 270 – Pat McK, Phone Captain

TBA

District 70 – Mike M, Phone Captain

Great River Group; Non-Smokers Group

District 90– Dave, Phone Captain

TBA

District 30– East Northport Eye-Opener

And Valley 8:00 PM

### **Thanks to June's Hotline volunteers:**

Area 110, Paul/Smithtown Serenity; Area 230, Jeff/Stony Brook Discussion; Area 50, Ron/Home for Dinner; Area 100, Dave/Coram-Farmingville Open Arms; Area 80, Donny and Woof

## **Intergroup Officers**

Chairperson Fred H. Chairman@suffolkny-aa.org

Alt Chair Vikki B. Alt-chair@suffolkny-aa.org

Treasurer Bob W. Treasurer@suffolkny-aa.org

Corr. Sec Anne B Corsec@suffolkny-aa.org

Recording Sec Daniel W. Recsec@suffolkny-aa.org

### **Committee Chairs**

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Corrections Paul .... Correct@suffolkny-aa.org

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Third Legacy Kevin C. ... Thirdleg@suffolkny-aa.org

Treatment Fac. Tom M. Treatment@suffolkny-aa.org

Webmaster Martin ..... Webmaster@suffolkny-aa.org

## **August Meetings**

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

**Institutions Committee:** 8/20/2014 7:00 PM SIA Office

**Public Information Committee:**  
8/19/2014 7:00 PM SIA Office

**SIA Monthly Business Meeting:**  
8/12/2014 Cleary School

**6:30 PM** New Group Rep Orientation

**6:30 PM** Share-a-Thon

**7:30 PM** Intergroup Meeting

**SIA Officers & Chairs:** 8/5/2014 7:00 PM SIA Office

**Suffolk General Service:** 8/15/2014 8:00 PM

Trinity Lutheran Church,  
Rocky Point

**Third Legacy Committee:** 8/26/2014 7:30 PM SIA Office



# ANNOUNCEMENTS



Ten years ago, the meeting list was filled with meetings that no longer existed. In order that this situation not happen again, every group is required to contact SIA once each year to let us know you are still in existence. The deadline for contact is October 1st. If we have not heard from you, your group will be dropped from the meeting list. Don't let this happen: contact the Intergroup office, update your group information, stay listed

## Third Legacy Workshops

The date for the Treasurers and Insurance Workshops is Saturday July 19 from 9:00 AM to 10:15 AM & 10:30 AM to 11:45 AM. The workshops will be held in the Intergroup Office at 113-8 Bay Ave in Patchogue.

## 2014 BIG MEETING

This year's theme:

"STAYING SOBER THROUGH SERVICE"

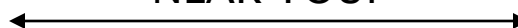
Committee Chairs – Volunteers – New to Service

New to Sobriety – All Are Welcome

Sponsored this year by Suffolk General Service

Contact SIA office for meeting date and time

COMING SOON TO A BULLETIN  
NEAR YOU!



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE CIRCLE AND  
TRIANGLE?

The Third Legacy Committee tells us why AA's iconic  
symbol is no longer AA's iconic symbol.

INTERVIEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES OLD-  
TIMERS OPEN HOUSE!

What was AA like in the '50's, '60's and '70's?



Write us and tell us what you think of, well, pretty much anything A.A. related. We'd like to make the Bulletin the voice of the members of A.A. in Suffolk County. This means YOU! Tell us what we're doing right; tell us what we're doing wrong; share your experience with others.

## MEETING CHANGES

### **BOHO GROUP**

EFFECTIVE JULY 1ST WILL NO LONGER HAVE  
A FRIDAY MEETING.

### **REMSENBERG BASIC SOBRIETY**

SATURDAY MORNING MEETING HAS BEEN  
CHANGED TO AN 8 AM TOPIC MEETING





The Huntington Group at Old First Church  
presents

# Big Book Unplugged

A 12-Week Series on  
the History and Program of Alcoholics Anonymous  
as it appears in the Big Book

Led by Richard H.  
Trustee of Dr. Bob's Home in Akron, OH

*BYOBB*  
(bring your own big book)

**Every Sunday from 7:30 to 8:30 PM**

**From June 15, 2014 – August 31, 2014**

In the downstairs room of

Old First Church

125 Main Street, Huntington, NY 11743

Contact information available through the  
Suffolk Intergroup Association



## SAVE THE DATE

SUNDAY, AUGUST 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2014

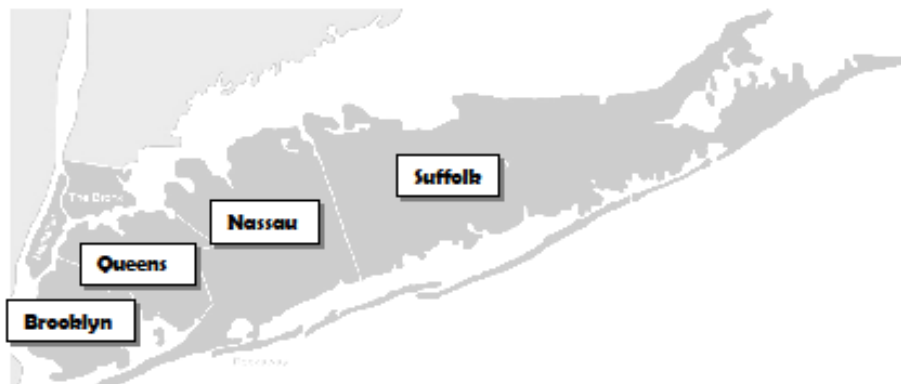
11:00AM -5:00PM

**FOUR COUNTIES COME TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE OUR THIRD LEGACY**

BROOKLYN COUNTY HOSTS THE FOURTH ANNUAL...

**L**ONG **I**SLAND **S**PIRITUALITY **T**HROUGH **S**ERVICE

**BROOKLYN-QUEENS-NASSAU-SUFFOLK**



Join us for a day of...  
Meditation, Workshops, Roundtables, Skits, and more.

*LEARN HOW SPIRITUALITY THROUGH SERVICE KEEPS US SOBER*

*SEE COUNTY ARCHIVES*

*ENJOY FOOD, FUN, FELLOWSHIP*

English→Spanish Translation available

ASL translation upon request

Wheelchair accessible

Bring sponsors, friends, and fellows!

Sun. Aug. 10<sup>th</sup>

PS 20

225 Adelphi St. (Between Dekalb & Willoughby)

Registration begins at 11:00AM

Brooklyn, NY