



The Suffolk Intergroup

BULLETIN

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GIFTS WE ARE THANKFUL FOR



SERENITY



THE FELLOWSHIP OF AA



NOT TAKING MYSELF TOO SERIOUSLY

In a daring attempt to attract attention, the cover of the Bulletin is being printed in color for the first time. November being the month of Thanksgiving, we asked people to suggest things for which they are grateful. The editor is grateful to Russ M., Mary K. and Fred H. who supplied the photography.



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TRADITION 11: ATTRACTION

Our Twelfth Step and our Fifth Tradition both tell us to "carry the message". We can't sit in our meetings hoping a still-suffering alcoholic staggers through the door by mistake. We have to make alcoholics aware that AA is here to help them when they decide drinking is a problem. Published in 1939, the first edition of the Big Book was AA's first attempt at making information about itself available to the general public. Since that time, the primary purpose of members involved in public information work has been, like the primary purpose of all of AA, to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. We each owe a debt to the men and women who came to the Fellowship before us that can only be repaid to those who come after. No one can reach out for the hand of AA if they do not know it is there. In the days of AA's infancy, when many members were fearful of exposure and protective of their anonymity, Bill remarked that AA can never be a secret society: if we are to help anyone, the still suffering alcoholic must be able to find us and those people, whether doctors, clergy or employers, who might have influence on the alcoholic, must know how to direct someone to us.

Folks in Public Information are often asked, "What exactly is it you people do in P.I.?" Well, truthfully, the question is more often phrased, "What the hell do you PI people think you're doing?" The question is usually followed by the story of a perceived anonymity break, or of a PI project which the questioner thinks is promotion rather than attraction, or of what is thought to be a breaking of Tradition. Public Information walks a fine line between the Fellowship's need to make itself known to those who may need it, and the Traditions on which the Fellowship works. I believe that anyone who has served in Public Information and wants to do a good job while

staying within our Traditions has to arrive at an understanding of "attraction" and "promotion" to guide them in their work. What follows is my understanding, and my opinion.

Think about three columns of newsprint. One column is an advertisement, clearly promotion; one column is an announcement of the day, time and location of an AA meeting, hopefully attraction; the last is an editorial, seemingly somewhere in between the other two. They all appear in the same newspaper, they are all black ink on white paper, they could well take up the same amount of page space and be printed in the same font...what makes them different? To me, it is in the treatment of facts and the intention to persuade.

Advertisement or promotion allows the greatest leeway in dealing with facts. We allow, and even expect, advertisements to deal in a bit of hype; to stretch the truth; to make exaggerated claims. Perhaps the ad contains facts that are not entirely relevant to the point the ad is trying to make, in order to gain a positive reaction by association or by contrast. Perhaps the ad contains quite a bit of opinion, perhaps unsubstantiated opinion. Perhaps the ad offers bonuses or gifts to persuade the reader to accept a point of view or take a certain action.

An editorial will also attempt to persuade the reader to a point of view or course of action, but while we expect advocacy in an editorial, we have a higher standard for the presentation of facts. We expect the editorial advocate to present the facts in the best light to make his case, but we would not expect that he would engage in lies of either commission or omission. We expect the facts used to support an editorial to be complete, undistorted and relevant, but the intent to persuade is still present.

In attraction, in the A.A. ideal, we engage in neither advertisement nor advocacy. We try to present the facts as clearly as possible and allow our audience to draw what conclusion they may. The facts of our experience, in drinking and in recovery, speak for themselves. The unadorned truth about ourselves and our Fellowship is our best persuasion. We see this in our individual Twelfth Step work with the still suffering alcoholic: we do best when we relate the facts of our own drinking and our own recovery and leave preaching and opining out. The same principle directs Twelfth Step work at the level of Public Information.



View Points: Step Eleven

Bill W wrote on page 97 of the 12 and 12 "almost the only scoffers at prayer are those who never tried it enough". When I arrived at the doors of AA in 1977 I was a card carrying SCOFFER (one who mocks, jeers, makes fun of). Prayer had been gone from my life for many years except for those times I was in major trouble and the prayer was "God get me out of this and I'll never do It again", also known as the foxhole prayer. God would answer my prayer and I could never hold up my end of the bargain. It wasn't until I hit an emotional bottom, a year away from a drink, that I was willing enough to follow the directions in the book Alcoholics Anonymous and start on the road to recovery. In order to get the full benefit of the Eleventh Step I had to clear the channel to the Higher Power thru the first nine steps.

Over the last 37 years of attending meetings and spiritual retreats I have heard many definitions of prayer and meditation and the best are always the simplest. Prayer is talking to my God and Meditation is listening. My favorite place to do that is in an AA meeting. My Higher power speaks to me thru the people in the rooms. The simplest form of prayer and Meditation is just "wasting time with God" this is my morning quite time.

Bill W was sober a little over four years when writing step eleven in the Big Book. One of the gifts is that Bill was not an expert in the field of Prayer and Meditation and kept his directions very simple. On the top of page 86 he says "It would be easy to be vague about this matter." He must have been thinking there are many who can do a better job but I'll give it my best. Next came some of the most powerful directions in the book.

He gives a full paragraph on what to do when we retire at night, a mini inventory that we end with a prayer asking God for forgiveness and asking what corrective measures should be taken. The next paragraph gives us some specific directions for the day. We should have a plan for the day and we ask God to direct our thinking, that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self seeking motives. The next paragraph deals with the solution for indecision and a very simple form of meditation. He states there are many helpful books on prayer and meditation and we should avail ourselves of them.

The book TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS was published when Bill W was 18 years sober and had been working on his spiritual growth. A little Jesuit priest, Father Ed Dowling SJ, came into Bill's life in 1940 while he was visiting NYC from his home town of Saint Louis, MO. Father Ed felt that the twelve steps were based on the book

"The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius" and came to discuss those. Father Ed became Bill's "Spiritual Sponsor" and according to Nell Wing Bill would continue "to lean on this special friend for spiritual strength, comfort, and advice". During the 1940's Bill had other spiritual guides among them Father Sam Shoemaker and Bishop Fulton J Sheen, all of which had an influence on his writings in the Twelve and Twelve.

Bill W's ten page essay on the Eleventh Step in the Twelve and Twelve is some of his most powerful writings and is my favorite part of this classic book. He suggests we use the Saint Francis Prayer, on page 99, as a tool for our meditation. Slowly dissecting and "slowly savoring every word and trying to take in the deep meaning of each phrase and idea".

Like me Bill was a true alkie, in a June 1958 Grapevine article he writes about his spiritual struggle: "WHEN IT COMES TO THE PRACTICE of AA's Step Eleven--"Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out"--I'm sure I am still very much in the beginner's class; I'm almost a case of arrested development."

"Around me I see many people who make a far better job of relating themselves to God than I do. Certainly it mustn't be said I haven't made any progress at all over the years; I simply confess that I haven't made the progress that I might have made, my opportunities being what they have been, and still are".

"I've just finished re-reading the chapter on Step Eleven in our book, "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions." This was written almost five years ago. I was astonished when I realized how little time I had actually been giving to my own elementary advice on meditation, prayer and guidance--practices that I had so earnestly recommended to everybody else!

"In this lack of attention I probably have plenty of company. But I do know that this is a neglect that can cause us to miss the finest experiences of life, a neglect that can seriously slacken the growth that God hopes we may achieve right here on earth; here in this great day at school, this very first of our Father's Many Mansions".

Dave McD

Cleary School Group

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.



Group History of the Month

OUR JOURNEY

VFW Post 8300

330 North Dunton Avenue

East Patchogue, NY 11772

Our Journey was born on the road...literally. Nicole, one of the co-founders had a flash of inspiration while "driving to a service commitment." Immediately, she texted her close friends in A.A. to share her news. They responded back with an emphatic "Yes!" The rest they say is history--- although since this is being written less than two months after the group started, it is still early in the group's history.

Knowing in advance that the VFW Hall in East Patchogue might have an opening or two, arrangements were made to hold the meeting there. The group first met on Monday, June 25, 2012. Prior to that, flyers were sent out and word spread at local meetings. Along with Nicole, Lynn, Bree and Nadine were the driving forces in getting Our Journey up and running. Nadine said "We needed a change. We weren't finding it in other groups." She was also the inspiration behind the group's name.

Our Journey meets twice a week: Monday (Big Book with a Tradition meeting on the first week) and Friday (Closed Discussion with anniversaries on the last week) at 7:00pm. The VFW Hall on Dunton Avenue is no stranger to Alcoholics Anonymous: The Doghouse Group meets there every Tuesday evening. For many years this hall was the site of the Christmas and New Year's marathon meetings.

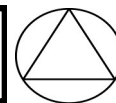
One evening, a member of the Archives Committee journeyed over to this group on a Monday mid-August to obtain background information. To his surprise there were over 60 people in attendance. The open meeting on Fridays had 38 AAs the week before. It is obvious the message is being heard loud and clear and people are answering its call. For a group less than two months old to attract this many people shows that they are on the right path.



This is a newer crowd to sobriety but several others tipped the scale on the recovery meter. Sober houses in the general vicinity may have provided a few attendees. What was obvious was the enthusiasm. The meeting ends with the Responsibility Statement, which demonstrates this group's focus. They are well aware of their need to carry a message to the still sick and suffering.

The group was advised by the VFW Hall that starting this September on Monday nights they will be sharing their meeting place with a Boy Scout troop. Even though there is a room divider, this may present some challenges to the fledgling meeting. A spirit of optimism prevails, however. It is the true measure of AAs to overcome obstacles and move forward. Many a group has fallen to the wayside over lesser issues. This group appears to have the energy to keep moving ahead. It has been said that a journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step. Our Journey begins and ends with the Twelve Steps. (August 9, 2012)





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

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Next Up on the HotLine:

November Commitments

- 11/2-8 District 110 - Paul S;
Cleary School Group
11/9-15 District 240 - Donald C
Center/East Moriches
11/16-22 District 40 -Bob L
High Noon
11/23-29 District 210 - Willie B
Back to Basics,
Freedom,
Baiting Hollow
11/30-12/6 District 70 - Mike M
Serenity on Sundays

Thanks to October's volunteers:

- District 220 Mt Sinai AM groups
District 90 Blue Point Tradition
District 230 We are Responsible
Port Jefferson Station
District 30 Fort Salonga Workshop

December Meetings

- Archives Committee:** 12/3/2014 8:00 PM SIA Office
Institutions Committee: 12/17/2014 7:00 PM SIA Office
Public Information Committee:
12/10/2014 7:00 PM SIA Office
SIA Monthly Business Meeting:
12/9/2014 Cleary School
Ronkonkoma
7:00 PM New Group Rep Orientation
7:00 PM Share-a-Thon
8:00 PM Intergroup Meeting
SIA Officers & Chairs: 12/2/2014 7:00 PM SIA Office
Suffolk General Service: 12/19/2014 8:00 PM
True North Church
Bohemia
Third Legacy Committee: 12/23/2014 7:30 PM SIA Office



Serve beer at meetings? Why not?

Stories from the Early Days of AA

AA boomed in the early 1940s, aided by a glowing Saturday Evening Post profile and the public admission by a Cleveland Indians catcher, Rollie Hemsley, that joining the organization had done wonders for his game. Wilson and the founding members were not quite prepared for the sudden success. Bill never let himself forget, it wasn't the office mail that was spreading the message. It was the band of tireless recovered albies who went on day after day and carried the word out to others. The number of these stalwarts in the early 1940s was incalculable, but several, perhaps because of their unorthodox methods, were close to Bill's heart. One of these was Irwin M.

Irwin was a super-salesman of Venetian blinds. A 250-pounder, he possessed a personality, an energy and a gusto as monumental as his build. AA was his religion, and because of a certain fanaticism in his approach, there was some hesitation in the beginning about giving him a list of prospects to contact. But since his territory covered Atlanta, Jacksonville and New Orleans, as well as Birmingham and Indianapolis, and since there was a file filled with the names of Southerners who'd so far had no contact with AA, the office knew they couldn't be choosy. They gave Irwin the list and sent him off.

Reports started coming in within weeks. Irwin had been incorrigible. With his whirlwind technique he tracked down drunks in homes, taverns and offices, and once he'd got his hooks into them he never let go. When he had to move on to another town, he spent his nights shut up in a hotel room writing letters to all his converts, admonishing them and praising them. Across the southland, new groups began to spring up in the wake of Irwin M, and if sometimes the questions of these newcomers indicated a confusion between AA and the Holy Rollers, it couldn't be helped. Bill hated to think what his atheist and agnostic friends would say if they saw these letters, but there was no denying they were coming from drunks who were sober. The South had been conquered again and much of the credit had to go to Irwin M. and others like him.

Bill felt, in the early days, that everyone should – every group had the right to formulate its own way of doing this particular thing, so it came about that we had a wandering, loving, lovable Jewish salesman who traveled all through the South. And he came back with stories about how they had one particular group that served beer during the evening, but nothing but beer! So that everything was perfectly fine, and of course, Bill thought it was hilarious, but nevertheless, he also thought that this kind of thing shouldn't go on. It took time and the dedicated work of one John W. to bring that group around.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Public Information/Cooperating with Professional Community

Presents

Speaking at Non -A.A. Functions

Sunday December 7, 2014 from 12:00 – 2:00 pm

Learn how to present AA to schools and the Professional Community. This presentation will take place at the SIA Office at 113-8 Bay Avenue Patchogue. It is suggested that you have 2 years of continuous sobriety. This workshop is limited to 25 people. Please contact the PI/CPC Chairperson by email Pubinfo@suffolkny-aa.org. Refreshments will be provided seating is limited to TWENTY FIVE people.

Young people in A.A. are strongly
encouraged to attend!!

As of December 2014 the PI/CPC Committee meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of the month. The first meeting will be on 12/10/14 at 7:30 PM at the SIA office



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!

Suffolk Intergroup Association Special Events Committee

Presents

The 2014 Winter Sobriety Dance

Saturday December 27 from 6–11 pm

SILO Community Center.

2111 Lakeland Ave.

Ronkonkoma NY 11779

Enter at bingo hall entrance

Food and Dancing

Live Music by REBOS

Service Opportunities will be
available. Get involved in
service and stay sober!

This event is wheelchair accessible
and open to the public.

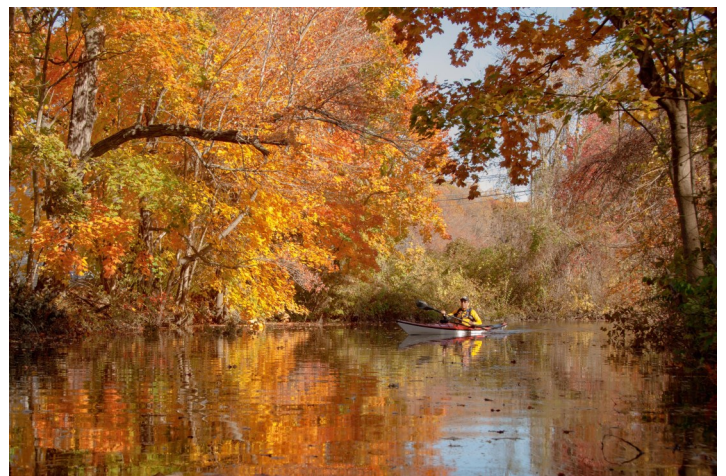
Email specevent@suffolkny-aa.org or
Call The S.I.A Office 631-654-1150 for
information.



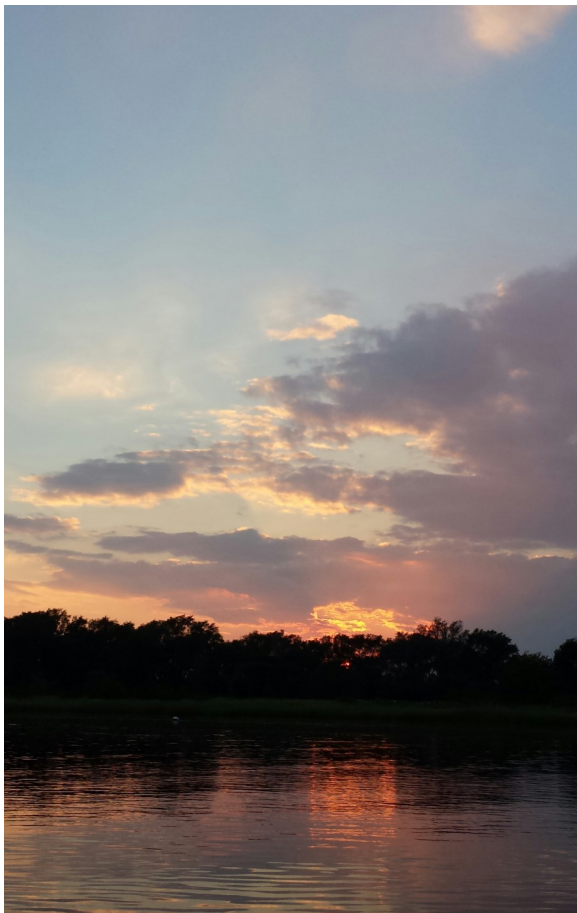
THE LOVE OF FAMILY



RUNNING ON THE BEACH WITH MY DOGS



ENJOYING NATURE



A RELATIONSHIP WITH A HIGHER POWER



NEW ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURES