



PRINCIPLES AND PERSONALITIES



The long form of the Twelfth Tradition reads: "And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all."

I saw this in action years ago at an AA Conference. During a break in the talks, a priest member was standing surrounded by other members in earnest conversation. I was passing by when an old-timer went right up to him, pushing through the crowd of admirers.

The old-timer confronted the priest saying: "Take those crosses off your shirt collar. We have no clergy in AA!" There was stunned shocked silence for a few awkward moments.

Then someone said: "Listen, mate, this is Father X, you ought to be treating him with respect." The intruder replied: "We in AA call no one of us 'Father'. We don't call judges in AA 'Your Honor' and we don't wear anything that sets us apart or above anyone else. We are all equal here."

Others were obviously getting angry with this rude member but the priest calmly said: "No, he's right" and started to take the gold crosses off of his shirt. "Just call me by my first name from now on. He's said all that so I don't forget that I'm just another AA member one drink away from being drunk just like the rest of you. Thank you sir. Now what were we talking about?"

The tradition says that we practice this tradition this for three

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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: Delisting

The sedate, collegial and non-confrontive tone of the last several Intergroup business meetings has been disturbed by a bit of controversy over the group representatives decision to remove from the meeting list those groups which have not confirmed their meeting days and times for the current year.

As part of *The Bulletin's* directive to inform the members of AA in Suffolk County of issues vital to the Fellowship, we have asked several people to provide us with opinion pieces on the various sides of the on-going contention. While we await those articles, your editor has volunteered to provide some background to the discussion. You may ask what, outside of a tendency to run off at the mouth and a need to fill space in the current issue, qualifies me to provide such background: simply, I was the Chairperson of Intergroup when this decision was first made 12 years ago and have heard it all before. I don't intend to argue one side or the other, but I would like to point out what I see as a couple of fallacies in the arguments being made.

The greatest concern of

most people I have spoken to who oppose the vote to "delist" groups is that the decision will hurt the newcomer. Personally, I agree that anything that affects the newcomer should be our greatest concern, but the reps decided 12 years ago that the newcomer is not affected in this situation.

The basic thought of those opposing delisting is that, if a newcomer doesn't see in the meeting list a meeting that has been dropped, that newcomer will not go to a meeting. This assertion doesn't stand up to analysis. Let us suppose that there is someone in Brightwaters who decides they want to sober up. That person obtains a meeting list and looks for a meeting in Brightwaters. As it happens, there are no meetings in Brightwaters. Does that person not go to a meeting? No, they look in Bay Shore, West Islip or Brentwood and go to one of those meetings. (At least I did.)

Suppose that I decide I would like there to be a meeting in Brightwaters, so I and a couple of like-minded friends start the "Sicker Than Most" group. Now when our new friend

looks for a Brightwaters meeting, he or she finds one and comes to it. Great! The *Sicker Than Most* Group has its first newcomer. All is well.

Now suppose that I have been elected group secretary, but, true to the name of the group, I am not very good at it and fail to confirm our meeting schedule with Intergroup. *Sicker Than Most* gets dropped from the list. Along comes another newcomer. The newcomer looks in the meeting list for a meeting in Brightwaters, but doesn't find one. In what way is this different from the situation before there was a group in Brightwaters? It isn't. The newcomer looks in Bay Shore, West Islip or Brentwood and goes to one of those meetings. The newcomer is not affected.

In fact, there have always been groups and meetings that are not listed in the meeting list. There are groups that are specific to police officers, doctors and lawyers and members of other sensitive professions that have never been listed. There have always been meetings that have chosen, for whatever reason, not to be listed. There have always been "invitation only"

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Tradition Twelve Leave Your Ego Home

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reasons: so we can actually practice genuine humility, so we don't start thinking too much of ourselves, and so that we can always keep our gratitude in mind. That older member and the priest both showed aspects of the 12th tradition in action.

More often the not I have heard people share that Tradition 12 means that I have to put AA's principles first, rather than someone's personal opinion, so I can protect the very roots of AA as a whole. I feel the hardest time to do this is when it is someone we really care about and respect who, for real and sincere reasons, wants to deviate from our principles. If we don't stand firm, we let a little more of our principles slip away and, sadly, AA has lost a little more of its foundation.

That's why we need to have unconditional love for the principles, as we may love each other unconditionally. That love comes from taking the risk of resting on the principles rather than giving in. To do otherwise may appear to be helpful, but it is just as damaging and unloving to the individual as it is to AA as a whole.

MaryAnn C.



STEP TWELVE

CARRYING THE MESSAGE

Let's begin by establishing the fact that this is the work of Bill Wilson and some of the other first 100 who got sober at the time. This was their experience and what they did in order to stay sober.

Noticing that these steps are written in the past tense, the first part of this step suggests without a doubt that it has happened. In this case we find out that the awakening of a spiritual nature occurred after the alcoholic(s) completed the first 11 steps. It has been said that the program is really terminated at the end of the 11th step if we consider only the healing of the alcoholic. It is however not sufficient to heal from a personal point of view, we do have an obligation to give back what we received so freely. Mother Teresa once said that "happiness is the fruit of our duty" She didn't say that happiness is the fruit of our work or anything else but the fruit of our duty. We, alcoholics, know very well what our duty is. It is clearly stated in our preamble. As a matter of fact we have a double duty as so stated: "Our primary purpose (duty) is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety".

It surely is a fortunate event if we can stay sober and help other alcoholics. Not only is the event positive for everyone concerned but it behooves us to do more than staying sober and that is to carry the message. Carrying the message is the one of the greatest results of this program. We cannot however carry the message unless we have a good and solid foundation in the program.

This is where we now have to do more than just stay sober and carry the message. We also have to change the person that came into recovery. That change which is often called the "psychic change" as we know is a change that will make an alcoholic that had to drink into an alcoholic that no longer has to drink. That would be fine if we were willing to do just that but as I quoted Mother Teresa in the beginning, it is not sufficient to just do for us what we think we have to do. We have an added duty to practice the principles of AA into our lives. I think we all know what the inventory meant and what it entailed. That would be fine if it were once in a lifetime to do but it remains our responsibility to continue to

strive for perfection (while still knowing that we will never achieve perfection) but still have to aim for it. We can't be aiming for it if we don't make an effort and ask our God to remove the defects that we identified in the 4th step inventory. That is another way of looking at practicing "these principles in all our affairs".

We also read in the step: "we tried". That implies that we might fail at times but nevertheless these (seldom occasions we hope) hurdles are never a reason (not even an excuse) to give up the work that has been delineated from the wording of the step. When we hear "we tried", it simply gives us an opportunity to realize that we are humans and can only perform human acts.

We do have an obligation however to do our best to help other alcoholics. That is the altruistic part of the step but we must also try our best (that can be difficult at times) to practice the principles of sobriety in "all our affairs". We now have an obligation to make a real attempt (on a consistency basis) to no longer cheat, lie, scam or whatever else we did that brought us to having to resort to drinking to get out of our own skin in order to make the feelings of guilt and remorse disappear.

One of the great benefit of these steps is that we are now challenged to do what we probably were meant to be as human beings; that is, being sober, helping others and changing our attitudes and having God remove our shortcomings.

We often speak of spirituality in AA. We often are quite unclear as to what that means. As an old -timer once said to a newcomer that if he did 4 simple things on a daily basis that he was living a spiritual life as it is outlined in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. These four things were: 1) acknowledge (pray) to your HP daily, 2) help another person, 3) always make an attempt to correct a wrong immediately and 4) don't drink.

Let's sum this all up by saying that if we look back at our AA lives and are able to say that we had a spiritual experience (awakening) and tried to carry the message and practice the steps of AA, then we can say that we perform our duty (as Mother Teresa put it) and that will bring happiness in our lives which is what we all strive for.

In essence we usually complicate a very simple program.

Lee C., Cleary Group



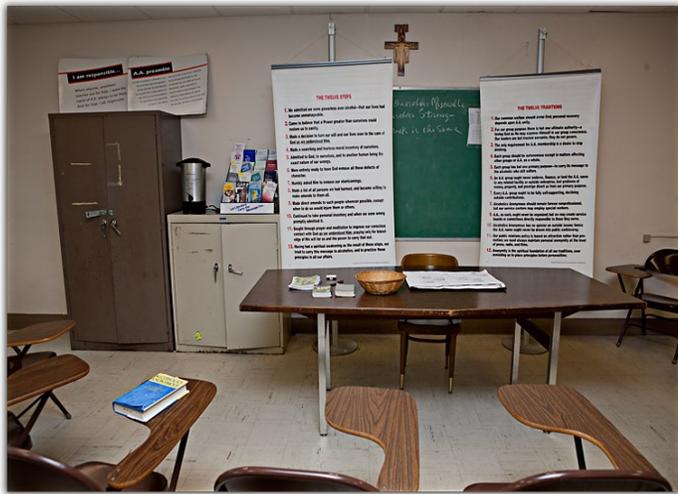
Group History of the Month

BETHANY GROUP

Huntington Station

We started May 6, 1979 as a split off from the Greenlawn Huntington Station Group. We originally met at Greenlawn Presbyterian Church on Pulaski Road. Our meeting days and times have remained the same for 24 years: Monday at 7:15 PM and 8:30 PM and Thursday at 7:15 PM and 8:30 PM.

We moved from the Greenlawn Presbyterian Church because of a significant increase in our rent. We were able to rent a temporary room and then moved to St. Patrick's Church on Main Street in Huntington Village and then to St. Peter's on Ogden Court in Huntington Station. We moved back to the Greenlawn Presbyterian Church and then to our present Bethany meeting place. We originally met in a classroom then shifted to the church itself because of a Montessori program that met in the classroom. It is challenging to meet in the church because it is uncomfortable for some newcomers. It is also hard to hear but overall we have been welcomed warmly at Bethany. The group has fluctuated between 10 to 40 members at different times.



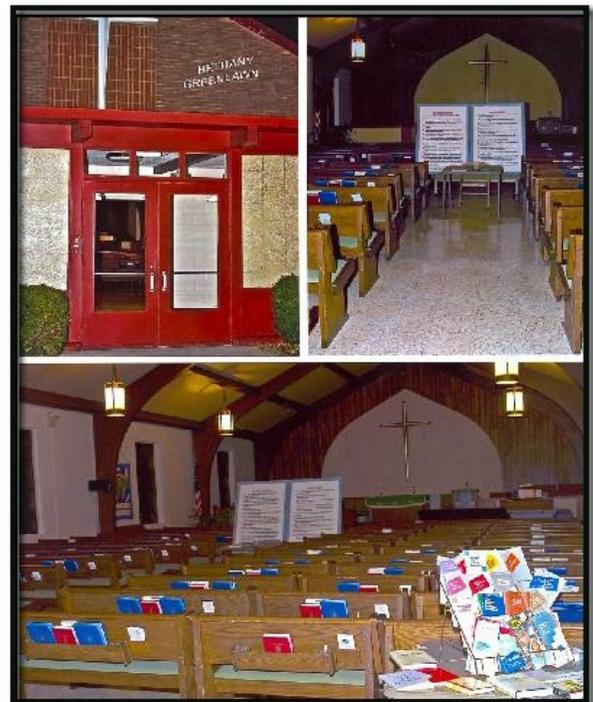
HIGH NOON

Melville

"It's an odd thing. This is a transient meeting". It first met at the WGSM Building in Melville where Seafeld had an outpatient program (900 Walt Whitman Road) but as the meeting grew, "it ran out of room and was asked to leave". A check of the Suffolk meeting list shows High Noon first appeared on the meeting list in May 1990. The original contact person, Woody R., has been elusive to find despite many attempts by the Archives Committee to reach him. It found a new home at Passages, another counseling agency, at 315 Rte. 110 in Huntington Station. There they met in a back room and continued to flourish.

Passages was bought out by yet another agency, Crossings, and although meeting at the same spot, 315 Route 110 in Huntington Station, they have been relegated to a small overcrowded back room and this created problems. In an effort to alleviate some of the overflow, they have found another spot at St. Hugh's school also in Huntington Station and for the time being will be meeting at both spots Thursdays at noon.

Otherwise the High Noon crowd will continue meeting in its cramped quarters Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. According to Kate "working people need a place to go" and High Noon has been fitting that bill for quite some time. It looked as if High Noon would bite the dust but has since settled into St. Elizabeth's Church and as of May 2009 had been meeting there for several years.





SAVE
the **DATE!!**



March 1, 2015

Suffolk County 18th Annual Unity Breakfast

Tickets go on sale:

Nov. 21st at General Service

Dec. 9th at Suffolk County Intergroup



Checks can be made payable to:
Suffolk Assembly Meeting
until Jan 16

Get involved!

Contact: unitybreakfast@asuffolkgs-ny.org



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:

December Commitments

12/7-13 Ron A; District 50: Babylon Nuts and Bolts, Babylon Big Book.
12/14-20 Dave; District 100: Centereach Group
12/21-27 Woof; District 80: Amityville Open Door, Friendly Group, County Line
12/28-1/3 Pat McK; District 270 Sag Harbor Spiritual Solution

Thanks to November's volunteers:

District 110 - Paul S; Cleary School Group
District 240 - Donald C;
Center/East Moriches
District 40 -Bob L; High Noon
District 210 - Willie B; Back to Basics,
Freedom, Baiting Hollow
District 70 - Mike M; Serenity on Sundays

January Meetings

Archives Committee: 1/7/2015 8:00 PM SIA Office
Institutions Committee: 1/21/2015 7:00 PM SIA Office
Public Information Committee: 1/14/2015 7:00 PM SIA Office
SIA Monthly Business Meeting: 1/13/2015 Cornell Extension
Riverhead
7:00 PM New Group Rep Orientation
7:00 PM Share-a-Thon
8:00 PM Intergroup Meeting
SIA Officers & Chairs: 1/6/2015 7:00 PM SIA Office
Suffolk General Service: 1/16/2015 8:00 PM
True North Community Church,
Lakeland Ave., Bohemia
Third Legacy Committee: 1/27/2014 7:30 PM SIA Office



ViewPoints: Delisting

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groups. No one has ever claimed that the absence of these groups from the meeting list is detrimental to the newcomer. There are 700+ meetings a week in Suffolk County, the absence from the meeting list of any one group or even a substantial number of groups, is not going to make a difference in the availability of AA to the newcomer.

The counter argument that a newcomer trying to find an AA meeting is going to be more discouraged by going to meetings that do not meet at the time and place the meeting list says they do is more cogent. After showing up at a couple of non-existent meetings, a newcomer might reasonably become disillusioned about AA and give up on us.

What about the *Sicker Than Most* Group, though? Don't they suffer from not being listed? Yes, they do, but the newcomer doesn't suffer. The suffering of the *Sicker Than Most* Group, and whether Intergroup has an obligation to relieve that disadvantage is another issue.

All Intergroup Reps

Please Note:

At November's SIA meeting, the groups voted to move the monthly SIA business meeting from its long-time home at Cleary School in Ronkonkoma to the True North Community Church in Bohemia starting in February 2015.

The Church has since informed us of a scheduling conflict and the reps will have to revote on the new day and time at the December meeting. Until such time as the reps can vote, no changes are official. – Fred H. Chairman

ANNOUNCEMENTS



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.

The Suffolk Intergroup

Public Information Committee

Presents

Speaking at Non -A.A. Functions

Sunday December 7 2014, from 12pm – 2pm

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 to reserve your spot. Refreshments will be provided.

Young people in A.A. are strongly encouraged to attend!! Help us get the message out there to the next sick and suffering alcoholic. Attending the public speaking seminar is REQUIRED for those who wish to speak at schools or to non-AA groups.

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



Suffolk Intergroup Association (S.I.A.)
Special Events Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous
Presents

The 2014 Winter Sobriety Dance
Saturday December 27 from 6-11pm

@ **SILO Community Center.**

2111 Lakeland Ave.

(The cross street is Ocean Ave.)

Ronkonkoma NY 11779

Enter at bingo hall entrance

Food and Dancing Live Music by REBOS FREE EVENT

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 info