



The Suffolk Intergroup

BULLETIN

Volume 41, Number 9

JANUARY 2015

au·thor·i·ty

a : power to influence or command thought, opinion, or behavior

b : freedom granted by one in authority

Having run through all the Traditions last year, this month starts a series of articles about Intergroup itself.

Recently, a number of people have been asking, "Where does Intergroup get the authority to tell the groups what they must do?" The answer is simple: Intergroup has no such authority and doesn't claim to have it. Neither has Intergroup the authority to tell any individual member of AA what he or she should do, nor does Intergroup claim such authority. Where, then, does the power of Intergroup to make decisions arise and who do these decisions affect?

According to the SIA by-laws, "The Suffolk Intergroup Association of Alcoholics Anonymous is a service organization available to all AA Groups in Suffolk County, whether they contribute to its support or not" and "The primary purpose of this Association shall be to assist Alcoholics Anonymous Groups in Suffolk County in their common purpose of carrying the AA message to the still suffering alcoholic by performing those functions which the individual Groups cannot accomplish alone." Intergroup is an organization the members of which are not individual AA members, but AA groups. These groups have joined together to perform certain functions. When the representatives of SIA's member groups meet at the monthly business meeting, the decisions they make affect only the operation of Intergroup. Even Intergroup's member groups, in the running of their group affairs, are not bound by the reps' decisions. Where, then does Intergroup get the authority to do anything? From its member groups. Each AA group could, under the Tradition of autonomy, run its own hotline. Such a situation would be confusing and inefficient, and few groups would have the necessary resources to do so, but they could try if they wanted to and, in fact, in the early days of Intergroup, there were independent "answering services". Rather than endure such a chaotic situation, Intergroup's member groups empowered Intergroup to act for them to create and maintain a hot line. The member groups then set the rules under which SIA would manage the hot line for them. The member groups continue to set the rules today.

Who, you might ask, the hell cares? Like so many things, questions about what Intergroup is and what its proper functions are resurface every so often. Recently, this question arose with regard to the meeting list and what groups will be included in it. Some people have said that Intergroup does not have the authority to require individual groups to submit group meeting information to the Intergroup office; these people are correct. How fortunate, then, that no one at Intergroup claimed such authority. What the reps did decide was that the meeting list that the groups have empowered and required Intergroup to publish would include among its listings only those groups for which Intergroup was in possession of current meeting times, days and locations.

(Continued on page 2)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Intergroup Information

February Meetings

Page 5

Step One

Page 3

Monthly Group History

Page 3

Announcements

Pages 5, 6, 8

Commentary on De-Listing

Page 2

Intergroup and Authority

Page 1

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

In his last talk, our co-founder, Dr. Bob spoke of our Fellowship being summed up in two words: "love and service." Sometimes, caught up in a sense of duty, it is easy to lose sight of the love part. That may have happened recently with the decision to remove quite a few meetings from our meeting list. These meetings failed to abide by the requirement that all groups submit "current mailing and contact information in writing... no later than October 1."

Obviously the intent of this decision is to keep our meeting list up to date, so those who use it can be assured that what they see written is as accurate as possible. Who wants to show up somewhere and find no meeting, just an empty building? This is especially true for newcomers. While the slogan "Dead meetings kill people" may be a stretch, we do want to be available for those in need. But wait a minute! If you show up at some meetings that reg-

ularly meet in a municipal place like a library or a recreation center and it's a holiday, the door may be shut tight. Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years, Fourth of July to name just a few and no meeting! Seldom is there a warning to that effect on the meeting list. Wouldn't newcomers go to these, too? Yet no one seems to be reacting to that so strongly.

How about two weeks after the meeting list comes out a group decides to change the day or time it meets? That information won't be updated for another three months when the latest list appears. Oh! Oh! Another newcomer is out on the ledge. The point is it may be impossible to have a totally unblemished meeting list. Maybe the best we can do is the best we can do.

Delisting perfectly valid meetings is not the answer. Actions like this can cause disharmony and division. Isn't one of our legacies

unity? Sorry, folks, but this purging doesn't measure up to Dr. Bob's standards. However well-intentioned, this is way off the A.A. beam.

Another Dr. Bob quote to Bill W. the last time the two of them met: "Remember, Bill, let's not louse this thing up. Let's keep it simple." Why not follow that advice. A notice on the side border of every single page of the meeting list: "Help us keep this meeting list up to date. If there is a problem with any listing, please contact the A.A. office at 654-1150 and leave a message." It's then a simple matter to follow up and correct whatever problem there is. This way we can walk and work together. There is less ill will, less pushing away, and less the impression that Suffolk Intergroup has turned into some unfeeling bureaucratic entity. It's safe to say that Dr. Bob put more emphasis on the love part. We can do the same.

Bob R.

Kings Park Group

Authority

(Continued from page 1)

As the Twelve and Twelve says, the difference between a request and a demand is plain to anyone. In this case, the difference between a demand for information and a statement of what the organization has decided to do should be equally plain.

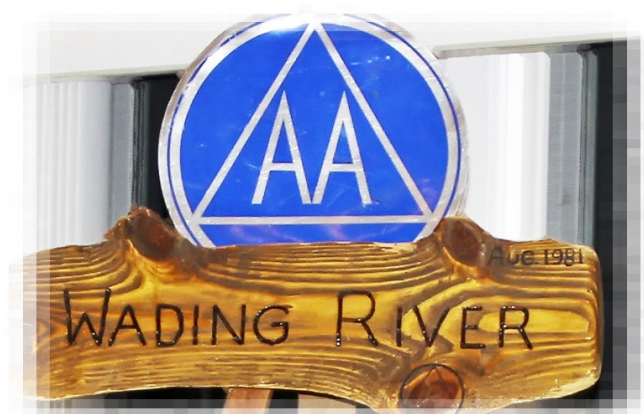
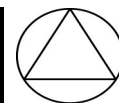
What if a group decides it doesn't want to send its meeting information? Then it is deciding that it doesn't want to be included in the meeting list, a decision it has every right to make. Should such a group expect Intergroup to change the rules to accommodate the group? No, it should not. Part of getting sober is growing up. Adults accept the consequences of their actions and do not expect the world to change to accommodate their individual whim.

So does Intergroup have the authority to force compliance from individuals or groups? No. Does Intergroup have the authority and the responsibility to set conditions on the services it provides to the groups, especially where not to set such conditions would be deleterious to the purposes of the service? Yes. Is Intergroup obligated to ameliorate the effects on some groups of the groups' own bad choices? No. You can take someone's choices away as much by forcing what you think is right on them as by forcing what you think is wrong.

(Next Month: A brief history of Intergroup.)

FREE OFFER!

We would like to email you your own copy of the Bulletin! Please send your email address to bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org and include "Send me my copy" or something similar in the body of the message.



Group History of the Month

The Wading River Group, which now meets at the North Shore Methodist Church, didn't start there. It started meeting in a Sunday school classroom above St. John's Hall on Wading River Road in August of 1981. I was lucky enough to be one of the A.A.s responsible for its formation. At the time, I was the coffee maker of the original Shoreham group which used to meet twice a week at St. Marks R.C. Church on Randall Road. A named Charlie C. and I had talked it over with our sponsors as well as with our many friends in the Shoreham group. We wanted to add a local beginners meeting as well as an open discussion which, at that time, Shoreham didn't offer. We felt as long as we weren't in direct competition with our mother group it would be OK. I remember the afternoon that Charlie and I approached the Pastor of St. John's, Fr. Damm. He at first seemed surprised and even taken aback by our request. He tugged at his chin for a moment, studying the floor. Then he smiled and asked when we would meet. "Sunday and Thursday evenings", we said, and eagerly added that it would not interfere with any of his church activities. And further, that we would certainly clean up after ourselves and be glad to make a small donation each month from whatever money might be left over from our coffee expenses. He agreed to give us a chance for a trial period of one month and the rest, as they say, is history. Thinking back now I recall the first A.A. meeting I ever attended. The first thing I noticed was the 12 and 12 shades. After that the table off to the side with books and copies of the Grapevine, a freestanding pamphlet holder, and framed slogans hanging above. Inside an adjoining kitchen there was a large coffee urn and on each table there were ashtrays and

(Continued on page 7)

The First Step

Alcohol was my power. It was how I managed. It was my guiding force, what I looked forward to as a reward after a long week – before I started drinking during the week, as my weekends lengthened. Alcohol gave me eloquence, real or imagined, that I lacked when I wasn't drinking. I looked good in the mirror. I was smart. I had great ideas. I knew everything, could solve the world's problems. I worked hard and played hard.

I was living life like a Jekyll and Hyde. When I was away on business I drank every night. It was great. I was free. So what if I suffered hangovers. By the time evening came around I was up again. When I came back from business I tried to live clean, and I succeeded for a while. Eventually my drinking merged with ordinary life. My weekends lengthened. I didn't want to look at myself in the mirror. I hated myself and self loathing took over.

I knew for years I was an alcoholic. I knew I was losing control. I was pretending. I knew I was powerless. I couldn't make it without a drink. I didn't care if I lived or died. Yet my life was still manageable. I was able to work. I exercised like crazy. I prayed. I kept my drinking at home. But the façade was cracking.

I started coming to AA meetings. For a year and a half I was aloof. I listened but stayed quiet. I read the Big Book, the 12x12. I drank. The men and women who wrote their stories for the Big Book I could relate too. I pleaded with God to help me. All I really cared about was drinking. Life had no meaning. One night, so sick, so tired, so alone – after my husband removed all alcohol from the house – I lay in my bed and promised to give up my job, to do anything to stop drinking. I was wiped out. That was a Tuesday.

On Wednesday afternoon I went to a meeting and someone spoke to me. Really, I think that was the second time

(Continued on page 7)



113-8 Bay Ave. / P.O. Box 659, Patchogue, NY 11772 (631) 654-1150

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

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 Marie V. Corsec@suffolkny-aa.org

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

Committee Chairs

Answering Service Dolores Phones@suffolkny-aa.org

Archives (open) Archives@suffolkny-aa.org

Bulletin Brian C. Bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org

Corrections Paul Correct@suffolkny-aa.org

Grapevine Mike C. Grapevine@suffolkny-aa.org

Literature Mike W..... Books@suffolkny-aa.org

Meeting List George D. ... Meetings@suffolkny-aa.org

Office Manager Karen D. Siaoffice@suffolkny-aa.org

Public Information Kevin .. Pubinfo@suffolkny-aa.org

Schools Eileen Z. Schools@suffolkny-aa.org

Special Events Dawn C..... SpecEvent@suffolkny-aa.org

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

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

Webmaster Kelly C..... Webmaster@suffolkny-aa.org

The HotLine January

Commitments

1/4-10 Rich W; District 250:

Remsenberg Basic Sobriety

1/11-17 Bob; District 220:

Shoreham, Wading River Group

1/18-24 Matt G; District 90:

Sayville Group

1/25-31 Jon G; District 230:

E. Setauket Sober Just for Today

Thanks to December's volunteers:

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

February Meetings

Archives Committee: 2/4/2015 8:00 PM SIA Office

Institutions Committee: 2/18/2015 7:00 PM SIA Office

Public Information Committee:

2/11/2015 7:00 PM SIA Office

SIA Monthly Business Meeting:

2/3/2015 True North Church

Bohemia

7:00 PM New Group Rep Orientation

7:00 PM Share-a-Thon

8:00 PM Intergroup Meeting

SIA Officers & Chairs: 1/27/2015 7:00 PM SIA Office

Suffolk General Service: 2/20/2015 8:00 PM

True North Community Church,

Lakeland Ave., Bohemia

Third Legacy Committee: 2/24/2014 7:30 PM SIA Office



ANNOUNCEMENTS

PATCHOGUE EAST LOVE AND SERVICE

(The Hospital Group)

Has moved effective 12/10/2014
From Bellport on Wednesday night and
Brookhaven Hospital on Friday and
Saturday nights to
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman
Catholic Church
95 North Ocean Ave.



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 Kings Park Group

Tuesday's and Fridays at 6:45 and 8:00
Lucien Methodist Church
Old Dock Rd. and Main St.
Kings Park
Asks for your support.



INTERGROUP IS *MOVING!!*

Beginning with the February 2015 meeting, the monthly business meeting of SIA will be held ***ON THE FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH AT TRUE NORTH COMMUNITY CHURCH ON LAKELAND AVE. IN BOHEMIA.*** The times remain the same. The meeting place and dates for Riverhead meetings remain unchanged.

New Meeting

Stony Brook Freethinkers

Fridays @ 7:30 PM starting January 16th

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at Stony Brook

380 Nicolls Rd., East Setauket

There is an increasing number of members within AA that are not religious in their thinking or practice. Freethought groups have arisen to serve this population. These groups don't recite prayers at the beginning or ending of their meetings nor do they suggest that a belief in God is required to get sober or to maintain sobriety. If the readings at their meetings include AA's suggested program of recovery, then a secular or humanist version of the 12 Steps is sometimes shared. While these groups are intended to be accommodating to atheists, agnostics and secularists of all stripes, any AA, non-believer or believer, is welcome.



DE-LISTED GROUPS: TAKE NOTE!

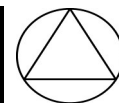
At the December Intergroup meeting in Ronkonkoma, the group reps voted to have the Bulletin publish in the January issue a list of those groups which were dropped from the November printing of the meeting list for failure to confirm with the Meeting List Chairperson the continued existence of the group and their correct meeting place and times. The following pages comprise that list. There are 93 groups which still have not contacted Intergroup to confirm their meeting data. If your group appears below, you must contact Intergroup with your meeting information if you want your group to be listed in the next meeting list.

SUNRISE EARLY SOBRIETY
Amityville
AQUEBOGUE LOVE & TOLERANCE
Aquebogue
NITE TIME
Bay Shore
MONTFORT SEMINARY BIG BOOK
Bay Shore
SUNRISE SOBRIETY
Bay Shore
HISPANO
Bay Shore
MIDNIGHT SERENITY
Bay Shore
KEEP IT SIMPLE
Blue Point
WORKSHOP
Bohemia
WAY OF LIFE
Bohemia
TOGETHER GAY GROUP
Bohemia
RIDING INTO RECOVERY
Bohemia

ST. ANNE'S COMING TOGETHER
Brentwood
LIVE AGAIN
Brentwood
ACCION
Brentwood
FIRESIDE
Bridgehampton
EAST END YOUNG PEOPLE
Bridgehampton
BRIDGE TO SOBRIETY
Bridgehampton
HISPANO
Bridgehampton
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING - EAST
Bridgehampton
HAMLET GROUP
Brookhaven
RENACCR
Central Islip
HOPE IN THE HEIGHTS
Coram
NORFLEET SERENITY
Coram
CUTCHOGUE SUNDAY
Cutchogue
ORIGINAL DEER PARK BIG BOOK
GROUP
Deer Park
SUNDAY SOBRIETY
Dix Hills
ALIVE AGAIN GAY GROUP
Dix Hills
SPRINGS FIREPLACE GROUP
East Hampton
SUNDAY STEP
East Hampton
BACK TO BASICS
East Hampton
UNIDOS VENCEREMOS
East Hampton
MEN'S STEP DISCUSSION
East Islip
EAST QUOGUE GROUP
East Quogue
GREENPORT GROUP
Greenport
FUENTE SE VIDA
Greenport

AFTERNOON
Hampton Bays
LAST CALL
Hampton Bays
SEASIDE SERENITY
Hampton Bays
MIDNIGHT MIRACLES
Hampton Bays
SATURDAY NIGHT SOLUTIONS
Hampton Bays
DELIVERANCE TOO
Happauge
HUNTINGTON STATION BETHANY
Huntington Station
22 DE MAYO
Huntington Station
LATINOS EN ACCION
Huntington Station
BRENTWOOD SUNDAY MORNING
Islip
SERENITY ON SUNDAYS
Islip
Women's Daily Reflection
Mattituck
IN THE SOLUTION
Mattituck
SUNDAY NIGHT MEDITATION
Montauk
CAME TO BELIEVE
Mount Sinai
SUNRISE 12+12
North Babylon
FORT SALONGA 12th STEP
Northport
NO. SHORE MEN'S GROUP
Northport
CANDLE LIGHT
Patchogue
SPIRITUAL NATURE
Patchogue
PATCHOGUE BEGINNER'S
Patchogue
HOPE AT NOON
Patchogue
CAMINO DE SOMBRIEDAD
Patchogue
MAIN STREET BACKDOOR
Patchogue

(Continued on page 7)



(Continued from page 6)

NORTH FORK SERENITY

Riverhead

REFLECTIONS '90

Riverhead

BIG BOOK STUDY

Sag Harbor

SAG HARBOR STEP GROUP

Sag Harbor

SOBER SUNDAY

Sag Harbor

MENS' GROUP

Sag Harbor

SISTERS IN SOBRIETY

Sag Harbor

THURSDAY 1:30 AFTERNOON

Sag Harbor

SAG HARBOR MEN'S BEGINNERS

Sag Harbor

MORNING GROUP

Sayville

SAYVILLE KEEP IT GREEN

Sayville

OLDIES BUT GOODIES

Sayville

SAYVILLE SUNDAY MEETING

Sayville

SHINNECOCK GROUP

Shinnecock

SHOREHAM GROUP

Shoreham

BIG BOOK AT BROOKSITE

Smithtown

MAY YOU FIND IT NOW

Sound Beach

SOUTHAMPTON GROUP

Southampton

WEDNESDAY NIGHT STEP

Southampton

THURSDAY NIGHT STEP

Southampton

HILL STREET BLUES

Southampton

BACK TO BASICS

Southampton

SHINNECOCK RESERVATION

Southampton

MEETING MAKERS MAKE IT

Southampton

UNA LU EN MI CAMINO

Southampton

GRAVEYARD GROUP

Southold

A NEW BEGINNING

Southold

ELEVEN STEP MEDITATION
WORKSHOP

Wainscott

BEACH GROUP

Westhampton

WESTHAMPTON WOMEN'S DISCUSSION

Westhampton Beach

WYANDANCH GROUP

Wyandanch

EL MILAGRO

Wyandanch

The First Step

(Continued from page 3)

in all the time I was coming to meetings that someone spoke to me. I had yet to raise my hand and declare myself an alcoholic. The fellow who spoke to me recommended a Thursday night meeting. I'd never noticed it in the meeting list before. Strange.

On Wednesday night I went to a meeting and raised my hand, said my name, and declared before all I was an alcoholic. It was the kind of meeting where everyone has the chance to share (almost always) so I was sort of sharing by default. On Thursday afternoon someone at a meeting offered me a cup of tea. I was so grateful but refused because I was shaking so much I could barely stay on the chair.

On Thursday night a miracle occurred for me at what is now my home group, and I started to become We. I added my name and my voice to all the fellows past and present who are the We of the first step. I was We, no longer alone. Over the days and months that followed, now two and a half years later, I realized that the isolated trying for sobriety was never going to work. I needed to become We and I'm very glad to be a part of a fellowship of men and women who share their experience strength and hope with each other. That's how we stay sober after taking the first step.

Thank God for AA. Best wishes to all for a blessed and sober New Year.

Joanne D,

Old Time AA

Ronkonkoma

GROUP HISTORY

(Continued from page 3)

of course the room was filled with folding chairs. It didn't occur to me then but somehow all this stuff had to be obtained and that of course was the next step that Charlie and I would have to take. The Shoreham group was generous. As coffee maker I also set up and was aware that they had an old set of shades that weren't needed anymore so I started with them. They really were destined for the garbage because they wouldn't roll up anymore and the edges were all torn. So I cut off the wood, trimmed them up, and glued them to two large sheets of plywood and edged them with duct tape.

I fashioned a group name sign from a piece of shaved tree bark and wood burned the name "Wading River" along with the date. There was an interesting knot on the wood which I used as the circle of fellowship and I inscribed the A.A. triangle inside it.

Group co-founder, Ralph, in 2007



SAVE
the DATE!!



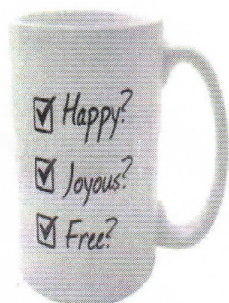
March 1, 2015

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@aasuffolkgs-ny.org