



The Suffolk Intergroup

BULLETIN

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FEBRUARY 2015

I-History

Early on in AA history, all phone calls for help in Suffolk County were handled out of New York City. In Suffolk County, reaching Alcoholics Anonymous hotline was a long distance call which most alkie could not afford. Issues with phone calls to Manhattan became increasingly problematic. Phone calls were not being answered quickly enough. One old-timer advised the Archives that a phone call placed to New York would result in a post card being mailed to someone in Suffolk County days later! The A.A.s answering phone calls were unaware of the geography of Suffolk County and a Twelve Step call for help from someone in Montauk might be referred to someone in Queens.

In 1966, several groups on the east end of Long Island banded together and formed an answering service to better assist the suffering alcoholics. The eastern groups each committed to contribute a set amount of money to keep this service afloat. The service appears to have been headquartered in a motel out in Quogue. No doubt it saved many lives by providing service up close and personal.

Meanwhile, Nassau and Suffolk AA met in the city to iron out these problems with NY Intergroup. Next time they met the NY folks had unilaterally rewritten the tentative agreement, but someone from Suffolk had had the good sense to tape record the previous meeting and was able to expose the inaccuracies and falsehoods. After the split things continued not to go well. It took at least three years to straighten out the mess as far as the phone book listing. Suffolk was a trailblazer in getting Intergroup listings more accurate as well as better organized in the directory as a result of this shabby treatment by NY Intergroup.

By 1970 A.A. had grown considerably in Suffolk, and the need for a more centralized service was apparent. The answering service was extended county wide with a majority of the groups contributing to the support of the service. In addition to answering calls for help and information, there were referrals for Twelve Step activity and meeting lists were compiled and distributed. In May of 1973 a unanimous vote at a special meeting in Memorial Hall in Bay Shore established full Intergroup status. With 85 groups throughout Suffolk County and with over 190 meetings a week, it was time for Suffolk County to declare its independence. This was met with considerable resistance

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ViewPoints: A Note from the Editor

A few readers have questioned your humble editor's decision to run the announcement of the formation of the Stony Brook Free Thinkers group in the January issue of the Bulletin. (Reprinted on pg. 7 this month for the reader's reference.) These questions have fallen into two groups: first, should a group that may reference a non-standard form of the Steps be listed as an AA group, and, second, why was the group announcement given more than the space usually allocated to similar announcements by other groups.

To answer the first question: there is no requirement that an AA member or group use the Steps at all, much less that a member or group not be free to interpret the Steps as the needs of the members require. This may sound like heresy today, but Bill warned against "literalists" in AA. In a letter in 1961, he wrote:

"As time passes our book literature has a tendency to get more and more frozen – a tendency for conversion into something like dogma. This is a trait of human nature which I am afraid we can do little about."

In *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, Bill describes changes to the Steps that were made as they were originally written, and notes that they are not mandatory: "In Step Two we decided to describe God as a "Power greater than ourselves." In Steps Three and Eleven we inserted the words "God as we understand Him." From Step Seven we deleted the expression "on our knees." And, as a lead-in sentence to all the steps we wrote these words: "Here are the steps we took which are suggested as a Program of Recovery." A.A.'s Twelve Steps were to be suggestions only." He went further in the Grapevine of July 1946, Vol 3 No 2, "Anarchy Melts": "In fact, our Tradition carries the principle of independence for the individual to such an apparently fantastic length that, so long as there is the slightest interest in sobriety, the most unmoral, the most anti-social, the most critical alcoholic may gather about him a few kindred spirits and announce to us that a new Alcoholics Anonymous Group has been formed. Anti-God, anti-medicine, anti-our Recovery Program, even anti-each other--these rampant individuals are

still an A.A. Group if they think so!"

More recently (June 2011), the General Service Office stated as follows: "As embodied in the Fourth Tradition, the formation and operation of an A.A. Group resides within the group conscience of its members ... It is not any A.A. member or A.A. group's right to stand in judgment of another."

I think that deals with the first question: No one, least of all me, gets to decide what an AA group is. What, then, about the second question? Why the extra space? Although there have been free thought meetings in AA since the mid 1970's, most people are probably not familiar with them. It seemed to me that some people's sensibilities might be offended if they went to a group that didn't adhere to what they expected an AA group to be like. Rather than have that happen, I devoted a paragraph to explaining what might be expected at free thought meetings generally. This gives people the opportunity to follow GSO's advice on what to do if you go to a group that does things you don't approve of: "Go to another group."

Intergroup History

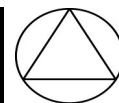
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from Manhattan and among some staunch Suffolk loyalists.

Suffolk Intergroup was on its own, blessed with enthusiasm but fraught with the expected growing pains. These growing pains still exist at times over forty years later. To celebrate our newly founded independence, the first Share-A-Thon was held at the old Colonie Hill in Hauppauge in 1975. Hundreds attended. A huge banquet complete with a live orchestra topped off a day of workshops. With the exception of one year, the Share-A-Thon has continued to be an annual event, although the banquet has long since been discontinued. Although the number of groups is now over 325, offering about 733 different meetings weekly, the Suffolk Intergroup Association continues to provide much needed services and outreach to the alcoholic both in and out of the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous.

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" in the body of the message.



When the group first met at the Legislature Building, liability insurance was required. In the course of a conversation with an insurance agency to arrange this, the group representative was asked what the name of the group was. On his desk was a copy of the Hazelden meditation book, *Touchstones*. He replied that contingent upon group conscience this would be its name. The rest is history.

The Archives Committee is always looking for volunteers to help save our Alcoholics Anonymous history. Contact the SIA Office .

Group History of the Month

Hauppauge Touchstones Group

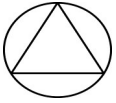
Once upon a time there were three Hauppauge groups: the original Hauppauge Group, Hauppauge Willingness, and Hauppauge Touchstones. Touchstones was the last of these to start and is the only one remaining today.

In February of 1992, eleven members met in Hauppauge and formed a new group. Most of the A.A.s were from the original Hauppauge group. The group's first meeting place was the William Rogers Legislature Building on Vets Highway, which created a number of problems. The Legislature used to meet on an emergency basis sometimes. One night, the press, including Channel 12 News, walked into the meeting not knowing it was an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. Eventually they would lose that meeting place and moved into the parole offices (Building 16) located not too far from the Legislature Building. They stayed there about a year and then once again moved - this time to the Presbyterian Church on the corner of Route 111 and Main Street in Smithtown.

Finally Touchstones moved into Calvary Lutheran Church in Hauppauge. That new location first listed in the May 1996 Suffolk County meeting list. The group meets there on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, although over the years the lineup of meetings has changed slightly in an effort to find the magic combination. For most of its existence the meetings started at 8:00PM. In 2004, times were moved back to 7:30PM.



Scenes from Hauppauge Touchstones



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

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

The Hotline February Commitments

2/1 - 2/7 Area 30: John, Kings park Group

2/8 - 2/14 Area 110: Paul, St James Groups

2/15 - 2/21 Area 240: Donald

2/22 - 2/28 Area 40: Bob L, Bethany Group

Thanks to January's volunteers:

Rich W; District 250: Remsenberg Basic Sobriety
Bob; District 220: Shoreham, Wading River Group
Matt G; District 90: Sayville Group
Jon G; District 230: Setauket Sober Just for Today

Intergroup Officers

Chairperson Fred H. Chairman@suffolkny-aa.org

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

March Meetings

Archives Committee: Check with SIA Office

Institutions Committee: 3/18/2015 7:00 PM SIA Office

Public Information Committee:

3/17/2015 7:00 PM SIA Office

SIA Monthly Business Meeting:

3/3/2015 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: 3/24/2015 7:00 PM SIA Office

Suffolk General Service: 3/20/2015 8:00 PM

True North Community Church,

Lakeland Ave., Bohemia

Third Legacy Committee: 3/24/2014 7:30 PM SIA Office



ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Meeting

The Three Legacies Group

Every Tuesday evening at 7:00 P.M.
at Dominican Village
(Helen Butler Hall)
565 Albany Ave
AMITYVILLE



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.

The Bulletin staff would like to know 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 One and Only Meeting

Smithtown
will celebrate its 5th
anniversary on Saturday March 7.

New Meeting

Stony Brook Freethinkers

Fridays @ 7:30 PM starting January 16th

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at Stony Brook

380 Nicolls Rd., East Setauket

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 for the Riverhead meetings remains unchanged, but that meeting will now also be held on the first Tuesday of the month.

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.



**South East New York
Area 49**



**47th SENY Convention
March 22-23, 2015**

**Recovery, Unity, Service:
The Foundation of Our Future**

Convention Highlights

Friday 3/20:
Kick Off & Welcome Meetings

Saturday 3/21:
Old-Timers, Theme, & Banquet Meetings

Sunday 3/22:
Spiritual Meeting

AA Panels & Workshops
Alkathon Meetings
AA Archives & AA Videos
Spanish Meetings
Al-Anon Meetings
Hospitality Room
Evening Entertainment

**Westchester Marriott Hotel
670 White Plains Road
Tarrytown, NY 10591**

Convention rate: **\$128.00 + 10.375% tax** per night
(single/double/triple/quadruple occupancy)
Room reservation deadline:
February 27th

Hotel reservations via phone: 1(800) 882-1042
On-line: www.marriott.com/nycwe
Reservation code: **SNYSNYA**



On-site Registration Hours:
Friday 3 PM—11 PM
Saturday 8 AM—midnight

Spanish translation for all main meetings.
American Sign Language or other translation needs
with pre-registration only.

Service animals only in convention areas.
Designated smoking areas located near hotel exits.
Wheelchair accessible.

For further information contact: Jane E., SENY Convention Chair
(718) 665-1253 (SENY voicemail) or convention2015@aasenya.org (SENY email)

For on-line convention
registration via Pay Pal go to:
www.aasenya.org

CONVENTION REGISTRATION PRE-REGISTRATION DEADLINE: March 7, 2015

One form per person.
Please make copies for
each registrant.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Email(optional): _____
AA: _____ Al-Anon: _____
Other (please specify): _____
Special Needs (please specify): _____
ASL/Translation Needs: (please specify): _____
Old-timer 25+ years (sober date): ____/____/____
Month Day Year

Registration Only \$15.00
Registration Children 10 years and Under..... Free
Registration & Banquet \$89.00

(Convention badges must be worn at all times.)

Please select one menu option:

Beef _____ Chicken _____ Fish _____ Vegetarian

Special Dietary Needs (please specify): _____

**(Tables seat 10. Submit all forms together if you wish
to be seated together at the banquet.)**

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____
Checks/money orders payable to: **SENY Convention 2015**

Mail to: **SENY Convention 2015
PO Box 5505
Miller Place, NY 11764**



The Hot-Line End-of-Year Report

Dolores K., Hot-Line Chair

The end of year numbers are far from statistically correct. They are based on the log sheets that were completed and returned throughout the past year. Unfortunately the log sheets are rarely filled in accurately or completely. The directions suggest that the volunteer use ONE check indicating the purpose of each call; that rarely is the case. We have made executive decisions in determining the reason for call, where necessary. Occasionally there is no category available for the type of call or for hang-ups. While the calls have been counted in the total number of incoming calls, they are not part of the final counts. These inaccuracies are an issue that needs to be addressed. A new log sheet has been developed; its efficacy is yet to be determined.

Quite a few volunteers chose not to fill out the log sheets and/or return them. Occasionally, the captains did not return them. That skews our results also.

All that being said: all numbers are approximate.

Total number of calls to Hotline: 8200

Calls requesting meeting information: 900

Calls requesting AA or related information

(Al Anon, NA, other Intergroups, etc.: 200

Calls asking for rides: 190

Calls asking to speak with another alcoholic: 400

Calls for immediate help: 400

The 12 Step Books:

Currently Suffolk County is divided into 16 phone districts; two are not functioning for lack of phone captains. There are approximately 1550 volunteer AAs who are willing to have his/her name available to do 12 Step work. Some districts have a great deal of representation; others have disconcertingly little. Many individual groups are active in this 12 Step work; others have chosen not to participate. We are working to foster participation from

absentee home groups as potential 12 Steppers, especially in districts with light participation.

The Year in Review

As the new year begins, we ask ourselves has the Answering Service fulfilled the duties with which it is charged for the past year?

1. By-Laws: Shall arrange for hotline telephone facilities whereby AA member volunteers will answer calls for help and inquiries about AA daily.

In the last year: the facilities are on the volunteers' homes. A different delivery service model may be discussed in the future.

2. By-Laws: Shall provide "12 Step Lists", updated annually, and other up to date information required for referring "calls for help" and answering AA inquiries.

In the last year:

a. A new 12 Step book was developed with up to date information regarding other agency information as well as available service for the "sick and suffering."

b. An updated 12 Step List was compiled from all home groups willing to participate. There was an approximate 50% participation rate.

c. A call has been put out to SIA reps to begin to solicit new 12 Step lists for 2015

d. 12 Step List books are updated quarterly.

3. By-Laws: Shall arrange a schedule of participation for all Suffolk County AA Groups.

In the last year:

a. There is a 14 week cycle for area participation in working the Hotline. A record of groups tapped for service has been maintained to ensure that all have been offered the opportunity to do service.

b. Eight area phone captains continued service in 2014. Two were unable to continue and were replaced. Seven area phone captains began service in 2014. Two of them returned to service after a hiatus. It has been suggested that the captains consider rotating out at the end of their 2 year commitment to allow others to step up.



SAVE
the DATE!!



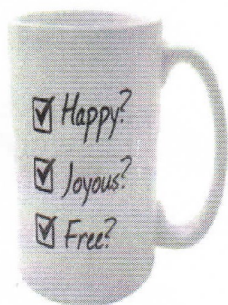
March 1, 2015

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