



The Suffolk Intergroup

BULLETIN

Volume 41, Number 11

MARCH 2015

Alcoholics Anonymous In Suffolk County



THE FIRST THIRTY YEARS:

In the Suffolk Intergroup Association Archives there exists a copy of a 1947 letter from Bill W., the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, to the Huntington Group congratulating it on its first anniversary. We can trace AA's beginnings back even earlier. It was in March 1941 that the famous Jack Alexander story about Alcoholics Anonymous appeared in the Saturday Evening Post. Soon after that article, A.A. headquarters in New York City tried to send one known A.A. on Long Island to a veteran's home on the grounds of the Kings Park State Hospital. How that Twelve Step call turned out we may never find out, but along the way other alcoholics did sober up. We have copies of newspaper articles that document this. One article from the March 1, 1945 Huntington Times said "there are several members holding regular meetings at the home of a senior member" This is two years before the Bill W. letter was written!

In the late 1940s, a meeting was started on a sleepy summer resort community called Fire Island. Some sources say it was started by the first lady to maintain continuous sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous---Marty M. Around this time, according to information found at A.A.'s World Services Archives in Manhattan, a clubhouse called So-So existed in Bridgehampton. Not much is known about it but this can end the debate whether or not any clubhouses ever existed in Suffolk County. At least two more clubhouses would pop up over the years. One behind an auto repair shop in Ronkonkoma and another above a saloon in Islip.

(Continued on page 7)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Intergroup Information April Meetings

Page 4

VIEWPOINTS: Questions

Page 2

Monthly Group History

Page 3

Announcements

Pages 5, 8

Step Two

Page 6

A Brief History of AA in Suffolk County

Page 1

A Letter

Page 6



ViewPoints: QUESTIONS

I have come a great distance over the last 35 years from the drunk who used to ask repeatedly, "Who cares?" This sad question at once belied my sense of hopeless helplessness even as it defined absolutely my own qualification, in as much as I remain a textbook case of the defiant alcoholic.

Writing this way, on a snowbound morning in February, I know the answer to the question, "What is your life?" It is recovery: spiritual, mental, financial, physical, social and emotional recovery! Just for today, I care about all of these facets and aspects of living.

I was asked, "Why do service?" I perform all kinds of service - at work, for my family, partner, neighbors and friends. There is simply no way to ignore my obligation to perform service in Alcoholics Anonymous. Clearly put, I would have so little life, or no life really, were it not for recovery. So the service I provide is my way to pay it forward (or back). I see plainly that we in Alcoholics Anonymous are part of and participating in an amazing oral history. Ours is a huge fabric, folkloric somehow, and so much more important than any (social) network. Now I can, at long last, see my small place in all of this with more than a modicum of perspective.

It is said, "the reward of service is the strength to serve". I know it is something we tell one another; something I tell myself constantly. For perhaps the first time in my life, I care about the taste I leave in someone's mouth after

I've come and gone. Finally, I can see the day may dawn when I am no longer in a position to do much more in and for Alcoholics Anonymous than not drink and go to meetings. One day, I will be sapped and spent, too. It happens. And so, the time for service is today.

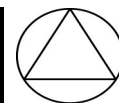
I was asked, "Why provide service as an area phone captain?" I have chosen to involve myself with the Hotline for several reasons. I was drawn to this service commitment for all the (at least to my way of thinking) advanced skills that the service actually requires in order to deliver its model competently and effectively. To wit, each phone captain must be adept with planning, promoting, persuading and explaining. The commitment requires representation, delegation, organization and cooperation. There attaches to this function quality control, accountability, feedback and committee meeting attendance. The responsibilities are both analytic and practical and certainly nothing I could have managed 30, 20, or even 10 years ago, as mine has been a long, slow recovery. Steady? Wonderful? Yes - but oh so very slow. I was no 90-day wonder.

So with all this earnest reflection and intention and energy brought to bear, I will respond to other questions that were posed: "What does this service mean?" And "What can it do?" I see the Hotline in practical, even dispassionate, terms. I perceive the hotline volunteers as the voice of Alcoholics Anonymous, and perhaps the only edi-

tion of the Big Book some might ever see. The hotline service affords us the opportunity (so much grander than mere chance) for outreach, connection, information or plain old sober service about the business we call living. The telephone Hotline places Alcoholics Anonymous squarely in the scheme of things. Thus, the service is part of the recovery landscape, as it is set midst hospitals, rehabs, sober houses and other treatment facilities. In a real sense, at any given moment, a hotline volunteer might become a gatekeeper of any of these places.

I am in the effort business and work on accepting the stark fact that results are beyond my control and ken. At the bottom of my heart, I must wonder whether one phone call (one crucial, critical phone call) can really make all the difference which we tout so freely when we discuss anybody's entry into Alcoholics Anonymous. I really cannot say. A much quieter part of me believes fiercely it is the Gift of Desperation that gets most of us through the door to stay in recovery, one day at a time. I will conclude by positing that happiness and desperation seem akin insofar as they are each part of an inside job. That said, I still maintain the Hotline is an important service we provide. Like everything else in and out of AA, it too will likely change and evolve and morph and emerge with slight and profound differences over the steady crawl of time.

Anonymous
Steps to Life, Coram



Group History of the Month

HAMPTON BAYS SUNDAY NIGHT

The Hampton Bays Sunday Night group was started in February 1969 by founding members "Florida" Manny, Jim M. and Millie S. Most of the history surrounding this group was provided by Ray M. and Russell M. Ray attended his first meeting of A.A. here Nov 21st, 1971 and has been sober ever since. He is still an active member. Russell M. attended this meeting for the first time in 1987. At that time, he had a month of sobriety. He was taken to this meeting by Pete "the architect" from Sag Harbor, and at the time, Russ was 49 years old. Russ's first impression was what some of us call the "trench coat" affect - "old timers" mulling around and probably not the hippest place for a 49 year old brimming with a full month of sobriety to be hanging his hat! Russ had the good fortune to meet Muriel, who was considered "Mother Theresa" in this area. Muriel came up to Russ and gave him a folded piece of paper written by the inter-county fellowship. It was the A.A. writing of "Why we were chosen". She scared Russ a bit, but he kept it and read it later and it stayed in his wallet for his first two years of sobriety. He still keeps it in his home today. Muriel died sober several years ago. Her service to A.A. couldn't possibly be measured.

In late 1993, the group decided that they had the "trench coat effect" happening and decided to add a 7PM beginners meeting to attract younger people and newcomers. It worked, but what also happened was that the older members started going to the earlier meeting especially in the winter months when it gets darker much earlier!

In February 1997, the group again changed by ending the 8PM meeting and running 2 meetings at the same time in different rooms. You have the choice now to sit in on a beginner meeting in one room, or the original meeting in the other room. They also made the change so they could have one coffee maker, which out here isn't that easy to come by, especially in the winter months! Today, the original meeting has roughly 30 strong and the beginners meeting has between 20-40 people respectively.

Russell M. May 3, 2007

To the Left: Hampton Bays Sunday Night Meeting Room. Below: Two group members and a guest enjoy coffee.



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

Contact the SIA Office at 654-1150.



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 Kevin 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 Eileen Z. .. 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

HotLine March Commitments

3/1 - 3/7 Area 210 Willie

Riverhead groups

3/8 - 3/14 Area 70 Mike M.

12 Steps of Hope, Serenity at Seven

3/15 - 3/21 Area 50 Ron A

West Islip Good Sobriety

3/22 - 3/28 Area 100 Dave

Centereach Open Door

3/29 - 4/5 Area 80 Woof

Thanks to February's volunteers:

Area 30 John Kings Park Group

Area 110 Paul St James Group

*Area 240 Dolores The Only Requirement
and Patchogue Groups*

Area 40 Bob L Bethany

April Meetings

Archives Committee:	Check with SIA Office
Institutions Committee:	4/15/2015 7:00 PM SIA Office
Public Information Committee:	4/21/2015 7:00 PM SIA Office
SIA Monthly Business Meeting:	4/7/2015 Cornell Co-op Ext. Riverhead
7:00 PM	New Group Rep Orientation
7:00 PM	Share-a-Thon
8:00 PM	Intergroup Meeting
SIA Officers & Chairs:	4/28/2015 7:00 PM SIA Office
Suffolk General Service:	4/16/2015 8:00 PM True North Community Church, Lakeland Ave., Bohemia
Special Events:	4/7/2015 7:00 PM Cornell Co-op Ext. Riverhead
Third Legacy Committee:	4/28/2014 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



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.

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.



True happiness, we are told, consists in getting out of one's self; but the point is not only to get out — you must stay out; and to stay out you must have some absorbing errand.

(Henry James)

Make AA your errand:

Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. p89 Big Book.

Be involved in AA. Help another alcoholic. Do service.

A New Meeting

A Vision For You

Step Meeting

Friday 8:00 P.M.

First Baptist Church

175 Second Ave

Bay Shore



To the Editor:

Regarding your reasons for printing the listing for the Stony Brook Free Thinkers meeting: you need to do your research better. Lots of our literature addresses this issue directly.

"A poignant story comes from the book AA Comes of Age. In the mid 1950s AA's reach extended to alcoholics around the world. Bill Wilson, co-founder of AA, was quite clear about liberty for individual AA groups in his "Chapter on Unity" from A. A. Comes of Age. On page 81 he talks about Buddhists who said that they would like to be part of AA, but also would like to replace the word "god" with "good" so that the practice of the Steps would be compatible with their atheistic belief. In 1957, Bill Wilson writes:

"To some of us, the idea of substituting 'good' for 'God' in the Twelve Steps will seem like a watering down of A.A.'s message. But here we must remember that A.A.'s Steps are suggestions only. A belief in them, as they stand, is not at all a requirement for membership among us. This liberty has made A.A. available to thousands who never would have tried at all had we insisted on the Twelve Steps just as written."

And:

"The absence of rules, regulations, or musts is one of the unique features of AA as a local group and as a worldwide fellowship". - 44 Questions, p. 16

"No one has to do anything in AA" - 44 Questions, p. 24
"Acceptance of the 'Twelve Steps' is not mandatory in any sense". - 44 Questions, p. 27

"We must never compel anyone to pay anything, believe anything, or conform to anything" - Tradition 3, 12 X 12, p. 141

"The full liberty to practice any creed or principle or therapy should be a first consideration. Hence let us not pressure anyone with individual or even collective views" -- Bill W., Address to the 1965 General Conference.

"...the A.A. program of recovery is based on certain spiritual values. Individual members are free to interpret these values as they think best, or not to think about them at all." - From "Members of the Clergy Ask About Alcoholics Anonymous" First printed 1961, updated 1996

"they appreciate that some alcoholics have been able to achieve and maintain sobriety without any belief in a personal Higher Power" - "Questions & Answers on Sponsorship", p. 23

(signed) "Call me Anonymous"

Dear "Call Me": I stand educated. Thank you.

The Editor

STEP TWO

I knew that the unmanageability of my life was insane. I wondered if I had ever been sane and just what did sane living look like.

It's taken a long time to reach the conclusion that the sanity being spoken of is the consciousness we were born with and that sane living is the incorporation of the Steps into my every day life. I still have days where my insanity resurfaces but it does not include the use of alcohol. Becoming still enough to seek conscious contact with my Higher Power remains very challenging.

I read Step 2 for the first time on December 30, 1975 at an Overeater's Anonymous meeting. "Sometimes A.A. comes harder to those who have lost or rejected faith than to those who never had any faith at all..." I was one of those. OA introduced me to the Steps, but I was unable or unwilling to apply them to my life so I remained addicted to alcohol, food and insane living.

I was raised Catholic and attended a Catholic college. I believed in God. I thought I wanted to enter the convent. However, the Convent did not want me. I will be eternally grateful for their decision even if I wasn't at the time.

Despite my formal education, I had few coping skills. By the time I had been married a few years, had two sons, was teaching high school full time and taking graduate courses, I had decided that God was a myth and that Church teachings were designed to control people and keep women secondary citizens.

Over the next two decades, I sporadically attended OA, Al-Anon and AA meetings. I was a prime example of "Half Measures Avail us Nothing." I blamed my husband for my unwillingness to get a home group, a sponsor or a commitment.

I'm not sure just when a faith in a Higher Power came back to me. When I was directed to get on my knees asking each morning for a sober day and giving thanks each evening and I did it, my faith returned. I've continued this practice. I didn't get sober or stop eating then, but it was the beginning of my spiritual journey and a faith that has continued to evolve.

I had always blamed my drinking on my husband. When he died on August 4, 1993, I finally surrendered. I knew it was a "now or never" moment. I was finally ready to follow directions. Even though, I now had a loving God in my life, experiencing Step 2 remained elusive because of my lack of humility. I remained defiant, intellectually self sufficient and self-righteous. After all, didn't I have all that education? Wasn't I right about organized religion and the overall hypocrisy in the world?

When I hear at meetings, "I came for my drinking and stayed for my thinking," I know that is true for me. Finally, I came to believe that the God of my understanding, a God of infinite love, was allowing me to change. I became able, some

(Continued on page 7)



Suffolk AA History

(Continued from page 1)

By the end of the 1940s we had active and established groups in Huntington, Sayville, Bay Shore, Kings Park, Southampton, Amityville and East Hampton. For some reason the Riverhead group stopped meeting and its members moved over to Southampton, but would reappear in the 1950s with renewed vigor. Such is the resiliency of Suffolk AAs. No matter what is thrown at us we bounce back, sober!

As Suffolk County grew in the 1950s, so did Alcoholics Anonymous. The next additions to our rolls were Babylon Mid-Island, Brentwood, Northport, Patchogue, and Wyandanch as well as the reincarnation of the Riverhead group. This time the group flourished. It still meets to this day. Notices about A.A. meetings had begun to appear in the 1940s in the East Hampton Star. Now they began to appear in other newspapers from Huntington to Northport to Patchogue. All of these articles spoke of the miracle of recovery happening to alcoholics everywhere through A.A.

The 1960s were very active and at least 20 groups joined the roster. Meetings sprouted from Copaugue to Greenport (then known as Southold-Greenport) with stops along the way in Port Jefferson, Stony Brook, Centereach, Dix Hills and Bohemia to name just a few. The East Moriches group was born in Center Moriches and would move back and forth from East Moriches to Center Moriches a couple of times before finally settling in the East.

By the time the first Share-A-Thon was held at the old Colonie Hill in Hauppauge in 1975, there were over 85 groups meeting in Suffolk County. Hundreds of members, spouses and guests attended that first Share-a-Thon. A huge banquet complete with a live orchestra topped off a day of workshops. The throng of men dressed in suits and women in fashionable gowns or dresses bespoke both the success of AA in Suffolk County, and the success of AA in changing the lives of so many. With the exception of 2011, the Share-A-Thon has continued to be an annual event, although the banquet has long since been discontinued.

Bob R., Archives Committee



The AA insignia above was rendered in stained glass by Caryn R. of the Blue Point Traditions Group (above). Rather than wait until the spring color issue to fully appreciate the beauty of this and the other photographs contributed to the *Bulletin* each month, visit the *Bulletin* archive at <http://suffolkny-aa.org/bulletins/bulletin.php>

STEP TWO

(Continued from page 6)

of the time, to listen to others so I could hear God speaking through them.

My coming to believe in a High Power has kept me sober and changed a hopeless, lonely, distrusting, sarcastic victim into a person who has experienced the Promises. I am no longer alone. I am happy and trusting. I continue to rely on God and AA to help me with my faith, my thinking and my actions.

Eddie T., Port Jefferson Group



**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/quad 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**