



The Suffolk Intergroup

BULLETIN

Volume 42, Number 7

DECEMBER 2015



NOT A DROP OF COMPASSION

I was born and raised in the South Bronx as one of ten children. I always felt that there wasn't enough of anything to go around, least of all love. I detested being poor and developed a sour grapes attitude early in life. It was easier not to want something than to face the possibility of disappointment. I nurtured an I-don't-care attitude.

I first used alcohol at age sixteen and after chugalugging a couple of glasses of wine I fell unconscious. I was seeking oblivion right from the get-go. I eventually built up a tolerance for alcohol and could drink huge amounts. I used alcohol for everything, even as an aphrodisiac, not realizing that alcohol murders passion.

After nine months of sobriety I still had not accepted the First Step and I started seeing a psychiatrist. I wasn't in the man's office two minutes and I told him how he was to treat me. Luckily, he was one of the "friends of AA" that Bill W. spoke of. Although not an alcoholic himself, he was very familiar with our program and it was obvious to him that I had not taken the First Step. I had six sessions with him when one Saturday morning I was visiting a rehab and glanced at some art work on the bulletin board. It was a bottle of booze captioned with the words, "It's ironic that you should have embraced me when you were seeking love, for I have not one drop of compassion for you." This had a tremendous impact on me and I knew I was in the right program. That night I went to see the psychiatrist for the last time and told him, "I'm wasting my money and your time. I'm an alcoholic and if I don't get active in AA I'm going to get drunk."

At a meeting that night I contacted some guy whose sobriety I admired and told him, "I want this program and I will accept any direction you offer me." I admitted that I was powerless over alcohol and my life was unmanageable.

Ed H., Steps to Life

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ERRATUM

The picture of the church on page eight of last month's *Bulletin* was wrongly credited to Russ M. of the Archives Committee. The picture was actually the work of John C., also of the Archives Committee.



VIEWPOINT: WHAT AM I WILLING TO DO?

Last month I attended a meeting of the Suffolk Intergroup Association of Alcoholics Anonymous. There were approximately 80 people in attendance representing the 350 AA groups in Suffolk County as well as elected officers, appointed committee chair people and a few various interested members of AA. What occurred at this meeting was astounding and, in my opinion, unacceptable.

There seemed a level of acrimony and abuse and disrespect that I had never before witnessed at an SIA meeting. In my history at this level of service, I have seen and heard unkindness and disrespect leveled at specific officers and chairpersons who are, by the way, VOLUNTEERS, that was very disheartening and demoralizing. The behavior I observed this night was way over the top.

While folks appeared obsessed and distressed over the use/ abuse of a debit card by an elected trusted servant, did we overlook the fact that there have been no minutes from the SIA meetings since August? Why is that? Do you know that with no minutes and no accounting of the election results held this month, SIA will not be able to sign over ANY financial records to the new officers. That means: NO checking account, NO charge card, NO debit card. I sincerely hope we have accurate and detailed minutes this month.

Why are we paying for multiple mailings to the same group every month rather than the data base of group information being kept up- to- date? What about that abuse of our money? Whose responsibility is it to maintain accurate records? Do I know? Do I care?

Why did the meeting list chair drop off the new meeting lists and leave? Could it be he didn't want to endure the same vitriolic attacks from the people he serves? Would the reps of the groups that have not responded to numerous requests for updates over the past two years come loaded for bear? Do those people know that the SIA reps voted to have groups update the information yearly or chance being dropped from the meeting list? Does the membership at the group level know that? From my experience, the answer is "No." Why is that? Whose responsibility is that? The Meeting List chair? I don't think so.

Why are there only 130 home groups represented in the 12 Step Books? Why is the number of those willing to talk to another alcoholic so significantly less? Why is it reported that the Area Phone Captains have to go to 3 or 4 groups in order to fill 14 shifts in a week? Should the Hotline Chair do more? Whose responsibility is it to bring the 12 step list back to his/ her home group?

A SIA rep at his month's meeting requested that we keep our speaking commitments. Why are we not showing up to represent our groups? Is that a lack of commitment to AA/ to our group and to our sobriety? It is the unusual meeting I go to where the scheduled speaker actually shows up.

And yet, let me focus my attention on an elected volunteer with many years of sobriety, a long history of service and a strong commitment to AA and how he may or may not have misused a debit card at an Intergroup business seminar that he gave up 5 days of his own time to willingly volunteer to attend. Let me cause a volunteer to avoid a meeting, based on experience, where he will be maligned for following the wishes of the groups. Let me look at the dearth of volunteers who were willing to stand for the election of officers for our Fellowship. I wonder if I will volunteer my service as a committee chair? Almost all the committee chairs are rotating out as per the By-laws that the SIA Reps

(Continued on page 7)



Group History of the Month

Greenport Group

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
768 Main St. & Manor Pl.
Greenport, NY 11944

The Greenport Group has been meeting regularly on Thursday nights at Holy Trinity Church for 40 years. But that's not the way it started. Greenport's first try at an A.A. meeting was in the Methodist Church in about 1956. Four men - remembered now as Fred, John, Adam, and possibly Jim - met for about six weeks and then disbanded because of difficulties maintaining sobriety.

The first meeting in Holy Trinity came in 1965, under the chairmanship of a hardware salesman from Deer Park, now remembered only by his nickname - "Pots and Pans". P&P's sales route around Long Island brought him to Greenport on Thursday afternoon, and the A.A. meeting was held Thursday night - as it still is, all these years later.

In the early days, the meeting started at 9:00 PM, since it was felt that it should be scheduled at a time when its members were most accustomed to be drinking. The hour was eventually moved up when a member, a farmer, said he couldn't do his chores while keeping such late hours.

Only men were early Greenport A.A. members but they almost always brought their wives to the meetings, apparently to reassure the wives of their whereabouts. All the meetings were three-speaker and it was rare to find a dollar bill in the collection plate.

The first woman member arrived in about 1968 - Katherine, from Shelter Island, daughter of a judge who also was a member. The first black woman member was Susie who joined in about 1970 and who was famous for raising her hand at the very end of every meeting and saying "Let's split!"

In the early days, the church's vestry used to meet in the sacristy, at night, with the door open, and many members



found it necessary to time their entrances in order to avoid being spotted by the vestrymen.

In the mid-70s, Greenport Group started a satellite meeting in the cafeteria at Eastern Long Island Hospital, a few hundred yards away from Holy Trinity. The informal relationship between the hospital and A.A. flourished. Nowadays, detox and rehab patients make their first "outside" meeting at Holy Trinity, while Greenport Group members have been the linchpins of the four meetings a week for patients in the hospital, which established the Quannacut alcoholism unit in the '90s.

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

Contact the SIA Office at 654-1150.



BEING LOVED IS A “WANT”

I went to a couple of psychiatrists prior coming to AA and I bewailed and bemoaned the fact that I was unloved. I berated my parents for not loving me as a kid and thereby screwing me up. The doctors commiserated with me and said they certainly understood why I used alcohol and that under the circumstances my behavior was appropriate. I went to those people because I needed approval and I was willing to pay for it. I got exactly what I paid for.

When the people in AA told me to separate my wants from my needs, I thought that would be easy. I was wrong. I had love under my needs column and I've learned that love is a want and not a need. I think it is more important for me to love than to be loved. On first reading the prayer by St. Francis, wherein he seeks to love rather than be loved and to understand rather than be understood, I thought that was nothing but nice sentiment. It's much more. It's a profound philosophy for living. Whenever I am engaged in actively trying to understand someone else, I have golden moments.

Today I have the love and approval of a few people and it's beyond my wildest dreams. But I can live without it. I can survive without love and if the definition of a need is something without which we would perish then, surely, love is a want and not a need.

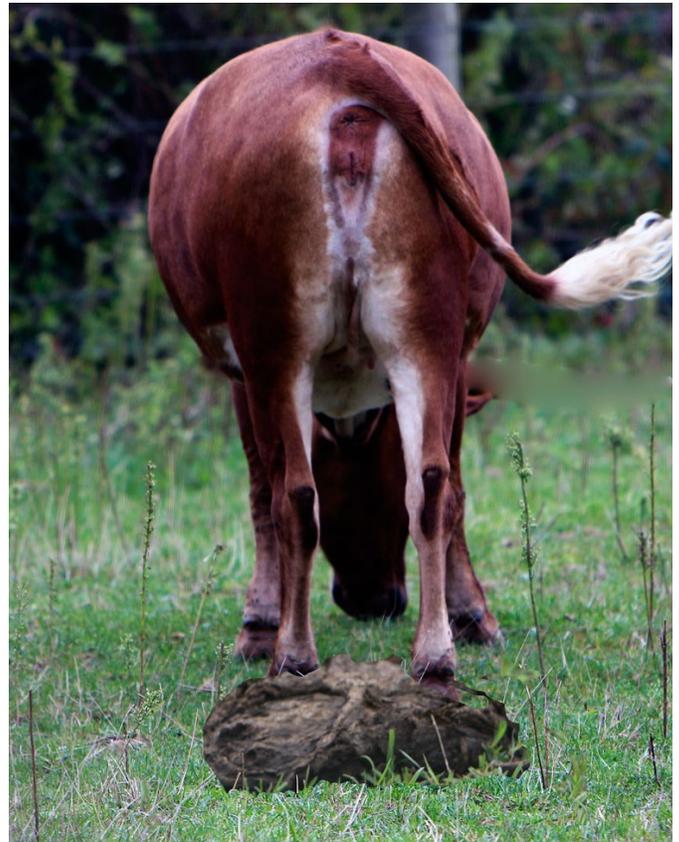
In the past I would think about the way people should treat me and the way people should act and the way the world should be, and I would bend myself out of shape because it wasn't as I thought it should be. I thought my kids should love and respect me all the time, but they didn't; my wife should worship me, but she didn't; the world should be a warm, comfortable, perfect place in which to live, but it wasn't. Today, I've stopped “shoulding” on myself. I realize that a “should” is a demand that reality be something other than what it is.

I've done much reading and thereby gained some knowledge but I've never been able to take the step from knowledge into learning by that route. In this Fellowship, I'm learning.

AA offers me a choice. I can either continue to play the same old broken record of the past - reliving past injustices, pitying myself for past mistakes - or I can do it the way of this program. I like this way. It's the only time in my life I've ever felt alive.

During my life, I've had more options than I recognized. I told myself many crazy things and thereby produced my own maladaptive behavior. I drank alcohol straight and chased it with tears. Today I am responsible.

Ed H., Steps to Life



RECOGNIZE ANYONE ?

How many times have you sat in a meeting and heard someone refer to themselves as “a grateful, recovering alcoholic”? How many times have you said you were grateful to AA for having given you back the love of your family? Or your health? Or your very life itself? Now, how many times have you gotten up off your self-satisfied kiester and volunteered to help the fellowship you claim to be so grateful to? If you're like most people, damn few if ever.

At the last Intergroup meeting, everyone present was asked if they were available to stand for office...out of eighty people, two said yes. Eventually, five people were found who would accept to serve a two year commitment as an officer of Intergroup. Where were the rest of you? Gratitude is an action, not an attitude. Next time you start spouting off about how grateful you are, take a look at the picture above. You and our bovine friend are full of the same thing, and it's not gratitude.



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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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HotLine December

Commitments

- 12/6-12 Area 80 PiJa G
- 12/13- 19 Area 100 Dave
- 12/20-26 Area 50 Ron A
- 12/27-1/2 Area 240 Dave S

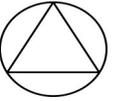
Thanks to November's

Volunteers

- Area 230 Jon G.
Barnum Ave, PJ Big Book
- Area 30 John K
E Northport, Valley 8:00, 164 Group
- Area 110 Paul
Hauppauge Touchstones
- Area 40 Bob L
Bethany
- Area 210 Willie B

January Meetings

- Archives Committee:** Check with SIA Office
- Institutions Committee:** 1/20/2016 7:00 PM SIA Office
- Public Information Committee:** 1/17/2016 7:00 PM SIA Office
- SIA Monthly Business Meeting:** 1/5/2016
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Griffing Ave., Riverhead
- 7:00 PM** New Group Rep Orientation
- 7:00 PM** Share-a-Thon
- 8:00 PM** Intergroup Meeting
- SIA Officers & Chairs:** 12/29/2015 7:00 PM SIA Office
- Suffolk General Service:** 1/15/2016 8:00 PM
True North Community Church,
Lakeland Ave., Bohemia
- Special Events:** 1/5/2016 7:00 PM
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Griffing Ave., Riverhead
- Third Legacy Committee:** Check with SIA Office



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Archives Committee is always looking for volunteers to help save our Alcoholics Anonymous history.
Contact the SIA Office at 654-1150.



The Bulletin staff would like to hear 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.

You can contact the Bulletin via mail sent to the SIA office or by email sent to bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org

All submissions, written or artwork, are gratefully accepted. - the Editor



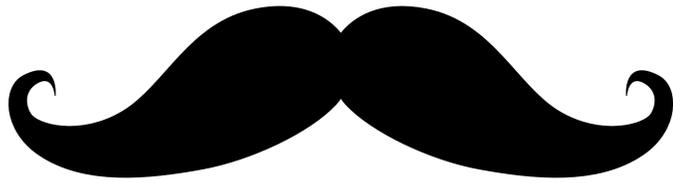
FREE OFFER!

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.

Subscriptions to Nassau Newsletter On-Line

Nassau Intergroup's Newsletter is now available via on-line subscription. While some of the content is only of local interest, several items may be of general interest to AA members considering AA's Three Legacies: Recovery, Unity and Service. They hope you may enjoy it, and share it with others.

Nassau Intergroup has introduced an e-subscription option for those who would like to receive their newsletter each month. All that's needed is an email address. If interested, please go to the subscription form on their website, www.nassauny-aa.org. There you will also have access to back issues of the newsletter.



A FEW WORDS FROM THE DEPARTING CHAIRPERSON

Thank you everyone for giving me the privilege to serve as your Intergroup Chair for the past two years. It has been a wonderful opportunity to help repay the debt that I owe to Alcoholics Anonymous for saving my butt a long time ago and for keeping me active and sober in the Fellowship. Overall it has been a great experience and the few bumps in the road have been more than made up for by the great people that I have met along the way and the new places that I have visited. Truly, a learning experience with a lot of fun thrown in. I cannot help but wonder why more people do not take advantage of the opportunity to get involved to reap the benefits of service in Alcoholics Anonymous.

I would like to extend hearty congratulations to your new incoming officers for 2016-2017. Dolores K, as your new Chairperson, Kevin D. as your Alternate Chair, Wayne as your new Treasurer, Tom C. as your new Recording Secretary, and Dawn C. as your new Corresponding Secretary. I am certain that you will give them all your support, cooperation, and respect that they deserve working for you for the new two years.

Again I would like to say Thank you to all of the current elected officers and chair people for their tireless service at Intergroup and sincere Good Wishes to the new incoming officers and chair people.

Above all, I would like to thank those that have said "Thank you for your service" in the past two years. You have no idea how hearing those few words made the job worthwhile.

In service,

Fred H. – Chairman (retired)

WHAT AM I WILLING TO DO? (Continued

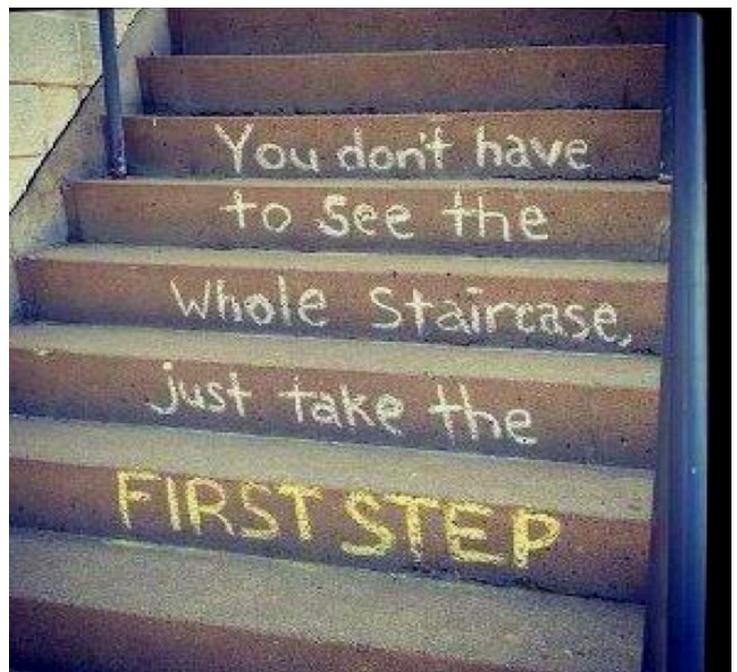
from page 2)

approved. Will I be offering my service? If not as a chair, then perhaps as a member of a committee?

There were of new SIA Reps in attendance at this month's meeting. If that were my first experience with the service structure of AA, you can be sure I would be hard-pressed to finish my commitment and that I would be leery of ever choosing to stand for any service commitment below the group level.

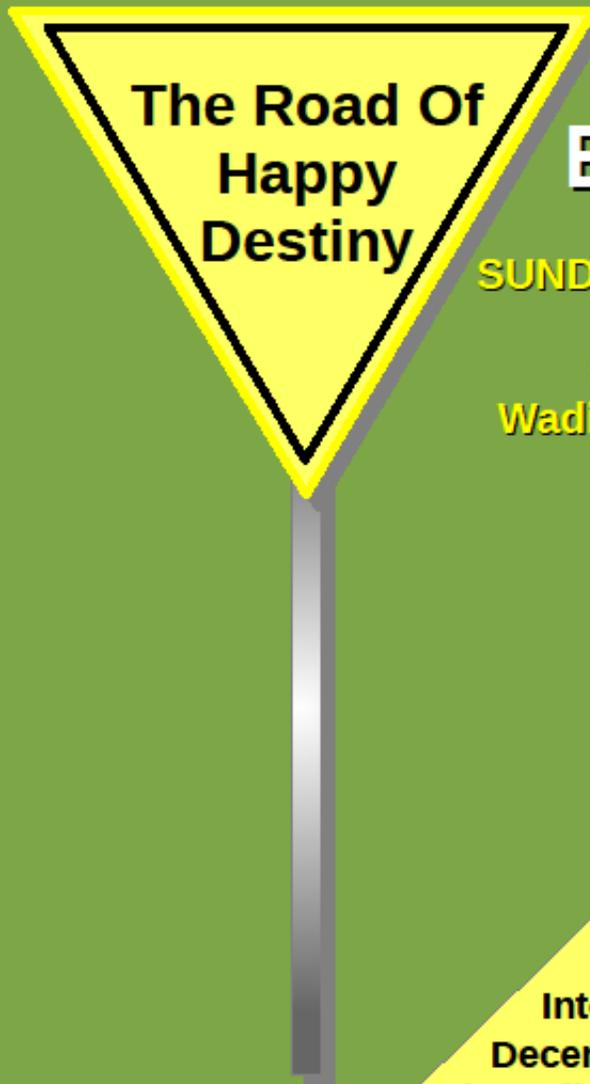
I was taught in AA to look at any situation and to ask myself a couple of questions: What was my part in this? What was my motive/ intention? What did I learn from it? I am not proud of my answers: My part was that I did nothing to stop the unwarranted attacks. My motive for not doing so was fear; fear that I would be thought less of and I learned that one would be crazy to serve the Fellowship as a trusted servant. Now what will I do with those truths? Will I succumb to the fear? Will I pray to have the fear removed and to take action by attempting a service position in order to build my character and to stay sober? More will be revealed for me. How about you?

Anonymous





SUFFOLK COUNTY GENERAL SERVICE 19th ANNUAL



The Road Of
Happy
Destiny

UNITY BREAKFAST

SUNDAY MARCH 6, 2016
THE EAST WIND
5720 New York 25A
Wading River, NY 11792
9AM – 1PM
Tickets @ \$25.00

TICKETS

Sales will
begin at the
November 20th
SGS Meeting.

Tickets will be sold at
SGS Assemblies in
December, January and
February and at Suffolk
Intergroup county meetings on
December 1 and January 5. *There
is no limit on the number of tickets
you can buy. Cash only. No personal
checks accepted. (GROUP CHECKS will
be accepted ONLY at the
Nov 20 SGS meeting.) ALL SALES FINAL. NO
REFUNDS. Questions? Email
unitybreakfast@aasuffolkgs-ny.org*