

THE SUFFOLK INTERGROUP A.A.



November 2016

BULLETIN

Visit your Suffolk County AA Website at: <http://www.suffolkny-aa.org>

Volume 43, Number 7

Submission deadline for the December Bulletin is (11/19). Email your submissions to Mary At : bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org



Month 11, Promise 11: "We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves."



Life Beyond My Wildest Dreams??

I Don't Think So!!

I'd be a millionaire today if I had a quarter for every time I've heard that expression!

Let's face it, when I first got sober, I didn't even know how to dream. The closest I came to having hope, was some grandiose idea of winning the lottery! I had no plans, no schemes, and no dreams. I was physically, emotionally and spiritually bankrupt. I had barely survived my childhood when I began drinking and drug-using. I never dreamed of anything better because I didn't know there was any better!

I came in to the fellowship in my early 20's and have been here ever since. I followed the direction of the old timers and those that came before me. I joined a group, got a sponsor and got a commitment in my group. I had volunteered for my first commitment sight unseen, as someone in my new home group encouraged me to stay for the business meeting and then "suggested" that I raise my hand, for what, I hadn't a clue. Little did I know, but that "suggestion" saved me and made an impact on my life that I couldn't have fathomed at the time. You see, it led me to a life of service inside and outside of the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. (Service to God and my fellow man.)

The first job in my home-group was that of the group secretary. Mind you, when I came in, I was filled with so much shame and remorse about myself that I couldn't look anyone in the eye, even when I spoke with them! Being the group secretary, I now had to 1) introduce myself, 2) greet people and sign them up for the home-group when they wanted to join, and 3) read the secretary's report in front of the group at every meeting! Yikes!! Talk about "stage fright!"

One of my earliest lessons was from a fellow AA with whom I'd volunteered to go on a speaking commitment. She was about half an hour late picking me up for the commitment. I'm sure she noticed the steam coming out of my ears when she finally arrived. After I got in the car, she turned and asked me what was the matter. I proceeded to read her the riot act about being on time and how rude it was of her to be late, blah, blah, blah.. She just laughed and shrugged it off and told me not to take myself so seriously.

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ELEVENTH PROMISE

**"We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us
what we could not do for ourselves."**

In my full-blown alcoholism I felt unloved and unlovable. I was very much given to atheism and I initially felt anger when I saw the word "God" on the shades in the rooms of AA. I had a need to **be** loved, not to love. Somewhere along the line in my recovery I was struck with the realization that when it comes to love the secret is in the giving.

I hold the belief today that there is a spark of divinity (or a spark of love, if you will) within all human beings. When I perform an act of kindness, I fan this spark of love that is within. When I love others I nourish the love that is within.

Light for the mind, love for the heart, understanding for the intellect – when this occurs there is a good chance we will experience peace.

Ask one hundred people the definition of the word "serenity" and you're apt to get one hundred different answers. I define serenity as the ability to live with unresolved problems.

There is no turning back on this spiritual journey, folks. Our hand is fixed to the plow; our foot is set upon the path. Grow we must. I welcome the challenge.

- Ed H.

Group History

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

Stony Brook Discussion

Stony Brook Community Church
(United Methodist)
216 Christian Ave
Stony Brook, NY 11790



In the mid 2000's a member of Stony Brook' Discussion provided a history of the group: a two page yellowing document that seems to have been handwritten in 1981. Their early days prior to 1971 admittedly are hearsay but thanks to the foresight of some members this is available.

In the early 1950s, there existed a group in Stony Brook which met weekly at the Community Church. Sometime around 1961, some members moved to the First Presbyterian Church on Sound St. in Port Jefferson. Thus started the Port Jefferson Group. Others would help start the St. James Group as well as the Centereach Group.

Around 1966, some members of Port Jefferson wanted a small discussion meeting where newcomers would feel comfortable. They found a home at the All Souls Episcopal Church Parish House on Mill Road. Hank C., Jack B. and Red S. were the primary founders of this meeting which met on Thursday at 9:00 P.M. These three remained members of Port Jefferson and by all accounts this Stony Brook meeting was very loosely organized with only the coffeemaker as a regular commitment.

A lady by the name of Joan W. decided in 1971 that this loose band of AAs needed to have announcements at the meeting, creating the secretary's position. She only kept the job for a few months until she moved. A newcomer took over and would head up to Port Jefferson and copy its announcements to bring back.

The written history says the group moved to the Community Church in 1972, while the meeting list first records it in 1973, so the verdict is out when the move may have happened. The anonymous historian emphasizes time and again how unstructured the group was, so they may not have notified Intergroup of the move. The group boasted thirteen members by 1975 when the Monday night lineup was added. One of the first beginners to come along, Fran P., had the honor of becoming the first beginners meeting chairperson. The Step meeting began about the same time.

After this, Stony Brook Discussion picked up momentum. For many years the group relied on the generosity of its home church but has since 1979 started paying rent. In the 1980's and 1990's old timers with more than twenty-five years sobriety were a fairly common occurrence.

The history ends with the following: *"We span the ages in our makeup and members stem from all walks of life. We have been blessed with the gift of wisdom from those who have come before us, Joe R., Don H, Red S. and the benefit from the long term sobriety and serenity of our present members. "*



(Continued from page 2)

Wildest Dreams

That fellow AA ended up being quite a teacher. Along with my sponsor and other members of my support group, she taught me about making commitments and that my word was my commitment. I learned about the importance of keeping my word and following through on my commitments, even when I did not want to. I also learned how to say "yes" and mean it, how to say "no" and not feel guilty about it, as well as how to "buy time" if I wasn't ready or able to make a commitment on the spot. A little at a time I started feeling better about myself, as a direct result of those actions.

As I progressed in my recovery, I first learned how to be a member of Alcoholics Anonymous and my home-group, and the responsibility that came along with that. (Attend every meeting in my group, especially anniversaries, to support my fellow group members; put my donations in the basket to support our group, so that we were able to continue carrying the message of AA; greet newcomers and others who looked new to the area to make them feel welcomed; and to call other group members regularly to check-in and ask how their day was going.) As I continued to experience and work the steps, my self-esteem and confidence began to grow and eventually, I could even look people in the eye when we spoke!! Now, that may not seem meaningful to some, but for me, who hated myself so much when I first got sober, that I literally wanted to zipper off my skin and step out of my own body....it was **ENORMOUS!!**

Ultimately, I learned how to be a friend, a daughter, a sister, an employee and a volunteer in my community. I learned how to be an upstanding member of society. One day at a time...hopefully, I will continue to grow into the person that God intends me to be!

Life Beyond My Wildest Dreams??

I Don't Think So, I Know So!!

- Nancy B. (Class of '86)

**"AA is not my whole life,
but AA makes my life whole"**

Preacher Bob

(may he rest in peace, his presence is still alive at
Serenity Improvement Group)

Time to Dig Deeper, in Support of AA

"Just because things have been done a certain way in the past does not mean they have to be done that way in the future. Some people, of course, are set in their ways and will need persuading that it's time for a change." - Sally Brompton

Let's talk about a subject many wish to ignore. A few years ago the Grapevine had an article on this subject but in our meeting rooms it seems to be taboo topic.

We did not have a problem finding money for our booze before recovery. It seems that many of us think sobriety is free. It is not. Everyplace we meet with few exceptions, we have rent to pay, plus the cost of coffee and cookies.

When I started my journey in AA 37 years ago, it was usually one buck for the basket. Rents at that time were at most \$10 per meeting. Over time, rents have increased to \$30 or more per meeting, and for many of us, one buck in the basket is still the norm. Some even say: "A dollar and a dream".

What about our contributions per the Pie Chart [see the pamphlet *Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix...ed.*], 50%/30%/10%/10% after expenses and a prudent reserve? When I had the job of treasurer in the 80s and 90s, we always sent money to SIA, REGION and WORLD SERVICE. How many groups still do this at present? Maybe 50%.

Many of us may think about putting more in the basket but as we look around and see that a buck is still the norm, we follow suit. Up until a few years ago I was as guilty of this as the drunk next to me.

If we did not have AA and went back out, I wonder how much money we would be spending each day? A quart of scotch is over \$45 today. If we take a look at almost everything we buy, the increase over the last 37 years is ridiculous. Cigarettes are up 900%! I checked with a restaurant manager recently and he told me one drink would cost approximately \$6-\$11! But the basket still gets that little old buck.

For those of us who can afford it, I have three suggestions to help AA pay its bills:

1) We could start by putting \$3 or more in the basket for each meeting we attend. Even if we go to a meeting a day that would still only be \$21 a week, less than what half a quart of scotch costs.

2) When we celebrate our Sober Anniversary, we can match how many years with the money we put in the basket. I started doing this some time ago after I saw someone else doing it. This year it will be \$37, still less than that quart of scotch.

3) We could also send a check to AA World Services matching our years of sobriety.

I know some AAs will not be able to do this. But in all honesty, ARE YOU ONE WHO CAN? The question we need to ask ourselves is: What am I willing give back to AA so that others will be able to enjoy the BLESSINGS of SOBRIETY?

Bob S
(aka) Bialybob
House of Gain

Thoughts on the Passing of Bill W.

Recently, my friend Archives Bob sent me a note regarding a report of Bill W's last days:

During her research for a biography of Alcoholics Anonymous co-founder Bill Wilson, author Susan Cheever dug through the just-opened archives at Stepping Stones, ... Alongside an archivist, she sifted reams of material that had not been looked at in decades.

One day, the archivist handed her a sheaf of wide, green-lined pages -- hourly logs kept by the nurses who tended Wilson on his deathbed. Cheever glanced at them. They seemed mundane.

"Keep reading," the archivist urged her.

Cheever came to the pages covering Christmas 1970. On the eve of the holiday, Bill Wilson passed a fitful night. A lifelong smoker, he had been fighting emphysema for years, and now he was losing the battle. Nurse James Dannenberg was on duty in the last hour before dawn. At 6:10 a.m. on Christmas morning, according to Dannenberg's notes, the man who sobered up millions "asked for three shots of whiskey."

He was quite upset when he didn't get them, Cheever writes.

Wilson asked for booze again about a week later, on Jan. 2, 1971. And on Jan. 8. And on Jan. 14.

Bill passed away from emphysema and pneumonia on January 24, 1971, having not had a drink for the last 37 years of his life.

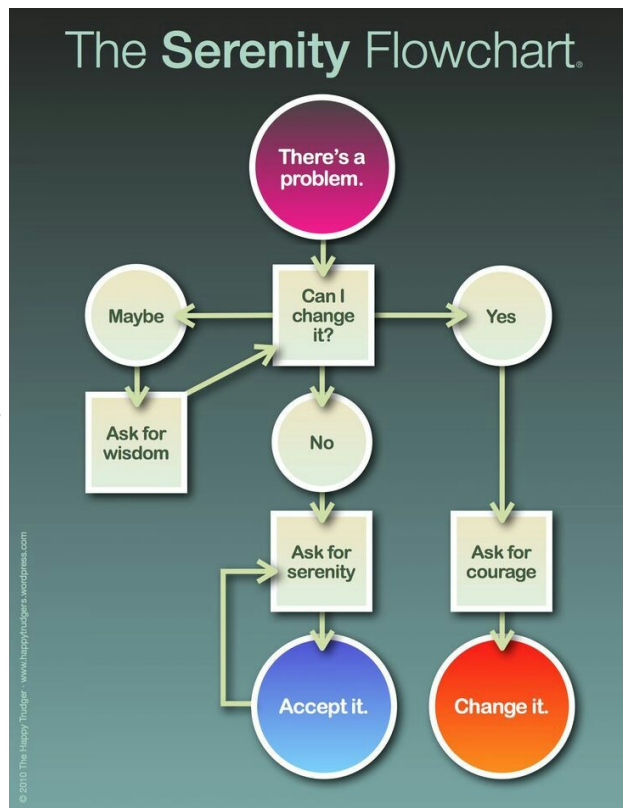
My initial reaction matched that of Cheever, "My blood ran cold. I was shocked and horrified." After all, if Bill wasn't safe from the urge to drink, how can any of us be? Then I realized that this was exactly the point. Each of us, as Bill wrote, is granted "a daily remission" dependent on our spiritual condition.

Our spiritual condition depends in part on our physical and mental condition. Bill was dying of final stage COPD and emphysema and most of the medicines that are used to treat the symptoms today weren't available 45 years ago. He would have been in considerable pain from pneumothorax (probably), would have been having difficulty breathing, been suffering from extreme anxiety and periods of agitation. He would have had low blood oxygen levels and possibly carbon dioxide toxicity, both of which impair mental functions. Small wonder he would have thought of a drink. It surprises me that he only thought of a drink four times.

In my years in AA, I have seen a number of people become ill and die. Almost all of them stayed sober; but only "almost all". None of us is ever completely safe from the urge to drink. In his death, Bill provided us with another lesson. This is a lesson not to put anyone on a pedestal and a reminder of how fragile our sober lives can be. As Cheever concluded, "...this was a story about the power of alcohol: that even Bill Wilson, the man who invented sobriety, who had 30-plus years sober, still wanted a drink."

Well, not quite: He wanted three drinks; truly an alcoholic, just like me.

Brian C., Stony Brook Freethinkers





ONE PERSON'S OPINION REGARDING STEP ELEVEN

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out.

I've often heard it said that we are not responsible for our thoughts. This, however, is no longer true for me. I believe thoughts are very significant and can have much power. A thought becomes an act, an act becomes a habit, a habit becomes part of our character and our character seems to determine our destiny.

Character is shaped by thoughts and emotions. We are shaped by our thoughts. Not formulating good thoughts would be like a farmer expecting an unplanted seed to grow. Good thoughts are like ships I send out. There's no sense waiting for my ship to come in if I haven't sent one out. Prayer in its simplest form is positive thought. Prayer in its most spiritual form is very powerful stuff.

Just as I feed my body at the table I must feed my spirit in prayer and meditation. Positive thought is to my spirit what food is to my body. I often take action in response to my thoughts. I believe that what I meditate upon I will become. Everything I do is affected in some way by what is or has been in my mind.

Someone once defined spirituality as "the willingness to look within and to trust." In light of that definition can I doubt that the program works? Personally, it seems I had to first learn to trust. AA then helped me to look within.

Ed H.

New Meeting

There is a new meeting at Remsenburg Basic Sobriety located at 167 South Country Rd, and Basket Neck Ln. Remsenburg. The new meeting is on Thursday at PM CD except the last Thurs, which is a Promises meeting.

THIS BULLETIN NEEDS YOUR HELP!

It needs YOUR participation! Please help and send in

- your articles!
- your experiences!
- your announcements!
- your comments!
- your, artwork, poems, photos, etc.!

Send to Mary at: bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org

Come to the Holiday Marathons!

Spiritual Nature and GSO District #113 will be sponsoring our annual Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve A.A. marathons.

**Where: St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Rider Ave. Patchogue**

When: 6pm to 1am. on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

We will be serving coffee and snacks. Please feel free to bring any food or snacks for the marathon.

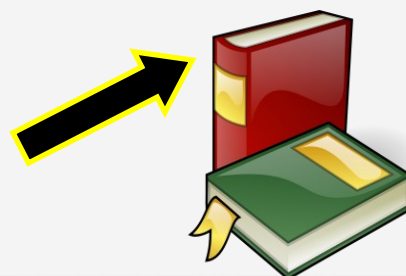
Any A.A. groups are urged to send a speaker for one of the slots we have open during the marathons. Please contact the Intergroup office for an email address for more information.

Eddie V

We need your old books you're not using!

Treatment facilities committee looking for AA members to donate any AA approved books for treatment facilities. You can always drop them off at the SIA office at 113-8 bay Ave Patchogue N.Y. 11772 Mon-Fri 9-3pm and Sat 9-1pm OR contact Jackie at:

treatment@suffolkny-aa.org



November Business Meetings

> Public Information Committee:

3RD TUESDAY OF MONTH

Tues. 11/15/16 7:00 PM

SIA Office, 113-8 Bay Ave.

Patchogue

> SIA Business Meeting:

1st TUESDAY OF MONTH

Tues. 11/1/16 8:00pm

**Cornell Cooperative Extension,
423 Griffing Ave.**

Riverhead

-7:00 PM New Group Rep Orientation

-7:00 PM Share-a-Thon

-8:00 PM Intergroup Meeting

> SIA Officers & Chairs:

LAST TUESDAY OF MONTH

Tues. 11/29/16 7:00 PM

SIA Office, 113-8 Bay Ave.

Patchogue

> Suffolk General Service:

3RD FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH

Fri. 11/18/16 8:00 PM

**True North Community Church,
Lakeland Ave.**

Bohemia

>Treatment Facilities Committee:

3RD TUESDAY OF MONTH

Tues. 11/15/16 7:00 PM

SIA Office, 113-8 Bay Ave., Patchogue

★ **Contact your Intergroup chairs!**

Chair- Kevin chairman@suffolkny-aa.org

Alt Chair- Tom alt-chair@suffolkny-aa.org

Treasurer- Wayne treasurer@suffolkny-aa.org

Corr. Sec.- Dawn corsec@suffolkny-aa.org

Recording Sec.- Tara recsec@suffolkny-aa.org

Answering Service- Ron phones@suffolkny-aa.org

Archives- Bob archives@suffolkny-aa.org

Bulletin- Mary bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org

Corrections- Lee correct@suffolkny-aa.org

Grapevine- Lee grapevine@suffolkny-aa.org

Literature- Laurie books@suffolkny-aa.org

Meeting List- Brodey ...meetings@suffolkny-aa.org

Public Information- Jack pubinfo@suffolkny-aa.org

SIA Office Manager- Cheryl.siaoffice@suffolkny-aa.org

Schools chair - OPEN!..... schools@suffolkny-aa.org

Share A Thon- Gene Marie..... share@suffolkny-aa.org

Special Events- Patrickspecevent@suffolkny-aa.org

Third Legacy chair - OPEN!... thirdleg@suffolkny-aa.org

Treatment Facilities- Jackie. ... treatment@suffolkny-aa.org

Webmaster- Troy..... websup@suffolkny-aa.org

WANTED: YOUR NAME HERE!

A SCHOOLS CHAIR AND A
THIRD LEGACY CHAIR are needed!

PLEASE VOLUNTEER SOME TIME!

Email for details:

chairman@suffolkny-aa.org



*****ANNOUNCEMENTS*****

This October, Long Island will be hosting the third annual *Empire State Convention of Young People in AA*. This is a rotating convention that fosters New York State unity and unity of AA as a whole. This convention is traditionally hosted by and attended by various ages and background. All are encouraged to attend.

Activities include:

- 3 big meetings
- marathon meetings
- workshops and panels
- 80's and 90's Dance
- contemporary dance
- costume party
- alternate entertainment
- al-anon programming
- opportunities for fellowship and networking and more!!

October 28, 29 & 30, 2016
Hyatt Regency Hotel
1717 Motor Pkwy
Hauppauge, NY

*To register and book your hotel room, visit
www.escypaa3.org*