

BULLETIN

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



Notice: SUBMISSION DUE DATE for May's Bulletin is April 20TH!

Send your submissions to Brian at: bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org



"My Spouse is in the Trunk"

I made up a tool, put it in my tool box, and after over three years, have still not used it! It is in the trunk of my car and this tool is another example of Vigilance.

One day I began to make this tool by making copies of several of the framed pictures we have in our home. I did not take them out of the frame, just put each one face down, one by one and pressed "Copy". Each was of a person or a possession, that meant a lot to me. Almost all were my daughter & spouse. I then spread them out in the trunk of my Toyota and closed the trunk. No, it was not a "Death Wish". It was a "Life Wish"! If ever I were to be out driving in my car and a desire came over me to buy a bottle, I would pull off the road, toss my wallet into the trunk, and continue my driving. Now it would be necessary to open my trunk in the parking lot of a liquor store, in order to get my money. This was a "Set Up" for what might be my last sane reflection on all I had to lose. From the trunk, every person and object that I cherish, would be looking right back at me. Would I choose that particular 4 minute purchase to lose all of this?

This moment of staring at all my loved ones (and my possessions) was my very last chance before I might do something stupid. Is it worth it? "Do I really want to do this?"

So far I have never had to pull off the road, open my trunk, & toss in my wallet ... not yet. No passers by would know how serious this 45 second stop really is. Last chances really do exist.

Some AAs get a second chance, even fewer get a third chance. I believe the eyes of my loved ones would ask me to get back in my car.

As weeks passed, the photocopies curled, and I had to tape them to cardboard scraps, but "my spouse is still in the trunk." After all, don't I occasionally have the oil, wiper fluid level, and tire pressure checked, to insure a smooth and safe journey for my body?

What's in the trunk is a check on my spirit.

Vigilance is simply a good idea.

Rick

Suffolk County

THIS BULLETIN NEEDS YOUR HELP!

We need YOUR participation!

Please help and send in

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

Send to Brian at:

bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org

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COVER ART

My grandfather was a drunk. Or, as my aunts used to say, a nice little Irishman who drank a bit too much. He also failed to bring home the pay check "too much", so it fell to my father to support the family from a young age. Dad learned that "you have to do it right" or everything fell apart. He became a perfectionist, a trait I learned. I can remember once when one of the neighbor kids took up playing the drums: my father said the kid would never stick with it. "Why not?" I asked, "He enjoys it." "Because he's not good enough at it," was my father's response.

Fast-forward 20 years and I was getting sober and trying to leave behind me those character defects that had helped steer me to drink. Perfectionism was one of them. I still said of myself that if I had painted the Sistine Chapel and someone complimented me on my work, I would immediately point out the one small spot in the corner that I had smudged. That small spot in the corner would grow, in my mind, until it destroyed the satisfaction of having done all the other work well. I gradually learned to be less of a perfectionist, but it never entirely left me.

Fast-forward again, this time 30 years to this past Christmas. I was looking through one of those catalogs from places you've never heard of that seem to appear at that time of year and I saw a "beginner's kit" for Oriental ink painting. I've always liked Oriental art and admire people who have artistic ability, something that I do not have in any great measure myself. Anyway, I mentioned this kit to a friend and she bought it for me for Christmas. I have since spent many enjoyable hours grinding my ink stick on the suzuri stone to make my ink. I find the repetitive motions to be very soothing, almost Zen-like. I've been practicing with my Sumi brushes, not everyday and probably not as much as I should, but I have a busy life and do what I can. I'm still not very good, even at the simple things like bamboo, but I enjoy the doing of it.

There is a part of Step Seven in the mix somewhere: I have a picture in my mind and I try to get it on paper. Sometimes it comes out like I envisioned it, sometimes not. Sometimes it comes out like nothing I expected. There's some Step Three in there, too. I have to learn when to stop painting. The idea behind Sumi-e is to put the essence of something on the paper — there is a time to stop adding to what you've done, and it is important to recognize when that time comes.

So I painted this month's cover. The important part came when one day I realized that I was enjoying the doing of it without being good at it. I can enjoy it even with knowing I may never be good at it. I hope somewhere that kid is still playing drums.

Brian C.

ONE PERSON'S OPINION REGARDING STEP FOUR

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Plato (quoting Socrates) said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." We might infer that to be a reference to a "searching and fearless moral inventory."

Prior to sobriety I was continuing to amass self-deception upon self-deception, mask upon mask, defense upon defense, sham upon sham, pretense upon pretense. I didn't realize that at the very moment of self-acceptance change is initiated. In doing my inventory, change began the instant I acknowledged, "This is who I really am."

Our Big Book suggests that "*resentment is the number one offender; it destroys more alcoholics than anything else.*" The root of the word resentment is Latin (*sentio* – to feel), so the English word resentment literally means "to feel again."

In holding a resentment I was actually re-feeling the bitterness that I had originally felt in the initial encounter with the person. I think I created toxicity in my body in that initial bitterness. Every time I re-felt that bitterness, I was again allowing that toxicity into my body. Anger eats at the soul.

The word *fearless* does not necessarily suggest an absence of fear but rather it means, "with courage." If I had waited for a complete absence of fear in me before beginning Step Four, I would not have gotten it done. Fear seems to be part of the human condition and it's an indication that there is something taking place that is not quite right. In fact, fear can be a lifesaver when it lets us know of the presence of danger.

Worry, on the other hand, is manufactured fear and I was the manufacturer of it. Worry was a way to avoid change because when worrying I created the illusion that as long as I was worrying about something I didn't have to do anything else about it.

I've heard it said that guilt is like a pail full of bricks and all we need do to be rid of it is to set the pail down. That's a bit simplistic, perhaps. Nonetheless, I did let go of a wagonload of guilt by doing an inventory and sharing it with God and with another human being.

It is suggested in the Eastern philosophies that a man can never step into the same stream twice. Perhaps the point of this is that everything in the Universe is subject to change. The universe is constantly evolving, expanding, growing, changing. It is helpful for me to change with it. I may, if I choose, continue to play the same old broken record of the past - reliving past injustices, pitying myself for past mistakes, - or I may choose the inventory and be free.

Ed H.



(Almost) All You Ever Wanted to Know About Intergroup Web Services

YOUR GROUP EMAIL ADDRESS

All groups have an email address thru SIA website. The ONE AND ONLY way to activate it is to send an email to WEBSUP@SUFFOLKNY-AA.ORG requesting the address and password. Please, only one request per group and expect for it to take about one week. If your group wants to participate in the online exchange you WILL need an Intergroup email address. While every group is autonomous, we have provided below some common sense guidelines to assist you. We will be sending info to all groups at their email address, including treasurer's report, meeting minutes, committee updates, special events, etc. Your group will be able to update meeting info, hotline list info, as well as share anniversaries and other group activities that you want to share. This can become a very effective way to communicate in a timely fashion: no more waiting for snail mail.

GROUP EMAIL GUIDELINES

All emails should be AA related. At least two group members should have the address and password. The password should also be recorded by the group secretary. It is recommended that your SIA rep have the address and password. Use your group email as a point of contact for any events that your group wants posted on the SIA website as personal contact information cannot be posted on the SIA website. Use caution when sharing any personal information and use the same caution if you receive any. Think before you forward any message that has any info such as phone numbers: make sure that the sender is ok with it.

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR GROUP ADDRESS

Participate in the online speaker exchange. Share anniversaries and info with groups in your area. Receive the bulletin and other information from Intergroup officers and chairpersons. Reach out for information. Update your meeting list information.

ONLINE EXCHANGE

On Monday, February 27 the first online speaker exchange went live, with over 20 groups participating. This exchange is intended to give groups more options to get both incoming and outgoing speaking commitments. It is our hope that all areas of Suffolk County, especially the North and South forks, will be able to better serve their group needs with this easy to use and anonymous system. As of March 12th over 30 groups are involved and we expect that number to rise. Based on a free service provided at Signup.com and communicated thru your group email address at the SIA website, this exchange provides complete anonymity in the online world. The first step toward participation is to obtain a group email address at the SIA website. Use that address to send an email to ONLINESPEAKEREXCHANGE@SUFFOLKNY-AA.ORG requesting more information.

Special thanks to Tracy K. and Steven I, who, with me, form the online exchange team. And our webmaster, Troy, who played a key role. This would not have come about without their hard work and expertise. Please feel free to offer any feedback or suggestions your group may have, after all, WE WORK FOR YOU!

Tommy M., Alternate Chair

Three Frogs on a Log

Step 3 states "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him."

When I first started out in this Fellowship, I saw a pretty, decorated sign telling me to "Turn it Over." That sounded great to me, I tried to imagine wrapping my problems into neat little bundles and passing them over to God, as I understood him (at that time). Unfortunately, simply visualizing the passing of my burdens did nothing to relieve me of my pain, misery and anxiety.

We hear that the first two steps involve only reflection and acceptance, but that the third step requires action. But what does that mean? When I received the great blessing of going through the 12 steps, I was told this story:

There were three frogs on a log. A hungry snake came bearing down on them. The first frog saw the snake, made a decision to jump, jumped and lived. The second frog saw the hungry snake bearing down, made a decision to jump, jumped and lived. The third frog saw this hungry snake bearing down on him and made a decision to jump. But fear gripped him, he stayed on the log and the snake ate him. The bottom line - a decision is only a statement of intention unless it is followed by action.

I knew that I had to take action so that my desire to turn things over would be changed into actually turning things over to the care of God.

These are the actions that I took to live in the peace that comes with letting God be in charge. First, I got on my knees and said the 3rd Step Prayer:

"God, I offer myself to Thee - To build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy way of life. May I do Thy will always!"

Next, through the 12 steps of the AA program, I learned to use tools such as meditation, journaling and talking to others to gain an understanding of my will (thoughts) and my life (actions). I learned that life was not making me miserable: it was my own negative thoughts, and the decisions that I made based on those thoughts, that was making me miserable. I pursued a relationship with the God that the first 100 talked about. This made me feel secure and comforted knowing that what I turned over would be well cared for. That I could just let go ... and let God.

May God bless you,
Diane G, Gratitude Group

Ego - Is It Really A Bad Thing?

It's not foolish or proud to recognize that we are beings with absolute significance. I have value in my own right apart from any purposes I may serve. The error comes with egotism: acting as if I were the only one in the entire world with absolute significance.

Richard Smoley

Smoley's statement in his book *Universal Love* was a good passage for me to read because I seem to have always had a misunderstanding of ego. When growing up, a popular notion seemed to be "thinking highly of oneself is egotistical."

I had difficulty accepting a complement and would often put down a person's attempt to complement me. I thought this was humility. I've learned that it's pride in reverse gear. Humility is not thinking less of me than I ought to. It is, however, thinking of myself less often.

Is ego, in and of itself, really such a bad thing? Isn't it the prompting of ego that makes working people get up in the morning and go to a job they don't necessarily like? Isn't it ego that prompts us to wash ourselves? Isn't it ego that urges people to face the drudgery of housework and do other things that must be done for healthy survival?

On the other hand, **egotism** is an example of unchecked ego; an ego that runs amuck (or amok, take your choice). When I'm judging the other guy's ego to be sticking out too far maybe I'm really feeling my own ego is not getting enough attention. Judging others is a dishonest way of praising myself.

An example of ego out of control would be, "I want what I want when I want it and if you happen to have what I want then I want you out of my way."

I know what it's like when my ego is out of control. There was a time in my life when I egotistically demanded my own way, very much like a child. I seemed to be unaware that balance and moderation in all things is the key to a peaceful life.

When I'm right I'm insufferable; unbearable; difficult to be around. I would latch onto some righteous indignation and run with it until a good friend called my attention to this when he asked, "Would you rather be right or happy?"

Unchecked ego is like a runaway horse. If I simply keep my "horse" in check I may be able to have a reasonably happy finish to these waning years.

An old saying suggested, "There's so much good in the worst of us and so much bad in the best of us it little behooves any of us to speak evil of the rest of us." Ed H.



Group History

The Trudge Group

Islip Presbyterian Church

340 Main St.

Islip, NY 11751

*"We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you **trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.**"*



"It was time for a change" said Dave---one of the two Daves who started this new group. "I wanted to be home early for dinner or maybe go to a ballgame." So two pioneer members of the There is a Solution Group decided to start another group. This one meets approximately 2 miles down the road from their former haunts. It meets on the same nights but an hour and a half earlier at 5:30 P.M. Dave was quick to point out that the days chosen (Monday and Friday) were at the discretion of the Presbyterian Church and not their choice. The focus of both meetings is the Big Book and it is fitting that the group name reflects one of its more noted passages.

The September evening a member of the Archives Committee showed up was still sunny. He was told that the High Noon Group, now meeting in Islip Terrace, once met here in this same spacious room. Chairs are placed in a large circle and the Big Book is passed around for each person to read and afterwards the meeting is open to sharing. This was the third meeting ever held, so there was a sense of excitement among those attending, many of whom were showing up for the first time. Clearly people knew each other from the other meetings in the general vicinity,

Since its first meeting on August 24, 2015, the group has been growing steadily. On that sunny day in September there were over twenty AAs. A guess would put the bulk of those attending as being sober less than five years. Since the other Dave has more than thirty years under his belt, he will be a great role model. By keeping the focus on the book, Alcoholics Anonymous, this trudge may be a most worthwhile lifetime trek.

S.L.A. Archives Committee
September 17, 2015

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

May's Business Meetings

> Public Information Committee:

3RD TUESDAY OF MONTH

Tues. 5/16/17 7:00 PM

SIA Office, 113-8 Bay Ave.

Patchogue

> SIA Business Meeting:

1st TUESDAY OF MONTH

Tues. 5/2/17 8:00pm

True North Community Church

Lakeland Ave.

Bohemia

>7:00 PM Archives Committee meeting

>7:00 PM New Group Rep Orientation

>7:00 PM Share-a-Thon

> SIA Officers & Chairs:

LAST TUESDAY OF MONTH

Tues. 5/30/17 7:00 PM

SIA Office, 113-8 Bay Ave.

Patchogue

> Suffolk General Service:

3RD FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH

Fri. 5/19/17 8:00 PM

>7:00 PM General Service new Rep meeting

True North Community Church

Lakeland Ave.

Bohemia

>Treatment Facilities Committee:

3RD TUESDAY OF MONTH

Tues. 5/16/17 7:00 PM

SIA Office, 113-8 Bay Ave.

Patchogue

>Big Meeting Committee:

3RD THURSDAY OF MONTH

Thurs. 5/18/17 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

Big Meeting - Jean Marie ... siaoffice@suffolkny-aa.org

Bulletin- Brian 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-Jack schools@suffolkny-aa.org

Share A Thon- Rob share@suffolkny-aa.org

Special Events- Patrick specevent@suffolkny-aa.org

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

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

Webmaster- Troy websup@suffolkny-aa.org

See what it's about!

A THIRD LEGACY REP is needed!

PLEASE HELP!

email:

chairman@suffolkny-aa.org



*****ANNOUNCEMENTS*****

THIS BULLETIN IS LOOKING FOR A NEW LAYOUT ARTIST/EDITOR!

TRAINING AND SOFTWARE PROVIDED

PLEASE CONTACT BRIAN AT bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org

**The Grapevine offers more much
more than just the magazine!**



- Books
- CD's
- Calendars
- Slogans
- AA#3
- Bill D.
- Man in the bed

And there is more!

Contact Lee at: correct@suffolkny-aa.org

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 drop them off at the SIA office at 113-8 Bay Ave., Patchogue Mon-Fri 9-3pm and Sat 9-1pm OR **contact**

Jackie at:

treatment@suffolkny-aa.org



42nd Annual SIA Share-A-Thon

What is the Share-A-Thon?

The Share-a-Thon is a free open single day event that takes months of working together to plan. During the day, over 60 workshops created by groups across Suffolk County, with various topics are available to attend. Breakfast and lunch crews keep everyone fueled up while information tables are open for everything AA has to offer in service. The day is topped off in the auditorium with a new "best home group" competition! Then our sobriety countdown and spiritual speakers from AA and Al-Anon. As you can imagine help is needed at all different levels and times of the day, so sign up and be part of a wonderful event! Any questions, please email us at: Share@suffolkny-aa.org

The Archives
Committee seeks
volunteers Contact
the SIA Office at
631-654-1150.