

July, 2020

**Volume 48
Number 3**

**THE SUFFOLK INTERGROUP
Bulletin**

**Visit your Suffolk County SIA
Webdite at:**

<http://www.suffolkny-aa.org>



The Suffolk Intergroup Bulletin

July Business Meetings

Due to Covid-19 these meetings may continue to be held online. For further information visit:

<https://2020.suffolkny-aa.org/groups/sia-general-meeting/>

LAST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

Tues. 7/28/20

SIA Business Meeting: 8:00 PM

Archives Committee meeting: 7:00 PM

New Group Rep Orientation: 7:00 PM

**True North Community Church
1101 Lakeland Ave., Bohemia, NY 11716**

**Public Information Committee:
THIRD WEDNESDAY OF MONTH
7/15/20 7:00 PM**

SIA Office, 113-8 Bay Ave. Patchogue

SIA Officers & Chairs:

**Treatment Facilities Committee:
THIRD TUESDAY OF MONTH
Tues. 7/21/20 7:00 PM**

**Suffolk General Service:
THIRD FRIDAY OF MONTH
Fri. 7/17/20 8:00 PM**

**New GSR Orientation: 7:00 PM
SIA Office, 113-8 Bay Ave. Patchogue**

A Message from SIA Web Support

The website has been updated and moved to a new hosting platform and as a result we're seeing better performance and more engagement. Visit the website for the most up to date information.

<https://suffolkny-aa.org/>

Please direct any comments, updates, corrections, or suggested changes to the Web Support:

websup@suffolkny-aa.org

Group Email Address

Claim your group's SIA email account TODAY:

<https://suffolkny-aa.org/groups/group-email/>

Online Meetings

To learn how to find and join online meetings, please visit our online meeting page:

<https://suffolkny-aa.org/online-meetings/>

To see all online meetings for today in the Meeting Finder visit:

<https://suffolkny-aa.org/meetings/?tsml-type=ONL>

Re-Opening Meetings

A few meetings have reopened or remained opened. Many more are hoping to reopen as soon as their meeting spaces allow it. Regardless if your group has just started to discuss restarting face to face meetings or is already there, please find useful information and resources on this critical topic on our

Re-opening Meetings Page. <https://suffolkny-aa.org/reopen/>

SENY Re-Opening Meetings Workshop

Area 49 – Southeastern New York – will be holding a virtual (Zoom) workshop on issues and consideration on how best to reopen meetings titled the Return to Face to Face Meetings. Find details on this event and all other upcoming events on the Events Calendar.

<https://suffolkny-aa.org/calendar/>

Your Group and the Meeting List

It is unlikely that we'll have a Printed Meeting List until much later this year. The Online Meeting List is being updated constantly and is the best resource to get the most up to date information. However, we can't keep the Meeting List current without your help!!

To find out more on how you can help keep your group's info up to date, visit

<http://suffolkny-aa.org/reopen/#meeting-list>

Online Contributions to SIA

Learn more about the why and the how continued 7th Tradition Contributions are necessary for SIA to continue its mission of helping groups carry the message. Please Contribute

General Services

"These are the facts of our history that show the need at all times for a safe reserve fund in the Foundation. This is the money that guarantees the operation of A.A.'s world services, rain or shine." —The Language of the Heart, page 139

May 12, 2020

Dear Conference members,

With so much happening over these past few weeks – including intense preparations for the 70th General Service Conference, committee meetings, board meetings, and other ongoing work in the office (in a virtual/telework environment) – the landscape across our organization seems to change every day.

Among these shifts have been the realities of our own financial situation. It's no secret that businesses and organizations from every sector have felt the economic impacts of this global health crisis, and we are no different. As a result, due to steep declines over the past two months in revenue from group contributions and literature sales, management and the boards have increased our focus on costs and expenses of office operations.

To that end, on April 22, the General Service Office made a request to the Trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee and its chair, Leslie Backus, for an emergency drawdown of \$3 million from the Reserve Fund. This request was due to the decrease in book sales and contributions caused by the global pandemic. After a review of the cash flow analysis, the committee agreed to forward the request to the General Service Board. On Thursday, April 30, the General Service Board approved the \$3 million Reserve Fund drawdown. Over the past week the office has begun that process and will continue to access funds as they become liquid in our bank accounts.

The decision was made after reflecting upon the primary principle behind the prudent Reserve Fund that A.A. has maintained for decades: "To provide the financial resources necessary to continue the services of G.S.O. and the Grapevine in the event of emergency or disaster..." (The A.A. Service Manual, page S72). The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, especially in New York City and the downstate region, is a true public health emergency. State and City regulations have restricted the operations of non-essential businesses since March. Our office at 475 Riverside Drive has been shut down to the nonprofit tenants since Friday, March 27, when we moved to 95% telework status for our employees, and there are no immediate indications of when this will change.

Further, the unexpected financial situation brought on by the public health crisis has required several layoffs or temporary furloughs of workers in roles that can no longer be covered by salary continuation. While this has been an incredibly difficult decision, our goal and responsibility is to maintain a sustainable, responsive organization to serve A.A.'s needs and requirements.

In addition to the objectives noted above, we are now focused on providing support for our General Service Conference, which will take place Saturday, May 16 to Tuesday, May 19. We will be utilizing a virtual platform to conduct Conference business, and our team has been demonstrating an "all hands on deck" approach to ensure that the event is successful for the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. While this is not something we envisioned even a few months ago, I am so proud of the resiliency and incredible work that has gone into planning. More discussion and reports on G.S.O. and AA Grapevine finances will be shared with you at the Conference.

This information and all that will be reported at the Conference are intended to be shared with the Fellowship, to keep the groups informed on Seventh Tradition funding of needed services, so that a true group conscience can be achieved in this difficult time for all.

Sincerely, in love and service,

G. Gregory Tobin

General Manager

Around the AA Campus

Happy to report that the SIA office in Patchogue is open again after a coronavirus mandated shutdown.

The Archives Committee is seeking stories about your experiences with the coronavirus and sobriety. Looking for a personal view of how it may have impacted your life or group. How you had to adjust your program to deal with it etc. The plan is to keep these in a binder down at the Intergroup office so future generations can learn about this difficult time in our history.

Some stories will be printed in the Bulletin with the author's permission.

Please help with this and spread the word.

The Archives is still looking for people to help with its website. It has now been six months without any assistance and that's not good. Work is backed up—way backed up.

Very sad news to report about losing four of our people. Howie was a familiar figure around the rooms. So was Santo from REBOS in Ronkonkoma. Santo helped start the Serenity by the Lake Group that still meets.

Bobby W was a strong presence in the Mastic Beach/Shirley area. He was at one time Intergroup Treasurer. Finally Bill B. from the Lake Ronkonkoma group leaves us with 52 years sobriety. Many may remember him from the Joe and Charlie tape meeting that met in various spots. All of these people carried the message and carried it well.

They will be so missed.

Until next month...

The Archives Committee
is desperately seeking people to
help with our website.

Check it out at
suffolkAAArchives.com

The Email Addresses of your Intergroup Chairs

Chair - Jean Marie - chairman@suffolkny-aa.org

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

Treasurer - Laurie - treasurer@suffolkny-aa.org

Recording Sec. - Zoe - corsec@suffolkny-aa.org

Corresponding Sec. Stacey - recsec@suffolkny-aa.org

Archives - Jack - archives@suffolkny-aa.org

Archivist - Bob - archives@suffolkny-aa.org

Bulletin - Fran, - bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org

Corrections - Robert - correct@suffolkny-aa.org

Grapevine - Jackie - grapevine@suffolkny-aa.org

Hot Line- Jeff - phones@suffolkny-aa.org

Institutions - Kathleen -
institutions@suffolkny-aa.org

Literature- Tommy - books@suffolkny-aa.org

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

Public Info - Danny - pubinfo@suffolkny-aa.org

Office Manager - Michael, -
siaoffice@suffolkny-aa.org

Schools - Phil - schools@suffolkny-aa.org

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

Special Events- VACANT -
specevent@suffolkny-aa.org

Third Legacy - Jim - thirdleg@suffolkny-aa.org

Web Support- David - websup@suffolkny-aa.org

SIA Volunteers - volunteers@suffolkny-A.A.org



**Eastport Primary Purpose
Shrine of Our Lady of the Island
258 Eastport Manor Rd.
Manorville**

The group's first meeting was March 18, 1981. We originally met in the larger building, but that building had no restroom. So people, at night, in the dark, had to walk up the hill to the church where they had a men's room and a lady's room on each side of the altar. On cold and snowy nights it was scary to go to the restroom.

About four years later, we moved into the gift shop. That was about the time we changed the format to a regular closed meeting. Original group members were Dick F., Gene S., Al W., Mark W., Dave Q. and Joe C.

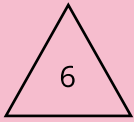
The Primary Purpose Group had splintered off from the West Hampton Beach Group simply because of its size. In the beginning every group ran the same format of 90 minutes with a qualification that ran at least 30 minutes and a coffee break that ran 15-20 minutes. Because of the group's size few people got to share on any given week.

Six members of the group had gotten together to discuss forming a new group with a different format. We would be the first group to run a house meeting.

First we made it a topic discussion group to eliminate the qualification. Then we did away with the coffee breaks. By doing this we were able to devote all the time to the meeting and with ten minutes of sharing on the topic we then were able to devote fifty more minutes to share. We were breaking new ground and a lot of people couldn't deal with the change.

We were not a popular group and after about two years some of the original members left the group. Some left for other groups and some left for personal reasons. After a few years the group had begun waning, with a membership of sometimes four or six members and sometimes even less. This went on for quite a few years, we were not able to pay the rent and I was told we should turn in the key and let it fold. But after having a talk with the priest and receiving his support and encouragement, I decided to keep with it. After about eight and a half years the group began to grow and by its ninth year it had become solvent.

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



The Suffolk Intergroup

A Story of Experience, Strength and Hope and Sobriety in the Time of the Coronavirus

In the early years of my drinking, I thought that alcohol was helping me handle my fears and nervousness. I was ashamed to show anyone my timidity; but paradoxically, of course, the more alcohol had its way with me, the more fearful and physically shaky I became. When I came into the rooms of AA, I was filled with guilt and shame. I didn't want anyone to see the fearful person I had become. Today, I remember a dear AA member who shared with me, "Welcome to the League of Frightened Men." In those days of less gender specific words and a 1935 book title, I knew that even though I was a 24 year old girl, the league was also for me. What a heavenly relief to belong to a group of frightened people who were going to show me the way to stop drinking and stop letting fear rule my life.

Hope—the antidote to fear. Belonging—the antidote to loneliness. Here was a fellowship I never knew existed, and it was for me too. Alcoholism was an illness; I had it; and I could get well. I could live a normal life without alcohol. My life since then has been an AA success story, and quite a long story of a normal, sober life.

I want to fast forward to when I was a high school English teacher in New York City. During the preceding years, I had earned my Master's degree and a teaching certificate! Me! An alcoholic who used to be too afraid to speak up in a classroom was now standing in front of my own class. To be sure, I put my license on my desk and took a peek at it whenever I needed reassurance that I knew what I was doing. One of my early and most serious challenges occurred on 9-11. I wanted to help keep my students from being afraid. We watched the twin towers collapse through the classroom windows. While we were in a long lockdown, I told those teens about how important and priceless their experiences would become some day to future generations. Thus, they wrote all about what they saw, felt and heard; and those journals are historical documents today, twenty years later.

In that vein, I want to contribute to the Archives of Alcoholics Anonymous. Every story of what it was like, what happened and what it is like now that I have heard in Church basements over the years is a lasting treasure to me. The stories teach me how to stay sober and inspire me to give in order to keep. They teach me that I am an authority on only one thing—my story—but that is an amazing and wonderful thing. Sharing my experience, strength and hope keeps me sober. I always hope it will help someone else, but I know it will help me.

Specifically, I want to share my experience during this viral pandemic of 2020. Maybe some of my fellow AA's will identify with the idea that it's harder to talk about what it's like now than what it was like back then! We are still in the midst of the pandemic, and most of my fellow AA's are handling the uncertainty with courage, kindness and optimism. Many of us are grieving, especially after experiencing the loss of loved ones and the inability, due to quarantines, to mourn the way we want to.

We have been advised to distance ourselves from our loved ones and friends to mitigate the spread of this strange and new virus. This has plunged us AA's suddenly into uncharted, cold and stormy waters as we need our meetings more than ever. Some of us have maintained face to face meetings, carefully limiting numbers of attendees, wearing masks and keeping their distance from each other. Just imagine! These are the very same guys and gals who are prone to hearty hugs and handshakes. I was taught to always shake the hand of the speaker at the end of a meeting to show gratitude. Some predict that the practice of handshaking may morph into a congenial elbow to elbow tap! We shall have to see how that will go in the future.

The majority of us have been attending ZOOM meetings, a new phenomenon for most of us! We get to hear each other and see each other in a group of little boxes on a computer screen or a cell phone. The first time I attended one, I felt extreme relief and hope. I would have the support I needed to meet the pandemic's cruel challenges. With Alcoholics Anonymous, I never have to be alone again. The virus could not change that happy circumstance of my life.

I never realized before how much a friendly smile directed right at me could lift my spirits. On Zoom, you can't wink and grin directly at anyone. We found a way to send private chat comments to each other though, and that will have to suffice. After the meeting, some of us linger a little longer, chatting some small talk. We call it our virtual parking lot.

The sharing of feelings and struggles and small successes is continuing in virtual meetings across the country. At this time, we are starting to open up our outside communities in careful phases as the pandemic has showed signs of slowing somewhat. We don't know what's ahead. We're earnestly hoping for the discovery of a vaccine. Many of us old timers remember the days of polio before the Salk vaccine, so we spread hope that our scientists will prevail over this virus they call COVID 19.

As always, pandemic or no pandemic, one thing is certain for our fellowship. A Higher Power and the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous provide the saving grace for this League of No Longer Frightened Men and Women.

Breath

*Breath born in the womb of life
Breath of life as old as time
Of this I do breathe as I swim
In a vast karmic sea
Causes and conditions rise and sink
Giving birth to endless cycles of trying
and failing
And of trying without fail
Epicycles of birth and death
The spirit of life holds me with care
Resilience rooted in eons of time
Nourishing my heart body and mind
Reminding me that the fear that I feel
Is too great to try to hold on my own
Reaching for the hand of another
I remember that I need not be alone
No I never need be alone*



About the Author

Robert B. is a sober alcoholic in Madison, WI participating in AA and AlAnon at Fitchburg Serenity Club. He has been sober since April 21, 2007. He also began writing and sharing poetry on Facebook during his first year sober as part of his recovery from alcohol dependency, acute anxiety and chronic depression. He has found that creativity expressed primarily through writing poetry and playing various stringed instruments helped him heal and thrive.

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Beyond Belief

**Suffolk Intergroup
Association of
Alcoholics
Anonymous presents
THE OTHER 24**

**Monthly workshops on
the traditions and
concepts will be held at
6:30 pm on the first
Tuesday of every month
at the SIA office in
Patchogue 118 Bay Ave (On
Terrell) Patchogue**

**The August workshop
will be held on Tuesday
August 4th at 6:30 pm**

**We will be covering
Traditions 7 & 8**

**A link to this is available
on our public calendar**

**DUE TO COVID-19 THIS
MEETING MAY BE HELD
VIA GOOGLE HANG
OUTS**

The 12 Traditions

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities