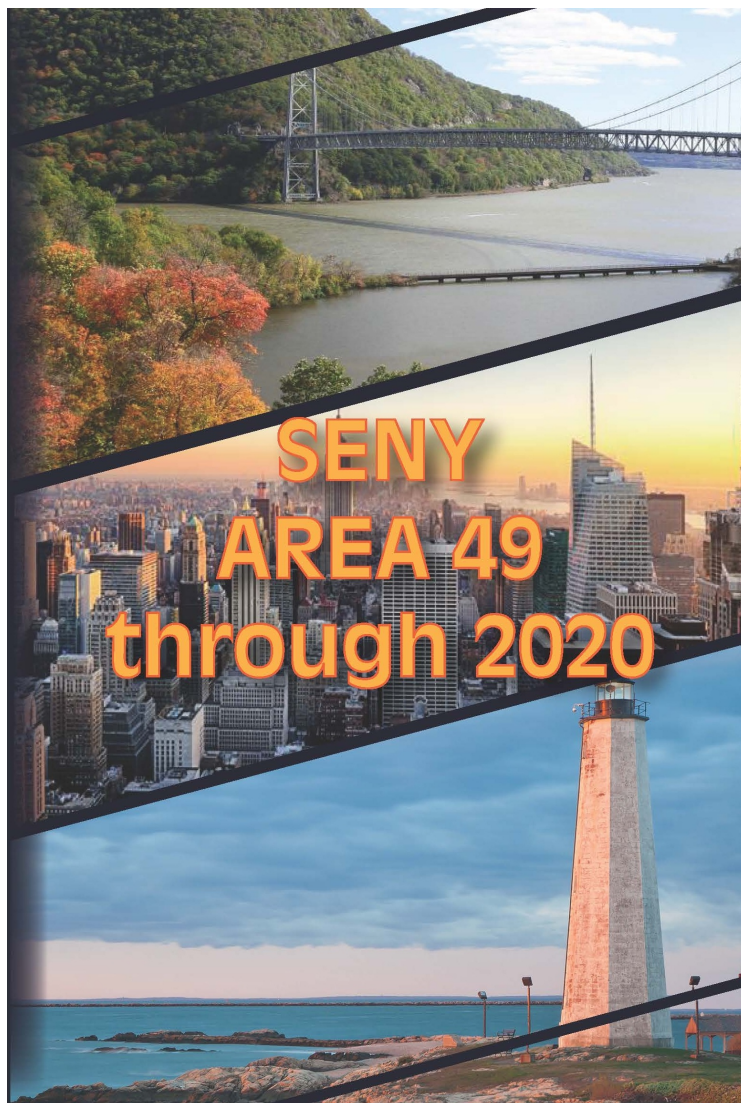




South Eastern New York (SENY)

SENY Area 49 through 2020

**Fourth Revision (Digital Edition)
December 2020**

South Eastern New York Area Committee and Assembly
of Alcoholics Anonymous, Archives Committee

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INTRODUCTION

In October 1950, Bill W.'s dream for the future of Alcoholics Anonymous was realized with the Trustees' approval of the General Service Conference (GSC) on a trial basis.

The United States and Canada were divided into 75 areas, and from this mapping came the development of the AA service areas. To give the Conference continuity, delegates were divided into panels. An odd numbered panel (Panel #1), elected for two years, was seated in 1951. An even numbered panel (Panel #2), elected for two years, was seated in 1952. Thereafter, one panel would be elected, and one would be retired yearly.

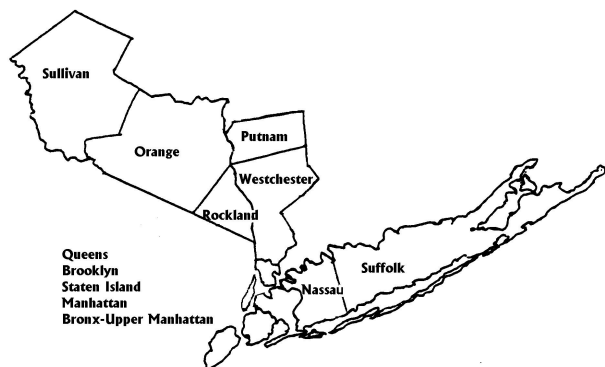
This booklet is dedicated to all those trusted servants who gave so much of their time and effort to serve South Eastern New York (SENY) as delegates, and to the many, anonymous others who have been trusted servants in the area.

The Twelve Traditions make clear that AA as such need never be organized, yet at the same time, some kind of organization is needed to carry the message in ways that the local groups cannot.

(Continued next page)

INTRODUCTION (continued)

In SENY, which is one of the now 93 delegate areas in the United States and Canada, we deal with AA issues and activities for the area which includes the City of New York (the boroughs of the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island), Long Island (Nassau and Suffolk counties) and the five nearby upstate New York counties of Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan and Westchester, along with a non-geographical Hispanic Districts grouping representing all participating Spanish language AA groups throughout SENY. This service beyond the home groups includes representing SENY at the annual Conference, and carrying out a variety of other service commitments that need to be filled within the area.



The South Eastern NY Area

Intergroup/Central Offices (ICO), in contrast to General Service, are more on the front line. Active ICO members answer AA hotlines providing answers to questions about AA to those who call AA for information or help. This may include alcoholics, but also contacts such as the family and friends of alcoholics, students and professionals who are for whatever reason AA-interested or curious.

Although separate entities, General Service and the ICOs work cooperatively and may share some responsibilities.

FROM THE SENY ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

What we have in Alcoholics Anonymous today rests firmly on the foundation of what went before, our history. The story of our AA fellowship in South Eastern New York is deeply associated with the very roots of our program of recovery. Beyond that, it's just fun to look back on how it all happened.

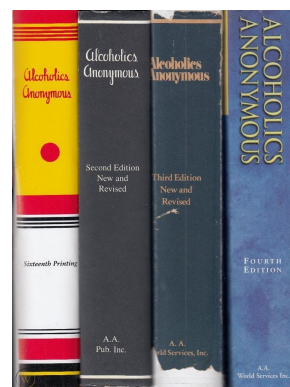
Do you know where Bill W. was first introduced to a spiritual road to recovery from his alcoholism? It wasn't Ohio. It was [Brooklyn](#). How about where Bill was when he started on what was to be his last drunk? That was [Staten Island](#). Know where the first institutionally based AA meeting was held? That was [Rockland](#) State Hospital. Where was the hospital Dr. William D. Silkworth treated his alcoholic patients, including a fellow named Bill W.? The answer is Towns Hospital, [Manhattan](#). These answers and other pieces of AA history that belong to SENY are found in the following pages. As you read, you will walk through more than eighty-five years of AA history. Perhaps you will find a name you have heard,

or even someone you know. Perhaps your group will be mentioned. It is all part of our collective history, and unique to SENY.

Respecting our Traditions on anonymity, in this booklet AA members, living or deceased, are referred to by first name, last initial only. Also, while every effort has been made to bring consistency to the style, format and layout of the book, it has been a work in progress for some time involving many AA members from throughout SENY making significant and varied contributions.

The SENY Archives Committee offers this booklet as a work in progress, and welcomes any comments, corrections, or additions. We also thank the many members of the fellowship, county and Intergroup archivists and historians, friends, and others who have helped make this current revision possible. They have helped us once again to "pass it on."

SENY Archives Committee, December 2020



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THE “HEADQUARTERS” BUILDINGS

- **17 William Street** (William Street near Broad Street), Newark, New Jersey

Hank P. and Bill W. set up the first AA Headquarters office here at the office of Honor Dealers, an auto dealership owned by Hank. Bill wrote much of the “Big Book” from this office. Ruth H. worked for Hank as a secretary and now worked with Bill on the book; she was AA's first non-alcoholic employee. The office remained at this location from about 1938 to 1940.

- **30 Vesey Street** (Vesey and Church Streets), Manhattan

The second headquarters office of Alcoholics Anonymous and Works Publishing Inc., after Bill split with Hank; the group operated here in Room 703 from 1940 to 1944.

- **415 Lexington Avenue** (Lexington Avenue and 43rd Streets), Manhattan

AA headquarters moves to the Grand Central Area after Bill and Lois find their new home at Stepping Stones in Bedford Hills. Bill could easily take a train from Stepping Stones to Grand Central Station and walk from there to the new office, making for an easy commute. The offices remained here from about 1944 to 1950. The new mailing address was PO Box 459, Grand Central Annex.

- **141 East 44th Street** (44th between 3rd and Lexington Avenues), Manhattan

Still close to Grand Central, the headquarters moved to this larger office in 1950 to accommodate the growing organization. The office remained here until 1960.

- **305 East 45th Street** (2nd Avenue and 45th Street), Manhattan

Again, the growing group moved to larger quarters, still in the Grand Central Area, and stayed in this building from 1960 to 1970.

- **468 – 470 Park Avenue South** (31st Street and Park Avenue South), Manhattan

This served as AA's General Service Office for over twenty years (from 1970 to 1992), eventually occupying five floors in two buildings.

- **475 Riverside Drive** (between 119th and 120th Streets), Manhattan

The [General Service Office](#) moved to this building, adjacent to the Riverside Church, in 1992. Offices occupy the 11th floor shared with the [Grapevine](#) offices. John D. Rockefeller made the entire block of land available for the structure which houses many church groups, interdenominational agencies, and non-profit organizations.



475 Riverside Drive, Riverside Church in the background.



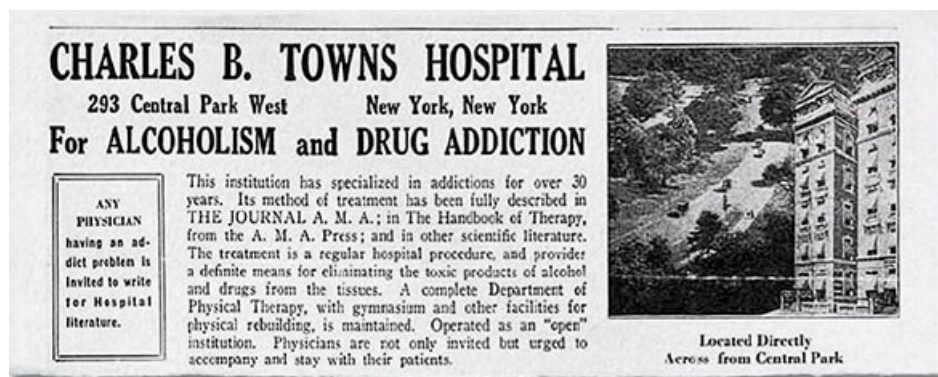
First General Service Conference, Commodore Hotel, Manhattan, April 1951

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WHERE ALCOHOLICS WENT FOR HELP

- **Towns Hospital**, 293 Central Park West (between 89th and 90th Streets), Manhattan

Bill landed in Towns Hospital four times, between 1933 and 1934 for treatment of alcoholism, and ultimately had a spiritual experience there in 1934 that led to his sobriety. Dr. William Silkworth, Medical Superintendent at Towns, treated 40,000 alcoholics there, including Bill W. and Hank P., and wrote the "Doctor's Opinion" in *Alcoholics Anonymous*.



- **Calvary Episcopal Church**, 237 Park Avenue South (4th Avenue and 21st Street), Manhattan
- **Calvary Mission**, 246 East 23rd Street (2nd Avenue and 23rd Street), Manhattan

Bill W. attended Oxford Group meetings here from 1934 to 1936, and got sober along with Ebby T., Rowland Hazard, Cebra G., Hank P., and many others. Rev. Samuel Shoemaker, source of AA's spiritual principles via the Oxford Group, was the pastor of Calvary and brought Oxford Group meetings to New York City.

- **30 Rockefeller Plaza** (off 49th Street), Manhattan

Here Bill met Willard Richardson, a friend of his brother-in-law and the connection to John D. Rockefeller Jr. Bill met Rockefeller in October 1937 in his 66th floor office, and told him about the AA program. The meeting went well, and in many ways, Rockefeller helped the fledgling organization survive its early years.

- **New York Clubhouse**, 334½ West 24th Street (between 8th and 9th Avenues), Chelsea, Manhattan

This first clubhouse was rented in 1940 for 100 dollars a month (about 1,300 dollars today). This was the first establishment acquired specifically to house Fellowship meetings. Bill and Lois, virtually homeless during this time after losing their Clinton Street, Brooklyn home, lived in a small upstairs room for about a year. It was at the Clubhouse that Bill first met Father Ed Dowling who would become Bill's spiritual mentor and who was instrumental in bringing AA to his hometown of St. Louis.

The Clubhouse becomes a de facto clearing house for local AA information from which New York Intergroup formally emerges in 1946.



BILL AND LOIS W.'S HOMES

- **38 Livingston Street** (between Clinton and Court Streets), Brooklyn

This was where Bill and Lois's called home during the flush, highflying years on Wall Street from 1926 to 1929. Bill was a successful stockbroker during these years, and the couple was well off. Lois and Bill knocked down a wall and converted two apartments into one to give them more space. However, these were also the years of worsening drinking by Bill.

- **182 Clinton Street** (Clinton and State Streets), Brooklyn

Lois's family owned this home for many years. Lois Burnham was born in this house in 1891. Bill and Lois lived here briefly in 1919, with her parents, when they were just getting on their feet. They moved there again in 1930, when the couple's financial situation had deteriorated severely after the stock market crash. Lois's mother was dying of cancer and Bill's drinking was quite bad. Lois's father gave the home to Lois and Bill after they married a few years after his wife's death.

Ebby T. brought Bill his message of spiritual healing and recovery in 1934 sitting with him in the kitchen at 182 Clinton Street, and it was in this house that Bill finally got sober. In 1935, Bill began hosting meetings at the house on Tuesdays, meeting with drunks constantly, some of whom lived there with Bill and Lois if they had nowhere else to go.

After Lois's father died in 1936, the mortgage company took ownership of the home, but the couple continued living there, renting the property until 1939 when they could no longer afford the rent. They were virtually homeless for two years, living with friends, above offices and in the 24th Street Clubhouse.

- **Stepping Stones**, 62 Oak Road, Katonah, (Bedford Hills)

About an hour north of Manhattan, Bill and Lois moved to this home in April 1941, and lived here for the rest of their lives. A wealthy woman named Helen G. heard that the couple needed a home and offered them the property for a small price, with no down payment and modest monthly installments.

(Most information on pages 2-3 is drawn from AAWS, Inc., Archives sources.)



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THE COUNTIES

[SENY](#) includes the City of New York (the boroughs of the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island), Long Island (Nassau and Suffolk counties) and the five nearby upstate New York counties of Westchester, Putnam, Orange, Rockland and Sullivan along with a non-geographical Hispanic Districts group representing all participating Spanish language AA groups throughout SENY.

BRONX AND UPPER MANHATTAN

At the 1995 Alcoholics Anonymous Convention, Old-Timers meeting in San Diego, California, of fifteen speakers chosen at random from among 129 old-timers with forty plus years of sobriety, three of the speakers got sober in the Bronx. This is



To the Bronx and Upper Manhattan

indicative of the great impact that early Bronx AA had on our fellowship.

The Bronx had its sober roots in the 24th Street Clubhouse where most of the outer borough members went after being Twelfth Stepped by our AA early timers in the late 1930s and very early 1940s. One of these members, an ex-cop, seemingly doomed to insane asylums, was Twelfth Stepped by an AA while in his sixteenth Bellevue hospitalization for drinking. He got sober in 1942. Before his second AA birthday, he started the first Alcoholics Anonymous group in the Bronx in 1944. We know this from early postings in the then new AA magazine, *The Grapevine*, which printed the story of his tireless efforts.

Early issues of *The Grapevine* recall that the first Bronx group held its initial meeting on August 6, 1944, at 518 Willis Avenue. Shortly thereafter, in October of that same year, the group found "a permanent and very spacious" place at 2500 Marion Avenue. The Bronx County Group came into being with Wednesday night open meetings. Through ardent Twelfth Step work, great enthusiasm and self-sacrifice for "the cause," membership exploded. That early

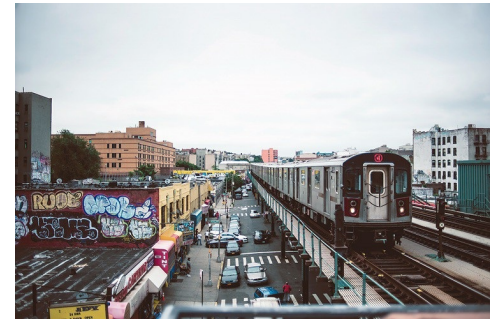
group lasted 66 years. With its primarily Irish working-class population, there were more than a few bars in the Bronx. Not surprisingly, AA groups seemed to flourish most in the neighborhoods rife with bars. Within a few years, the Bronx saw the beginnings of the South Bronx, Parkchester, Mott Haven, Gun Hill, Woodlawn, University Heights, City Island, and Riverdale groups.

These groups usually had open speaker meetings and often had hundreds of members and potential alcoholics in attendance. Making coffee and setting up chairs was a big job. In the early decades, outgoing speaking commitments were often a journey taken by carloads of members to Brooklyn, Connecticut, New Jersey, upstate New York, or wherever else they were needed in order to "carry the AA message." A very close relationship existed with the New York Intergroup Office because there were almost daily Twelfth Step calls coming to the groups.

Because of geographic proximity and similar working-class roots, Upper Manhattan had many similarities to the Bronx and the two have always shared a special kinship. When the Washington Heights and the original Inwood Group began in 1947, their eventual AA association in the early developing General Service structure of SENY was with the Bronx. As a result, the late 1970s saw the development of the Bronx and Upper Manhattan "mini-assembly," which was eventually named General Service Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous. This pairing of the Bronx and Upper Manhattan has also allowed some of its members to wear, on occasion, name cards at service gatherings that proclaim themselves official "BUMs."

For General Service's purpose of organizing to help the alcoholic who still suffers, the [Bronx and Upper Manhattan Committee](#) has been broken into ten districts; Woodlawn, Riverdale, South Bronx, Fordham/Bedford Park, Bainbridge/Gun Hill, Upper Manhattan, Morris Park/Parkchester/Tremont, and Northeast Bronx. These districts help to carry the AA message through committees on Public Information, Cooperation with the Professional Community, Treatment Facilities, Corrections, and Special Needs. They all focus on how best to carry the AA message to those who might need our program of recovery. In addition, the Bronx and Upper Manhattan Committee has sponsored annual Share-A-Day events that have gone

from scores of workshops on topics of Recovery, Unity, and Service to much smaller events that continue to carry the message of what we do. We also have the tradition of hosting an annual Spiritual Breakfast, held in a restaurant setting, in order to invite members to share in the fellowship of the spirit.



A view of the Bronx

In 2005, the county went through an overall review of the area by the DCMC. As a result, county by-laws were written based on SENY's by-laws to better serve its community. At one point, there were as many as 135 groups reported in the 1990's. However, since that time, we have seen great population shifts and demographic changes. Some groups have closed in some communities while growing in others. In recent years, there have been few to no active districts with District Committee Members (DCMs). The pandemic of 2020 saw the groups "in-person" meeting places shut down by law. Many groups were able to find ways to meet in cyberspace using a variety of technologies, even new video platforms like "Zoom," have paved the way through our difficult times. Our service committees at the Area, County and Intergroup levels have been able to function and even thrive. By year's end 2020 there is hope that we will bounce back. It remains to be seen how the impact of both the pandemic and technology will change our fellowship. Will we value our in-person meetings and their sacrifice? Will our service structure change now that we are not constrained by geographic boundaries? It is hoped that our principles will guide us in years to come, as we trudge the road of happy destiny.

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BROOKLYN

In November 1934, Ebby T., an alcoholic who found a solution to his problem in the Oxford Group, visited Bill W. at his home at 182 Clinton Street in Brooklyn. That meeting, recounted in Chapter 1 of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, laid the foundation for Bill's recovery, and in turn, for AA as a whole.



182 Clinton Street

After traveling to Akron in the spring of 1935, which led to his meeting with Dr. Bob and the first stirrings of what would soon become the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, Bill returned home to Brooklyn. There, he started weekly meetings, which, after several moves, relocated to the St. George Hotel downtown. In February of 1942, these gatherings became known collectively as the Brooklyn Group. Considered the second oldest group in the nation and the oldest group in New York City, the Brooklyn Group achieved this status by virtue of its origins on Clinton Street.

By the end of 1946, there were six more groups meeting in Brooklyn, including Brooklyn's first foreign language meeting, the Norwegian Group. 60 years later, in 2006, [Brooklyn Intergroup](#) listed 158 groups throughout the borough, including meetings conducted in Spanish, Russian, and Polish.

In 1980, the first Brooklyn Get-Together was held at Bishop Kearney High School in Bensonhurst, an annual tradition that lives on today as [Brooklyn County](#) Share-A-Day. In November 1988, Brooklyn held its first annual Spiritual Breakfast. This event, along with the Share-A-Day, provides Brooklyn AA's with annual opportunities to come together and celebrate their borough's place in AA history and the Fellowship's Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service.

—2020 Update—

- 2011, LISTS

Brooklyn's participation in the Long Island Spirituality Through Service (LISTS) workshop began in 2011 when the event was hosted by Suffolk County. (Nassau

County hosted the prior and first LISTS event. The hosting of LISTS rotates among the four counties of Long Island—Brooklyn, Nassau, Queens and Suffolk.) LISTS is partly a Share-A-Day, partly a workshop that emphasizes the spiritual benefits of service for the recovering alcoholic. By 2020 each of the counties of Long Island has hosted a LISTS workshop at least twice.

- 2012, Sandy

Superstorm Sandy (October 22-November 2, 2012) brought unprecedented destruction and flooding to Brooklyn. Many meetings in the flood zone were closed as their venues had to be repaired or rebuilt. Some meetings were temporarily held at members' homes while new venues were sought for these meetings. Meanwhile, shelters were inundated by people displaced from their homes by the flooding. Brooklyn's Special Needs Chair brought AA meetings to the Park Slope Armory which was a mental health and special needs shelter with lots of alcoholics.

- 2016, Passing of Long-Timers

The year had barely gotten out of the gate, and Brooklyn suffered not one, but multiple losses. Boyce B. from Slope Open Discussion was SENY's Panel 39 Delegate. Thomas K. from the Bay Ridge Group had gotten sober when Dr. Bob was still alive. He had 58 years "back." Don D. from the Bay Ridge group made it to 62 years sobriety. He is often quoted as saying that to get to that many years sober, "You don't drink, and you don't die!" All could be counted on to participate as keynote speakers in county-wide events and as panelists in workshops sponsored by various districts. They embodied the maxim that, "In order to keep it, you have to give it away."

- 2012-2017

Venues of Brooklyn's Spiritual Breakfast changed twice over the decade between 2010 and 2020. Bay Ridge Manor was discontinued as a venue in 2012 because there was a half flight of stairs between the entrance and the dining room which made the venue wheelchair inaccessible; Dyker Beach Golf Course Clubhouse (2012-2017) served Brooklyn well but the popularity of the Spiritual Breakfast in Brooklyn increased to such an extent that a larger venue, Grand Prospect Hall, was selected.

- 2018

Venue for Brooklyn Share-a-day changed in 2018 from Bishop Kearney High School to St. Francis de Sales School for the

Deaf owing to the former venue's doubling of the rental price. Area events hosted by Brooklyn have been using St Francis de Sales School as well.

- 2018, District 404 impacts the 68th General Service Conference

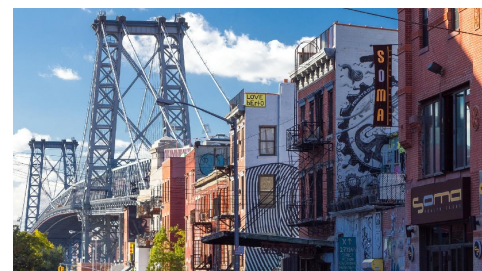
North Brooklyn District 404's proposal that the agnostic/atheist pamphlet, *The God Word* from the UK be adopted by AA World Services was approved at the 68th General Service Conference. From home group to the GSC, the campaign took place within the year 2018.

- 2019-2020

By 2019 Brooklyn Intergroup verified that its cleaned-up meetings database was accurate and up-to date. It launched the new website, www.bigaa.org. Brooklyn Intergroup also began hosting an annual "Dr. Bob-E-Que" in the spring of 2018.

When COVID 19 struck Brooklyn in 2020, virtual meetings were launched by individual groups. Brooklyn Intergroup took the lead in coordinating this activity and publishing Brooklyn's online AA meetings on its web site.

Brooklyn County approved a motion to send a recommendation of the TRANScend group's GSR to the Area to have the 70th GSC add an agenda item to replace the phrase in the AA Preamble, "a fellowship of men and women," with "a fellowship of people."



Williamsburg Bridge

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HISPANIC DISTRICTS

In 1976, with the assistance of the New York Intergroup, the Service Committee of the Hispanic Groups (now called the Hispanic Central Office) was invited to participate in a SENY area committee meeting. The members of the area committee expressed the necessity of electing a member of the Hispanic committee who would attend the area assemblies and form a Hispanic district, so that the Hispanic groups would be included in the General Service structure with their respective General Service Representatives (GSRs). This would bring life to the "Fourth Concept for World Service."

Not long after, a few members of the Board of the Service Committee of the Hispanic Groups began to attend their first SENY committee meetings, in order to observe and to document the needs and functions of the District Committee Member (DCM). The DCM would represent the 30 Hispanic groups of New York, most of which actively participated in the activities and services of the service committee of the Hispanic groups with a representative.

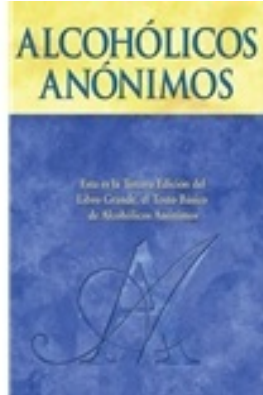
After attending several SENY committee meetings, the General Service Committee of the Hispanic groups made an announcement to all the groups regarding the new alliance, whereby, the SENY area assembly agreed to designate the Hispanic district as number 614 exclusively as a non-geographic district rather than a county such as Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk.

The Hispanic DCM began to serve in 1977, as the only Hispanic representative in the area committee. He gave his report once a month at the meetings of the [Hispanic General Service Committee](#), and was an officer of the Board of the Service Committee of the Hispanic Groups until 1983. At that time, District 614 established its own service meetings, held on the last Saturday of every month. The Hispanic Central Office lent their premises to District 614, giving up one of their meetings each month, so that District 614 could meet and be fully functional.

By 1981, there was a broader understanding of where we were located within our area. At the request of the DCM, the Hispanic General Service Committee held its first Hispanic Convention. In order to pave the way, the DCM arranged for there to be Hispanic representation and participation at the 21st SENY Convention. On April 24th–26th of 1981, the Hispanic General Service Committee, the Bronx Committee, and representatives from groups of Brooklyn, Nassau, Suffolk, and New Jersey Intergroup participated. This convention took place at the Sheraton Inn at La Guardia Airport, in Queens. At this convention, a program in Spanish was created.

District 614 continued its efforts to locate and to lead GSRs within the context of their functions. An idea formed in 1985, to hold the first Share-A-Day jointly with the Hispanic General Central Office. The event was first held on Sunday, June 16, 1985. By then, there was great anticipation, joy, and enthusiasm for the celebration of the 50th

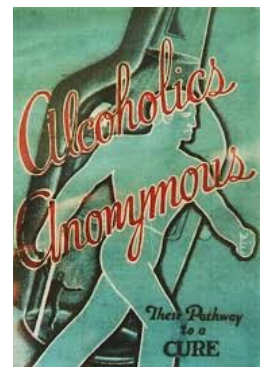
anniversary of AA. What better way was there to celebrate this anniversary than to celebrate it at the first Hispanic Share-A-Day. Other Share-A-Day events followed for the next six years. District 614 later hosted this event themselves from 1987 to 1991.



Third Edition "Big Book" in Spanish



"Twelve and Twelve" in Spanish



Optional design for the dust jacket, "Big Book" First Edition

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MANHATTAN

Although AA dates its start from June 1935, when Bill and Bob first met in Akron, Ohio, [Manhattan's](#) involvement with AA began in December 1934, when Bill, with the help of Dr. William Silkworth, sobered up for the last time at Towns Hospital, formerly located at 293 Central Park West. When Bill returned from Akron, he began to put his ideas into action.

In April 1938, the first Manhattan meeting formed, taking place at Burt T.'s tailor shop on West 46th Street. Alcoholics everywhere are ever grateful to Burt, who hocked his business to keep the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* in print.

In the spring of 1940, AA's first AA clubhouse, located at 334½ West 24th Street, opened. The "Corporation," the body that governed the clubhouse, organized meeting times; meetings were held on Sunday and Thursday at the clubhouse, on Tuesday at Webster Hall, 113 West 57th Street, and at Steinway Hall at 14th Street and Union Square. Foreshadowing New York Intergroup, the Corporation also began to function as a central committee for the handful of meetings in the metropolitan area.

April 13, 1944, marked the formal creation of the Manhattan Group, purported to be the first AA group number one in New York (number two nationally). Manhattan Group has a 1966 letter from Bill W. substantiating this information. With the formation of the Manhattan Group, the original "Corporation" dissolved, although a new one formed to run the new clubhouse on 41st Street, with the Manhattan Group as the paying tenant. Alcoholics being alcoholics, a fight soon began over who should run AA area affairs, and how. And in June 1946 17 groups, holding 29 weekly meetings across Brooklyn (2), the Bronx (1), Manhattan (11), Nassau County (5), Queens (4), Staten Island (1), and Westchester County (5) formed [New York Intergroup](#). In February 1947, the St. Nicholas Group, in Harlem, was founded. By May 1947, when New York Intergroup published its second meeting list, there were eighty-six meetings throughout the city, adjoining counties, and Connecticut. The earliest listing of a New York City Spanish language meeting appeared in April 1948.

As of August 2020, there were over 400 groups listed in Manhattan, with well over a thousand weekly meetings. There are an increasing number of linguistic meetings, including meetings in Spanish, French, Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian. Furthermore, members who identify as members of various communities, including young people and the LGBTQ community, have formed AA meetings, a testament to the vitality of AA within Manhattan.

New York Intergroup, a partnership of AA Groups, supports AA Groups and members within and outside Manhattan. It is often the first AA contact for New Yorkers who believe they have a problem with alcohol. Intergroup lists meetings in Manhattan and across Area 49 and provides members with meeting books and AA literature. Every day, Intergroup volunteers, AAs all, answer phone calls from members and non-members. In 2020, Intergroup stepped up to meet the challenge of COVID-19 by providing a virtual platform that allows Groups to move their meetings online.



Towns Hospital

In the last two decades, it has become increasingly difficult for AA groups to find meeting spaces in Manhattan. Church closings and rising rent have contributed to the decreased availability of meeting spaces, creating a competitive market for inexpensive meeting space by AA and non-AA entities alike. Although Groups have been forced to move and even close, AA in Manhattan continues to thrive as Groups find new ways and places to meet.

Alcoholics Anonymous' world headquarters, the [General Service Office \(GSO\)](#), is located in Manhattan at 475 Riverside Drive and 120th Street, as are the offices that facilitate the production of *The Grapevine* and *La Viña*. GSO supports and serves alcoholics across the United States and Canada, creating and providing a wide range of conference-approved literature and information for members and outside organizations, both public and private. GSO handles AA's media relations, maintains our archives, and holds our annual General Service Conference, where AA Delegates, Trustees, and select GSO staff members discuss and come to collective decisions on behalf of AAs across the United States and Canada.

NASSAU COUNTY

"What we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now."

- The Early Years - 1940's

In the August 1981 issue of the Nassau Intergroup Newsletter, it states the first home group in Nassau County began in a member's home in Garden City during the war years. Many early groups met in group members' homes, which is why they were called "home groups." Within a few short years, as AA membership grew in Nassau, the need for larger meeting spaces was imminent and necessary. Thus, AA groups began forming and meeting in larger places such as church basements. Early sources suggest the first group to meet outside the traditional home group atmosphere held its meetings in either Baldwin, Freeport, Manhasset, Merrick/Bellmore, Mineola, Garden City, Roslyn, or Valley Stream. However, at the June 14th 2008 Nassau County Big Meeting, ten old-timer panelists, each with thirty-seven to fifty-one years of sobriety, believed the Mineola Group was the oldest group in Nassau County, with their meetings being held at the Mineola Fire House. This uncertainty explains the need and importance for documenting our history through archives, as well as making our history available for future generations of AA members to enjoy.

- 1948 to 1969

The Manhasset-Roslyn Telephone Service fulfilled a need at a time when there were relatively few groups on Long Island and membership was small. The Manhasset-Roslyn Group undertook this service and effort, unassisted financially by any other group or by New York Intergroup. The vast growth in population on Long Island brought with it a greater demand for AA information and a constant increase in activity for the telephone answering service. The burden of handling the service became excessive, more trying, and more than any one group could sustain, no matter how highly dedicated its members were.

Founding members of the Nassau Answering Service were involved in setting up Nassau General Service and Intergroup.

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NASSAU COUNTY (continued)

Many of these same people continued to participate in Nassau Intergroup and General Service. From these dedicated people the purpose and agenda of the [Nassau General Service Representative Meeting](#) became clear: (1) to learn how to cooperate with each other and our friends in carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic; (2) to offer an accurate recap of news and history for Area 49's newsletter, *The Link*, and to pass along AA General Service Guidelines and the Twelve Concepts for World Service; and (3) to encourage districts to organize and carry the message of our primary purpose while practicing principles before personalities through the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts.

- Early 1970s

Chaired by the Panel 17 SENY Delegate, the first Nassau General Service Representatives meeting was established in Nassau County was attended by a small number of members representing their groups. The Mineola Group held these meetings at their location.

- June 24, 1970

Members from AA groups voted overwhelmingly at the Church of the Advent, Westbury, to assume the burden of providing a telephone answering service to help the suffering alcoholic in Nassau County. AA volunteers staffed this service, called the Nassau Answering Service of Alcoholics Anonymous. Around this time, there are fifty-three groups in Nassau. With help from clergy friends, almost all of whom were non-alcoholics, at the Church of the Advent, the telephone answering service was set up in the basement of Winthrop Hall, Advent Street, in Westbury. This important institution helped establish better communication for twelfth step calls between groups throughout Nassau and the suffering alcoholic. Rumor has it that this is the first live AA hotline service provided in the United States.

- 1976

The Nassau General Service Representative Meeting moved from the Mineola Group location to the Church of the Advent, Winthrop Hall, and they elected the first Local Committee Member.

- 1977

The Nassau Answering Service moved into its own office in Hempstead and changed its name to The Central Office of Nassau.

- June 17, 1978

Nassau County's first Share-A-Day, held at Adelphi University, Garden City, was hosted by The Central Office of Nassau. In subsequent years, various locations throughout the county held this event.

- 1980

The Nassau General Service Representative Meeting became the Nassau General Service Committee and was chaired by a District Committee Member at Large, or DCM at Large. SENY, Area 49, requested that Nassau form General Service districts. Ten groups per geographical district were established and districts were given the freedom to merge. Nassau General Service Committee decided to cap the number of districts at twenty.

The Central Office of Nassau relocated to a new office in West Hempstead. The groups at that time, having the "courage to



change," followed their Higher Power's guidance and underwent another name change to [Nassau Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous](#). During this time, Nassau Intergroup began providing service to 153 groups. The AA hotline received over one thousand phone calls per month. It continues to be an AA service entity.

- July 11, 1982

On this date, the First Annual Nassau Intergroup Picnic, held at Eisenhower Park, East Meadow, for AA members, their families, and friends enjoyed a day of fellowship and fun.

- 1983

Nassau Intergroup became incorporated in the State of New York.

- 1984

A small number of General Service members, having attended a Spiritual Breakfast in the Bronx, decide to organize a similar event in Nassau. The purpose of the event was to offer fellowship as well as to inform groups about General Service and the services provided.

- 1985

Nassau County's first Spiritual Breakfast, an open AA event, was hosted by the Nassau General Service Committee. Held at a catering hall in Massapequa, some two hundred attendees enjoyed the event.

- Mid-1980s

Nassau Intergroup of AA Inc. organized a dinner dance for the evening of Nassau County's Share-A-Day for AA members and their guests to attend.

- 1989

Nassau Intergroup of AA Inc. outgrew its office in West Hempstead, so the organization relocated to a larger office in the same building.

- 1990s

Nassau General Service Committee underwent another name change to Nassau General Service Group, and is chaired by a District Committee Member Chair (DCMC).

- August 12, 1990

Nassau's Spiritual Breakfast formally changed the name to Nassau AA's Unity Breakfast.

- June 15, 1991

Nassau General Service Group and Nassau Intergroup of AA Inc. co-hosted the first Big Meeting, celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous in Nassau County. It was held at the Tilles Center, CW Post Campus of Long Island University, Brookville.

- October, 1994

Nassau Intergroup of AA Inc. formed its own Institutions Committee, a service function that used to be provided by New York Intergroup's Institutions Committee. Nassau Intergroup's Institutions Committee, the largest standing committee in the county, brought AA meetings into hospitals, detox and rehab facilities, as well as to the Nassau County jail on a weekly basis.

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NASSAU COUNTY (continued)

- December 5, 1996

The *Ad Hoc* Special Needs Committee became a permanent Nassau Intergroup of AA Inc. standing committee.

- February, 1998

Nassau Intergroup of AA Inc. is providing service to over three hundred groups. The twenty-four hour hotline continued to be staffed by volunteer AA members since 1977. Nassau Intergroup of AA Inc. began publishing a monthly newsletter called the Nassau Intergroup News. At no charge to members, 90,000 meeting lists were distributed. The intergroup also had an active Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee, Public Information Committee, and Speaker's Bureau.

- 1998

Since the late 1970s, the Nassau General Service Group began holding its meetings at the Westbury Group's meeting place in the Church of the Advent, Westbury. In the late 1990s, the new clergy advised Nassau General Service Group members that they must find an alternative meeting location. The following year, their meetings were held at the Nassau Intergroup of AA Inc. office in West Hempstead.

- 1999–2000

Nassau General Service Group meets at the Nassau Intergroup of AA Inc. Office in West Hempstead. During this period, redistricting of Nassau General Service Group's districts takes place.

- 2001–2002

New By-Laws were written and adopted during this period. The Nassau Intergroup office serves as a location for service workshops hosted by Nassau General Service Group.

- 2003–2004

There were no significant occurrences during this period.

- 2005

As a public information effort, members from District 206 contact libraries and high schools in their district and offer them a copy of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

The dinner dance, hosted by Nassau Intergroup of AA Inc. since the mid 1980s, was held for the last time.

- 2006

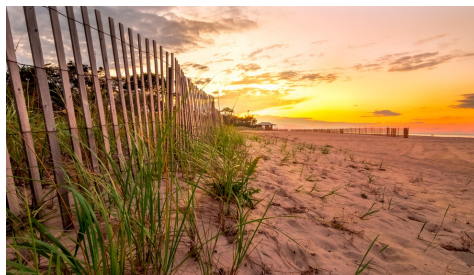
Nassau County's Big Meeting underwent a hiatus.

- October 23, 2006

The first issue of Nassau General Service Group's newsletter, *The Gazette*, debuted.

- 2007–2008

Nassau General Service Group's By-Laws underwent the amendment process. Though there are some active districts meeting regularly, inactive districts are a concern. Thus in an effort to help rebuild inactive districts, the DCMC suggests district meetings be held at the bi-monthly General Service meeting until such time when these districts are able to meet regularly on their own. Two GSRs become DCMs of their respective district at the February meeting.



Nassau Beach

- January 1, 2008

Due to an ever-increasing participation by members, the Nassau Intergroup Representatives Meeting relocated from the Nassau Intergroup of AA Inc. office, West Hempstead to a larger meeting space at the Garden City Community Church, home of the Garden City Group.

- April, 2008

Nassau General Service Group received its New York State tax-exempt number.

- May, 2008

Although the numbers constantly change, Nassau Intergroup's meeting list was updated and released during the month of May. It contained various types of AA meetings available for alcoholics and interested members of the public. AA groups and meetings throughout Nassau County span two cities, three towns, and sixty-four unincorporated areas. The meeting list included 269 distinct AA groups who provide 690 AA meetings each week from which to choose from.

- June 5, 2008

While production costs continually rose, it is decided at the monthly Nassau Intergroup Representatives meeting that Nassau Intergroup of AA Inc. would continue to publish meeting lists, free of charge, to members for as long as possible. This is also in keeping with the Intergroup's tradition of providing service for AA members.

- June 14, 2008

After a two-year break, Nassau General Service Group resurrected Nassau County's Big Meeting and used the Garden City Group's meeting location to hold the event. Nassau Intergroup of AA Inc. decided not to be involved in this event any longer.

- August 18, 2008

Nassau General Service Group conducted a county inventory.

- September 13, 2008

Nassau General Service Group in Nassau County hosted the SENY Election Assembly. This was the first time Nassau County hosted an election assembly. The Garden City Group offered their location, the Garden City Community Church.

- 2009

In the spirit of cooperation Nassau General Service Group and Nassau Intergroup of AA Inc. work together placing two copies of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* into every library throughout the county. Information on how to contact AA is included with each book.

- May 9, 2009

Districts 208/209 host a "Spirituality and Sponsorship" workshop. Later interested members from California enquire about this workshop as they are interested in holding a similar workshop in their area.

- October 10, 2009

Nassau General Service Group hosts the Big Meeting at the Garden City Group's location.

- June 6, 2010

Nassau, Queens and Suffolk General Services host a successful tri-county workshop on "Service and Spirituality" at the St. William the Abbot School, Seaford. This is a first for all three counties and it is hoped more tri-county workshops will be held in the future.

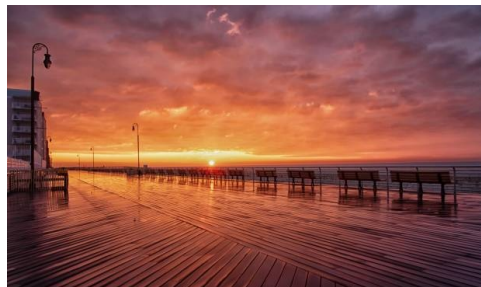
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NASSAU COUNTY (continued)

- August 14, 2010

A large turnout of members, family and friends attend the Big Meeting held on the beach in Long Beach.



Long Beach, NY

- September 2010

Nassau General Service Group conducts a new county inventory.

- October 2010

Members from Districts 208/209, with assistance from SENY, arranged with Cablevision Long Island to air an AA public service announcement (PSA) produced by AAWS titled Testimonials. The PSA is scheduled to air from November 29 to December 26 and includes the AA hotline numbers of both the Nassau and Suffolk Intergroup.

- November 13, 2010

District 208/209 hosts a service workshop on "History, Hopes and Heroes" at the Village Church of Bayville.

- March 2018

Nassau Intergroup is formally renamed the Intergroup Association of Nassau, Inc.

—2020 Update—

Being A Trusted Servant in the Time of COVID

At the closing address of the July, 1955 AA Convention, held at the Kiel Auditorium in St. Louis, at precisely Four O'clock in the afternoon, Bill W. delivered a stirring address in which he handed the responsibility of AA's services over to us in the form of the General Service Conference. This is all laid out nicely in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, by Bill W. In his address to the convention, he was confident that we, as trusted servants, would be able to serve AA's needs in both good times, and times of crises.

The COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020 was one of those times. In fact it was the biggest worldwide crisis for AA since the Second World War. Suddenly, with the rest of society, we were thrust into a new and frightening world. The Internet, with all the tools of social media, had been slowly incorporated into AA's life previously. The [AA Grapevine](#) had its own [YouTube](#) channel, and [www.aa.org](#) was already in full swing, as were websites of all of our service entities from the groups down to the GSO.

Now, however, the leisurely pace at which the Internet became incorporated into AA jumped into hyperdrive. Businesses, public gatherings, and even houses of worship were shut down in March. The implications for AA were obvious, and to be taken very seriously. It was time for our trusted servants to spring into action.

Nassau County was no different. Faced with church closings, our groups suddenly found themselves with no places to meet. Calls came into our Intergroup Office by an overwhelming amount. The Steering Committee's Executive Board decided in March to close our office until further notice. This affected both the daytime hotlines and also our nighttime hotline—the Nightbook. All phones had to be answered remotely by volunteers. The Nightbook made a valiant effort to keep the lines open, and we did, again with the help of volunteers.

A social media tool, Zoom, became widely used as a source whereby online meetings could go on. There was a learning curve, but "the hand of AA" was there to help those people who had a tough go at it. All of our events, both county wide, area wide, and even regionally were all handled by Zoom. In Nassau, the Big Meeting went off very smoothly online, as well as a couple of workshops and all three holiday Alkathons.

In June, it was recommended by the Intergroup Steering Committee to resume the sale of literature, carefully following the health guidelines put forward by the State. It was modeled after the "curbside pick-up" method in use by retail businesses in the area.

The Nassau Intergroup Newsletter did an excellent job of keeping all of our members informed of happenings countywide. The print editions ceased, and the Newsletter, together with the help of our webmaster, was like a "virtual meeting place" and news hub for all things AA, as well as health updates on the pandemic admirably

done by our Literature chair. Our webmaster worked very hard and successfully posted a list of all the virtual meetings in Nassau County taking the place of the actual groups whose meeting places were closed.

Over the summer, some groups elected to have outdoor meetings, in parks, etc. Moving into the fall, some churches opened up and the AA groups were allowed back in provided they followed the State guidelines for safety precautions: masks, limits on attendees, and social distancing.

Thus began the phenomenon of "hybrid meetings" where people were in physical attendance, and a laptop was set up on the front desk so the moderator could call on the Zoom attendees as well as the actual physical audience.

At this writing, two COVID vaccines reached the market, and we are hopeful that sooner rather than later we will be back to some semblance of normalcy. The questions of what will happen to the meetings that opened as "Zoom only" have yet to be decided. As of now, they are listed on our website, and considered "official AA groups."

Through it all, it looks like Nassau County fulfilled Bill's vision, voiced in 1955, of an AA that most certainly has "come of age."

Members in Nassau County are dedicated and committed to carrying AA's message of hope to the alcoholic who stills suffers. We do this through the many service activities that we organize. Our goals are to continue to cooperate with other AA service entities, to work with professionals in the community, and the public seeking information.



First Edition AA Grapevine, June 1944

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ORANGE COUNTY

The first AA meetings in the county met in Middletown and Newburgh. These meetings started at 9 PM to allow time for visitors from neighboring towns to arrive, as distances to travel were long and road conditions were poor. The first meeting in Middletown met in the late 1940s, in a private home, and was a speakers' meeting. Later, this first group, previously housed in Middletown, moved from the private home to St. Joseph's School on Cottage Street. A third grade student who went to that school can still recall seeing the AA posters and the empty reminder bottle that was in the room where the group met.

The Cup and Saucer Group in Goshen started out with china cups and saucers. The Pine Island group began in 1980 and met in the same church for eighteen years. The meeting was one hour and thirty minutes long, and saw an attendance of forty-five to fifty people, including very young alcoholics. Many people also recall the early fellowship, the picnics at Old Mill Beach, and the Christmas and New Year's Eve parties that were held.

In 2006, Orange County AA saw the inception of its Archives Committee. In the following months, the committee found a location to display the archives. The archives are on display at 74 Ridge Road in Newburgh.

One of the pictures exhibited is a picture of the Cornwall Press with a description that states the following: "This is where the first and second editions of the 'Big Book' were printed." Also

incorporated with the archives are histories of the AA groups in Orange County. Currently, the Archives Committee is seeking old meeting lists to display as well.

Over the last several years, many changes have molded the current state of AA in Orange County. The 2007 Share-A-Day, held at the Washingtonville High School, coincided with the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of [Central Services of Orange County](#). The anniversary also included the founding of the twenty-four hour hotline phone service, which is still successful because volunteers have main-

tained the hotline for the last thirty years. Ten years ago, there were over one hundred meetings a week. By 2008, there were over two hundred meetings held weekly.

The Institutions Committee still supports between ten and twelve institutions in Orange County and some in outlying areas. The Institutions meeting used to take place at St. Christopher's Inn in Garrison until sometime in the early 1980s. At that time, Harold C., Fred A., and Bill D. thought it would be wiser to move it to Orange County, where it received more support and funding.



Bear Mountain Bridge

PUTNAM COUNTY

Early meetings were held in Brewster, Patterson, Cold Spring, Garrison, Carmel, and Putnam Lake (which later moved north to Purdy's).

Founded in 1948, the Brewster Group was the first formal group in Putnam County and it held its meetings in Brewster on Saturday. Croton Falls had a step meeting and a discussion meeting on Friday's in Carmel.

In the early 1970s, a step meeting began in Croton Falls at St. Joseph's Church. The meeting eventually split from the United Methodist Church on Main Street in Brewster. The Brewster Group moved several times, first to Old Route 6 in Carmel, then to St. John's in Mahopac, and finally found its way back to the First Methodist Church in Brewster.

The first discussion group in the area was controversial. Members from the area felt that the open speakers meetings were the meetings in which to feed spirituality, and discussion meetings were meant for members to talk, rather than listen.

The Gong Show produced the first known coffee pot with the groups names engraved in brass. The Cold Spring Group began in 1957. The Garrison Group, found-

ed in 1962, meets at St. Phillips Church and currently has five meetings per week.

Putnam Lake group was founded in 1972.

Patterson

Group

formed in

August

1973. The

Footsteps

to Serenity

Group

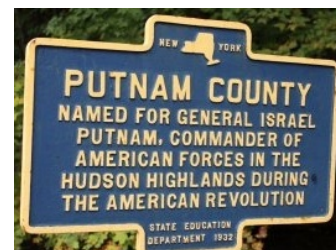
formed on

February 5, 1983. Its founders were from the Plug in the Jug Group.

The Carmel Recovery Group changed names in 1987, to Brewster Recovery, and moved to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in 1990.

In the past several years, Putnam's changes in AA have come through the General Service Office suggestion of district committees. Commitments include the Putnam County Hospital Detox and the County Jail, both of which have co-ed meetings, and the Arms Acres Rehab.

Every October, the Unity Breakfast is held at Graymoor. The county's own By-Laws were adopted June 15, 2007, and in the spring 2008, the first edition of *The County Crier* newsletter was printed. The Cold Spring Group has recently celebrated fifty-one years of continuous sobriety, and in October 2008, the Garrison Group at St. Phillips celebrated forty-six years.



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QUEENS

Since 2009, Queens County has continued to move forward and has remained quite active. We continue to meet on the last Monday of the even months at St. Mary Gate of Heaven Church base-ments.

Sponsorship Chair has been added to our Service structure in 2010.

The first Tri County Event was held June 6, 2010 hosted by Nassau, Queens, and Suffolk Counties. It was held at St. William the Abbott School in Seaford, Long Island. This joint operation allowed for a large scale Workshops on Service, our Service Structure and how to get involved. It then included Brooklyn and the Hispanic Districts, being renamed (LISTS, Long Island Spirituality through Service).

Super Storm Sandy hit the Rockaway Peninsula in Queens on Oct 29, 2012. Water was up to six feet in areas and any ground floors or basements were flooded, cars destroyed, stores closed. It wiped out power plunging the peninsula along with Broad Channel and most of Howard Beach into darkness. The boardwalk washed away along with many homes, and as one AA member so eloquently put it, "I've lost everything except my sobriety."

We essentially lost all our meeting rooms. There were a few people holding impromptu meetings in their homes. Industrious members got permission from a local church to use a small kitchen area. Some meetings were during the day with candles as there was no power and with most cars gone and roads impassable, most attended on foot.

Some members got in touch with Queens Intergroup and they came through with a gas powered generator so meetings where now held at night, but still, as it was winter, there was no heat so the stove was used with pots of water to provide some heat.

It didn't look as if a lot of our rooms would ever be available again, but a full time room was secured at the First Congregational Church, Beach 94th Street, and a large number of groups started using the space as their meeting room. A good number of groups still call it home today.

In 2013 Queens added a website and a GSR Bootcamp was started as an informal gathering to further assist GSRs and anyone else interested in service. It has since grown into regularly scheduled Topic Workshop held at the Queens Intergroup Office. It was also the start of using Power Point presentations at our General Service Assemblies.

Many of our DCMCs have moved on to SENY committees. In a four year span three past DCMCs were asked to chair the SENY Convention. Three have become SENY treasurers, one a SENY chair and another Alternate Delegate.

The Queens County Service Manual was updated 2015, first time since 2003.

Queens County had its Inaugural Spiritual Breakfast October 4, 2015 at the Italian Charities of America on Queens Boulevard, and it has been a continued success. It has since been moved to the Immaculate Conception Center in Douglaston.

On November 10, 2018, [Queens County General Service Assembly](#) hosted a Three Legacies Workshop, held at St. Mary Gate of Heaven School Auditorium, mirroring the one held in 2002.

There has been some redistricting throughout the years with a major one in 2018/19. Many districts were combined, and in some cases, making a Cluster of districts.

Queens County has continued to host it's Queens Share A Day event as well as Queens Intergroup continuing to host the Holiday Share A Thons and the Queens County Exchange Meeting.

There are several Clusters/Districts that stay exceptionally active, hosting workshops and other events.

Though there have been some group/meeting closings, they have been offset by new Groups and meetings.

Our [Queens Intergroup](#) continues to cover the phones which includes 24 hour service. The Exchange meeting continues to flourish giving us the opportunities for an informal get together followed by the Intergroup Rep Meeting. Though at times finding a venue was difficult, Queens Intergroup has persevered and continually hosts Holiday Share A Thons at Thanksgiving and Christmas through New Year's Day. These meetings run 24 hours daily, covered by the home groups in Queens County.

On a sad note, in March of 2020, the world was hit with the Corona Virus (COVID-19) forcing the temporary shutdown of gatherings including our meetings. Our 2020 SENY Convention was cancelled as well as our International Convention July 2020 in Detroit.

At the county Level, our Spiritual Breakfast scheduled Oct 31st has been cancelled and our April 18, 2020 Queens Share A Day was postponed until the Fall of 2020. Many other group events have been cancelled until further notice. As of this writing, all meetings were cancelled mid-March 2020 and are still closed.

On the bright side, with the hard work of NY and Queens Intergroups and the Queens County General Service Assembly, many home groups have been able to continue their meetings in these hard times on their scheduled days by holding virtual meetings.

April 29, 2020 QCGSA held its first Virtual Assembly, on June 27, 2020 Queens Intergroup held its first virtual Exchange meeting, October 24 Queens Share A Day will be a Virtual event as well as Oct. 26 our first Queens County Virtual elections. As of this writing Face to Face meetings are starting to open up at a very slow pace.

We wish to thank several past Queens County DCMCs for their input and their service.

December, 2020



Flushing Meadows-Corona Park

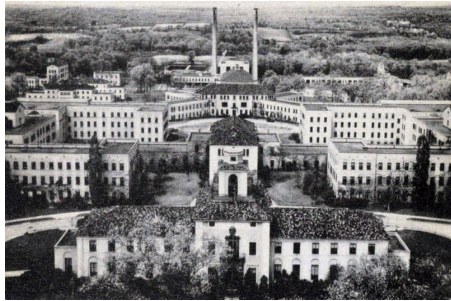
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ROCKLAND COUNTY

Alcoholics Anonymous in Rockland County traces back to the bitter winter of 1939 when Bill and Lois W. moved in with Bob and Mag V. in the "Siberian Wing" of a drafty farmhouse in Monsey. This was the beginning of a two-year routine of "living around," since Bill and Lois had all but used up any financial resources.

In December 1939, Bob V. started meetings for alcoholic inmates confined to the grounds of Rockland State Hospital. This was the first AA group in a mental Institution. Dr. Russell E. Blaisdell, then head of the hospital, was key to this beginning and in developing processes for encouraging patients to continue with AA after "graduating" from what became known as the Blaisdell Rehabilitation Center.

A few months later, he actually let bus loads of committed alcoholics go to AA meetings in South Orange, NJ and New York City. (For more details see, *AA Comes of Age*, p.12, and *Pass It On*, p. 218.) Since then, the rehab moved to a new building, on the same grounds. The New York State Education Department placed a sign in front of the building, marking this historical 1939 AA event. As of 2008, our Intergroup Institutions Committee currently hosts six weekly meetings on the grounds of that same institution.



Old Rockland State Hospital

The oldest continually active home group is the Suffern Group, founded by about twelve members in 1946, which now has over 100 active members. Other groups with more than 25 years of longevity are: New City (1963), Pearl River (1963), Pomona (1970), Spring Hill (1973), 3 in 1 (1983), Nanuet 12n12 (1974), West Nyack (1974), Ramapo Valley (1975), Key to Sobriety (1976), Alumni (1977), and Congers Legacy (1977).

The Key to Sobriety Group started in 1976 because, as one old-timer noticed, there was a need for a step meeting in Rockland County. The 1980s and 1990s have seen significant growth of AA in Rockland County.

An example of this growth is The Grapevine Group, founded in 1985, which has grown from the original dozen to over 140 members and 6 weekly meetings. They have preserved their unique-for-Rockland tradition of holding a discussion around tapes/CDs, which are available from the AA Grapevine, on Sunday night in Valley Cottage.

While membership continued to grow in Rockland County, our General Service Committee decided to host its first Annual Spiritual Breakfast at the Comfort Inn in Nanuet on March 6, 2005. One hundred-seventy attendees came to the breakfast. On March 9, 2008, they held their fourth Annual Spiritual Breakfast, boasting 413 attendees. As of 2008, our [General Service Committee](#) is composed of 16 group GSRs.

In 2005, the [Rockland County Intergroup](#) Public Information Committee started the production of Rockland County's AA website. The website went online in April 2006. Since then, it gets approximately 4,200 visitors a month, including visitors from foreign countries. As of 2008, Rockland County Intergroup has 19 group repre-

sentatives. Rockland County is New York's smallest county, yet as of 2008, its meeting list boasts over 150 weekly meetings.

—2020 Update—

Just as with Key to Sobriety, there were other needs. The Congers Men's Group was the first men's meeting in Rockland, but as with most of the early meetings, they only met once a week, Mondays at 8 PM. Some of the members would go home eat with family, then go back out to the meeting.

Feeling the need for an earlier meeting, Tony F. and a few others started Thruway Men's Group in 1986 meeting at 6 PM in Nyack, in the beginning hosting only three to five members then growing to 25 after six months. After a few years the building was sold and they moved to New Hempstead where today they host an average 100 to 120 members and meet six days a week.

Also with a need for specialized meetings, Young and Free was started by Nick C. and a few others March 7, 2015, Saturdays at 8:30 PM a few years after a failed attempt at a young persons' meeting. Young and Free is still active and has started a second meeting on Wednesdays. Members from Young and Free connected with young people from Westchester and Orange counties and formed the [Westchester Orange and Rockland Committee of Young People in AA \(WORCYPAA\)](#). They have been involved with Intergroup and General Service in Rockland County for a few years now.

In keeping with service in hospitals and institutions (H&I) which started with Bob V. at Rockland State Hospital, Rockland now brings meetings into Good Samaritan Hospital and Nyack Hospital several times a week. H&I also carries a meeting into Rockland County Jail twice a week for men and woman. Blaisdell was also where the yearly Alcathon was held until about 2013.

Feeling a need to do service and seeing the need for people to have a place to go Christmas eve through Christmas day, Mike H. restarted the Alcathon in 2017 at the Haverstaw Rec Center with meetings every other hour. It was welcomed with many of the groups in Rockland taking chair commitments.



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STATEN ISLAND

Staten Island's (SI) place in AA history is intimately linked to the first of the Three Legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous Recovery.

Strange as it may seem, the black clouds of a slip gathered over SI seven months prior to the actual founding of AA. How did it happen? The year was 1934, and the month was November. Bill W., future co-founder of AA, had been sober since September following his latest drying out session at Towns Hospital on Central Park West. Bill's Wall Street office was closed for Armistice Day, but his wife, Lois, was at her job at Loeser's Department store in Brooklyn. Alone, Bill decided to spend the day golfing at one of Staten Island's many golf courses. Once on the island, he began to chat with a stranger on the bus. At lunch, in a good mood and reminiscing over his experiences in France during World War I, Bill relaxed just enough to pick up a drink. Thus began his last alcoholic binge, which lasted until mid-December.

You may think that this incident is a dubious distinction for Staten Island but looking at it another way, Bill's golf outing may be viewed as the turning point from which he finally got the message of recovery and could pass it on to us as our First Legacy. Bill's final drinking days are described in the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, Chapter II, "The Three Legacies," where he went on to write these now famous words, "Suddenly the room lit up with a great white light." Having had a spiritual experience, his true sobriety began.

AA marks its founding date June 10, 1935, the sobriety date of AA number two, Dr. Bob. Yet it was not until January or February 1945, that Staten Island's first regular AA group began to meet. The March 7, 1945 edition of *The Staten Island Advance* headlined an article, "Alcoholics Anonymous . . . has come to Staten Island and has already begun its work quietly, and effectively, just as it has in hundreds of other communities



Fort Wadsworth and the VNB in background

. . . the Island group held its first meeting only a few months ago. Within a short time after it began . . . eight Islanders—six men and two women—have been helped." That first group, called the St. George Group, initially met at midday in Borough Hall to accommodate office workers in the area.

We owe a debt of gratitude to many alcoholics who were very instrumental in helping us. They added a measure of credibility to AA's program of recovery during an era when public opinion concerning alcoholism was low. For Staten Island, one such friend was Father James Griffin, Pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, Tompkinsville. The priest helped found the first group, lent an encouraging hand, and spread the favorable reputation of AA among community leaders. Griffin had been a chaplain at Queen General Hospital. It was there he began to help suffering alcoholics when an Island drinker went to him for help. This effort was the seed for our first regular AA group.

Prior to that, Islanders introduced to AA in Manhattan or Brooklyn held meetings in private homes. We even had an active Public

Information (PI) Committee in the early forties. A few newspaper articles carried comments about Box 301, a Twelfth Step PO Box at the St. George Post Office. This apparently was a way for Island AAs to reach out to active drinkers and their families before the Inter-group 12th Step phone lines were established.

By 1946, [New York Intergroup](#)'s first meeting list carried a Wednesday, 8:30 PM meeting at the Staten Island Institute of the Arts & Science in St. George. In 1947 and 1948, the meeting list added two new groups. Of all the groups in existence today, only one can trace its beginnings to the 1940s. The Sunnyside Group started in February 1949 at St. Theresa's Church in the Sunnyside section of Staten Island. In those days, the group met Tuesday and Friday nights. Today it meets at Moore Catholic High School in Graniteville on Wednesday and Sunday evenings.

Our next still existing group, the Great Kills Group, began September 6, 1952. At the time, The Staten Island Advance reported that it was the sixth Island Unit, the 161st in the New York Metropolitan area and the 4511th in the world. The group held its meeting on Monday and Saturday nights. By 1952, there was at least one AA meeting each night of the week. Amazingly, this group still meets on the same days. The congregation built a new church in 1952 and AA was invited to meet in their new parish hall beneath the church. We continue to meet there—that is 46 years at this writing—a truly awesome relationship.

During the ensuing years, Staten Island AA chugged steadily uphill like "the little locomotive that could." Pursuing the legacy of service, the early eighties, formed the [Staten Island General Service Meeting](#). Since then, it has grown dramatically, expanding its service to remain sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety through some of the following committees: Public Information, Cooperation with the Professional Community, Treatment Facilities, Corrections, Archives and Literature, and the Grapevine. Our General Service also hosts SENY Service Workshops and Traditions Workshops. In 1995, General Services began to sponsor a Holiday Marathon for December 25th, providing meetings, cake and coffee throughout the day.

General Services also sponsors the annual SI Share-A-Day, our biggest 12th Step event. First presented in 1983, the workshops and speaker meetings draw crowds of seven or eight hundred people. Al-Anon participates in the event also. For the price of a \$3.00 ticket, an attendee is provided a hot lunch, and lots of coffee and cake. The public and the professional community are invited to attend.

Christmas is an important season for Staten Island AAs. A Christmas Eve Marathon began in 1984, and it has evolved into an all-day sober celebration with fellowship and open meetings from 10 AM to midnight. Members contribute their favorite holiday foods and they come to share fears and joys associated with the holiday. Members' children and other loved ones are invited to attend.

November of 1996 saw Staten Island's first Spanish AA meeting called Grupo Papa Todos, Group for Everybody, which began meeting at the Immaculate Conception Church on Wednesday and Friday nights.

Staten Island also welcomed its first sober clubhouse, Traditions House, in 1997. Members say it is no coincidence its opening day

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STATEN ISLAND (continued)

was June 10th, which is Dr. Bob's anniversary. Traditions House hosted eighteen AA meetings weekly, over the course of its nine-year existence, and supported countless members of AA on their road to recovery. One year following the closing of Traditions House, Staten Island welcomed its second sober club- house, The HOW Club, located in Port Richmond, which opened its doors on December 1, 2006.

Meanwhile, on December 1, 2002, at The Snug Harbor Cultural Center, members of Staten Island AA created the 1st Annual Spiritual Breakfast. In 2007, over 350 people attended the Spiritual Breakfast. Other notable 2007 occurrences included the first SENY Archives Workshop held in October, the creation of a new General Services Website at www.statenislandaa.org and the expansion of Staten Island's DCM areas from six to 12 districts.

Staten Island now humbly boasts 80 groups providing 105 meetings a week. Our Institutions Committee, working in conjunction with New York Intergroup, is also very active organizing members to bring 65 meetings a week into institutions such as the Arthur Kill Correctional Facility, halfway houses and four local hospitals which house ATCs, detoxes and a sobering-up station. The committee also provides meeting lists, Big Books and pamphlets for prisoners and patients as its budget allows.

Today, society has a deeper understanding of alcoholism and the recovery process. The world created by recovering alcoholics designed to help themselves and others has contributed to this understanding. Staten Island AA is proud to have done its part to foster the Three Legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous: Recovery, Unity, and Service.



Staten Island Ferry

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The Saturday Evening Post,
March 1, 1941

SUFFOLK COUNTY

The earliest mention of AA meetings in Suffolk County traces back to the early 1940s. By the end of the 1940s, Suffolk had active and established groups in Huntington, Sayville, Riverhead, Bay Shore, Southampton, Amityville and a few other communities.

The 1950s and 1960s saw an explosive growth in AA, and Suffolk County became one of the fastest growing counties in New York.

In 1966, five towns near Riverhead sponsored a Telephone Hotline to aid suffering alcoholics. This allowed them to call locally and receive help from the nearby groups. Newcomers had reported the reluctance to spend money to call New York City. Those that did either received no response or received a call back several days later, from members of distant groups.

By 1970, AA had grown considerably in Suffolk and the need for local, centralized service was apparent. The answering service extended countywide, with a majority of the groups contributing to the support of the service. The Hauppauge Group arranged exchange meetings to distribute the meeting lists, complete with the names,



The Big Duck, Flanders

times and locations of groups, so that alcoholics could find any and all the meetings available in Suffolk.

Suffolk County is one of the largest counties in South Eastern New York (Area 49) and has a very diverse population of residents who live here year round and residents who live here in the summer and on weekends only. Consequently, our meetings are also very diverse and strive to meet the needs of the recovering alcoholics here.

There are over 300 groups in Suffolk County and it is possible to attend more than one meeting a day, every day of the week. Long time groups such as Sunrise Sobriety in Center Moriches and East Northport Eye Opener Group both meet before 7 AM, seven days a week, while the Bay Shore Midnight Serenity Group (1979), commonly referred to as "The Pit" meets at midnight every night except Fridays. The Deer Park Home For Dinner Group meets at nearly every day at 5:30 PM and the Smithtown Afternoon Group meets every day except Sunday at 1 PM. If an alcoholic in Suffolk County needs to find a meeting, it is not difficult.

Suffolk County also has several unique meetings that started to meet the diverse needs of our ever-changing summer population. Many of the Fire Island groups only meet between May and October. Many of these meetings gather directly on the beach and several hold meetings every day. Similarly, locals know that the Babylon Bridge to Sobriety Group meets at Captree State Park, in the parking lot, at sunrise on Sunday mornings. There are several meetings on the east end of Suffolk County, which meet specifically during the summer. These include the Montauk Sunday Night Meditation Group and the Amagansett Group. Suffolk also has its own "Island" groups, that is, those groups on Shelter Island. The group members often meet people at the ferry and transport them to the meeting place. Additionally, one of the Sieberling children resides on Shelter Island and shares her experience of having known Bill W. and Dr. Bob with interested alcoholics. Finally, there are groups known to the boaters and sailors. Both the Sag Harbor Group and the Mattituck World Famous Group are quite used to having people arrive at their meetings by way of boat rather than by car.

Suffolk County also has many long-time "specialized" groups. The Bohemia Together Gay Group first began holding meetings in 1996 and the Bellport Rainbow Group (Gay and Lesbian) opened their doors in 1998. Both groups continue to remain strong today. The Jane Doe's Group in Bay Shore began in 1982, while the Brookhaven Women's Group has been in existence for over 20 years. Similarly, the Men Tell it Like It Is Group in Quogue and the Men's Room Group in Bay Shore help to meet the needs of our male population. The Islip Doin' It Young Group and the Bridgehampton East End Young People's

Group are both very active in carrying the message to our young alcoholics in Suffolk County. It is very exciting to see the "young" recovering alcoholics in Suffolk County actively participate in service. In 1991 and again in 2009, the Young People's Eastern Conference was held in Suffolk County. The Veterans Over the Horizon Group carried the message to veterans at the VA Hospital in Kings Park and there has been a meeting at Charlie Murphy's Nursing Home in Northport for several years. There are also have over 50 handicap accessible meetings and several ASL meetings available for our members.

In 1994, a new Polish-speaking group, the Bay Shore Latarnik Group, was started to meet the needs of the Polish-speaking alcoholics in Suffolk. Sadly, this group closed their doors after remaining very active for several years.

Suffolk County is blessed to have two very active service organizations that work closely together to carry AA's message to the still sick and suffering alcoholics in Suffolk. [Suffolk General Service \(SGS\)](#) and [Suffolk Intergroup Association \(SIA\)](#) work both independently of each other and together to provide services to the groups in Suffolk County. While both entities have similar committees, each service body focuses on specific aspects of service, so that the two bodies do not overlap or duplicate services. It is this spirit of cooperation that makes Suffolk County the strong, active county that it is.

Unfortunately, in the late 1980s, all of Suffolk General Service's archival material was destroyed in a car fire. Over the years, our Archive Committee has worked diligently to acquire information about the early years of AA in Suffolk County from a wide variety of sources, as well as keeping all our current information archived both digitally and in our fireproof file cabinets. Despite the initial loss of our archival material, what survived then, and remains strong today, is the spirit of service and responsibility to carry the message in Suffolk County. On average, over 80 GSRs attend a monthly General Service meeting and serve as the vital link between AA and their home group. Additionally, due to a strong understanding of the service structure and our commitment to being an active, participating county in SENY, SGS is

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SUFFOLK COUNTY (continued)

one of the few service bodies in our area to have made it part of our county's conscience to provide a bus to nearly all the area assemblies and the Delegate's Day of Sharing every year. SGS continues to carry the message through the various committees and programs that most AA's are familiar with including the Cooperation with the Professional Community, Public Information, Corrections Special Needs, and Treatment Facilities, which is conducting the Bridging the Gap Program. SGS also provides workshops, Group Inventory moderators and a Traditions Speakers list to the groups and districts through their GSRs and DCMs.

For the last fourteen years, SGS has hosted an annual Unity Breakfast at the Polish Hall in Riverhead, NY for over three hundred people. Despite the occasional call for a larger venue, the groups in Suffolk have repeatedly voted to keep the Unity Breakfast at the Polish Hall, perhaps because of the kielbasa.

In 2008, SGS launched its own website with links to AA World Service, The Grapevine, SENY, and SIA. Our website address is www.aasuffolks-ny.org. Following the bi-annual county inventory, SGS also adopted a budget for the first time in its history, this as a result of a suggestion made at the inventory.

At the time that the Unity Breakfast idea came about, it was also decided to co-host an Annual Big Meeting with SIA. Fourteen years later, the Big Meeting continues to serve as a Public Information workshop for both alcoholics and non-alcoholics in Suffolk County. The program changes each year, depending on which service body is planning the event, SGS or SIA, but the message of service and recovery is the same and the celebration of AA's anniversary is a constant theme. The ongoing partnership between the two service bodies ultimately makes Suffolk County an active, vibrant sober community.

SIA has been actively providing service to alcoholics since 1973. SIA maintains one of the few remaining 24-hour Telephone Hotline's still manned exclusively by alcoholics. Additionally, the organization publishes an updated meeting list four times a year which lists the over 300 active groups in Suffolk County. SIA has many committees, including the Public Information Schools Committee, which brings AA speakers into high schools and colleges. The organization also holds many workshops throughout the year that focuses on topics important to recovering alcoholics. The SIA archives contain a vast supply of history about the groups in Suffolk County. SIA also hosts an annual, well-attended Share-A-Thon in October and an Open House at the SIA Office every June to celebrate AA's birthday.

Clearly, Suffolk County is a unique and interesting area. For alcoholics in Suffolk, whether they live here year round, are summer residents or visitors from out of town, it is possible to find an AA meeting day or night, seven days a week. The spirit of recovery and service has been and continues to be strong in Suffolk County.

—2020 Update—

- 2008–2013

Following the launch of the SGS website in 2008, by 2012 a Web Committee was established and initiated a redesign of the website to create a place where people can go to be inspired to do service. To find the latest "happenings" in General Service, graphic design took on a whole new meaning and brought many new AA's to the site.

Another change within this period was the Unity Breakfast. Drawing more people to the event, a new location was needed to hold our fellow AAs and guests. The East Wind in Wading River was now the new location which drew a crowd of up to 1,200 mingling and enjoying fellowship.

- 2015 - 2016

Having had many years of SGS County meetings at the Trinity Lutheran Church in Rocky Point, we had to find a new location to hold our meetings. True North Community Church in Bohemia became our new home for SGS County meetings. Centrally located, it soon became a venue for Suffolk Intergroup as well. We enjoy hosting many workshops and events there with our fellow AA's.

Staying updated with the latest technology, SGS' registrar adopted the "air table" database to be in line with SENY.

- 2017 - 2019

Suffolk has always hosted many workshops for our fellow AA's. These years were no exception. Three service workshops, First legacy of Recovery, Second legacy of Unity and Third legacy of Service, were held in the Riverhead Theatre (one of the oldest). They brought people from all around the island who were interested in hearing about our Three Legacies. Another workshop that was well received was the Safety Workshop "A Safe Place to Share." It could have gone well beyond its three-hour time slot with the engaging conversation of the audience and panelists. Another breakfast was hosted by SGS called the Breakfast Brunch and held around June 10th in celebration of AA's birthday. And yes, it was held in no other than the Polish Hall in Riverhead. SGS hosted the event for three years before returning it to the Riverhead groups where it originated.

Staying with the times, SGS enhanced the counties website with the capability to accept 7th Tradition contributions online, thus accommodating everyone.

- 2020

New challenges were on the horizon for SGS as we entered a pandemic in early spring that would result in closing in-person meeting places where home groups met, and in-person SGS meeting venues and workshops that were planned. Suffolk had to figure out how we were going to keep our members connected and informed. SGS had its first county meeting on May 15, 2020 on a virtual platform, which was Zoom. We started getting the word out through our SGS county email blasts to let the body know we were meeting as a county virtually. Since that time, all our SGS

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Montauk Point Lighthouse

SUFFOLK COUNTY (continued)

county monthly meetings, Committee meetings, DCM and Committee Chair meetings, GSR Orientation meetings and, not to be left out, our county elections, inventory and budget meetings all took place virtually.

Suffolk Intergroup jumped into action by updating their online meeting list with all groups that were meeting virtually. SGS and Intergroup joined together in keeping its AA members and future members and community informed and connected. Our Unity Breakfast for 2021 will go on as it always does, but virtually.



Aerial view of Long Island

SULLIVAN COUNTY

The first meetings in the area in the late forties were held in Middletown and Newburg in Orange County, Kingston in Ulster County and Poughkeepsie in Putnam County, NY. Many of these meetings started at 9 PM to allow time for visitors from neighboring towns to arrive because the distances to travel were often long and road conditions were poor.

On or about 1946, meetings in Sullivan County were held in the Grange Hall in Liberty on Wednesdays. The first anniversary of the Liberty Group was a gala affair held at the Columbia Farms Hotel in Hurleyville. Unfortunately, though this event no longer exists. This group currently meets at St. Paul's Lutheran Church on Chestnut Street in Liberty on Thursday and Saturday.

Around 1949 or shortly thereafter, Orange County's Port Jervis Group started its meetings. In Ulster County, the Kingston Group started a Sunday meeting that met in the Governor Clinton Hotel. The first official meeting was held in Dr. Crowley's office in Kingston. The first regular meetings in Ul-

ster County (not in a home or office) were held at the Benedictine Hospital in 1941.

Monticello meetings started in either 1948 or 1949 on Mondays and met, ironically, in the back room of Slim W.'s liquor store. Reportedly, around 1946, a woman up on Walnut Mountain stayed sober by calling Slim every day at the liquor store. The group later moved its meetings to a private home on High Street and then to various churches. This meeting, until recently, was at the St. John's Church on Saint John Street in the village on Monticello, but recently moved to the Neighborhood Facility. Also in the late 1940s, a doctor who practiced on Broadway in Monticello was very interested in helping drunks. He gave vitamin shots to them and if a dire case showed up at his office, he would take them in through the back door ahead of the crowded waiting room. The first Step meetings in the area began, approximately, in 1970 at the Parksville School. These meetings ended in the winter since there was no heat. Some early AA's were heard to say, "No souls saved after 10 PM." One would think that meetings could go on for hours.

Our [Sullivan County Intergroup Association \(SCIA\)](#) started in 1979. There are currently 42 active meetings in Sullivan County. These meetings range from Beginner to Big Book and include Open and Closed Discussion, Speaker, Step and Tradition meetings. Currently, an alcoholic can find a meeting any day or every day of the week in the county in contrast to the 1960s when it would take 1,500 miles to get to 90 meetings in 90 days.

Intergroup publishes meeting lists, which undergo quarterly revisions. These include 20 meetings in the neighboring counties and 42 local Sullivan County meetings. Our Hospital and Institutions Committee distributes Public Information packets and provides information at health fairs, which help carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic. Additionally, this committee holds six meetings in prisons and rehabs. SCIA also maintains a professional answering service, which is available 24 hours a day.

In cooperation with SENY, District 1295 sponsors various workshops and informational Share-A-Days to further our knowledge of the disease of alcoholism. This enables us to educate and inform our members, and to pass along knowledge to the public at large, so that we may be better able to help those who still suffer.

In the last ten years, Sullivan County has not changed very much. The county has held a Share-A-Day from 1998 to 2003 and continues to hold a Spiritual Breakfast originally known as the Mothers Day Breakfast (for the mothers in recovery who could not be with their children) every May for the last 14 years and is still going strong.

Five years ago the Bethel meeting moved to Hurleyville and continued until May 2008, when it had to close its doors, as did the longtime meeting in Eldred. Both these meetings will be greatly missed.

On the upside, the Sunday night meeting in the Rockhill Ambulance building celebrated six years this year and a new step meeting at the same location began in April of this year. Currently, you can find 51 meetings held in Sullivan County every week.



Beaverkill Falls, Parksville

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WESTCHESTER COUNTY

Steps! 90 in 90! Big Book! AA Round-Ups! Unity Breakfasts! Group Inventory Meetings! Anniversaries! BIG Anniversaries!

That is what [Westchester AA](#) is all about today. Just like Alcoholics Anonymous in New York and Ohio, and then throughout the nation, we grew to this joyful work by the sometimes hard road of experience.

In a warm and witty account of AA in



Croton Dam, Croton Gorge Park

Westchester, one member wrote of our birthing from New York City and Greenwich, CT. Soon after Bill W. finished writing the "12 Steps" with the approval from the several score of sober members, five thousand copies of the "Big Book" were printed. Sr. Ignatia and Dr. Bob were treating thousands of alcoholics in St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, Ohio. It was then that John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and 75 wealthy dinner guests cemented into place for us our tradition of self-support, and Vesey Street in New York City became the first AA Headquarters.

Bill W. wasted no time in "carrying the message" and two solid groups appeared, one in Greenwich, CT, and one in Manhattan. The White Plains Group, still going strong at Memorial United Methodist Church, came into being on May 17, 1941 from the folks in Connecticut where fellowship and caring was strong. From here sprouted the Peekskill Group and New Rochelle Group in 1944, and the first of the Yonkers groups in 1945.

The Mount Vernon Group came out of people from Bill W.'s old home town of Brooklyn in 1943, while he and Lois were making their first cross-country tour to visit the recovered miracles of our century. The "city people" brought with them the structure and the sharing of experience, strength and hope with one another. All the groups supported one another discussing ways and means of living the sober life, and

coming together on a daily basis. Bronxville, with twelve groups today, absorbed Fleetwood, and sent out many to the East and West. One member wrote, "It is often observed, with the partial accuracy of most 'old wives' tales, that there is a 'terrific turnover' in Alcoholics Anonymous. And yet, of the many who discovered sobriety that vintage year of 1948, there are some known to most of us who have never flown far or fatally from the White Plains nest."

Meanwhile, White Plains and Mount Vernon continued to produce offshoots. All and all nineteen groups were formed: Bronxville, Chappaqua, Larchmont, Mamaroneck, three groups in Mt. Vernon, New Rochelle, Pelham, Pleasantville, Port Chester, Rye, Scarsdale, Tarrytown, White Plains, Yonkers, and Yonkers North. By 1959, eight more came together, including the Bedford Hills Group where Bill eventually landed after first "protecting his anonymity" in Chappaqua.

By 1970, there were 30 groups in Westchester. The Old Purdys Group, formed in 1969 out of the Cops and Robbers Group in Mount Vernon, began to carry the message North and West. One member of that group visited the Big Book Group in London and invited the members to visit any time they were in America. Soon after, a young man came, three years sober, and led a step meeting using the "Big Book" as a reference. His joy and peace were so awesome to behold that after that night the elders said, "We'll have to have 'Book Meetings' if that's what happens in a person's life from studying it!" As a result, many groups such as It's Guaranteed, Maryknoll, Katonah, Crow Hill, Patterson, Putnam Lake, Plug in the Jug, and several "Step" named groups in Putnam County forming during the 1970s and 1980s took with them a Big Book meeting as well as the Step and Open meetings.

Besides the parent group, White Plains now boasts sixteen AA groups, Yonkers has fourteen, Bronxville has twelve, New Rochelle and Rye have eight each, while Mt. Kisco, Ossining, and Yorktown Heights each have seven groups. All together, there are well over 175 groups today.

Bravely touted as the First Annual Round-Up, the Westchester County-Wide Service Get Together was held in 1979 at the Westchester Community College. A couple of years along saw us move to the County Center. Today, the Round-Ups are held, fittingly perhaps, at the Memorial

Church on Bryant Avenue, home of the original Westchester Group.

Putnam County has "come of age" and has left the service cluster after learning the ropes to sponsor its own Share-A-Day. Topics, workshops, red-ball meetings, special speakers, not to mention free lunch, are all part of the day of recovery and fellowship.

While Round-Ups stayed an important part of Westchester AA life, the 1980s saw a surge of interest in Unity Breakfasts, originally arranged so that all the groups of the county could come together in love, fellowship, and recovery while enjoying a great speaker and those scrambled eggs. Today these events are set for both spring and fall and are often a newcomer's early recognition that life can be fun, even while sober.

In 1998 or there about, a decision was made in the Westchester GSO to change the name of The Westchester Round-Up to The Westchester Share-A-Day. Early in 2005, after many recent years of falling attendance at the Share-A-Day, a decision was made to try a Share-An-Evening, starting at 3 PM instead of 8 AM. This change brought a drastic increase in overall attendance. In addition, there was a great improvement in participation and enthusiasm. We are now in the formative stage of our Fourth Annual Share-An-Evening.

—2020 Update—

In Westchester County, meetings were created for specific demographics in the county. Meetings were created for Spanish speakers. These include the following groups; *Grupo Unidos* in Yonkers; *Felices En Sobriedad* in White Plains; *Grupo en Busca de la Verdad* in Port Chester; and Mt. Kisco *Grupo* Latin American in Mt. Kisco. Additionally, in Pelham and Dobbs Ferry, AA Gay and Lesbian Groups were formed.

In Westchester County, there are a variety of AA events that are held. A key Westchester County AA event is Share-A-Day. During this event, AA, Al-Anon, Young People's, and Spanish speakers share their experiences, strength, and hope. Groups, such as the Pelham Players, have performed entertaining skits and plays during this event. Besides Share-A-Day, the Stepping Stones Picnic,

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WESTCHESTER COUNTY (continued)

held in Katonah, is another widely attended event. This picnic, which is held in the former home of Bill and Lois W., has been held since 1959. Besides hearing captivating speakers, people have the privilege of touring the historic home of Bill and Lois. In June of 2020, the event was turned into a virtual event due to the COVID-19 pandemic. From March 22–24 in 2019, Westchester County had the honor of hosting the 51st SENY Convention. Events included speaker meetings, history presentations, an Alkathon, and a banquet.

Beginning in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced churches to cancel AA meetings throughout Westchester County. Innovative alcoholics took the initiative to set-up virtual meetings for their groups. Following in their lead, virtual meetings were created by various meetings in Westchester County. As of July 2020, most Westchester County groups have online meetings scheduled.

MORE AA HISTORY IN SENY

YOUNG PEOPLE IN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (YPAA)

South Eastern New York's history of younger AA members extends back to the pioneering days of Alcoholics Anonymous. The first AA groups specifically intended for young sober alcoholics were named "thirty-five and under groups," and first appeared in the AA directory in 1947. Currently these groups are referred to as "young people's groups." The term "young" has taken on a broader meaning so as not to exclude those aged above thirty-five from attending the meetings. Today, "young" is defined as "young at heart" or "room to grow." At present, there are Young People's groups meeting every day of the week in Manhattan alone. Young People's groups are also in the other four boroughs of New York City and scattered throughout SENY. These meetings can be easily found in local AA directories.

As specific young people's groups grew in numbers and popularity, some chose to organize outside the group level and form committees directly responsible to the young people in their local area. Several committees' purpose was to plan and host

conferences, conventions, while others structured themselves to be recognized as service committees instead.

The Bridge Over Troubled Water Young People's Conference (BOTWYPC) formed in the Bronx in 1984. This committee hosted conferences for seventeen consecutive years, with the exception of 1993 because of conflict with the [International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous \(ICYPAA\)](#), which New York City hosted that year. Generally held in February, BOTWYPC's met at Cathedral College in Queens, and in June at SUNY Maritime College in the Bronx or the College of Mount St Vincent in Riverdale. BOTWYPC hosted a Young People's Hospitality suite at the annual SENY Convention for many years, sometimes under ICYPAA's name and sometimes under their own. BOTWYPC was also highly involved in bringing the 36th ICYPAA to New York City in 1993.

ICYPAA has the most longevity of all Young People's Conferences. The first ICYPAA took place in Niagara Falls, NY in 1958 and did not return to New York until 1982, when it was hosted in New York City. The 25th ICYPAA of 1982, took place at the Statler Hilton Hotel, now renamed the Hotel Pennsylvania, across from Madison Square Garden. ICYPAA returned to New York City in 1993. The 36th and 52nd ICYPAA's took place at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in Times Square with an attendance close to 5,000 each time.

In addition to BOTWYPC and ICYPAA, young people in SENY hosted several mini-conferences over the years. During the 1980s, young sober alcoholics from New York City held a conference in Stony Point. Rockland County Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous also hosted a conference in Stony Point during this same time. The Orange County Fellowship of Love Conference also existed during the 1980s in Warwick, NY.

Another large-scale young people's committee began in the 1980s and spanned across the entire state of New York, the New York State Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (NYSCYPAA) hosted approximately ten years of confer-



ICYPAA Button, 1993
New York, NY

ences. Two of these conferences unfortunately, have been remembered as rather infamous. A conference held in Long Island lost a great deal of money. SENY contributed to the host committee in order to pay the balance to the college where NYSCYPAA was renting space.

Another conference, this time held at the Crowne Plaza in White Plains, suffered the fate of being shut down by the hotel on Friday night because of their failure to meet room block and banquet commitments. BOTWYPC and a new Young People's service committee, the Tri-state Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (TRICYPAA), raised money to reimburse SENY for the Long Island mishap, and to pay the remaining balance to the Crowne Plaza. The majority of the money owed to the Crowne Plaza was paid, and the hotel relieved NYSCYPAA of the remaining balance due to negotiations with individuals of the ICYPAA Advisory Council. These two failed conferences were quite controversial in AA all the way to the General Service Conference level. All current delegates at the time received a letter regarding the matter. It has taken many years to repair these relationships, particularly in SENY.

TRICYPAA began the process of mending these relationships for the sake of current and future Young People's committees. TRICYPAA was a Young People's service and ICYPAA bid committee formed in 2001. The committee rotated its central meeting location within the tri-state area. Tension between members who wanted to focus the committee's work on service, and those who wanted to focus on the ICYPAA bid eventually dissolved the committee.

In early 2005, the [New York City Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous \(NYCYPAA\)](#)

committee formed. NYCYPAA's foundation is similar to TRICYPAA's in that it is a Young People's service committee and ICYPAA bid

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YPAA (continued)

committee. NYCYPAA hosts multiple fellowship events throughout the year, participates in Share-A-Days in the New York City area, answers late-night phones for New York Intergroup every month, participates in the annual SEAT Convention, and facilitates weekly meetings in the juvenile wing at Riker's Island. It also provides a contact list for Bridging the Gap to local treatment centers, participates in Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community commitments, bids for ICYPAA annually, and makes regular outreach trips to young people's groups in all five boroughs. The committee attended the first panel for young people at the New York State Informational Workshop in 2006, and the first roundtable for young people at the Northeast Regional AA Service Assembly in 2007. They held The Grapevine/La Viña writing workshops, and reviewed *In Our Own Words*, hosting a feedback session with the Executive Editor of The Grapevine. NYCYPAA also facilitated a screening of AA's videos for young people to provide feedback to the Area Delegate, and later shot video footage for submission to AA World Service's after a call for new videos for young people in AA. Later, they presented their video submission at District workshops, a SEAT Area Assembly, and at the Eastern Area Convention of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous to encourage participation. NYCYPAA also hosted the 52nd ICYPAA in 2010.

NYCYPAA continues in service in the area enjoying a wonderful relationship with SENY. It is our hope that SENY will continue to experience an abundant and enthusiastic young people's community who wish to be a current part of, not just the future of Alcoholics Anonymous.

—2020 Update—

A number of developments have occurred since the YPAA's history in SENY was published a decade ago. Prominent among these are: 1) a change in SENY's focus on and relationship to the Area YPAAs, 2) the creation of two additional committees, 3) the light-speed advancement of technology, 4) the evolution and expansion of YPAA events, and 5) the 2020 pandemic which has reshaped both the world and the challenges and opportunities in Alcoholics Anonymous.

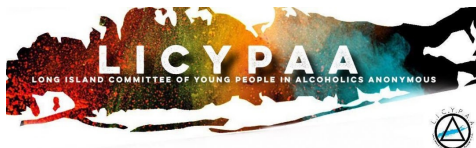
First, one addition to the original history: the [Long Island Committee of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous \(LICYPAA\)](#) was formed in 2000, and continues to serve the communities in Suffolk and Nassau Counties, as well as points west and north.

SENY & the YPAAs—

Prior to 2007, one of the SENY Alternate Delegate's duties was "Liaison with the New York State Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (NYSCYPAA)." When the 8th Edition of the SENY Handbook was released in January 2007 that description was broadened to what it remains today: "[Serves as] Liaison with the Young People in AA service groups, the various YPAAs." The Alternate Delegate visits each YPAA a number of times each year, to bring news of General Service and SENY, and to invite the YPAAs to send their own liaisons to Area Assemblies and the SENY Convention.

Three Current YPAA Committees—

As well as NYCYPAA (serving the 5 boroughs) and LICYPAA (Nassau and Suffolk), a



third strong committee emerged to serve the Northern SENY counties in 2015: [Westchester, Orange and Rockland Committee of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous \(WORCYPAA\)](#). These three committees, in the best tradition of AA, work both independently of and in harmony with one another, often co-hosting events to be more encompassing and inclusive. At the heart of each committee's mission is our primary purpose, helping another alcoholic to achieve sobriety.

In addition to these three "standing" committees, there is "278 Bid Committee" (named for the Interstate running through Brooklyn and Queens), which has come together to bid on a future International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (ICYPAA). This is an "ad hoc" committee whose stated purpose is to be able to host another ICYPAA in Southeastern New York, as was done in 1982, 1993, and 2010. The process of securing an International bid can take a number of years, and a Bid Committee exists for as long as it takes to achieve that event

Technology Advances—

Technology and Communications have "rocketed into a fourth dimension" in the last decade. As might be expected, Young People lead the way, and the YPAAs use this technology effectively and aggressively.

All three YPAAs (and 278 Bid) have skilled "Graphics Chairs" who produce their own flyers and publicity; chat groups provide for rapid and efficient communication; and members who cannot make a live meeting simply give their reports virtually or by other electronic means. All this means that the YPAAs can respond quickly to both challenges and opportunities - and they do!

YPAA Events—

While each committee has at least one "signature event" (NYCYPAA's boat trip and LICYPAA's Luau come to mind), all three committees sponsor numerous events throughout the year. Each event has a 7th Tradition monetary and spiritual nature: to be self-supporting, and to reach out to the still-suffering alcoholic and bring them into the AA fold. Events are either hosted by the committee or co-hosted with one or more additional committee, either in or outside the Area. These smaller, more flexible events do not bring in the thousands of participants of the big Conferences (such as the [Empire State Convention of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous - ESCYPAA](#), 2016), but they are the bread and butter means of reaching out locally to the young people seeking sobriety.

The Pandemic—

In March 2020 Southeastern NY became the COVID-19 epicenter of the United States. As of this writing (late 2020) the Area still struggles with reopening, social distancing, and all the other challenges that the world and Alcoholics Anonymous are experiencing. The YPAA committees responded early and well, and were especially quick to use their technology skills to keep AA's primary purpose functioning. As restrictions have slowly begun to lift, the YPAAs have started to move back to live events where feasible (and legal), but the committee meetings are still being held either on a virtual platform or on a hybrid (virtual and live) basis. Like the rest of AA they long for face-to-face fellowship, but accept that having another option is invaluable.

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YPAA (continued)

In Summary—

On page S42 of the current *AA Service Manual* there is a sentence that refers to General Service's relationship to the Local Intergroups and Central Offices: "So these two separate but vital service structures coexist in many areas in mutual cooperation and harmony." That sentence applies as well to the relationship between SENY, AA and the YPAA committees. While each is autonomous, both have the same primary purpose; while "passing the hat" might not be the same as "selling merch," the fact is that each one strives to provide a safe haven for alcoholics, whether they have decades or days of sobriety, and even if they're still in the throes of active alcoholism. YPAA is part of our present and our future; they do active outreach and are inclusive; and we will do well to embrace and support them.

AA AT GROUND ZERO

A little more than two weeks after the tragic events of September 11, 2001, a new chapter in AA's long history of working with friends outside of the Fellowship began. The Red Cross, in order to serve the thousands of firefighters, police, steelworkers, medical personnel, and other volunteers who worked in the disaster zone, established its Respite Center #1 at 101 Murray Street at the corner of West Street just north of the World Trade Center in a building that houses St. John's University. The arduous, emotionally draining work of recovering the remains of those who perished and then clearing away the enormous pile of debris's went on nonstop for days and weeks, with most volunteer's working day-long shifts that gave them little time to do much else but eat and sleep. The Respite Center was intended as a place for the volunteers to do a little of that, plus seek out medical and other services that they might need to continue their work.

Included among the volunteers were a good many members of AA, some of whom were from out of town and for all of whom it was very difficult to get to an AA meeting, even if they knew the location of one. Fortunately, some of the AA's in the uniformed services let those in the Red Cross know of this need for some kind of ready access to AA, and a Red Cross intern made

a request for help from the General Service Office. This resulted in a series of events, described below, which led to an AA presence, for several crucial months that year, right in the middle of what was then known as Ground Zero.

Following the Red Cross request, calls were made on September 26, 2001, by staff members at GSO to chairpersons of New York Intergroup's Institutions Committee and to SENY's Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee. These two individuals, who as it turned out, were AA friends who had done service work together over the years, were quickly in touch with one another and with many others in AA service to begin the process of assembling the volunteers needed to bring AA to Ground Zero.

By Friday, September 28, about 15-20 volunteers gathered and were ready to go to the Red Cross headquarters in downtown Brooklyn. At this point, the extent of the AA work, or even the location for it, was unknown. Many details still needed to be worked out among the overlapping authorities who were responsible for the ongoing search and recovery work. Security clearance and ID cards would be required of all however, so on that first day the volunteers were obliged to wait

many hours as the details were completed. Eventually, most of the disappointed volunteers were sent home, but around 6 PM that evening, a small group of three volunteers were credentialed and transported through the security lines into Respite Center #1. There they waited several more hours until finally, around 8 PM, Room 231 was designated as their room and became the main center for AA activity at Ground Zero for the next two and a half months. Although no formal AA meetings were held that night, the room was set up and identified for the "Friends of Bill W.," anonymity being a major concern given the mix of uniformed and non-uniformed workers streaming through the building. A few first visitors arrived, some unbelievably, simply to bask in the thought of an AA presence there, before the volunteers were obliged to leave that night. What followed was more than a day of uncertainty until on Sunday, September 30, another group

of volunteers were brought to the Red Cross headquarters and this time nine of them were credentialed and a real presence was established in room 231 by 4 PM that afternoon. One of the issues that had to be resolved was under what umbrella the AA volunteers were to be grouped religion or mental health. The latter won out (to the amusement of the AA volunteers), and for the next two through the mental health division of the Red Cross. At 6 PM, that Sunday night the first official meeting gathered in room 231. The speaker was a police officer from the Bronx, who said he had opened the "Big Book" that morning and just happened to read in "Bill's Story" the description of his going off to World War I. Appropriately, he used that familiar AA text as the focus of his talk, and so began AA at Ground Zero.

Soon a corps of upward of 70 credentialed volunteers were assembled (with a huge list of many more who were willing to serve), and a series of three six-hour shifts were established. It was decided that several volunteers would be present in the room at all times to talk with AA members in need of conversation, to hold impromptu meetings if enough people were on hand, or sometimes simply to give someone a hug. A more-or-less regular meeting met at lunchtime on most days, and literature and other AA information was kept on hand for any AA members to use. In mid-October, a fourth shift from midnight to 6 AM began, which continued into November. Also in October, an AA presence was established in Respite Center #3, which was south of the World Trade Center, in a damaged but still functional Marriott Hotel. There, too, a series of shifts were set up to assure that volunteers were present during the hours the room was open, with literature on hand as well. That center remained open until late November.

As mentioned, Respite Center #1 was a Saint John's University building, and Room 231 was a one-time classroom with a large blackboard that covered one wall. There, the three volunteers who entered the room that first Friday night wrote their names and home groups, and in the weeks that followed pretty much all the volunteers and visitors who entered that room followed suit. When the AA presence ended

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AA AT GROUND ZERO (CONTINUED)

and Room 231 closed, that blackboard was totally filled with names and home groups. Likewise, there was a logbook for volunteers and visitors to sign at both Respite Centers. Although the blackboard was not able to be preserved, and is probably in use today as another classroom tool, photos of it at the end of AA's presence have been preserved, and the logbooks have been turned over to the AA archives at the GSO. Other mementos, such as two large "Ground Zero Group" plaques, forged by the steel workers from metal salvaged from the twin towers site, were given to New York Intergroup and to the GSO for safekeeping.

In April 2005, the volunteers who served at Ground Zero held a reunion. There, all reminisced about what the experience meant to them, and in some cases disagreed on details as to what exactly happened and when. (Most of the material contained herein has been drawn from a transcript on that occasion.) Among the shares that night was one from a New York City firefighter who was not a volunteer for AA, but who made use of that facility as an AA member. "I have no idea," he said, "how many sobrieties were saved by that meeting, but I'm telling you it was more than a handful, because there were a lot of guys and people right on the verge every night that we were there." He went on to say, "Anything that we needed there [at Ground Zero], it just seemed to pop up. When your face was dirty, somebody rinsed it off. If you lost a glove, there was somebody there to give you a glove. And this [Room 231] was just a piece of the puzzle. And for me and other guys like me, it was a big piece of the puzzle, probably the biggest piece."

AA at Ground Zero lasted from September 28 until December 7, 2001 thanks to the efforts of all the volunteers from South Eastern New York General Service and from New York Intergroup. This is another example of AA cooperation within the fellowship and with AA's friends outside.

SENY IN 2020, YEAR OF THE COVID PANDEMIC

From 1935, Alcoholics Anonymous' members and its service structures weathered numerous wars, hurricanes, floods and all other forms of natural disasters, economic crises and social turmoil, but nothing would have prepared the Fellowship for the events of 2020 in the wake of the COVID-19 driven pandemic.

By February-March, Federal, State and local public health authorities were recommending limiting non-essential activities, and some saw the writing on the wall, that our AA way of life might soon be upended, challenged in unprecedented ways. In New York, that challenge formally came when the government effectively shut down the State for all but "essential" activities at 8 PM on March 22. Home groups, the heartbeat of AA, and all service groups overnight disappeared, and many had not been ready.

Geographical South Eastern New York (SENY) was at the epicenter of the worst of the early pandemic in the US, and at least initially, members and groups struggled to respond to the loss of physical meetings. But quickly, after some fitful initial efforts, members were able to reach out to each other through phone calls and social media, began to discover or rediscover phone and online AA meetings and other options for virtual gatherings, resources that had in some cases been around for decades but underused until now. Service meetings too learned to migrate many of their activi-

ties to virtual space. Local Intergroups rallied their resources and quickly became critical information centers for their counties pointing the way to resources for offering virtual meetings, maintaining anonymity in these new settings, and on the availability of those offerings in lieu of local face to face AA, a new kind of meeting list.

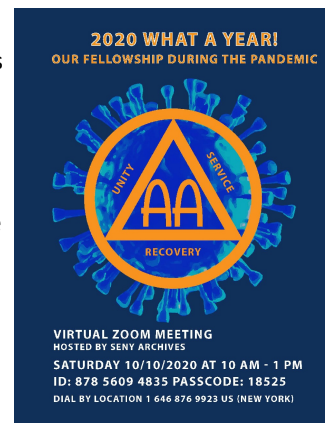
Prominent among the Intergroups was the response from NY Intergroup which quickly pulled together an offering of both general information about keeping AA afloat during the shutdown, and material support for any who wanted to mount an AA meeting on what would become the go to platform, Zoom. Numerous groups and meetings were supported.

Institutional SENY, for its part, saw the need to cancel all face to face activities it had scheduled. This included the cancellation for the first time of the area's annual convention which had completed its planning phase and had been accepting registrations by the time it was called off. Similarly, SENY moved its committee and assembly meetings to virtual platforms, historically holding its first virtual election assembly September 12, one of the first if not the first in the Fellowship to do so. Its standing committees too moved to virtual meetings and events including SENY's "Return of In-Person Meetings" workshop in June, and two virtual Archives workshops May and October, the latter entitled, "2020, What a Year! Our Fellowship During the Pandemic," capturing the impact of and response to COVID-19 in the local Fellowship.

AA's 70th General Service Conference had been scheduled to meet in Westchester in the spring of 2020, but instead held its first historic Conference in virtual space April into May. Also, by the end of March the AA General Service Board had concluded it needed to cancel the International Convention later offering a virtual experience in its place which ran July into August.

At the Fellowship's grass roots during the core of the shut down, there were members getting sober in AA who had never been to a face to face meeting, had never shared a cup of coffee or thumbed through the "Big Book" sitting across from a sponsor. There were those too in this period for whom the Fellowship fell short. Unfortunately, we also saw the enhanced anonymity of virtual meetings allowing some individuals to show their baser selves.

Locally, most members, groups and service groups accepted the need to support the public health related restrictions while some others chose to disregard them, and there was an increasing strain for many as the period of restrictions wore on. Later too during the reopening phase, the Intergroups remained informational resources, but also struggled with what was their responsibility in considering listing meetings known or suspected to be poorly or non-compliant with COVID restrictions. More about the local experience of COVID-19 in 2020 in SENY is reflected in the individual county sections of this history book.



Flyer from October 2020 SENY Archives Workshop

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SENY IN 2020, YEAR OF THE COVID PANDEMIC (CONTINUED)

As of this writing the ultimate impact of the pandemic of 2020 on AA remains to be fully appreciated. New ways of carrying the AA message developed while at the same time long standing pillars of AA were shaken and in some cases shattered. Some venerable meetings failed to return from shutdown. Some meetings returned in new forms as hybrid (a combination of virtual and face to face participation options for the same meeting) or parallel (the same meeting being held in virtual space and face to face simultaneously but separately) gatherings. New ones would continue to exist in virtual space alone.



As SENY emerged from the shut down, it was a time to reflect on how well we had done in assuring the hand of AA was always outstretched for anyone who wanted it, anywhere. There were successes and failures. We saw both the best and the worst of ourselves in that period.

What had we learned about ourselves, and our program and Fellowship?

SENY Archives Committee, October 2020

BRIEF HISTORY OF PIONEERING GROUPS IN SENY

Among the early groups in South Eastern New York there are those like the Brooklyn Group (believed to have gotten its start in the Brooklyn Heights home of Bill and Lois W.), the St. Nicholas Group in Harlem (the first African-American group in the area), the Baldwin Group on Long Island, the Brewster Group in Putnam County, and the Suffern Group in Rockland County. These venerable groups all still meet to this day.

There are also many pioneering “special interest” groups throughout our area like the We Agnostics Group (established in 1986), and the Caduceus Group for medical professionals, both of which meet in Manhattan. There are also LGBTQ groups which have served AA for many years. Among them, the first transgender recovery group in SENY, TRANS (Transgender Recovering Alcoholics Navigating Sobriety) began in 2014 in the Pride Center at the downtown Brooklyn Metrotech Center. All these groups and others like them help to widen the doorway into AA and to hold the door open for untold alcoholics.

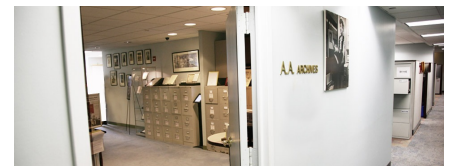
As “the only requirement AA for membership is a desire to stop drinking,” Alcoholics Anonymous strives to be the diverse, inclusive, spiritually grounded fellowship that our Three Legacies: Recovery, Unity and Service poignantly describe in our literature. What we make of it is up to each of us every day, every meeting.

Our history accrues. What of groups and changes of which SENY is unaware? We hope that members may be able to provide us with historical information that has not yet been recorded or to help correct mistaken information. Please contact our Archives Committee at archives@aasenya.org.

To be continued.

RESEARCHING YOUR GROUP HISTORY

AAWS/GSO offers information on how to research AA group history. Go to www.aa.org. Follow the link from the home page to “[Archives and History](#),” then to “[History and Resources](#),” then, “[Resources for Local AA Archives Committees](#).” From there it is suggested you download both the “[Oral Histories Kit](#),” a resource for capturing individual member stories and recollections, and, “[Researching AA Group History \(SMF-169\)](#),” a service piece with suggestions and resources for preparing a group history. You may also reach GSO by phone at 212-870-3400. Ask for “Archives” which has historical records on many groups. You may also enjoy a visit to the office to review first hand the holdings on your group.



AA Archives at GSO

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