

# sober NEWS

Inter-Group Association  
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**Editor: Michael B.**  
**Chairman: William F.**



## **Wanted: Telephone Volunteers**

Be the voice of attraction to the new person calling for help. One year of continuous sobriety is required. Call or come by the New York Inter-Group office for an orientation.

The opinions expressed herein are solely those of our contributors. Publication does not imply endorsement by either NYIG or A.A. as a whole. We reserve the right to edit for clarity, grammar, and punctuation.

## **WHY SHOULD WE SUPPORT NYIG?** **5 POINTS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION**

By NYIG Steering Committee

As part of our ongoing conversations about New York Inter-Group (NYIG), we'd like to share with you a rather novel idea that a local A.A. member recently brought to our attention.

This alcoholic, who prefers to remain anonymous, suggested that we create a set of concise "talking points" about the organization. Something to let the newcomer know what NYIG is, what it does, and why it deserves our support.

To that end, we—the membership of the Steering Committee—present a five-point summation of NYIG. It is our hope that the following statements will encourage not only group discussion, but group action.

### **1. WE ARE RESPONSIBLE**

Imagine a newcomer can't find a meeting, either because the New York Area Meeting List—published semi-annually by NYIG—is incorrect, or simply out-of-date. Now, imagine that same newcomer calls the NYIG office, and no one is there to pick up the phone.

Most of us have heard the Responsibility Statement before: "Whenever anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there, and for that *I am* responsible."

Well, what happens when the hand of A.A. *isn't* there? Aren't WE responsible?

### **2. PRIMARY PURPOSE**

NYIG's Corrections and Treatment Facilities Committee (CTFC) carries the A.A. message to still-suffering alcoholics who can't go out, and get a meeting on their own.

Every spring, CTFC holds its annual "Primary Purpose Conference", featuring speakers who heard the message on the inside.

There is no sobriety requirement to get involved. Newcomers, and those counting days, can participate in their monthly literature -packing event at the NYIG office.

### **3. GROUP CONSCIENCE**

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **QUEENS AREA FORUM**

Queens Inter-Group Office  
105-29A Metropolitan Avenue  
Forest Hills, NY 11375

SEPTEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>

7:30 pm

### **EXCHANGE MEETING**

Public School 41  
116 West 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10011

SEPTEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>

7 am

### **CTFC LITERATURE PACKING**

New York Inter-Group Office  
SEPTEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>

10 am

### **NEW INTER-GROUP DELEGATE WORKSHOP**

Public School 41  
116 West 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10011

SEPTEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>

10 am

### **INTER-GROUP QUARTERLY DELEGATES' MEETING**

Public School 41  
116 West 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10011

SEPTEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>

11 am

### **VOLUNTEERS MEETING**

New York Inter-Group Office  
SEPTEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup>

6:30 pm

## **WHY SHOULD WE SUPPORT NYIG?**

Continued From Previous Page

NYIG requests a Delegate from each meeting listed in the Five New York City Boroughs, and Westchester County. Each Delegate represents the group conscience of his or her home-group.

The Quarterly Delegates Meetings--hosted by NYIG on the second Saturday of March, June, September, and December--allow these group representatives to hear reports from the NYIG Steering Committee about office activities, and to vote on matters affecting office operations.

Delegates also attend bi-monthly Area Forums, which are presided over by an Area Representative, who also serves on the NYIG Steering Committee. These informal meetings are like two-way conversations: groups stay informed about NYIG's activities; and the Area Representative stays informed about group concerns, and relays them to the Steering Committee during monthly meetings.

### **4. ATTRACTION RATHER THAN PROMOTION**

NYIG's Public Information Committee (PI) sends speakers to high schools, universities, senior centers, and civic organizations within the Greater New York City area. PI speakers bring the message of what Alcoholics Anonymous is to the general public. They also distribute A.A. Conference-Approved materials, and provide information about local Open A.A. meetings.

### **5. SELF-SUPPORTING THROUGH OUR OWN CONTRIBUTIONS**

NYIG is financed by Contributions from A.A. groups, and individual members, including Anniversary Club donations, and Faithful Fiver contributions. NYIG is also financed by the sale of A.A. Conference-Approved literature, and Anniversary Medallions, as well as the net proceeds from the Annual Bill W. Dinner.

To learn more about how to get involved, please call or come by the NYIG office. You may also visit our website at [www.nyintergroup.org](http://www.nyintergroup.org).

## **Join the Anniversary Club!**

**CELEBRATE YOUR SOBER ANNIVERSARY BY  
JOINING NEW YORK INTER-GROUP'S  
ANNIVERSARY CLUB.**

Your voluntary contribution of **\$1 (or more)** for each year of your sobriety will help NYIG to carry A.A.'s message of hope and recovery to still-sick and suffering alcoholics throughout the Greater New York City Area.

For more information, please stop by the NYIG office  
or visit our website at

**[www.nyintergroup.org](http://www.nyintergroup.org)**

# Faithful Fivers!

## NEW YORK INTER-GROUP'S SEVENTH TRADITION GRATITUDE PLAN

Your pledge of **\$5 (or more)** each month helps support NYIG's continued effort to carry the A.A. message of recovery and hope to still-sick and suffering alcoholics throughout the Greater New York City Area.

As a **FAITHFUL FIVER**, your personal contribution will help the doors of NYIG stay open 365 days a year!

For more information, please stop by the NYIG office, or visit our website at **[www.nyintergroup.org](http://www.nyintergroup.org)**

### IN LOVE AND SERVICE

Hi, family!! My name is Dee!!

I'd just like to express my thanks to the entire New York Inter-Group Corrections and Treatment Facilities Committee for the great job they did in coordinating The 2015 CTFC Annual Dinner Dance Benefit at Antun's on July 25! As a member of NYIG CTFC of Brooklyn, as well as a Representative for the NYIG Bridging the Gap Program, I was honored to be selected as the Keynote speaker for the event.

The event appeared to be a success!

Carrying the message into a Correction and/or Treatment Facility (whether vocally or through the literature NYIG provides), has a long history, beginning eighty years ago with our co-founders. This tradition lives on today!

In Brooklyn, I heard the message in a treatment facility 23 years ago and for the last 21 years, I've been venturing into treatment centers and correctional institutions in four of

the five boroughs (and Westchester County, where I was Committee Chair) to help carry the message to those who cannot get to a meeting on their own. Besides, I get to keep what I have (recovery) and to give back what I received (hope).

I now serve on the Bridging the Gap Committee, where we service patients and inmates being discharged from these respective facilities to make their very first A.A. meeting. Service at this level can be very challenging, and yet very rewarding. It's an experience that I'll talk about for as long as I can.

In conclusion, I implore you to support NYIG's CTFC as best as you can (eg. donations, joining, speaking), to insure this service continues for years to come. Again thanks to the entire NYIC CTFC (especially in Brooklyn) for selecting me for that special event.

Love and Service,  
Dee W.  
EZ Does It!

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Continued From Page 2

#### **MANHATTAN CTFC MEETING**

New York Inter-Group Office  
SEPTEMBER 17TH  
6:30 pm

#### **WESTCHESTER AREA FORUM**

First Baptist Church  
456 North Street  
White Plains, NY 10605  
SEPTEMBER 19TH  
9:30 am

#### **BROOKLYN AREA FORUM**

First Unitarian  
Congregational Chapel  
121 Pierrepont Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
SEPTEMBER 19TH  
2 pm

#### **BRONX AREA FORUM**

Westchester United  
Methodist Church  
2547 East Tremont Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10461  
SEPTEMBER 19TH  
2:30 pm

#### **PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

New York Inter-Group Office  
SEPTEMBER 28TH  
7 pm

#### **CTFC LITERATURE PACKING**

New York Inter-Group Office  
OCTOBER 10TH  
10:00 am

**WE ARE NOT SAINTS,  
BUT WE CAN BE ANGELS!**

**A Call to Action for the  
2015 Bill W. Dinner**

By Michael B.



Every year, alcoholics from all Five Boroughs, and Westchester County, flock to the Grand Ballroom of the New York Hilton Hotel, located on Sixth Avenue, between 53<sup>rd</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> Streets, for New York Inter-Group's annual fundraising gala, The Bill W. Dinner.

Manhattan is hosting this year's event, which takes place on October 31<sup>st</sup>. Recently, I sat down with Kathleen Mc., the Chair of the 2015 Bill W. Dinner Planning Committee, to find out what she, and her fellow committee members, have in store for us.

**So, tell me Kathleen. Do you remember your first time going to the Bill W. Dinner?**

My first time was in 1986; and Lois spoke. Then, I went to another one in '87, where she spoke again—she read Bill's last statement—and it just ripped my heart open. I've been going ever since. I think I've only missed two years in the entire 28 years that I've been sober. This will also be my third time on the Planning Committee.

**And now, you are the Chair of the Planning Committee. Congratulations.**

Thank you. Well...last year, I chaired the Big Meeting. So, this was the next step, I guess.

**Of course, that is a lot of responsibility on your shoulders. Ever feel overwhelmed?**

Yes. Especially before we're having our Committee meeting, to make sure I have all my T's crossed, and my I's dotted. At this point, I feel like everything's in place. Now it's a matter of making the timetable that we can all keep to. And I don't feel fearful about any of that. I really believe that all the people we have here are really committed.

But, it's a lot of responsibility. Our biggest responsibility is that we want to see ticket sales that we haven't seen in a long time. You know, 1800 – 1900 tickets are not a whole lot to sell. And we're Manhattan, so we really want to represent.

**And as Chair of this year's event, how do you respond to critics who say that the Bill W. Dinner is too cost prohibitive for many people to attend?**

Yes, it is \$125 a ticket. But, I've always made it work. Unemployed or employed. Now, there are a lot of events in the course of a year. There are A.A. dances for \$10. There are a lot of other ways that we can celebrate sobriety that aren't the Bill W. Dinner. But this is our one big deal.

I agree that, for some people it is difficult. But I've seen so many people get a ticket, because they've done service at the event. Last year, we took two people in at our table. Stuff like that happens an awful lot.

**So there are opportunities for say, a newcomer, or someone who's financially struggling to get a ticket?**

Absolutely. I know some groups that do scholarships for beginners. And people who don't want to spend the \$125 can always go to the Old Timer's Meeting,



which is a free, and that way they can still be a part of the event.

Fact is, though, I spent a whole lot more than \$125 to do what I did before I got sober. And I think anybody who complains about that price should remember what they spent on a weekend, just on booze alone. That's always my response to beginners, or my sponsees that have a remark to make about the Bill W. Dinner.

**Now, on a lighter note, this year's Bill W. Dinner is on Halloween. Is this going to be a costume ball?**

People have mentioned that. It's not going to be a costume ball. Will people come in costumes? We're alcoholics! So, chances are some people will come in costume.

**But you are not encouraging people to dress up?**

We have no opinion one way or the other. There is no dress code for the event. Nothing is written on any of the fliers, or postcards, etc.

**And does the theme of this year's**

**event acknowledge Halloween in any way?**

The Committee voted on a bunch of different themes, and the one that got the most votes was, "We are not Saints."

**Now, for those who've never been to the Bill W. Dinner, can you describe what actually goes on at the event?**

It's a three speaker meeting. After dinner, of course, there's dancing. We'll have a room set up for a DJ, and a room set up for live music.

**And what's your favorite part of the event?**

To be in a room with that many people when they do the Candle Lighting Ceremony—that's probably my favorite part. You can hear a pin drop sometimes. The gratitude you can cut with a knife. When they talk about Bill's Last Message, and then they pass the candle. Each person passes their candle to the

next. So that the light goes on. That we don't ever stop passing it on.

And again, the room is silent. That's what's really special. That the gratitude for sobriety gets passed on. Because that's what our purpose is. And when that happens, every year, my heart just leaps a little bit.

**Sounds fantastic. So, is there anything else you would like to add?**

Just that, now I don't know if there can be neon signs on this article, but...

**(Laughter)**

Just to get the word out about how special this event really is. I mean, when you walk into that room, and see all those people... Not just the people you know, but also (since it's an open meeting) their significant others, and their family members, who may have never been to an A.A. meeting before. So, their first meeting is in the Grand Ballroom of the New York Hilton with like 1800-2000 people, and they think, "Oh, this A.A. thing is pretty wonderful."

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Continued From Page 3

### **GROUP RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**

New York Inter-Group Office  
OCTOBER 13<sup>TH</sup>  
6:30 pm

### **MANHATTAN CTFC MEETING**

New York Inter-Group Office  
OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup>  
6:30 pm

### **STATEN ISLAND AREA FORUM**

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
2018 Richmond Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10314  
OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup>  
7:30 pm

### **MANHATTAN AREA FORUM**

New York Inter-Group Office  
OCTOBER 20<sup>TH</sup>  
7 pm

### **2015 OLD TIMER'S MEETING**

New York Hilton Hotel  
1335 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY 10019  
OCTOBER 31<sup>ST</sup>  
1 pm - 3 pm  
3:30 pm Bill W. Movie

### **2015 BILL W. DINNER TICKETS ON SALE \$125**

New York Hilton Hotel  
1335 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY 10019  
OCTOBER 31<sup>ST</sup>  
7 pm

## **GOT TO KEEP COMING**

By Pete C.

I have been coming for a while and I don't forget; and even realize that I am not done yet. I really do have a three-ring circus in my head. I just keep coming for what I really want to get.

I know The Big Book's first 164 pages, and its 96 "musts". Hey, it's The Big Book! What else am I supposed to trust?

I got over five years sober, and it doesn't mean I got my brains back yet. So ten years knowing how to play with the brain is just a fantasy that some get.

I'll just keep on coming just to see who I might see; and I wonder sometimes where all the rest might be. A.A. is where I always got to keep coming all the time, as I really do like to feed my crap-filled mind. And I really do like to have a good sober time.

I come to A.A every time I can show. I know it's up to me if I really want to grow. Oh, I realize I really got to go—especially if it's really me that I want to see glow.

I'm right here in the rooms of A.A., where I got to keep coming 'cause it gets a little weirder every day. But if I do the trudging for acceptance that brightens up the day, I will be quite happy on that fateful day. If drunks come and stay, we don't mind; as I came for the drink, and stayed for my mind.

So don't drink, and hit a meeting even if your head says no. If you really search your heart, you will show. But right now, it's the end of the show, so now I got to go slow.

## **What's the Difference?**

### **Inter-Group & General Service Explained**

**OCTOBER 10, 2015  
10 AM - 4 PM**

**OUR SAVIOR  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
1734 WILLAIMSBRIDGE RD  
BRONX, NY 10461**

Speakers from throughout  
South Eastern New York

For more information,  
contact [NeilliePR@aol.com](mailto:NeilliePR@aol.com)

## **sober NEWS wants YOU!**

**YOUR EXPERIENCE!  
YOUR STRENGTH!  
YOUR HOPE!**

### **Submissions:**

400 - 1,000 word articles on  
any topic related to sobriety.

### **Volunteers:**

Help us print, package &  
distribute the newsletter  
throughout the 5 Boroughs  
& Westchester County.  
No sobriety requirement.

### **Contact:**

[sobernews@nyintergroup.org](mailto:sobernews@nyintergroup.org)

**SERVICE KEEPS  
YOU SOBER**

By Mike B.

“Service keeps you sober!”

That’s what my first sponsor always used to say; and he was right. Doing service at my homegroup—whether it was making coffee, setting up chairs, or chairing a meeting—got me out of my house, and more importantly, out of my head.

Doing service broke through my sense of isolation, by placing me in situations where I had to talk to people, even when I didn’t want to. It also gave me a sense of belonging, of being part of something greater than myself for (arguably) the first time in my life.

My first taste of service beyond the group level came when I was asked to

be the Program Chair for my homegroup. This meant I was responsible for booking all of our incoming speakers at the Quarterly Exchange Meeting sponsored by New York Inter-Group (NYIG). Now, I wasn’t too thrilled about getting up at the butt-crack of dawn on a Saturday in order to get down to Public School 41 in the West Village. But, I have to say, it was an awesome experience.

Talk about controlled chaos! Dozens of alcoholics from the five boroughs, and Westchester, crowded into the school’s cafeteria, all of them circling the room, shouting out their group’s name and location, asking for speakers, exchanging cards and fliers with dates and contact information. There was no rhyme or reason to any of it. No way to tell how, or where to begin. I just had to dive into the deep end, and hope I didn’t drown.

Thank God, I wasn’t there alone. You see, at my homegroup, the Program Chair was a year-long commitment. The first six months, you learned what to do from the person who came before you. The next six months, you taught it to the person who came after you. When my term finally ended, so did my dealings with NYIG. Or so I thought.

Since then, I’ve spent countless hours on the second floor of 307 Seventh Avenue, answering phones, stuffing envelopes, and even counting anniversary coins. I’ve sat on a number of committees, including the planning committees for the Big Meeting, and the Bill W. Dinner.

Not to brag, or anything. I mean, I’m still an alcoholic. I still can’t drink safely. I still need help staying sober a day at a time. It’s just that, for me, nothing keeps me coming back like doing service. It’s that simple.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

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**QUEENS AREA FORUM**

Queens Inter-Group Office  
105-29A Metropolitan Avenue  
Forest Hills, NY 11375

NOVEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>

7:30 pm

**VOLUNTEERS MEETING**

New York Inter-Group Office  
NOVEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup>

6:30 pm

**WESTCHESTER AREA FORUM**

First Baptist Church  
456 North Street  
White Plains, NY 10605

NOVEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>

9:30 am

**BROOKLYN AREA FORUM**

First Unitarian Chapel  
121 Pierrepont Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

NOVEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>

2 pm

**BRONX AREA FORUM**

Westchester United Methodist  
2547 East Tremont Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10461

NOVEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>

2:30 pm

**PUBLIC INFORMATION  
COMMITTEE MEETING**

New York Inter-Group Office  
NOVEMBER 23<sup>RD</sup>

7 pm

**28TH ANNUAL  
BROOKLYN  
SPIRITUAL  
BREAKFAST**

**DECEMBER 6, 2015**

**9:30 AM - 1 PM**

**Dyker Beach**

**Golf Course**

1030 86<sup>th</sup> Street

Brooklyn, NY 11228

**\$30 Tickets Available**

For more info, please  
contact Evelyn R.

**evelynrbklynaa@**

**gmail.com**

# soberNOTES

Send all letters to [sobernews@nyintergroup.org](mailto:sobernews@nyintergroup.org)

Please specify if you wish to have your name and home group printed

## Packing My Bags

Well, 2015 came upon us quickly. Why it's almost like yesterday when 2010 hosted the International Convention in San Antonio, Texas!

As we speak (or read), I am packing my bags, and heading off to Atlanta, Georgia, land of peaches. There, I hope to catch up with (approximately) 50,000 of my closest friends from A.A.

The International Conventions are wondrous events, and I would highly recommend attending one if you are able. If you can't make Atlanta, how about packing your bags, and planning a trip to go to the 2020 International Convention in Detroit?

Service with A.A. still excites me. I get very happy meeting new friends, getting local information, attending workshops, and of course, visiting local Inter-Group offices.

Since we are driving, I hope to get

to a few meetings along the way. Hope to see you all on the journey of life.

In Unty,  
Amylynn K.  
Big Book Pioneers

## Beginners' Meetings Have Lost Their Primary Purpose

When I first came to Alcoholics Anonymous in 1991, it was suggested that we start out by briefly sharing how we got here. Then, we focus on giving the tools to the newcomer: don't drink no matter what; carry a meeting book; get a sponsor; get a home group; sit up front at meetings; and carry candy.

Today, it seems like members focus on telling their entire life story. For instance, "I started drinking at the age of six when my father gave me some of his beer...." The speaker doesn't let the newcomer hear what he or she can do to stop

drinking, and how to stay sober in AA. The newcomer hears this type of qualification at a Beginners' Meeting, and then carries it over as the suggested method for how to share. It is discouraging for me to go to a meeting, and to hear a speaker qualify in this manner.

At my home group, we are now suggesting that speakers use the book, *Living Sober*, or an A.A. pamphlet as the basis for. We can't help what they will share, of course, but at least we are making an effort to help them stay on topic.

If a meeting loses its focus, we say, stick to the basics. But what do we say when a meeting has lost its primary purpose? Because, in my opinion, that's exactly what's happened to the Beginners' Meeting.

Respectfully submitted in love and service,

Barbara V.

## Welcome to the Fellowship!

### WEDNESDAY ON WESTCHESTER SQ.

Daytop Village  
2614-16 Halperin Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10461  
Beginners Meeting  
Open Meeting  
WEDNESDAYS  
7: 15 pm

### FRESH START GROUP

Our Lady of  
Assumption Church  
1634 Mahan Avenue  
@ Roberts Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10461  
Closed Discussion Mtg.  
TUESDAYS  
7: 30 pm

### WITHOUT A PRAYER

Goddard Riverside  
Community Center  
Ground Level Art Room  
595 Columbus Avenue  
New York, NY 10024  
Agnostic OD Meeting  
SATURDAYS  
5 pm

### GOTHAM CITY SPEAKERS

St. John & St. Matthew  
Emanuel Lutheran Ch.  
283 Prospect Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11215  
Open Speaker Meeting  
THURSDAYS  
7:30 pm