

sober NEWS

New York Inter-Group
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sobernews@nyintergroup.org



Wanted:

Phone Volunteers

Inter-Group phone volunteers are an integral part of Alcoholics Anonymous. They represent A.A., and may be the first impression callers have of our fellowship. This is the voice of attraction to the new person calling for help. It may be their first step toward finding a new way of life in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. One year of continuous sobriety required. Call or come by the New York Inter-Group office for an orientation.

Welcome to the spring issue of the new Sober News -- twice as big! We want to hear how much you are liking us, where you are finding us (we're online as well) and would love to publish your stories of sober living in New York. We also want more group histories. If your home group is the best (and what is that saying? If it's not, find another home group) we want to publish its history. We would like photos of your group's signage and stories behind that upside-down think sign from the 1950s. Send pictures, stories, questions (we'll try to answer) and suggestions to sobernews@nyintergroup.org.

Thanks and enjoy the issue!

The Editors

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH

2013 BIG MEETING PLANNING COMMITTEE MTG.

New York Inter-Group Office
Monday, March 4th
6:30pm

TELEPHONE VOLUNTEERS COMMITTEE MEETING

NEW YORK INTER-GROUP OFFICE
TUESDAY, MARCH 5TH
6:30PM

CORRECTIONS & TREATMENT FACILITIES LITERATURE PACKING

NEW YORK INTER-GROUP OFFICE
SATURDAY, MARCH 9TH
10AM

SPANISH LANGUAGE CORRECTIONS & TREATMENT FACILITIES COM. MEETING

NEW YORK INTER-GROUP OFFICE
SATURDAY, MARCH 9TH
3PM

2013 BILL W. DINNER PLANNING COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

NEW YORK INTER-GROUP OFFICE
SUNDAY, MARCH 10TH
2PM

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THE 32ND ANNUAL MANHATTAN SHARE-A-DAY

"OUR SOLUTION IS ACTION"

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 2013 9:00AM-5:00PM

THE O.HENRY LEARNING CAMPUS (M070)

333 WEST 17TH STREET (BTWN. 8TH AND 9TH AVENUES)

Coffee, Tea, Breakfast, Lunch Day of FELLOWSHIP!!!

WELCOME MEETING * MEETINGS ALL DAY OLD TIMERS *
YOUNG PEOPLE * BIG MEETING * SPANISH MEETINGS * AL-ANON
* CORRECTIONS * CPC * TREATMENT FACILITIES

ARCHIVES * LITERATURE * GRAPEVINE / La VINAACCESSABILITY
/ SPECIAL NEEDS * CHILD CARE AVAILABLE

Spanish Translation and ASL Interpreter

Visit our website www.manhattanshareaday.org

Email: manhattanshareaday@gmail.com

GETTING SOBER IN NEW YORK

A Newcomer's Experience

By Tara D.

On a recent Wednesday night in our Upper Manhattan apartment, my younger sister expressed concern about me that came out like this: "You have no social life. The only thing you do is go to meetings." To my surprise, I immediately found myself defending Alcoholics Anonymous this way: "I like it."

Until that moment I hadn't realized that was true, or how integral the fellowship has been in my recovery. But AA has become my newfound social outlet, a safe place where I know others feel as socially awkward and strange as I do. Of course, in replying to my sister, I left that last bit of information out. But I'm realizing that many non-alcoholics think of AA as she does: a kooky club for recovery—you go there for treatment and commiseration and nothing else. I mean, if you can't have a few drinks, then how are you having fun?

For months after rehab I asked myself the same question, believing that there would be no fun in recovery. And at meetings where people seemed so happy, talking about their "pink cloud" moments, I could hardly force a smile. I know now that I simply was not ready to feel differently — and that's OK. You need not measure your progress against that of others. Each alcoholic has his or her own timeline.

It's been close to a year and a half since I've touched a drink or a drug, and I'm slowly opening myself up to new experiences that used to scare me or cause serious anxiety. I have to remind myself daily that my past doesn't define me today and that many others have drunk and drugged as much as I did but never had the courage, opportunity, or knowledge to seek treatment. Because my bottom was so public, humiliating and life-changing, the thought of even speaking with people who knew the details of my downfall was terrifying. I was, and still am at times, so afraid that others will judge me as harshly as I have judged myself.

But that's just it. People in AA often don't know the details of my offenses, nor do they care. They recognize that alcohol fueled and poisoned most of our actions and relationships. Understanding this commonality allowed me to open up a bit. I started to feel for the first time in a long while that people in AA actually saw me the way I am today—strong and warm and compassionate. That's how I was before alcohol killed my soul and transformed me into a cold and angry person.

So I make meetings a part of my routine. I know that I have to keep going, even if I don't always enjoy them or grow tired of people repeating how "grateful" they are in a quasi-robotic mantra. I realize that you don't have to dump all your issues there, or even at all; that being honest means being honest with yourself and that sharing should be focused on topics as they pertain to alcohol.

Thankfully there has been little judgment. Even those who share deeper descriptions of their lives before they got sober seem to feel safe because, given our self-destructive tendencies, we all could have done such things under the influence.

Do you have a story to tell? Do you want to share your experiences of getting sober in New York? Let Sober News know so that we can all celebrate your sobriety Send story submissions to sobernews@nyintergroup.org.

An Old-Timer's Experience

By Herb A.

Walking through the doors of A.A. back in January of 1983, it was the first time in a long time that I felt welcome. That was also the first time I realized I wasn't unique. Seeing you people, hearing your stories, finding out that you thought and felt the same way I did—it threw my entire world upside down. But it also calmed me down. It meant that I wasn't alone, that I was just another garden-variety drunk.

My sponsor gave me the inside scoop on the fellowship. Because I didn't know what A.A. was all about. Was it a cult? Was it some kind of religion? Was I going to have to shave my head and play tambourines out at the airport somewhere? The thing is, even if they had asked me, I would have done it. That's how desperate I was to get sober.

My sponsor also told me I needed to get phone numbers and go out to fellowship after the meetings. I hated going out with people. I didn't know what to talk about. Without a drink, I just felt so awkward. Again, I only did it because my sponsor said so. That's probably the one thing I did right. I followed suggestions. I went out with people, despite how I felt. And what did we talk about? Drinking, of course. I got lucky in that respect. Drinking gave me solid basis for discussion. By the end of my first year, I felt like I could talk to anyone.

Later, I met a woman, Mary R., who taught me about sober dances. Again, it was awkward, at first. I didn't know how to act. But I had no place else to go. I had to replace the bar scene. Not only did I stick with it, I found that I really enjoyed myself.

Another suggestion I listened to was to get a home group. Mine is TGIF&S. I first heard about it through my friends, Stewart and Holly. They were going to Grammarcy, but they said there was another group nearby, on 15th Street. They took me to the Friday night Beginner's Meeting. At the time, it was held in a kindergarten class. There were twenty of us in that meeting, and we all had to sit in little baby chairs. I thought it was some form of psychological warfare. It was as if I was being reduced to a child, so I could start my life over again. And that's just what I did.

Today I enjoy my life as much as I can. I teach dancing once a week. Whenever I can I go to the weekly disco-hustle party at Stepping Out Studios in Chelsea. There's alcohol there, but nobody drinks much. They're there to dance, like me. But I always remember I can't do it by myself. I need my sponsor, my sponsees and my meetings to stay sober. It's not all work though. And after thirty years of sobriety, I can honestly say that the Promises are very real.

GROUP HISTORY

46th Street Group

All Saint's Church
 43-12 46th Street
 between Queens Boulevard & 43rd Avenue
 Sunnyside, NY
 Mondays 8pm
 Wednesdays 6:30pm & 8pm

By Elena W.

"I came to my first AA meeting in March of 1975. I started at 46th Street and haven't had another home group. That first night, Lou K. came up and shook my hand. He was jovial and happy, and I thought, what the hell is wrong with that guy?"

"I felt like I was going crazy. They told me to come back, so I did. They told me to 'start where you stand,' so I did. AA, and 46th Street, is the primary thing that gave me my life. -Mildred C.

The 46th Street Group was established April 6th, 1963. Contrary to popular belief, the group's name didn't come from its street address, but from the fact that many of its founders belonged to Union Local 46 of Wire Lathers. The first meetings were held in a members' basement, but it seemed lone female member to from a basement with so the meeting was Hall. Six months later, to our current home at



At the beginning, set up in a horse-coffee on each table afforded everyone the opportunity to share, and after everyone was permitted and a cloudy haze of in the air. There was a large fan for help. As we grew, we moved to an auditorium where we share by show

fewer in number to be sure, now congregate outside at the 5-minute break.

Two beautiful artifacts can be seen at each meeting: the wooden slogan tree, which was given to Florence (Flo) M., who then donated it to the group, and the wooden "steps" podium, handcrafted by Willie, a carpenter from Whitestone.

Members agree that among the many strengths of the 46th Street Group is our fidelity to singleness of purpose, and our deep commitment to the newcomer. Beverly explained, "Jack brought me to 46th Street on January 20, 1974 - my first day without a drink. I walked in, sat down, and stayed. I felt safe here, like I could finally be the 'good' me, like I was on the right road. Today, 46th Street helps me to keep going. Wherever 46th Street goes, I will follow."

The dedication of our founders can be felt across Western Queens, as the 46th Street Group gave rise to four other groups, all of which are still active today: New Leaf, Why Not?, A Step Forward, and Alive Again. We think of this original group with immense gratitude: Georgie B., Frank P., Gene R., Tim B., Pat R., Chuck C. David B., Ace R., John R., Buddy F., John D., Frank B., Joe D., and Marianne L.

UPCOMING EVENTS

(CONTINUED FROM FIRST PAGE)

MARCH

GROUP RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

NEW YORK INTER-GROUP OFFICE
TUESDAY, MARCH 12TH
6:30PM

BRONX AREA FORUM

WESTCHESTER UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH
2547 EAST TREMONT AVENUE
BRONX, NY 10461
LEADER: KARL B.
SATURDAY, MARCH 16TH
2:30PM

BROOKLYN AREA FORUM

FIRST UNITARIAN
CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL
121 PIERREPONT STREET
BROOKLYN, NY 11201
LEADER: BARBARA L.
SATURDAY, MARCH 16TH
2PM

QUEENS AREA FORUM

OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL
64-33 WODHAVEN BLVD
CORNER OF 64TH DRIVE
REGO PARK, NY 11374
LEADER: AMY S.
SATURDAY, MARCH 16TH
4PM

APRIL

MANHATTAN AREA FORUM

NEW YORK INTER-GROUP OFFICE
LEADER: SHERRY P.
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3RD
7PM

CORRECTIONS & TREATMENT CTFC CONFERENCE

PUBLIC SCHOOL 41
116 WEST 11TH STREET
@ 6TH AVENUE
LEADER: NYE B.
SATURDAY, APRIL 20TH
8:30AM