

# SOBER NEWS

## NEW YORK INTER-GROUP – SUMMER 2008

307 Seventh Avenue (28<sup>th</sup> Street), Room 201, New York, NY 10001-6007

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Website: [www.nyintergroup.org](http://www.nyintergroup.org) (includes Meeting List)

E-mail: [sobernews@nyintergroup.org](mailto:sobernews@nyintergroup.org)

*I am responsible...*

*When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,*

*I want the hand of A.A. always to be there,*

*And for that I am responsible.*

### Service in Pajamas

Calls to New York Inter-Group between 10 pm and 2 am are forwarded to a volunteer's home. I have been doing this service for about eight years. I liked the idea of doing service at home, pajama clad, and alone.

I was nervous. What would I say to perhaps desperate, perhaps drunk people? How could I help? In the middle of the night, I would really be on my own. Was I good enough, wise enough, knowledgeable enough? This was all about me. I was going to save lives. How self-important!

Callers were sometimes without hope: they had problems as a result of their alcoholism: broken marriages, destroyed careers, shattered lives. How could I solve all of these problems?! In fact, I made more than one middle-of-the-night call to AAs who had been sober for many years and had done a lot of service. They suggested that I stick to my job: passing the AA message of hope and recovery based on what I did to stay sober one day at a time. They suggested appropriate pages in the "Big Book" I could recommend to callers as sources of guidance and hope. They suggested that I calm down and get out of the way. They suggested something radical: keep it simple, they said. What an idea!

I could repeat that it was necessary to stay sober only for the rest of today. I could suggest thanking a Higher Power for sobriety before falling asleep, and asking a Higher Power in the morning for help staying sober that day. I could suggest reading *A Vision for You* in the "Big Book." I could assure the caller with the shattered life that there was hope: that I, too, had had a demolished life but had recovered by taking some simple suggestions.

In each case, I asked my Higher Power for help in letting go of the outcome.

I learned that all I could share was my experience, strength and hope. I was responsible for taking the hand of a suffering alcoholic and sharing the hope I had found; maybe finding a meeting for the next day. I did not have to solve all of the callers' problems, resolve all of their lives' situations. It was not even about me and what I

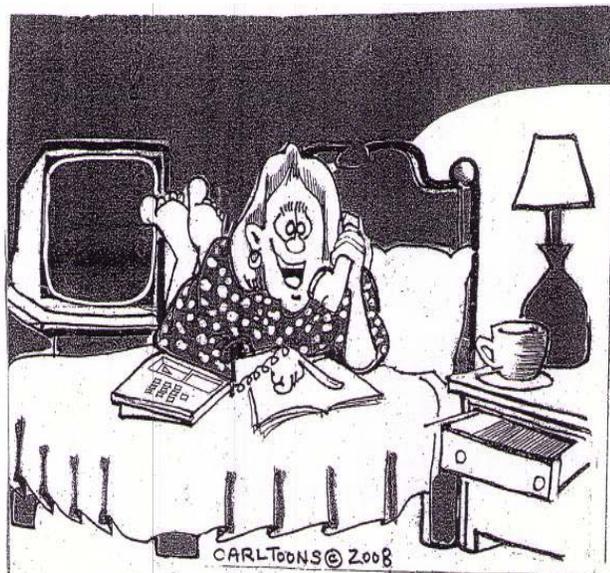
could do. It was about Step Twelve: carrying the message of recovery and hope.

And I realized that, of course, I had never been alone. My Higher Power was there beside me all through the night.

I love doing this service. I keep it simple, sharing only my experience, strength, and hope. When I relinquished the illusions of control and power I became able to humbly offer love and hope. Moreover, I found that these callers gave as much to me as I had offered to them: they reminded me of the dark place to which I could return if I picked up the first drink and they invigorated my gratitude for the miracle of my sobriety.

Joy of joys, sometimes callers do indeed thank me for helping them get through another day sober. This is gratifying. But mostly this service lets me forget about ME, takes me out of self-pity, and lets me extend the hand of AA as it was extended to me.

Leeza C., Manhattan



## Call Forwarding & Anonymity

AA members who volunteer to answer calls to NY Inter-Group via call forwarding can rest assured that the volunteer's phone number is protected. Between 10 pm and 2 am, callers dial only the phone number of NY Inter-Group; the call is forwarded to the member's home by the telephone company computer. As for call volume, volunteers report that they receive between three and twelve calls per four-hour shift.

Call NY Inter-Group between 9 am and 9 pm to arrange for a brief orientation for this very important service.

The Editors, *Sober News*

### **In this issue:**

- A member shares his first experience at the annual Bill W. Dinner.
- A caller asks what it means to be an inter-group delegate.
- The Public Information Committee speaks at a high school and gets letters from some students.
- ***Opportunities for growth: calendar of upcoming events.***

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## **My First Bill W. Dinner Experience**

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I had my last drink on October 18, 1989. I began my treatment in a detox, after which I spent 42 days in rehab and five months in a halfway house in the Bronx. As I started my journey in sobriety, I became active in a couple of home groups and attended many meetings on the Harlem circuit (the Mid-Harlem, St. Nicholas, Salem, and Riverton groups).

As a result of my getting active in the fellowship, a long timer, who noticed my commitment to my sobriety, donated two tickets to the 1990 Bill W. Dinner, to be held at the Hilton Hotel. As a newcomer, I had no idea what the dinner was for or about. I didn't know what to wear; I didn't know what to expect. A member who was active in service came to my rescue: he explained that the dinner was held to celebrate Bill W.'s December 1934 sobriety date and that it is a 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition fundraiser to help support New York Inter-Group. He told me that the dinner is semi-formal and he suggested that I rent a tuxedo. At that time, I had been sober for about a year; I didn't have a credit card for this rental, but my sober friend kindly

rented everything I needed. He allowed me to pay him back, in cash: it felt good to be self-supporting through my own contribution.

On the night of the dinner, a member of the fellowship picked up my date and me and we drove downtown to the Hilton. When I walked through the revolving doors and was greeted by the folks on the hospitality committee, I felt like I had "arrived." I was wearing a white dinner jacket, black tuxedo pants, black patent leather pumps, and a white winged-collar shirt with a black bow tie; and my date didn't look bad either! I was overwhelmed with gratitude. While taking in the sight of approximately 2,000 sober alcoholics and their families – all dressed up and shined up – I started to really understand what a wonderful fellowship I was now a part of. There were women in beautiful evening gowns, draped with jewelry; men in all sorts of formal attire, and some in military uniforms and even a few wearing kilts. As I wandered the banquet hall, saying hello to old friends and meeting new ones, I felt as dashing as Rick (Humphrey Bogart!) in Casablanca.

That was the first of many Bill W. Dinners I've had the privilege to attend over the years, as the dinner moved from the Hilton to the Marriott and then back to the Hilton. I've heard some inspiring speakers, made many new friends, and have been honored to sponsor a couple of newcomers to their own first experiences. I'm looking forward to this year's dinner on November 8, 2008. I hope to see you all there.

Yours in service,

Dan J.,

2008 Bill W. Dinner Chair

## **NY Inter-Group belongs to you!**

Honor your sponsor's, your sponsee's, even your own sober anniversary in the spirit of AA with a 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition contribution to NY Inter-Group. Some among us have found deep satisfaction in helping our inter-group stay open to keep on answering phones, sending mailings, producing our meeting book, maintaining a website. We also provide forums where groups can interact and work together and we provide the structure for committees which carry the message to hospitals and prisons, and which communicate with the professional community and the general public.

Gratefully,  
The Editors

## *A caller asks:*

### What Does an Inter-Group Delegate do?

**IG volunteer:** AA, can I help you?

**Caller:** My group just chose me to be the new inter-group delegate – what is that?

**IG volunteer:** Inter-group delegates represent their groups at the quarterly delegates' meetings and the area forums in each county. Forums provide members with the opportunity to hear about NY Inter-Group's activities and to voice their group's conscience about the operation of the Inter-Group office.

**Caller:** How do I find out when I have to be at these meetings and where they are?

**IG volunteer:** NY Inter-Group has a group update form which should be filled out whenever there is a change in group information. For example, meeting schedule changes, new officers or group's location. This update form can be sent to NY Inter-Group via regular mail or fax. These numbers are printed on the update form. When this form is received at the NY Inter-Group office, you, as the new inter-group delegate, will be put on the mailing list and be kept up to date on current and upcoming events.

**Caller:** Is there a Web site?

**IG volunteer:** Yes there is – the Web address is [www.nyintergroup.org](http://www.nyintergroup.org).

**Caller:** What about anonymity? I never use my last name in my home group.

**IG volunteer:** NY Inter-Group seriously guards the information it receives. Last names are used for mailings to keep you and your group aware of the opportunities for service. Inter-Group does not share mailing lists with any organization – only meeting information is shared with other area inter-groups.

**Has being an inter-group delegate enhanced your sobriety? Share your Sober News with us by mail, E-mail, or fax, shown at the top of page one of this issue.**

### **Excerpts of letters received at New York Inter-Group office from students after a Public Information (P.I.) Committee presentation at their school by two AA members:**

*Names withheld.*

“These days, most of us teenagers drink every weekend and don't know the consequences.”

“I really appreciated your visit to my class...the conversations that we had filled me with interest because this disease killed my grandfather.”

“What really surprised me was when I asked if you guys have ever given up on a member and you both replied ‘No’; I thought that if people relapsed more than a certain number of times, you all would have given up on them.”

“Thank you for coming to my school. You helped me to realize how many people around me could have a problem.”

The Public Information Committee of NY Inter-Group prepares speakers and then sends them to speak at schools, senior centers, or other organizations which have requested a speaker from AA. These AA members talk about the AA program, based on our Twelve Traditions and Preamble. The talk is followed by a question-and-answer period.

If this form of Twelfth Step work appeals to you, please call NY Inter-Group at (212) 647-1680, or E-mail [generalinformation@nyintergroup.org](mailto:generalinformation@nyintergroup.org), for more information.

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### **Closed for a holiday? Having a celebration? Let us know!**

Will your meeting be closed on any upcoming holidays? Is your group holding a special event such as the group's anniversary celebration? Notify NY Inter-Group, giving full details!

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NY Inter-Group Calendar of Events, June 2008:

Mark your calendar: August, September, October 2008:

Office Telephone and Call Forwarding Volunteer Orientation, NY Inter-Group office, 307 7th Avenue, @ 27th & 28th Streets, Room 201, Manhattan, 10001. Orientations are held Monday morning, between 9 am and 1:30 pm; Wednesday, Thursday and Friday between 6 pm and 9 pm; and Saturday afternoon between 1:30 pm and 6 pm. No appointment is necessary for those time periods. If you are unable to attend at any of these times, please contact a NY Inter-Group staff member at (212) 647-1680 to arrange a convenient orientation time. One-year of continuous sobriety is required to answer telephones at NY Inter-Group.

**June 15th**

Big Meeting, (AA's 73rd Birthday), 1:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M., @ The New York Hilton Hotel 1335 Avenue of Americas, (between 53rd & 54th Streets), Grand Ballroom 3rd Floor, New York, N.Y 10019. Three-speaker open meeting. It is a free event; no tickets are required. There will be a Seventh Tradition collection.

**June 17th**

Queens Corrections and Treatment Facilities Committee Meeting, 7 P.M., Our Lady of the Cenacle School Cafeteria, 87-25 136th Street, Hillside Avenue and Van Wyck Expressway, Richmond Hill, 11418. Meeting is held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, same time and location.

**June 19th**

Manhattan Corrections and Treatment Facilities Committee Meeting, 6:30 P.M., NY Inter-Group Office, 307 7th Avenue, Room 201, @ 27th & 28th Streets, Manhattan, 10001. Meeting is held on the 3rd Thursday of the month, same time and location.

**June 20th**

Bronx Corrections and Treatment Facilities Committee Meeting, 7:00 P.M., St. Nicholas of Tolentine, @ Fordham Road and Andrews Avenue, University Heights group meeting place Bronx, 10468. Meeting is held the 3rd Friday of the month, same time and location.

**June 23rd**

Staten Island Corrections and Treatment Facilities Committee Meeting, 7:00 P.M., How Club, 252A Port Richmond Avenue, Staten Island, N.Y. 10302. Meeting is held the 4th Monday of the month, same time and location.

**June 28th**

Brooklyn Corrections and Treatment Facilities Committee Meeting, 1 P.M., 103 Quincy Street, Between Franklin & Classon Avenue, Basement, Daily Reflection Workshop group meeting place, Brooklyn, 11238. Meeting is held the last Saturday each month, same time and location.

Please note on your August, September, and November 2008 calendars:

**August 2nd**

The Corrections and Treatment Facilities Committee's Literature Fund Dinner and Dance: 8 PM – 1 AM at Antun's Restaurant, 96-43 Springfield Boulevard, Queens Village, NY. The net proceeds from the committee's only annual fund-raising event are used to purchase AA conference-approved literature for distribution to the institutions and correctional facilities it services and to pay for participation in conferences related to treatment and correction facility activities. For directions, contact Antun's Restaurant at (718) 468-6400. Tickets cost \$65.00 and are available now at the NY Inter-Group office, Monday through Friday, from 9 AM to 5 PM. For further information, you may call the NY Inter-Group office at (212) 647-1680 or (914) 949-1200.

**September 13th**

NY Inter-Group delegates' quarterly meeting: Noon at PS 41, 6th Avenue and 11th Street, Manhattan, 10011.

**November 8th**

The Bill W. Dinner: New York Hilton Hotel, 1335 Avenue of the Americas (between 53rd & 54th Streets), Manhattan, 10019, in the Grand Ballroom on the 3rd floor. This event celebrates the 74th anniversary of the sobriety date, December 11th, 1934, of AA's co-founder, Bill W. The net proceeds from the Bill W. Dinner help keep the doors of NY Inter-Group open, the phones answered, and the meeting book printed and up to date. The Afternoon Program begins at 1 PM and ends at 4 PM; no tickets are needed for the afternoon activities. The Bill W. Dinner begins promptly at 7 PM. The doors open for seating at 6:45 PM. Tickets for the Bill W. Dinner cost \$100.00. There are 10 seats per table. You can pick up tickets for the Bill W. Dinner at NY Inter-Group, Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM. You will need to bring a check payable to NY Inter-Group, or cash. If you need additional information, please call NY Inter-Group at (212) 647-1680 or (914) 949-1200.