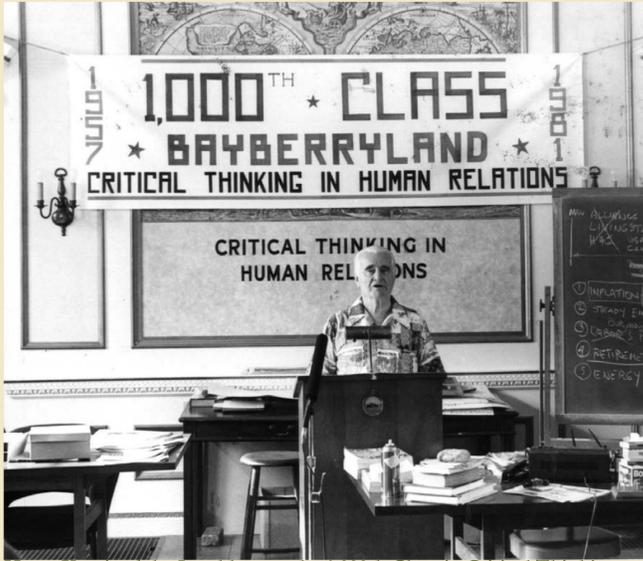




Harry Van Arsdale, Jr. 1905-1986



Harry Van Arsdale, Jr. addresses the 1,000th Class in Critical Thinking at Bayberry Land 1981. Courtesy IBEW Local No. 3, Educational Foundation

The man dubbed “Mr. New York City labor” was born on November 23, 1905, in the Hell’s Kitchen area of Manhattan, the son of a union electrician. In 1933, Van Arsdale took on the role of Business Manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local No. 3

Van Arsdale used his union position to better the lives of his men through a 7 hour work-day, pensions, free dental care and medical checkups, paid vacations, and cooperative housing. In 1962 he pushed to open up the trades to 1,000 new apprentices, many of whom were members of minority groups. He believed in training people, since he saw that education led to immediate economic improvements and was a path to a better and more just society.

Efrem A. Kahn convinced Van Arsdale and the Union leadership that they should build a convalescent home for union members. In 1949,

the committee including Van Arsdale and Harry F. Fishbach, found Bayberry Land to be a suitable location, and purchased it from Pauline Davis for \$131,250.

The manor, closed since the 1942 Davis departure, was in rough shape. However, the Union’s resident director, Oscar Schniedenbach, was able to rehabilitate the manor and to smooth over community relations among townspeople who feared a rabble of Communists at Bayberry Land. After five years, IBEW determined that the rest home was underutilized, due to the distance between Southampton and New York City. Van Arsdale suggested that the education committee use Bayberry Land as a residential center. Established in 1957, the educational facility offered a curriculum entitled “Critical Thinking in Human Behavior,” which was designed to teach local No. 3 members how to think. The course of study included semantics, logic, history, and psychology.



Harry Van Arsdale Jr. and Mayor of New York, Robert F. Wagner, at Bayberry Land. Courtesy of IBEW Local No. 3, Educational Foundation Archives



IBEW Local No.3 Committee for Educational and Cultural Fund established Bayberry Land as a convalescent and educational center. Courtesy IBEW Local No. 3, Educational Foundation

In 1971 Van Arsdale was instrumental in creating a summer camp at Bayberry Land for the children of union members, disadvantaged children, and Boy Scouts. Known as Camp Integrity, the camp provided opportunities for children to enjoy the outdoors and learn leadership and survival skills.

Van Arsdale’s efforts to educate the members of IBEW Local No. 3 extended far beyond the Bayberry Land Center for Critical Thinking to include college scholarships for members’ children, library branches, continuing education courses through the Cornell School of Labor and Industrial Relations, High School equivalency programs, and finally the establishment of Empire State College and the Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies.



Architect’s drawing for Convalescent Facility Center expansion in 1969 including residences, a new administration building, and a recreation center. Courtesy IBEW Local No. 3, Educational Foundation

Van Arsdale had an active role representing the interests of labor in New York City until slowed by cancer in 1982. He retreated to Bayberry Land, where he continued to work on behalf of Local No. 3 until hospitalized in New York. Van Arsdale died in February, 1986, at the age of 80. Over three thousand people attended his funeral service at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Manhattan.