



The Suffolk Intergroup

# BULLETIN

Volume 42, Number 3

JULY 2015

## A HAPPY AND SOBER FOURTH



### SEARCHING FOR A HIGHER POWER

By Ed H.

*Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet,*

*Closer is He than breathing; and nearer than hands and feet.*

English Poet Laureate Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote what appears above in his poem *The Higher Pantheism*. The death of Tennyson's best friend had sent him spiraling between faith and doubt.

In reflecting on my own life I herein acknowledge that I've had very little faith throughout my life and this has been accompanied by a mountain of doubt. I seemed to have always held the notion that life's great mystery would reveal itself to me in the next book I read. I didn't know then that life's mystery must be lived, not read about. I was reading books about Masonry, philosophy, psychology, metaphysics, biofeedback and psychic phenomena. Anything new that came along – I jumped into it.

When the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi came to America I dove into transcendental meditation. I was looking for "wisdom from the East," so to speak. When that faded I tried dianetics and scientology. I took the Course in Miracles. Then I tried Rosicrucianism. After that it was theosophy. Nothing and no one could clear up the confusion within me. I had plenty of anger within me and the anger was nothing more than fear in disguise. Surely it was a sage who suggested,

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## NOTES FROM THE BIG BOOK



There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance - that principle is contempt prior to investigation.

(Herbert Spencer)

The terms "spiritual experience" and "spiritual awakening" are used many times in this book which, upon careful reading, shows that the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism has manifested itself among us in many different forms.

Yet it is true that our first printing gave many readers the impression that these personality changes, or religious experiences, must be in the nature of sudden and spectacular upheavals. Happily for everyone, this conclusion is erroneous.

In the first few chapters a number of sudden revolutionary changes are described. Though it was not our intention to create such an impression, many alcoholics have nevertheless concluded that in order to recover they must acquire an immediate and overwhelming "God-consciousness" followed at once by a vast change in feeling and outlook.

Among our rapidly growing membership of thousands of alcoholics such transformations, though frequent, are by no means the rule. Most of our experiences are what the psychologist William James calls the "educational variety" because they develop slowly over a period of time. Quite often

friends of the newcomer are aware of the difference long before he is himself. He finally realizes that he has undergone a profound alteration in his reaction to life; that such a change could hardly have been brought about by himself alone. What often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of self-discipline. With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves.

Most of us think this awareness of a Power greater than ourselves is the essence of spiritual experience. Our more religious members call it "God-consciousness."

Most emphatically we wish to say that any alcoholic capable of honestly facing his problems in the light of our experience can recover, provided he does not close his mind to all spiritual concepts. He can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial.

We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. *Willingness, honesty and open mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.*

### *A Higher Power*

*Continued from page 1)*

"The effort to escape the truth is the father of all anxiety."

At forty-two years of age I was confronted with the realization that I had been abusing the use of alcohol and that was the truth I had been evading.

I found myself looking truth square in the face and the choices were to either deny it or accept it. Some folks helped me with the acceptance and as a result some semblance of serenity has entered my life.

The people who helped me address the problem suggested that having faith in a power greater than me might be necessary if I wished to not lapse back into a state of inebriety.

The word "spirit" derives from both Latin and Greek. To breathe in is to inspire (take in spirit) and the word expire originally meant to breathe out spirit.

In the simple act of breathing we are taking in power and breathing out power. I had been searching for a Higher Power too high and too far up. Actually there was a Higher Power nearer than hands and feet.



## Group History of the Month

### THE BOHO GROUP

Bohemia NY 11716

In 2008, a member of the congregation at the True North Community Church, then located in Port Jefferson, won 3 million dollars in a New York scratch-off lottery. He immediately turned that winning ticket over to his pastor. According to a newspaper story, one of Pastor Bert Crabbe's wishes was to find a bigger home for his growing flock. Some of that lottery money has gone towards the new church. They are now located on Lakeland Avenue in Bohemia. This is not your typical setting for a church. The church shares a gigantic modern building with a manufacturer. This is the home of the Boho Group.

Lisa M. was stricken with that age-old alcoholic remedy for resentment: start your own group. One day at her old group, an A.A. with two months sobriety was chosen to speak at the beginners meeting. Lisa's sponsee had an issue with this as did Lisa. This is usually the motivation to get a new group going and that is exactly what Lisa did.

Lisa is a practicing member of The True North Community Church, which is non-denominational. It was home to the 2011 Big Meeting, the annual Suffolk A.A. event, which was a huge

success. So Lisa approached Pastor Bert who opened up his heart and church to the new group. The meeting would be held in the café because as the clergyman put it "alcoholics shouldn't be in the basement anymore."

The first meeting was on November 4, 2011. At that meeting when the question was asked "Is there anyone new to this meeting?" everyone in the room raised a hand. As Lisa remembered this, tears were in her eyes. A schedule was set up: Friday 7:00PM beginners followed by an 8:15PM Big Book and on Sundays at 3:00PM. The Sunday time slot was chosen because "there are meetings at 2:00 and 4:00, so this fills a gap."

There is a symbiotic relationship with Talbot House. Talbot sends people to service at this church and when there Pastor Bert frequently makes mention of the A.A. meetings there, so people come back when they are discharged. One day the reverend mentioned the new meeting and as a result, five people attended that very day. Several sober houses in the area also provide attendees. Lisa does a meeting at C.K. Post and that also brings in some ladies from the rehab. So the word is getting out there!

S.I.A. Archives     January 2, 2012

The Archives Committee is always looking for volunteers to help save our Alcoholics Anonymous history.

Contact the SIA Office at 654-1150.





## Responsibility and Commitment

Very frequently in recent years, I hear people at meetings thank the person who has led the meeting for doing service. I think of service as what the volunteers on various SIA and GSO committees do and of the individuals who bring meetings to treatment facilities week after week (just two examples) – but not just taking the occasional speaking commitment. I have been taught that taking speaking commitments is a responsibility and a duty and is one of the essential elements of my personal sobriety. I do it for my own benefit and if, by speaking, I can help someone else that is a bonus.

Not very long after my 90<sup>th</sup> day of sobriety, I was told five minutes before a meeting that I was the speaker that night. I was terrified but managed to get through it somehow. After that meeting, my sponsor told me that I should put my name on the group calendar for an outside speaking commitment once a month. Furthermore, he added, if I took a commitment that I was unable to fulfill for any reason, it was my responsibility to make certain that another member of the group filled that commitment.

In recent years, in my opinion, I have noticed a definite decline in that level of responsibility and commitment. I have chaired my group's open two speaker meeting for the last year. During the first six months, we got speakers for this meeting, as we always had, through the quarterly exchange meeting and during that time at least 50% of the speakers were no-shows, leaving me to scramble for "volunteer" speakers at the last minute. This was true of other group meetings we tried to fill through the exchange. We made a change six months ago to address this issue. It became the responsibility of our chair people to obtain speakers for all of our group's meetings. The result has been that all of our speakers have fulfilled their commitments.

I have gone to the last two exchange meetings only to book outgoing speaking commitments for our group members. (That is quite an experience. It supposedly begins at 8:00 AM. Get there at 8:00 and you'll be all alone in the parking lot. In December, my fingers were numb by the time I finished and in March everyone got wet. There really should be a better way but "A.A. as such is never organized.")

I probably sound like a cranky, whiny complainer to some but there are times when I am somewhat concerned about the future of A.A. Among my other pet peeves: anniversary alcoholics who are rarely at group meetings but never miss their anniversaries, people who take commitments within the group and don't fulfill them, knowing someone else will fill in for them, and people who join a group knowing their schedule will prevent them from making group meetings (they should probably join a group they can actually attend regularly).

Fortunately, there are quite a few members of Alcoholic Anonymous who are dedicated to carrying the message of A. A. If we had to rely only on the people who are content to be part-time members and who have no regard for the importance of commitment, many a meeting would disappear and there would be fewer opportunities for newcomers to receive the help they need. I have found that it is very true that you have to give it away if you want to keep it. That is our primary purpose. People who don't do this, I believe, do so at their peril. I often look at the sign that is next to the speaker's podium at our meeting. It reads: *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!*

**- Dan S., Patchogue Group**

## FREE OFFER!

We would like to email you your own copy of the Bulletin! Please send your email address to [bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org) and include "Send me my copy" in the body of the message.

## GROUP HISTORY

*(Continued from page 3)*

The meeting is held in a large room called the cafe near the entrance of the church. It has the ambiance of a Starbucks with small round tables, lounge chairs and sofas. On the Sunday the Archives visited there were different coffees, hot chocolates, pastries, cookies and bagels for the taking. Much of this is left over from the earlier church services and would be discarded. The thirty in attendance were trying their hardest to make sure that nothing went to waste.

The name BOHO is an abbreviated version of Bohemia but nothing at this meeting is a shortened version of what recovery is all about. The church may have expanded due to the luck of a lottery ticket but this group will no doubt grow thanks to the enthusiasm of its people. Sobriety doesn't involve luck but this meeting is a lucky break for those in need of the message of recovery in the immediate area.



**113-8 Bay Ave. / P.O. Box 659, Patchogue, NY 11772 (631) 654-1150**

## **The Bulletin**

Is published monthly by the Suffolk Intergroup Association of Alcoholics Anonymous, PO Box 659 Patchogue, NY 11772. "Alcoholics Anonymous" and "AA" are registered trademarks of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Quotes from AAWS literature and AA Grapevine are used with permission.

## **Please note:**

Inclusion of articles and announcements in The Bulletin does not constitute endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous or Suffolk Intergroup Association. Rather, members of Alcoholics Anonymous have been encouraged to share their experience, strength and hope through this publication. Opinions expressed are those of the writer unless otherwise noted. Suffolk Intergroup makes these articles and announcements available solely as a service to the reader.

Brian C., Editor

## **Intergroup Officers**

Chairperson Fred H. [Chairman@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Chairman@suffolkny-aa.org)

Alt Chair Vikki B. [Alt-chair@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Alt-chair@suffolkny-aa.org)

Treasurer Linda C. [Treasurer@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Treasurer@suffolkny-aa.org)

Corr. Sec Marie V. [Corsec@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Corsec@suffolkny-aa.org)

Recording Sec Daniel W. [Recsec@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Recsec@suffolkny-aa.org)

### **Committee Chairs**

Answering Service Dolores [Phones@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Phones@suffolkny-aa.org)

Archives (open) ..... [Archives@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Archives@suffolkny-aa.org)

Bulletin Brian C. .... [Bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org)

Corrections Kevin ..... [Correct@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Correct@suffolkny-aa.org)

Grapevine Lee ..... [Grapevine@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Grapevine@suffolkny-aa.org)

Literature Mike W. .... [Books@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Books@suffolkny-aa.org)

Meeting List George D. ... [Meetings@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Meetings@suffolkny-aa.org)

Office Manager Karen D. .... [Siaoffice@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Siaoffice@suffolkny-aa.org)

Public Information Eileen Z. .. [Pubinfo@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Pubinfo@suffolkny-aa.org)

Schools Eileen Z. .... [Schools@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Schools@suffolkny-aa.org)

Special Events Dawn C. .... [SpecEvent@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:SpecEvent@suffolkny-aa.org)

Third Legacy Kevin C. ... [Thirdleg@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Thirdleg@suffolkny-aa.org)

Treatment Facilities Tom M. [Treatment@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Treatment@suffolkny-aa.org)

Webmaster Troy ..... [Websup@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:Websup@suffolkny-aa.org)

## **HotLine July Commitments**

July 5-11 Area 270 Pat McK

July 12- 18 Area 40 Bob L and Marion I

July 19-25 Area 220 Bob P

July 26- Aug 1 Area 230 Jon G

## **Thanks to June's Volunteers**

Area 70 Mike M-

12 Steps of Hope Bay Shore

Area 50 Ron A- N.

Babylon Phelps Lane

Area 100 Dave

Coram- Farmingville Open Arms6

Area 80 Woof

various groups

## **August Meetings**

**Archives Committee:** Check with SIA Office

**Institutions Committee:** 8/19/2015 7:00 PM SIA Office

**Public Information Committee:** 8/18/2015 7:00 PM SIA Office

**SIA Monthly Business Meeting:** 8/4/2015

True North Community Church

Lakeland Ave., Bohemia

**7:00 PM** New Group Rep Orientation

**7:00 PM** Share-a-Thon

**8:00 PM** Intergroup Meeting

**SIA Officers & Chairs:** 8/25/2015 7:00 PM SIA Office

**Suffolk General Service:** 8/21/2015 8:00 PM

True North Community Church,

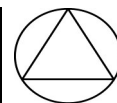
Lakeland Ave., Bohemia

**Special Events:** 8/4/2015 7:00 PM

True North Community Church

Lakeland Ave., Bohemia

**Third Legacy Committee:** 8/27/2014 7:30 PM SIA Office



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## ARCHIVES CHAIR NEEDED

### Standard Job Description:

An **archivist** (*AR-kiv-ist*) is an information professional who assesses, collects, organizes, preserves, maintains control over, and provides access to records and archives determined to have long-term value. The records maintained by an archivist can be any form of media (photographs, video or sound recordings, letters, documents, electronic records, etc.).

### Intergroup Job Description:

A person of saintly demeanor, unearthly sanguinity and OCD issues who enjoys doing the above described job in the company of the history obsessed

**Please apply to**  
**Intergroup Chair**



The Bulletin staff would like to know what you think of, well, pretty much anything A.A. related. We'd like to make the Bulletin the voice of the members of A.A. in Suffolk County. This means YOU! Tell us what we're doing right. Tell us what we're doing wrong. Share your experience with others.

You can contact the Bulletin via mail sent to the SIA office or by email sent to [bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org](mailto:bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org)

All submissions, written or artwork, are gratefully accepted. - the Editor

## A BRIEF NOTE ON THE EXCHANGE MEETING

Elsewhere in this edition of the Bulletin, Dan S. of the Patchogue Group comments on the joys of standing in the cold and wet to exchange speaking commitments in parking lot seven of the SCCC Selden campus. Dan and many others wonder why we do this at 6:00 AM on a Saturday morning. The short answer is that Intergroup has tried to schedule this meeting differently and YOU WON'T LET US! This story goes back 30 years that I know of, but just to speak to the present problem: Originally, after we lost the ability to hold the meeting in the parking lot at Cleary School because people kept showing up too early, SIA rented the dining area in Babylon Hall (next to parking lot seven) and had the cafeteria opened for us at 9:00 AM on Saturday four times a year. Not only were we warm and dry, but we could buy coffee and breakfast and have tables and chairs to sit at. Gradually, however, the same crowd that insisted on getting to Cleary so early that the school was in session while the meeting was going on in the parking lot began showing up early at SCCC. Eventually, people were showing up so early that the hall wasn't open and they started hanging out in the parking lot. As time went on, more and more people started showing up earlier and earlier, apparently afraid that all the "good" commitments would be taken if they got to the meeting later. At some point, SIA figured out that there was no one actually meeting in the dining room and we stopped renting it. SCCC was kind enough to let us keep meeting in the parking lot. So that's how we got to where we are. A word of advice? If you don't want to meet at 6 AM, don't go at 6 AM, but Intergroup can't stop you if you insist on going.



## A FEW WORDS ON SPONSORSHIP

I cannot say enough about Groups, Sponsors in particular. They both provide what is needed for sobriety.

My introduction to A.A. was in a Rehab before leaving the military, with meetings in and outside. After coming back to New York it wasn't long before I drank. In a couple of months I was back in A.A. with Father Pete's group in Nassau and one in Hauppauge.

Coming back from 10 years in and out of A.A. same Home Group and a new Sponsor things started to change. There was a change in myself also, I had hit bottom. My first Sponsor guided me through the Steps Traditions and taught how to be of Service to the Group and out of the group.

When coming up on 90 days sober, talking to him he asked what I was doing on a certain day. Found out he had signed both of us to speak, I learned a lesson that day, and a lot more followed. I did not think I had anything worthwhile to say 91 days sober. I had no faith I would do what was right. My Sponsor thought otherwise. Before I had my first year sober my Sponsor handed me a blank lighter. When I said he was a little early he said my attitude was different, he saw the change long before me.

When asked to help bring meetings into prison checked with my Sponsor and that led to sponsoring inmates upstate visits, and learning something about Service outside my home group. Another lesson.

All my Sponsors place emphasis on the Steps, Traditions, and Service, in the Group and outside the Group, and are still doing so today.

Kevin C.

Third Legacy Chair

FROM THE ARCHIVES:  
ADS FROM OUR PAST

### ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

*Inquiries Invited*

P. O. BOX 442

HUNTINGTON

## A Program of Attraction

As you can see by these two newspaper notices, it has been a long standing practice to place notices in newspapers to advise the community of Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. We are an anonymous program not a secret society. As such we are of little or no help if the public at large doesn't know we exist or where are meetings are located.

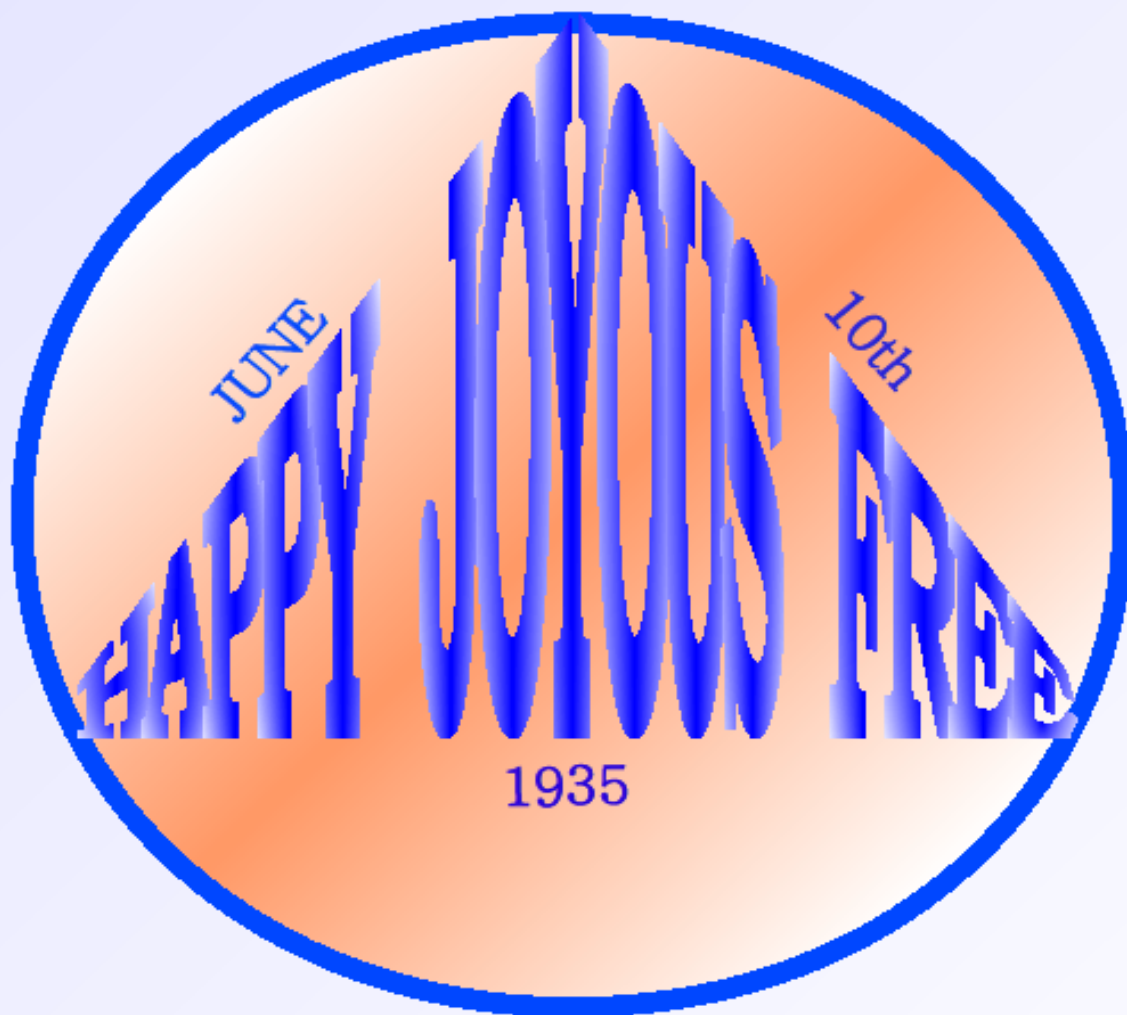
...[Dr. Bob] said there were two ways to break the Anonymity Tradition: (1) by giving your name at the public level of press or radio; (2) by being so anonymous that you can't be reached by other drunks. - Dr. Bob and the Good Old Timers, page 264 ("Alcoholics Anonymous Inquiries Invited" is from the Long Islander September 26, 1946)

("Attention, Excessive Drinkers" is from Suffolk County News June 23, 1950)

### **Attention, Excessive Drinkers**

Alcoholics Anonymous is a non-sectarian organization composed of alcoholics joined together to help each other solve their common problem -- alcoholism. If alcohol has become a problem in your life and you have a sincere desire to do something about it, AA may be able to help you.

There are no dues or fees involved. There is a group in your neighborhood. It is suggested that you consult your physician, priest or minister, or address a note to Box 224, Sayville, N. Y. All communications will be kept strictly confidential.



**Save the date:**  
**Suffolk County Intergroup**  
**Share-a-thon**  
**Sunday, October 11 2015**  
**St Joseph's College**  
**Patchogue NY**

