

Overeaters Anonymous

Santa Cruz County Intergroup

# The Stepping Stone

Winter 2015

Volume 4, Number 3

Overeaters Anonymous is a fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength, and hope, are recovering from compulsive overeating. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. There are no dues or fees for members; we are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer.

For More Information About Overeaters Anonymous and its Program of Recovery,  
Visit [santacruzaoa.org](http://santacruzaoa.org) or Call Our Hotline, 831-429-7906

## Beyond Our Wildest Dreams: The Birth of Overeaters Anonymous



In 1958, OA founder Rozanne S. took a friend to a Gamblers Anonymous meeting, and came home with a dream: to create a similar program that would address her own problem, compulsive overeating. Rozanne and a friend met weekly, called each other daily, revised the wording of the Twelve Steps to their own comfort level, and counted calories...and they both lost a lot of weight. Two years later OA was born, but it was not the OA program we know today. The journey from then to now is a rocky and fascinating story of inspiration, hard work, and determination, as well as a lot of self-will, conflict, and pain. This journey is well-documented in the OA-approved book, *Beyond Our Wildest Dreams*.

One of the early conflicts was around whether or not the OA program should endorse a specific food plan. Tremendous battles were fought between those who believed a certain food plan was essential and should be required for membership, and those who believed more flexibility was needed to accommodate different people's

needs. After years of struggling with various food plans, OA's current policy eventually evolved, which keeps the focus on the practice of abstinence rather than on specific food choices. Individuals are now free to choose the food plan that works for them.

It is interesting that OA as an organization had to go through a recovery process very much like what we go through as individual members. In the beginning the founders were mainly interested in losing weight and keeping it off, and they started out with what we now recognize as part of our disease, a "diet mentality." They obsessed and argued about food – what they could or could not eat, and how much. They wrote their own version of the Twelve Steps because they didn't like the original version. They had many struggles over who was in control – just as many of us do until we make that crucial decision to turn our will and our lives over to a Higher Power. For the first few years, they argued and

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### The Early Days in OA

**1958 - The seed is planted** - Rozanne attends Gamblers Anonymous

**1960 - OA begins and grows** - First meeting & Paul Coates TV show appearance attracts members

**1962 - First National Conference and Convention**

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almost split up over whether this was a psychological or spiritual program. Eventually, through a very long process of mutual support and honest introspection, they recognized their mistakes and sought to correct them.

What eventually evolved is the wonderful program we have today, which recognizes that this is a three-fold program of physical, emotional, and spiritual healing. Our powerful "Unity with Diversity" policy allows for individual differences in *how* we work our program, while keeping the focus on our primary purpose, to carry our message of recovery through the Twelve Steps to those who still suffer. This January, as we celebrate the 55th birthday of OA, it is a great time to remember the birth and early years of this remarkable program, and the work and dedication it took to develop it into the powerful, effective, and life-saving way of life it has become.

**HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY,  
OA!!!**

-- Carol F.



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**55<sup>th</sup> OA Birthday  
Celebration**

**January 23 – 25, 2015**

**at the LAX Hilton**

**Register online at [oabirthday.com](http://oabirthday.com)**

**Did you know...**

... our OA meetings in Santa Cruz County have been around since the 1970's? Jean W., who has been in our fellowship since 1977, remembers two weekly meetings. "They were very warm and welcoming, just like today," she says. "I also remember there was no concept of long-term abstinence back then. We had a birthday chip for 21 days and after that, everyone was automatically considered a sponsor." Our fellowship has now grown with many members having long term abstinence, some with 25 years or more.

By 1989, our fellowship grew to 22 meetings happening at churches, libraries, the hospital education center, and even in a meeting room at the DMV office in Capitola. "I went to a meeting a day in 1989," remembers Meg, who joined Santa Cruz OA that year. "The Saturday morning meeting was packed with 40-50 people; it was great, and the Sunday morning meeting really hit the spot for me!"

Today, those weekend meetings are still going strong, and we have a total of 15 weekly meetings throughout the county. Our membership drives how OA happens locally, with attendance and service being key factors to each meeting's long term success. Any member can start a new meeting, and more information and support are available at

[oa.org/membersgroups/group-support/](http://oa.org/membersgroups/group-support/)

-- Anne M.

## Change in Thursday Meeting

The Thursday 1pm meeting has decided by group conscience to change its name and focus. Our name is now "Focus on Abstinence" and we will be reading from the OA approved book, *Abstinence*, as well as the "Commitment to Abstinence" pamphlet and other OA materials focusing on abstinence. Members are invited to make a weekly commitment to their own abstinence and to report on their successes and challenges around abstinence at this meeting. (Abstinence is not a requirement for attendance.)

**1965 – Growing by leaps and bounds -**  
Dear Abby letter attracts members – first Lifeline published

**1966 - Abstinence defined -**"To the Newcomer" pamphlet  
3 meals /day & avoid binge foods

**Late 1960s - Different food plans -** including the "Gray Sheet"

# Giving Service

## Fall 2014 Region 2 Assembly Report

In late October, delegates from 24 Intergroups, six board members, one trustee and one alternate rep came together at the Fall 2014 Region Two Assembly in San Diego. Santa Cruz County Intergroup was represented by Anne O., who has provided highlights for this newsletter.

- **Phone meetings led by WSO Board of Trustees (BOT) and Region Chairs.** The BOT meeting is the first Sunday of each month and the Region Chairs meeting is the second Sunday of each month. Both meetings are at noon Pacific Time and the phone number for both is 424-203-8405, pin 925619.
- **Virtual Workshops.** *OA Literature – The Heart and Soul of OA* and *Our Primary Purpose*. Visit [oa.org/podcasts/](http://oa.org/podcasts/) and check out these two virtual series.
- **The new Brown Book.** *Overeaters Anonymous, Third Edition* is out, including a revised “Our Invitation to You.”
- **Donations to WSO.** Currently, most WSO money comes from literature sales, so we are not really self-supporting through our own contributions. The budget is very tight and participation in some events, such as professional health fairs, has had to be cancelled. **WSO donations are needed.** Visit [oa.org](http://oa.org) to contribute.

### Suggestions

- Establish a new service position at your meeting to regularly review and download information from the “What’s New” section of the [oa.org](http://oa.org) home page. Copies can be included in the meeting’s announcements binder.
- Take copies of *Lifeline* to doctors, or add to newcomer packets, instead of circulating them at meetings. We need to urge people to subscribe to *Lifeline*, instead of relying on free copies that subscribers share.

**A Reminder.** OA Steps and Traditions should be read as written. When the wording is changed, it is no longer conference-approved literature. This also applies to AA literature, such as the Big Book.

The 2015 R2 Convention will be on June 26-28 in San Diego, at the Town & Country Resort and Convention Center.



**A special thanks to the  
DAY in OA Committee**  
for your hard work, creative ideas  
and a wonderful event!



Late 1970s - First  
OA in Santa Cruz

1980- First  
addition of the  
Brown Book  
published

1986 - Decision  
not to endorse any  
particular plan of  
eating

# The Literature Table

*The Dignity of Choice - Sample Plans of Eating is a pamphlet which outlines the practical details of how to choose and implement a food plan. It answers the important question, "What do I DO to get started?" Even more important, it reflects the OA position that we are not a diet club, and that food choices are an individual matter best decided by each member with the guidance of their sponsor and health professional.*

"My sponsor suggested I choose a food plan from the pamphlet Dignity of Choice. At first I was reluctant because I wanted to be able to choose what and how much I ate at each meal. But I chose a plan (a combination of plans) and was surprised how freeing it was to weigh and measure my portions. Now I know how much starch, fruit, protein, etc. I will have at each meal."

--Margaret K.



*At the recent Thanksgiving Day meeting, we asked the question, "What are you grateful for?" We will be sharing the responses we received in a section of the newsletter called Gratitudes, starting with this current issue and in the next three issues of 2015.*

I'm grateful for working the steps, for example, Step Four. It was hard and scary and I got through it with lots of help. I learned to chip away at it, 15 minutes a day, and it got done. That works for me for any project or chore. Great lessons from all the Steps. Grateful for this way of life where I can make mistakes and make amends and not feel like I am a mistake. Grateful I don't have to do anything alone, that I have a relationship with my HP. I am grateful for source, which has given me a life beyond my wildest dreams.

-- Meg

I'm so grateful for my spiritual awakening and for knowing my HP wants me to be loving toward others and myself.

--Anne M.

I am grateful for friendship, the fellowship of OA, and those with recovery who offer their experience, strength and hope.

--Marcia

## Find A Meeting

Meetings are drop-in and open to all.  
Meeting information is subject to change.

### SUNDAYS

**9:05-10:15 a.m. Speaker** *Fragrance Free*  
Sutter Maternity & Surgery Center, Sutter Room  
2900 Chanticleer Avenue, Santa Cruz

**4:00-5:15 p.m. 90-Day** *Fragrance Free*  
Church of the Nazarene, 115 S. Morrissey,  
Santa Cruz *green door to left of main entrance,*  
*off parking lot*

### MONDAYS

**12:15-1:15 p.m. Lifeline** *Fragrance Free*  
Trinity Presbyterian Church, Library  
410 Melrose Avenue, Santa Cruz *through yellow gate*

**7:00-8:00 p.m. Book Study/Speaker**  
Soquel Congregational Church *Fragrance Free*  
Anne Hutchinson Room, 4951 Soquel Dr., Soquel

**7:00-8:00 p.m. Literature**  
Mars Hill Coffee House, Community Room  
610 San Benito Avenue at 6th Street HOLLISTER

### TUESDAYS

**12:15-1:15 p.m. Steps and Traditions**  
Trinity Presbyterian Church, Library  
410 Melrose Avenue, Santa Cruz *through yellow gate*

### WEDNESDAYS

**10:30-11:30 a.m. Voices of Recovery**  
Bayside Baptist Church *across from the Gault School*  
1335 Seabright Avenue, Santa Cruz

**11:00-12:00 p.m. Learning Our Literature**  
49 Blanca Lane, #303, Watsonville (831-707-0039)

**6:30-7:30 p.m. Writing**  
335 Spreckles Drive, Suite A, Aptos

### THURSDAYS

**1:00-2:00 p.m. Focus on Abstinence**  
Trinity Presbyterian Church, Library  
410 Melrose Avenue, Santa Cruz *through yellow gate*

### FRIDAYS

**12:00-1:00 p.m. 90-Days, AA 12&12 study**  
Live Oak Family Resource Center *Fragrance Free*  
Community Conference Room  
1740 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz

**12:15-1:15 p.m. For Today book study**  
Quaker Meeting House, Social Hall  
225 Rooney Street, Santa Cruz

**12:00-1:00 p.m. Wonders of Writing**  
49 Blanca Lane, #303, Watsonville (831-707-0039)

### SATURDAYS

**9:00-10:10 a.m. Speaker/Discussion**  
Calvary Episcopal Church  
531 Center Street, Santa Cruz

**11:00-12:00 p.m. Speaker/Literature**  
Watsonville Hospital *Fragrance Free*  
Sequoia Room, Watsonville