

The Stepping Stone

 **OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS®**
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY INTERGROUP

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 4

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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 SANTACRUZOA.ORG OR CALL OUR HOTLINE, 831-429-7906.

Intergroup: The Backbone of Santa Cruz OA

“But what does Intergroup DO?” You may have asked yourself this question, wondering why you would volunteer to serve on Intergroup. I wondered this myself, until I became a part of it and saw how essential it is to our Santa Cruz OA community.

Santa Cruz Intergroup helps individuals learn about and deepen their 12-Step programs through the following:

■ The twice yearly **Day in OA** event, bringing speakers from outside and within the county to inspire us with their stories of strength and hope.

■ The annual **Summer Retreat**, which provides a peaceful and contemplative time to focus on our spiritual life (and have fun too!).

■ The **Thanksgiving Day Meeting**, which gives us an oasis of sanity in the midst of what can be a challenging holiday.

■ **IDEA Day and 12th Step Within** events, which spark new ideas and strengthen commitment.

Intergroup reaches out to carry the message to compulsive overeaters and connects Santa Cruz with 54,000 OA members throughout the world.

Santa Cruz Intergroup “carries the message” through a public outreach campaign. The Public Information Coordinator and volunteers organize and participate in public speaking engagements and staff booths at local health fairs.

Intergroup is the spine of the OA body. It supports all our limbs and systems and connects them with a pathway of information and stimulation. Intergroup supports meeting groups and individual members and provides a vital communication link with Regional and World Service.

OA information is published through radio and TV announcements and calendar listings in local newspapers. Intergroup members staff the Hotline, produce meeting schedules and *The Stepping Stone*, our bimonthly newsletter, and maintain a local website.

Special outreach is made to doctors and other health professionals who may have contact with people who suffer from compulsive food behaviors.

Intergroup works hard to spread the message that there is a proven, workable method of recovery.

In addition, Intergroup is a communication pathway with other groups in the region and throughout the world. Through Intergroup, members at our local meetings learn about regional and world events and hear about helpful tools of recovery, such as new literature.

Through Intergroup, the Santa Cruz OA community has a voice in the decisions that affect OA throughout the world. Our representatives attend Region 2 Assemblies and World Service Conventions where these far-reaching decisions are made. I believe OA is stronger, more inclusive and more effective when the “Santa Cruz” voice is heard in those rooms.

So we can see that Santa Cruz Intergroup is a busy backbone, keeping us connected, keeping us going, carrying the message, and helping each and every one of us strengthen our program and find a new life in recovery.

Chris W.

☞

Santa Cruz OA Intergroup meets the third Sunday of each month from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon at Sutter Hospital. All are welcome to attend.

Good Health: The Reward of Participation

When I think about the times I am most alive, it is when I am the most involved. When I am part of the process, I feel the most confident and powerful.

Service is not something I *have* to do, it is something I *get* to do. When I step up and take the opportunity to serve, I am fulfilling my purpose.

There are a lot of things that can hold me back. Service is a chance to get over some of those obstacles. I amaze myself by breaking through those barriers.

Isolation is a devastating part of this disease. Service gives me a perfect venue to move beyond my comfort zone. I am working toward being healthy and free. Playing it safe never put anyone on the path to greatness. I need to be courageous, be brave, take a chance and serve.

Service is a chance for me to step into the light and show the best of myself. It is also a chance to see the bigger picture, become part of the decision-making and make connections with some truly amazing people.

Here's to our health!

Marlynn

From Our Roving Reporter **Interview with** **Marilyn T.**

Marilyn T., the current chair of Santa Cruz County Intergroup, has been a member of Overeaters Anonymous since 2009 – three OA birthdays. “About three years, this last time,” she says when queried as to the length of her attendance. As for abstinence, the number is the same. Marilyn got her sobriety when she came in and has never let it go.

Marilyn has been involved with Intergroup for about two-and-a-half years and has been on the Board for about a year-and-a-half.

She has participated as an Intergroup Rep, works on various committees and is active in her current position as chair of the Intergroup meeting that takes place on the third Sunday of each month.

Other Intergroup members smile when they speak of how Marilyn runs the meeting “with a lot of laughter and a good eye toward the clock.”

“Intergroup is fun,” states another member. “Marilyn is quite a comedian.”

She may keep things literally rolling (in the aisles), but Marilyn is quite serious about doing service in this two-year position. Her

current desire is to bring attention to several issues handed down from the World Service Organization (OA business board) and Region 2 (Intergroups working together):

- An Abstinence Packet made available for purchase at meetings.
- More meeting focus on young persons (teens and under). See article on page 3.
- A *Lifeline* subscription for each meeting.
- Meeting insurance.

Marilyn says it was her “willingness to accept all different views and opinions” and her love of humor that led her to say yes to a position as an Intergroup member. She says she’d love to see her pet projects “resolved” before her time on the board is over.

When asked if there was a spiritual aspect to her Intergroup work, Marilyn replied: “Yes. Meditation, prayers and conscious contact with my Higher Power start and end my day, every day, and I ask for direction with the next right thing when I am in question of what is good...I am very spirit-based on original Big Book teaching and lessons.”

Marilyn says she uses the Steps and Traditions in her daily life to the best of her ability. As to how

Intergroup service affects her life, she comments that it keeps her “grounded, humble, thankful, abstinent and living a sober life.”

When asked how much of her term is left and if she plans to renew, Marilyn answers, “Six months; renewing is not something I have thought about. I try to live in the present and not future-cast too much. My HP will guide me when the time comes to decide.” ☞

2012 **Annual Retreat** **In the Redwoods** **August 24-26**

Renew, Reflect, Reconnect

With Your Program, Your Goals and Your Life

Join us in the redwoods for an OA camping retreat. Relax by the campfire. Renew in mind, body and spirit with yoga, meditation and workshops. Share stories of experience, strength and hope.

Register by July 31
\$35 for the weekend
\$25 for a day

After July 31
\$40 for the weekend
\$30 for a day

To register, fill out and mail the form at the bottom of the Retreat flier. Pick one up at any of our meetings. You can also get information about registering from Marilyn (688-4319), Marci (359-2293), or Marion (334-7233).

Attendees from 2011 say:

“Fabulous! Life changing.”

“Connection with God (HP), good recovery, good friends, good times.”

“Sitting around the fire at night, listening, opening up, laughing, crying, I felt connected with each person and with Higher Power, in a way that let me know that I need never be alone.”

Welcome, Whatever Your Problem Is With Food

The Young People's Committee of Region 2

"Overeaters Anonymous (OA) members come in all sizes: welcome, whatever your problem with food.... Many of our members also began having a problem with food when very young – forty five percent were under twelve; eighteen percent were between twelve and seventeen. We have been helping compulsive eaters of all ages since 1960." (Source: *To Parents and Concerned Adults* pamphlet.)

The OA community, assisted by Santa Cruz County Intergroup, offer knowledge and compassion to the younger member and a message of experience, strength and hope. As stated in the pamphlet, *To the Teen*, OA can be helpful in making teen years feel easier.

A Young People's Committee (YPC) was created at the Spring Region 2 (R2) Assembly. The assembly meets twice yearly and is attended by reps from each Intergroup in the Region. The committee is contacting the 34 registered Intergroups and requesting that they consider a new outreach effort to attract and support still-suffering young persons in their areas.

Teens are already welcome at OA meetings, but R2 is now urging a focused effort to attract them to the OA rooms. The YPC sent out a mailing recently with a letter and a copy of the November 2011 *Lifeline*, which focuses on family – including "teens and under" with food issues.

Please see the Intergroup Rep for your meeting to learn about the six helpful suggestions for attracting young persons given in this letter. Also included in the letter are five free downloads at oa.org, and three items available for meetings to purchase from the OA Bookstore.

The Region 2 Young People's Committee would welcome your suggestions, as they continue to explore new ways to carry the message to the young person who still suffers. ☞

Sarah's Story

When I first got into OA at age 28, I was full of ideas – wrong ones! I was certain I wouldn't fit in, or find common ground with the large circle of people in the room. Certain that the skinniest people there were the "winners" of the group, and that I, more than 300 pounds and full of resentments, wasn't one of them.

But I'd tried every other seemingly sane way to get healthy (which at the time I thought meant just getting thin), so I stayed, and bit by bit, the "certainty" I had used to push people away disappeared.

I soon learned that I had something in common with every person at OA meetings. Each one was struggling and one day at a time, finding the tools they needed to cope with the disease of compulsive overeating.

I was lucky enough to have found a very diverse group, with members as young as their late

teens and as old as ninety, and quickly realized we *all* knew the same pain, the same frustration, and eventually the same hope and strength, which has helped get me through the last 11 years.

Today, I attend a much smaller group and serve as the group rep at monthly Intergroup meetings. That service keeps our group up-to-date on events and changes in Santa Cruz County OA and helps ensure that I don't just linger at the edge of the meetings.

Being part of Intergroup means having a voice and using it. It means taking an active part in OA, which encourages me to be more active in my own recovery. It also keeps me from falling into that old pattern of self-pity and the assumption that "no one understands where I'm coming from." I'm grateful to both OA and Intergroup for helping me see that, at last.

Sarah M.

Find a Meeting

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

SUNDAYS

9:00-10:15 a.m. Speaker/Discussion
Sutter Maternity & Surgery Center
2900 Chanticleer Avenue, Santa Cruz
Free childcare with advance reservation by 5 p.m., Friday.
Call 831-429-7906

4:00-5:15 p.m. 90-Day
Church of the Nazarene
115 South Morrissey, Santa Cruz

MONDAYS

12:15-1:15 p.m. Literature
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
2500 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz

7:00-8:00 p.m. Book Study/Speaker
Soquel Congregational Church
4951 Soquel Drive, Soquel
Focus: Addicts and alcoholics

TUESDAYS

12:15-1:15 p.m. Steps and Traditions
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
2500 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz

WEDNESDAYS

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

12:00-1:00 p.m. Literature
Learning Our Literature (LOL)
49 Blanca Lane, #303
Watsonville

6:30-7:30 p.m. Writing
The Wednesday Night Meeting
335 Spreckles Drive, Suite A, Aptos

New Location

THURSDAYS

1:00-2:00 p.m. Big Book, OA literature
Louden Nelson Community Center, Room 5
301 Center Street, Santa Cruz

FRIDAYS

12:15-1:15 p.m. For Today book study
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
2500 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz

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

SATURDAYS

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

11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Steps/Traditions
Watsonville Hospital
75 Nielson Street, Watsonville
Sequoia Room

Kate's Story

Turning 26 was hard for me, mostly because it meant that I had been suffering from bulimia for thirteen years. Exactly half of my life. The harsh truth was that I couldn't remember how to live without it, but I also couldn't continue to live with it.

Over the years, I had tried numerous forms of therapy, none of which "worked." Looking back, I know it was a power greater than myself that led me to the warm rooms of Overeaters Anonymous.

Sometimes I'm the youngest person at a meeting. Other times there are other people my age. Either way, I always feel welcome and embraced. It is beautiful to know there is a place where age

doesn't matter. We all share similar experiences despite our ages.

I have been to meetings with people closer to my age and as much as it is comforting, it doesn't change the healing process. I have found love and guidance in people of different ages, genders and walks of life and I hope to give that back.

The only thing I wish, is that I had come into this program when I was younger. That the thirteen years I spent suffering with my disease could have been spent enjoying my youth, for it is a precious and fleeting thing.

But this is my path and my journey and I am so happy to have found hope, happiness and recovery.

Kate N.

Our Newsletter Gets a New Name

The December 2011 issue of the Santa Cruz OA Newsletter advertised a contest for finding a new name for our newsletter.

By the end of March, we had received 15 clever and creative entries. The suggested names were compiled and presented at the May Intergroup meeting, to be taken by IG Reps to their individual meetings to be voted on by the members.

At the June Intergroup meeting, a consensus of these votes was taken and, as seen on page one, our new name is *The Stepping Stone*.

Thank you all for your participation in this endeavor, and here's to the inaugural issue of *The Stepping Stone*!

Temporary Sponsors Bureau

Santa Cruz County Intergroup is establishing a Temporary Sponsors Bureau to aid newcomers in beginning their work on the Twelve Steps, establishing an understanding of the Tools of Recovery and finding permanent food and Step sponsors.

In the months to come, more information will be available at meetings and through this newsletter.

In the meantime, those desiring a temporary sponsor and those available to be a temporary sponsor can email oaskyrose5@yahoo.com or call the OA Hotline, 831-429-7906. ☞

Lifeline 1 x 1 Campaign: Make Lifeline Self-Supporting

**Lifeline magazine cannot survive on praise alone.
It needs your financial support.**

Your efforts to make *Lifeline* self-supporting are paying off in 2012!

- *Lifeline* has more than 1000 new subscriptions.
- The *Lifeline* deficit is decreasing, but we still need your help!

**Thank you to those groups who have subscribed.
If your group has not done so, please consider subscribing today.**

Reprinted from the OA World Service newsletter, *A Step Ahead*, 3rd Quarter 2012.

**"If you're not doing enough for OA,
you're not doing enough for yourself."**