

The Stepping Stone

 **OVEREATERS
ANONYMOUS®**
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY INTERGROUP

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 5

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2012

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.**

A Retreat In the Redwoods

Santa Cruz Intergroup held its annual camping Retreat in August at Rancho del Oso, just 16 miles north of Santa Cruz.

This beautiful and welcoming campsite has been the venue for our Annual Retreat for the last five years or so, made available through the generosity of one of our OA members and her family.

The Retreat began on Friday afternoon and ended on Sunday at noon. Twenty-four of us made our way to this enchanting site among the redwoods. Some came with camping gear and stayed the whole time and others came only for the day.

The theme of the Retreat was *Renew, Reflect and Reconnect*. Speakers, workshops and activities moved us through a weekend of fellowship, recovery and love.

Please read on. The following stories share the miracles of this magical event.

Redwood Paradise

Driving into the redwoods touched me on so many levels. I felt so privileged to be welcomed into this breathtaking space. I was greeted with physical and psychological hugs. The total acceptance gave me courage to try things I haven't done in years. I have secretly been



wanting to try yoga but didn't think my body would go along with it. This introduction was so gentle and accepting that I surrendered. It was so peaceful. It set the tone for the entire day.

The meditation continued to envelope me. The meetings and workshops were layered with fun, intensity and healing. The total acceptance that was created provided a powerful bond for us lucky enough to be witnessing it.

Even the breaks were well used, by hiking around this incredible place and writing "love notes" to leave for each other. Of course, our abstinent food provided the foundation to keep our path open to all that HP had in store for us.

I have to admit that at one point after dinner, I was triggered by old patterns. The warm fire and contentment were conjuring up memories of baked goodies coming from all directions. Of course that did not happen here. That would have stopped the flow of love and understanding.

My day was filled with emotion: uncertainty, insecurity, sadness, despair, fear, joy, and profound gratitude. The night was about deep connection and understanding "beyond my wildest dreams." I feel so blessed that I gave myself the gift of this retreat. It was a magical experience in a majestic setting.

Marlynn

Retreat... What a Great Word!

We retreated into a redwood forest; we retreated into ourselves to *reflect*; we retreated into a world of understanding, acceptance, love, and support.

We formed bonds with new friends and strengthened bonds as we *reconnected* with old friends. We discovered things we didn't

know about each other that brought us closer and helped us to hear the experience, strength and hope of others in such a profoundly deep way. We were *renewed*.

Retreat...repeat...next year! It is amazing.

Jane R.

Welcome to OA Santa Cruz. Welcome Home!

What a warm welcome I've enjoyed from Santa Cruz OA members since my arrival for a one-year stay, on the first of August 2012! A friend from my home group in Boulder, CO, alerted me to your annual August "Retreat in the Redwoods." This year's theme was *Renew, Reflect, Reconnect*. The hardworking committee certainly delivered on that promise! Not being a camper, I elected to attend on Saturday. A member I met the week before offered me a ride, and I happily accepted. Chatting with her on the way up and back was an added bonus.

We arrived at the campfire just as a morning meditation was ending and then enjoyed a speaker meeting. Afterward, we were led through a variety of group activities, some of which led to raucous laughter. Between each activity we chose a nearby partner for a two- to three-minute one-on-one share. Taking turns, each had a printed question to ask the other. The questions included: What is your favorite program slogan? Do you have a food plan? What is your favorite literature? Are you abstinent? This was a thought-provoking way to connect with each other.

My favorite activity came after lunch. For ten minutes, we wrote a letter to our Higher Power. Next, we used our non-dominant hand to write our HP's response to us. Again we paired with another member to share our reactions to the experience. What an affirming and positive exercise! I was reminded that my HP is ever-available, always evolving, loves me exactly as I am, reaches out to me through nature, often is seen through the love, concern and voice of others (HP with skin on), is gentle and always loving, often guides through my intuition and is

my source of lightness and being.

I was thoroughly delighted by my first OA event in Santa Cruz and I look forward to upcoming Intergroup-sponsored events. Thank you, OA Santa Cruz, for being such a warm, welcoming and wonderful community!

Nancy K.

Reflection on the Retreat in the Redwoods

I packed my camping gear for the annual OA retreat in the redwoods and headed up Highway 1 with some trepidation. I'd been struggling to maintain my abstinence. I had days and months of grace, followed by days of overeating and isolation. The very real consequence of compulsive overeating is a depressive hopelessness and self-loathing.

I hoped the retreat would nurture my willingness. I prayed myself into action. I planned my food for the weekend and was soon driving up the coast to the beautiful Waddell Creek Valley. I surrendered to the group agenda.

That was a relief. I reminded myself that the gift is often just showing up.

Around a campfire in the redwoods we had meetings, connecting activities, guided visualizations and time to talk and listen to each other. One woman had just barely 30 days in the program, another, a year or so. Several of us once had long-term abstinence and were praying to return to a simple, loving food plan. We all had big challenges in our families, joys and disappointments.

We talked about our favorite OA literature, food plans, service, higher power, relationships. We did yoga, walked, laughed, hugged, journaled and rested. We made and shared meals together. In one activity, we invited our higher power to write us a letter, then asked a partner to read it aloud to us. We were an odd-numbered group and I didn't have a partner for this exercise, so I sat by the flickering campfire and listened to the chorus of voices reading the kindest of direction and support to each other.

"It was impossible to say we had no capacity for faith, or love, or

LETTER FROM GOD

My love for you is endless
Unfathomable
Anything you ask is granted
(so immediately that
there's no need to use
the future tense)
Relax in my support and
trust me. When you dare
to share your gifts I can
with you and you are safe.
Let every challenge bring you
closer to me. You are
never alone - only sometimes
you forget!
We are here for you always!

Written with the non-dominant hand. Contributed by a Retreat participant.

worship. ... (F)or deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there." (The Big Book, Chapter 4: We Agnostics)

Our stories and tribulations circled up into the redwoods. We tended the fire and made sure everyone was heard. After a meeting, we lingered and talked some more. In the morning, one camper reported having a deer lie down outside her tent in a clearing. She felt it press against her in the night and wondered if it was a dream or if she had made camp in a doe's favorite sleeping spot.

The Waddell Creek area is rich with natural history. Local families have tended campfires in that very

same fire pit for generations. Because of the generosity of an OA member who made the family camp available and several dedicated OA members who planned the annual retreat this year, we were able to experience the land and each other and become part of that history ourselves.

Jennifer P.

A Life-Altering Weekend

I returned home from this year's OA retreat tired, really needing a shower, and feeling absolutely great! We spent three days in nature, reflecting, renewing, reconnecting, and releasing. What a magical, life-altering weekend!

With OA friends old and new,

we shared meetings, meals, meditation, and yoga. We shared stories, feelings, laughter and tears. And we shared lots of love and lots of recovery.

I've been told I can't do life alone, but that sure doesn't stop me from trying. But during the weekend I got to know others, myself, and my own personal HP better. Sitting in that campfire circle, surrounded by redwoods and OA family, there was no doubt that we were in the presence of a higher power.

This retreat reminded me once again how simple our program is and how grateful I am for OA and recovery.

Hope to see you at the retreat next year!

Marsha

Santa Cruz County Intergroup Presents

∞ A Day in OA ∞

"LOVING THE PERSON IN THE MIRROR"



Saturday, October 20, 2012

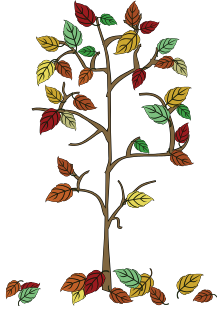
12:30 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Quaker House, 225 Rooney Street, Santa Cruz

Speakers ♦ Activities ♦ Workshops ♦ Raffle

Clothing & Accessories Sale

Preview Sale 11:50-12:20



Thanksgiving Meeting

Thursday, November 22
10:00-11:30 a.m.

AT THE RED CHURCH
Calvary Episcopal Church
532 Center Street, Santa Cruz 95060
Call the OA Hotline for more info
831-429-7906

A Message From Intergroup

Santa Cruz County Intergroup keeps us connected, carrying the message of recovery and helping each and every one of us strengthen our program and find a new life in recovery.

Intergroup is comprised of the Intergroup Board and Intergroup Reps, representing each Santa Cruz County meeting. IRs are selected by the group conscience of the group they represent. The primary responsibility of the IRs is to represent their group at Intergroup meetings and to act as liaison between Intergroup and their meeting.

The Intergroup Board

Marilyn T., *Chair*
Karen M., *Vice-Chair*
Marcy S., *Secretary*
Margo, *Treasurer*
Glenda, *World Service Rep*
Gi, *Region 2 Rep*
Willa, *Hotline Coordinator*
Nanette, *Public Information Coordinator*
Alex M., *Web Master*
Marion, *Newsletter Editor*

Intergroup Meetings. Intergroup meets once a month, on the third Sunday, from 10:30 a.m. to noon, at Sutter Hospital. Meetings are attended by the members of the Board and the IRs. All members of the Fellowship are invited to IG meetings.

Temporary Sponsors Bureau. Our Temporary Sponsors Bureau aids newcomers in beginning their work on the Twelve Steps, establishing an understanding of the Tools of Recovery and finding permanent food and Step sponsors. If you are

interested in becoming a temporary sponsor or if you need one, please call the **OA Hotline**, 831-429-7906.

Margo's report. For Intergroup's fiscal year ended June 30, 2012, we had increased income from the previous year and a larger increase in expenses, leaving us with a net loss of just over \$300. We are in an okay position cash-wise and have a break-even budget for the current fiscal year. We are committed to keeping expenses as low as possible, while getting information and resources out to the Fellowship in an effective manner.

Nanette's report. I coordinate the sharing of information about our Intergroup activities and other newsworthy OA events through local newspapers, radio, television, local library Web sites and television community boards. I send mailings to local doctors, counselors, nutritionists and dietitians, including OA pamphlets and a meeting schedule. I recently started an anonymous Twitter outreach to youth and I am a member of an Intergroup committee for youth outreach. I'm also working on a page on the Santa Cruz OA Website, focusing on young people with eating disorders. Please feel free to give me more ideas on reaching out to our community. Email me at pic@santacruzcoa.org.

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 & Brown Book
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