

The Stepping Stone

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.

90 Days to Freedom

When I first came to OA, I figured I'd catch one or two meetings a week for a few months, and that would help me stay on my diet. If someone had told me that first day that I had to attend 90 meetings in 90 days, I definitely would have walked out and never come back.

Fortunately, no one told me I had to do anything. In fact, someone told me I could eat whatever I wanted, as much as I wanted. The only suggestion I heard was not to eat between meals, and even that was a suggestion, not a rule.

Imagine my surprise when, a few months later, I was attending every meeting I could get to, I had a sponsor, I was reading the literature and working the steps, and I made up my mind, with no prompting from anyone, to attend 90 meetings in 90 days, *because I wanted what the program was offering me – freedom from food obsession.* They say it takes 90 days to change a habit, and I had some habits that I definitely wanted to change.

As soon as I made that commitment to my own recovery, my abstinence began. Then for a while my life went into a state of turmoil. I had some times of intense food cravings, and I was on a roller coaster of intense feelings. I needed that daily meeting for the hour of sanity and reassurance it offered. I became much more conscious of my diseased thinking, as I began to realize how much of my time and energy had been taken up obsessing about food, eating, dieting, weight, and body image, and that dieting was just as much a part of my disease as overeating. I came to understand that I had always focused on my weight as my capital-P Problem, and ignored other character defects that were actually much more serious problems. The essential principles of the program began to sink in as I heard them repeated day after day.

Most importantly, I began to feel less isolated in my disease. I began to feel a connection with the people in the rooms, as individuals and as a group. My judg-

ments about overweight – mine and others' – began to change and fade. I no longer felt ashamed or embarrassed about being here – rather, I felt happy and grateful for the caring and support I received.

Now I look forward to my meetings, to the friendly faces I see here, and to the honesty, vulnerability, and wisdom I hear here. It's so comforting and encouraging to be a part of this fellowship, to know that I belong here and I'm not alone. Because of my 90 days of immersion, my habits – of behavior and thinking – are changing, and I feel bonded with "my peeps."

Carol F.



Haiku

My eating secrets,
denying my emotional state.
Thus I am shamed.

Yesterday it worked,
Yet, today it does not work.
A cunning disease.

Mother, Daughter, sad;
OA bound us together.
Sad becomes glad.

Eating compulsions
kill my soul today.
Meeting salvation.

Nadine N.



Santa Cruz County OA Intergroup
Invites You to the 2013
Annual Retreat In the Redwoods

The Path to Recovery

Working Steps 1, 2 and 3 Under the Redwoods

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23, 3:00 P.M.

TO

SUNDAY, AUGUST 25, 12:00 NOON

Join us in the redwoods for an OA camping retreat with favorite activities from past retreats, such as "Love Notes" and "Quick Shares," and workshops using Steps 1, 2 and 3 to explore and heal. Renew in mind, body and spirit with yoga, meditation and fellowship around the campfire.



Registration

\$35 for the weekend

\$25 for a day

Deadline: July 31

After July 31

\$40 for the weekend

\$30 for a day

Email Marion at
keystrokesplus@live.com if you
need a registration form.

Questions

Karen (831-359-3791)

Marci (831-359-2293)

Nadine (831-359-2808)

Marion (831-334-7233)

How OA Changed My Life

In May of 2003, my mother died. She had been a compulsive eater and I did not want to follow in her footsteps and be battling the same disorder into my seventies, if I lived that long. At forty-eight, I finally hit bottom and was overcome with the desire to stop the binge/diet cycle of compulsive overeating that, since my early thirties, had consumed most of my waking thoughts. I'd already stepped in and out of the rooms of OA for fifteen years. This time was different. In November of 2003, I was finally desperate enough to be teachable. I've been a consistent member of OA ever since.

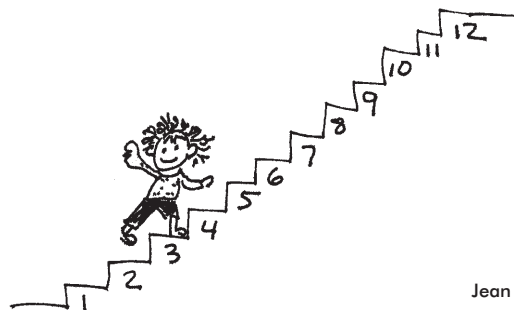
I got a sponsor immediately, and surrendered to our slogan, "Keep coming back, it works." My sponsor suggested that I attend three meetings a week – a new habit that put me on the path to recovery. She also encouraged me to begin working the steps right away. I bought OA and AA literature and began recovery in earnest. My sponsor also recommended doing service at the group level, so I accepted the position of treasurer at a meeting. This required that I attend every Thursday, benefiting both the group and my recovery.

Fast-forwarding six years, to July of 2010 ... I was sitting in a meeting and we were reading Step 3 in the 12 and 12. I read, on page 23: "As we become aware of what our eating guidelines should be, we ask God for the willingness and the ability to live within them each day. We ask and we receive, first the willingness and then the ability. We can count on this without fail." Although I had read this page many times over the years, I would have sworn the passage had just been inserted. I had never noticed this promise before!

Clearly, a more serious practice of Step 3 was required. I photocopied the entire step and placed it in my journal. Every day for the next three to four months, I read some or all of it, focusing on page 23. I realized that food guidelines were required if I were to "live within them." As a former dieter, I'd told myself that a plan of eating sounded too much like a diet. It hadn't occurred to me that the slipping, sliding and chronic relapsing I'd been experiencing was the result of not using a plan of eating. Finally, I received the willingness to put down sugar and use all of the tools. I now eat three meals a day, with life in between. I continue to work the steps and stay honest with my sponsor about my food, because this accountability keeps me conscious of balance in my choices.

Today I am happy, joyous and free, because I stayed until the miracle happened.

Nancy K.



Jean W.

The elevator's broken. Take the Steps.

Call Before Taking The First Compulsive Bite

HOTLINE

**It's two hours after dinner and something edible is calling to you.
You are about to open your mouth for food's pseudo-comfort.
STOP! You won't get relief there.**

Santa Cruz County Intergroup now has a (mostly) live hotline. OAs can call when struggling with eating issues, to verbalize their understanding of a food plan, to talk about powerlessness, HP, the Steps or Traditions – or anything else. The new hotline is for you. It is up and running to provide help before taking that first compulsive bite. The line is staffed by current OA members with some recovery, ready to share their experience, strength and hope.

**The new number is available now: 831-295-5866.
Use it in an emergency! Use it for good health! Use it!**

See the next page to find out how to become a Hotline volunteer.

Through a Green Dot's Eyes Report on the 2013 World Service Business Conference

It was a privilege to represent our Intergroup at the annual World Service Business Conference (WSBC) in Albuquerque, NM. The conference ran from April 29 to May 4 and it was packed with OA meetings, workshops and Board of Trustees meetings. This year's conference was titled "Searching and Fearless: A Fellowship Inventory," with emphasis on "2013: The Year of Abstinence Awareness."

As a Green Dot – as first-time attendees are designated – I was given a mentor with prior experience attending WSBCs. Hannah S., from Palm Springs, was gracious, knowledgeable and generous in giving her time to me, and her help was priceless in the sea of parliamentary procedures. My roommate, Sarah O., was from Ireland. It was a great joy to meet her and I hope to continue our friendship.

Attendees were requested to join committees and I decided to join the Youth in OA Committee. We recommended changing its name to Young People in OA, which is more current. Our assignment was to put

together a letter of introduction to Intergroups regarding resources and suggestions to carry the message to the under-30 age group. Before its distribution, the proposed letter was to be presented to WSBC for approval. I was blessed to be part of this committee, as bringing young people into OA is a passion of mine.

There were 10 committees in total, with agendas that were mostly carried on from past business conferences. Committee meeting topics were: Bylaws, Conference Literature, Finance, Professional Outreach, Public Information, Region Chairs, Twelfth Step Within, Unity With Diversity, Web/Technology and Youth in OA.

Virtual meetings were also discussed. Internet meetings are the only ones available to some people, and we need to change with the times. Consideration was given to making these meetings independent; one suggestion was to add a "donation button" to the web pages so attendees can make

Seventh Tradition donations.

It was interesting to view the voting process. There were more than 200 eligible voters, consisting of regional trustees, general service trustees and representatives from all 10 regions. Amendments to the bylaws were brought to the floor and voted on. A two-thirds majority is required to amend the bylaws. (Other motions require only a simple majority.) Any approved motions pertaining to bylaws will eventually have to be incorporated into Intergroup bylaws. I also witnessed the election of Region and General Service Trustees to fill the positions of outgoing trustees.

The Seventh Tradition was observed at each daily meeting and World Service received total donations of \$4,599. The conference ended on Saturday with a banquet, entertainment and the introduction of current Regional and General Service Trustees.

*Marilyn T.
WSBC Rep*

You are between meals and food is beckoning. You call the live hotline at 831-295-5866 for help. But wait! There is no answer. You get forwarded to voice mail. You need help and there's nobody there.



Shifts need to be filled for OA members to get help. Volunteers are needed. This is a great opportunity to give back.

If you are available, please call 831-227-1663.

Help others! Help yourself!

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
Fragrance Free

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
Trinity Presbyterian Church, Library
420 Melrose Avenue, Santa Cruz

New Location

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/Traditions

Trinity Presbyterian Church, Library
420 Melrose Avenue, Santa Cruz

New Location

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
831-707-0039

6:30-7:30 p.m. Writing

The Wednesday Night Meeting
335 Spreckles Drive, Suite A, Aptos

THURSDAYS

1:00-2:00 p.m. Big Book and Brown Book

Louden Nelson Community Center, Room 5
301 Center Street, Santa Cruz

FRIDAYS

12:15-1:15 p.m. For Today

Quaker Meeting House
225 Rooney Street, Santa Cruz

New Location

12:00-1:00 p.m. Writing
Wonders of Writing (WOW)

49 Blanca Lane, #303, Watsonville
831-707-0039

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

Dancing With the Steps

Sponsored by Santa Cruz County
Overeaters Anonymous
Open to all 12-Step Programs

Saturday, September 28, 2013

7:00 p.m. – Meeting

8:00-10:00 p.m. – Dance

Watsonville First United Methodist Church
229 Stanford Street, Watsonville, CA
Call Marlynn, 831-688-8230, for information.

