

The Stepping Stone

 **OVEREATERS
ANONYMOUS®**
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY INTERGROUP

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 5

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2013

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.**

The Path to Recovery Working Steps 1, 2 and 3 Under the Redwoods

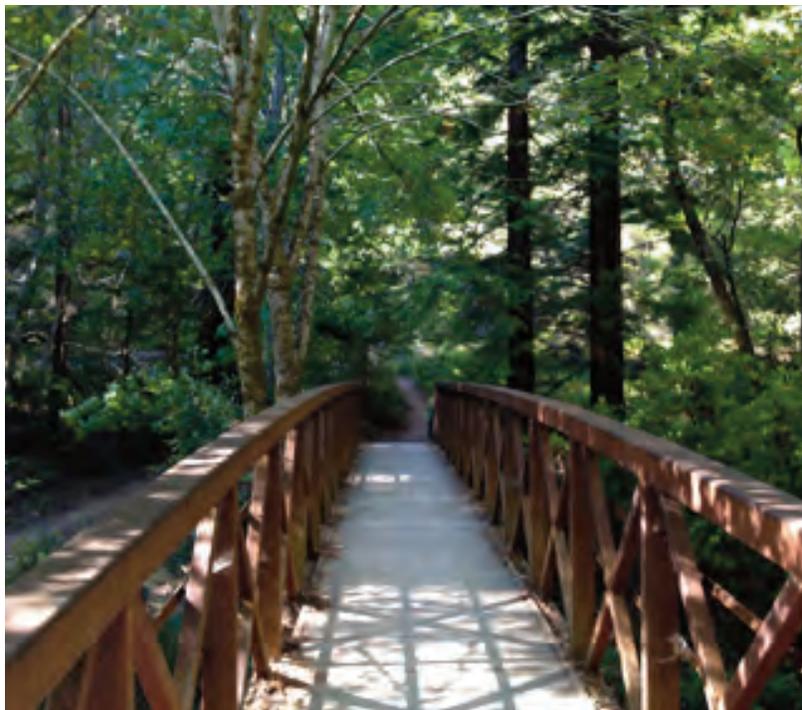
The quality of my life has improved greatly since I returned from the OA Retreat in the Redwoods. My experience there was exactly what I needed to get on board for the spiritual journey I had been desiring for myself.

After arriving at our sacred destination in the forest and receiving assistance from a fellow camper in setting up my tent, I met and joined the other OA members who had already arrived.

After dinner, we participated in a powerful guided meditation around the campfire. I found myself, after many years, releasing feelings associated with the death of a loved one (and their unconditional love).

The next morning, during yoga, I was led to open my body, my mind, and my spirit to love. These experiences during meditation and yoga were just the first of many spiritual treats — or re-treats — that have deepened the healing power that I have been experiencing in the weeks since.

I offer many heartfelt thanks to God: for my getting a ride to the retreat and a ride home; for the family



whose beautiful space we used for our retreat; for the retreat committee; for the helpful speakers, my fellow campers and their fellowship and sharing, and for their love and kindness; for the stoking of the campfire; for the hot water for all our cooking needs; and for the ringing of the bell that helped us to not miss any of the prayers, instruction, experiences, laughter, singing, art, and writing.

Due to all the miracles I found while camping under the redwoods that weekend, along with the shared experience of working the first three Steps, I was moved to surrender my will, my life, and my disease of compulsive overeating to my Higher Power.

I was happy to return home with a fresh new connection to my Higher Power, my program, my family, myself, and my fellow OAs.

Thank you!

Susie S.

Love Note From the Redwoods Retreat

Dear OA fellows,

The retreat was awe-inspiring, from start to finish! The redwoods were the gentle giants that greeted us upon arrival, along with the buzzing cicada, the lush greens and the earthy forest smells. Once settled, we gathered around our first campfire and sang songs to Carol F.'s ukulele serenade.

Afterward, Karen M. helped us to connect with a friend, mentor, or Higher Power through a picturesque, guided meditation. Then, we were off to bed.

Saturday was a big day. Some got up at the wee hours to have yoga with Alice — who drove up especially to lead this activity. Others, such as myself, only dreamed of stretching. After breakfast, Carol F. led us in a firm, yet gentle, way of working Step One. She offered questions such as: “If you are not yet abstinent, what will it take? [And] how does your perfectionist self define your abstinence versus your loving

Higher Power or recovering self?” She said: “Food is good. The problem is my behavior around food.”

Next, Jennifer P. shared OA and AA literature and personal experiences related to working Step Two. She also gave us questions to ponder such as: “What would it look like if you were willing to believe? What would you do differently when you woke up in the morning?” She ended by saying how courageous it is to have hope when you are in despair.

After an ample break filled with naps, hikes, love notes, meals, meditation and Suzanne M.'s stretching and Big Book



Smoke Voice to God. Retreat participants recite Third Step prayers as they watch the burning of Nadine's wooden sculpture.

reading group, we reconvened to decorate Third Step prayer flags from a variety of spiritual traditions. Nadine N. invited us to write and include our own prayers as well.

Next we wrote, on Japanese funeral paper, words expressing the impediments to our faith and to our following HP's will. We rolled up and embedded our papers in a wooden sculpture of Nadine's design. Then we watched the whole structure burn, each of us reciting simultaneously a Third Step prayer of our choosing. As sparks flew and smoke and voices rose, my heart soared and tears came to my eyes. I experienced at once a celebration, a mourning and a homecoming.

Thank you Suzanne M. and family, for sharing your beautiful land with us. Thank you Retreat Planning Committee, OA fellows and HP, for making this a deeply nourishing, transformative and fun event.

I came away feeling renewed in my OA program and full of hope, faith and love. I'm already looking forward to the redwoods retreat in 2014 and hope that you'll join me!

With love and gratitude,

Rachel K.



Love Notes envelopes dangle from a clothes line next to the bell used to call campers to scheduled events. Each camper was given a designated envelope that, filled with messages of love from other campers, would be taken home to recall the weekend and its treasured moments.

Surrender

To the consecrating fire
I surrender
Any lingering belief in my own unworthiness
Any stubborn refusal to see
To give — or to receive
The gifts of my life
Or the love that longs to be felt
Any lingering attachments
To illness
To inabilities and false limitations
To mediocrity
To these mud-colored glasses
With which I approach the mirror
To the lie of my invisibility
The lie that I do not matter
Any lingering hopelessness
Any secret revenges
Or dark urges to sabotage my own dreams



I surrender
The myth of my victimhood
Any old stories, too often told
Of the bad things that happened to me
The injustices, the abuse, the neglect
Any hidden pleasure I took
In wearing the victim costume over
and over again
Like old clothing I refused to throw away
Even after it was tattered and dull

I surrender
My identity as
'one who does not earn,'
'one who is not loved or lovable,'
'one who is too old or fat or scarred,'
'one whose dreams cannot come true.'

I give it all up
The infinite mass of reasons
I can always come up with
Not to be happy, joyous, and free –
I surrender them all
To the consecrating fire.

Carol F.





HOTLINE

**Call 831-295-5866 for live help,
day or night.**

Upcoming Events

- September 28, 2013, 7-10 p.m. **Dancing With the Steps**, meeting and dance, Watsonville First United Methodist Church, 229 Stanford Street, Watsonville.
- October 3, 2013, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. **Cabrillo Wellness Fair**, Cabrillo College. Join us at the OA table and help carry the message.
- October 26, 2013, 12:30-4:45 p.m. **A Day in OA**, Live Oak Grange, 1900 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz. Clothing and accessories exchange – doors open at 11:50 for early shoppers.
- November 23, 2013. **IDEA Day** (International Day Experiencing Abstinence). Look for more information to come.
- November 28, 2013, 10:00-11:30 a.m. **Thanksgiving Meeting**, "The Little Red Church," 532 Center Street, Santa Cruz.
- December 2013 (date and location to be announced). **Sponsorship Workshop**, in conjunction with Twelfth Step Within.

New Books From OA World Service



Abstinence, 2nd Edition. Members share their experience, strength, and hope. Fifty percent new stories.



Reflect on the daily readings in **For Today**. This workbook provides thought-provoking questions for each day.

Temporary Sponsors Bureau

Santa Cruz County Intergroup has 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. If you are interested in becoming a temporary sponsor or if you need one, please call 831-429-7906.

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
Fragrance Free

New
Location

7:00-8:00 p.m. Book Study/Speaker

Soquel Congregational Church
4951 Soquel Drive, Soquel
Fragrance Free

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

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
Fragrance Free