



Sea to Sky Intergroup Newsletter

Volume 173
January 2018

I put my hand in yours and together we can do what we could never do alone.

NO RESOLUTIONS, JUST CHANGE.

INTERGROUP NEWS & EVENTS

All members are welcome to attend our **Intergroup meeting on Saturday, January 27, 2018** at 10 am, 1630 Edinburgh Street, New Westminster. Free street parking. Accessible.

Start 2018 with some great service opportunities! We need help with the following Intergroup positions: vice-chair, marathon & retreats coordinator and 12th step within coordinator. We are also looking for an assistant literature coordinator from January to June 2018 with a view toward that person taking over as literature coordinator in June. Contact Carlos, our intergroup chair, if you're interested at vancharles2011@hotmail.com.

Step Study Groups Forming Soon... The Coquitlam, Ladner and Northshore meetings are all planning to form step studies groups in the New Year. A step study is a 12 to 15-week time commitment, with reading assignments, writing homework, and sharing your Fifth Step. It is a transformative experience and deepens your understanding of the 12-step program. If you are interested, please contact the representative for the meeting hosting a step study nearest you. Contacts are in the meeting directory on our website (www.oaseatosky.com).

CONGRATULATIONS! Some special abstinence birthdays were celebrated recently! 90 Days: David & 6 Months: Jennifer (Northshore). One Year: Bridget (West End Recovery), Patti (Stepping Out) and Wendy (People in Recovery). Two Years: Serena (People in Recovery). Yay!! It works if we work it!



Spread the Message: send your group's good news to seatoskynews@gmail.com.

The **New Westminster meeting** on Monday nights has now closed. For other local meeting options, please see the directory at www.oaseatosky.com or check out the phone / skype meetings available via the meeting finder on www.oa.org.

REGION 1 EVENTS & NEWS

Greater Seattle Intergroup Retreat, February 2-4, 2018 at Camp Huston, 14725 Ley Road, Gold Bar, Washington. US\$160 before December 31st. <http://www.seattleoa.org/winter-retreat-registration/> or email Retreat@SeattleOA.org

North Cascades Spring Renewal Retreat, April 6-8, 2018 at Camp Casey Conference Center on Whidbey Island, near Coupeville, WA. Registration by March 1st is US\$135. Info: Allen at 360-678-9358 or allen@taylor635.com. The registration form is available on oaseatosky.com under "events".

Save the date! Vancouver Island Intergroup Retreat, June 8-10.

REPORT FROM REGION 1 CONVENTION

Faye D, our World Service Delegate, attended the Region 1 Convention in Seattle in October. Her full report is available from the Intergroup Secretary. Here are some highlights:

- There are **25 Intergroups and 357 OA meetings** in our region, comprised of BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, NWT, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Alaska!
- The "Green Envelope" 2017 Campaign to raise funds for our **Region 1 Intergroup renewal project** raised \$4,000 and so far, nine Intergroups (including ours!) have participated in the renewal process. Another six Intergroups plan renewal workshops for 2018.
- Region 1 is the only region in OA to have a **virtual sponsorship program** for those unable to find a local sponsor or who would prefer to work "remotely" by phone, email or Skype.
- An **online Step Study program** is planned for 2018 as part of the Strong Recovery working group. Faye is on this team. Stay tuned for more details!
- The **OA Region 1 website resource section** has been reorganized to make it more accessible. Notable new content includes **resources for men in OA**. Check it out at www.oaregion1.org

If you have questions for Faye, she is at mizpiggy@shaw.ca.

Greta H is our alternate delegate and she added that 260 members attended the Region 1 Convention and OA-ers from our Intergroup were the second largest turn out!

Unsure about OA terminology? World Service has a new Glossary which explains OA business, conference, and parliamentary procedure terms for effective and efficient communication across the Fellowship. Check it out here: <https://oa.org/files/pdf/OA-Business-Glossary-2017.pdf>

Subscribe to your Newsletter by following our blog on the OA Sea to Sky website (www.oaseatosky.org). **Contributions** to the Newsletter are very welcome! Please contact Jennifer at seatoskynews@gmail.com. Your newsletter is printed the week before Intergroup (the last Saturday of every month). The opinions expressed in this Newsletter belong to the contributors and may not represent our Intergroup or OA as a whole. This month's masthead photo is the Lionsgate Bridge in Snow, photo credit: BCTV News. Together we get better!

WORLD SERVICE RESOURCES



Looking for a way to have your Action Plan, your Food Plan and other OA resources at your fingertips? Try the OA Simplicity Project. With \$2 of coloured index cards and this handy guide, you can make a pocket deck of

program to take with you wherever you go. The instructions are found here: https://www.oa.org/pdfs/tsw_simplicity.pdf

Struggling with a problem? Why not 12 Step it? A handy guide to applying the 12 Steps to any problem is available from OA World Service. Copies of the handout can be downloaded here: http://www.oa.org/pdfs/twelve_stepping_a_problem.pdf

Interested in a meeting service position? World Service suggests we have a “Designated Downloader” who checks oa.org and oaregion1.org for news & events each month. This person then shares this info with their home group during the ‘announcements’ part of the meeting!

NEW “CLOSING THE MEETING” IDEA

The East Vancouver “A Vision for You” meeting has a new closing practice for their meetings that other groups may wish to adopt as well. Their fellowship reads, in unison, the last three paragraphs on page 164 of the AA Big Book. You know, the part that says:

Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.

Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.

May God bless you and keep you—until then.

They find reading these words together and aloud to be inspiring and unifying for their fellowship. **Maybe 2018 is the year your group would like to try this as your closing prayer too!**

TO MY LOVED ONES, FROM A FOOD ADDICT

Fernanda sent in this submission: I returned from a treatment centre for food addiction last week, armed with a new practice around my food – weighing and measuring my meals (in addition to abstaining from certain food substances, committing my meals to a sponsor, and other practices). My Dad, who I was staying with for a few days after treatment, asked me: how different is this current eating plan compared to how you were eating before? I took his question as a launch pad to address my loved ones regarding the fact that I am an addict.

I am an addict. In my case, it's usually food that I'm addicted to. More specifically, I am addicted to sugar, flour, caffeine, high fat, volume, processed foods, bingeing, purging, restricting, over-exercising, under-exercising and body obsession. These are the food drugs and food behaviours over which I am powerless. In the same way that a heroin addict is powerless over heroin – she's

lost the ability to just say no – I am powerless over my drugs and behaviors. Incidentally, I'm powerless over alcohol, money, my emotions, other people, and self-destruction. In other words, these are other areas in which my addictive personality comes into play. In these areas, my life is unmanageable [Step 1].

Many food addicts before recovery (or in relapse) are significantly overweight or obese. Some are mildly overweight, at a normal weight, or underweight. This can be for a number of reasons, ranging from compensatory behaviours (purging, restricting, fasting, exercising, dieting, etc.), to metabolism and genetics. **Food addiction, like all addiction, is a progressive disease.** Later stage addiction is far beyond “habits” or “problems” or “vices” or “coping mechanisms” – it is a full-blown disease barreling headfirst for death. This is not an exaggeration. My disease will kill me, and it has had me in a stalemate for a while.

The most literal course towards death for a food addict is when the morbidly obese individual dies of a heart attack or from complications resulting from diabetes. Another obvious death sentence is heart attack, stroke or other complications arising from bulimia. I'm certainly at risk for those, at times spending up to 12 hours repeatedly filling my body with litres and litres of food and inducing myself to vomit it out. Death from addiction can often be slow or amorphous. **It is often a spiritual death first**, or, in other words, a destruction of everything life-giving and good in the addict's life. When I choose my addiction over my health, relationships, career, spiritual life or other meaningful pursuits, I'm committing a slow suicide.

I've been so firmly pressed into a corner by my disease that I've been on the verge of selling all of my possessions, relocating to a remote corner of the world, and eating myself to death where no one can judge me or stop me. This is nothing but a slow form of suicide. Nor is it a mere fantasy – I could do it as easily and as suddenly as I recently moved across town in attempt to escape my disease. My impulsivity on account of co-occurring disorders exacerbates this risk. I'm also an addict with the propensity for cross-addictions, like alcohol, drugs and sex – my disease will pick up anything to try and kill me (I'm pretty sure it prefers food).

Many people think that the only side effects of food abuse are weight gain. But the fact is, when used in excess by certain types of people, food drugs can impair judgment and severely alter the state of one's mental health, for a number of well-documented physiological reasons. Food-related addictions are deadly serious and hardly different from addictions to drugs, alcohol, sex, or gambling. **In my experience, addiction is addiction, period. It is the same acute spiritual suffering that brings all addicts to twelve step programs worldwide.**

And so, I work a twelve-step program. And I surrender my food wholly by weighing, measuring and abstaining, in the same way that the alcoholic surrenders alcohol completely. **And I do recovery the only way possible: the hard way, which is one day at a time.**

Thank you for your love and support. - Fernanda, Vancouver

➔ **Further Resources for Friends and Family of OA-ers:** <https://oa.org/newcomers/for-family-and-friends/> ✨ to support a young person: <https://oa.org/newcomers/for-family-and-friends/supporting-young-persons/> ✨ Quiz for concerned family: <https://oa.org/newcomers/for-family-and-friends/familyconcerned-adult/#q1> ✨ And like Al-Anon, there are O-Anon groups forming: www.o-anon.org ✨

❄️ **Happy New Year to all!** ❄️

May peace and joy surround you, contentment latch your door, and happiness be with you now and bless you evermore.

❄️ Year's end is neither an end nor a beginning, but a going on with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us – Hal Borland.

For Today: Instead of resolutions, promises and vows, I mark this New Year as I do all others: by surrendering my will and my life to God. I give up trying to handle my food and my weight. (For Today, January 1) ✨ ...still controlling my food, I had not taken Step One... (Voices of Recovery, January 1). ✨ Sorrow looks back, worry looks around, faith looks up. F A I T H = Finding Answers In The Heart ✨