



## Sea to Sky Intergroup Newsletter

Volume 175

March 2018

Let us live while we live. Having saved my life, let me live it.

JUST FOR TODAY...

### INTERGROUP NEWS & EVENTS

All members are welcome to attend our **Intergroup meeting on Saturday, March 31, 2018** at 10 am, 1630 Edinburgh Street, New Westminster. Free street parking. Accessible.

Your Intergroup is planning a **Spring Marathon** and a **Fall Retreat!** If you would like to do service by helping with the planning or to suggest speakers, please contact Chelsea at [chelseawilliams05@hotmail.com](mailto:chelseawilliams05@hotmail.com)

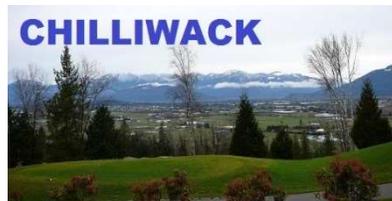


**CONGRATULATIONS!** Some special abstinence birthdays are being celebrated! Chelsea (West End) 1 year on February 16<sup>th</sup>, Jennifer (North Shore), 9 months on February 28<sup>th</sup>, and three recent 1-year anniversaries in the

Shaughnessy meeting (send in your names if you'd like to be in the newsletter!). Congratulations to each of these members and their sponsors, food buddies, home groups and other support folks. Send good news to [seatoskynews@gmail.com](mailto:seatoskynews@gmail.com).

→ The **One Aurora Meeting in Whitehorse** will meet at 730 pm at 4071 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays, starting in March.

The **Ladner meeting** is starting an **8-week Step Study on March 1<sup>st</sup>** from 230 to 330 pm on Saturdays after their 130 pm regular meeting. Interested? Print out the Lawrie C step study guide from <http://oabigbook.info/BigBookStudyPP7.pdf> and bring your Big Book. Ladner United Church, 4960 48th Avenue, Delta. For more info, contact Patti L. at 604-940-1956.



#### CHILLIWACK

The **Chilliwack meeting needs support** (Saturday mornings at 1030 am, 46048 Gore Avenue in the St. Thomas Anglican Church). **Members are invited to "take your**

**meeting on the road"** and carpool 3 or 4 members to visit this meeting in the coming weeks and months. Some members are crossing the border to attend OA meetings in Bellingham given meetings in the Fraser Valley are few and far between. That is not always practical given the border crossing. We carry the message in Step 12. Please support our local meetings!

**Seventh Tradition Update:** The 2017 year-end intergroup financials are in and thanks to significant literature sales, we had approx. \$2,000 surplus over Intergroup expenses. These funds will go to Region 1 and World Service as our Intergroup's 7th tradition for 2017. Our 2018 budget is also finalized. The current recommendation (based on Intergroup's 2018 budget) is that meetings who make a 7th tradition to Intergroup designate that 85% go to Intergroup, 10% to World Service and 5% to Region 1.

If you'd like to see the Intergroup financial statements, please ask your Intergroup rep or contact our treasurer, Tim C. Tim's contact information is in the meeting directory.

Several groups in our Intergroup say the **eight-line version of the Serenity Prayer** and find it helpful for recovery: *"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference. Grant me patience with the changes that take time, an appreciation for all that I have, tolerance for those with different struggles and the strength to get up and try again – one day at a time."*



### REGION 1 EVENTS & NEWS

**Marathon, Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup> in Nanaimo**, on strengthening recovery and strengthening meetings, at the Ramada Inn at 315 Rosehill Street. This marathon will be facilitated by Region 1. \$20 or by donation. <http://www.oaviig.org/events.html>

**North Cascades Spring Renewal Retreat, April 6-8, 2018** at Camp Casey Conference Center on Whidbey Island, near Coupeville, WA. Info: Allen at [allen@taylor635.com](mailto:allen@taylor635.com).

**Sunlight of the Spirit Retreat, May 18 - 20. 7th Annual Central Oregon OA Retreat.** Suttle Lake, Oregon. US\$175 by May 1st. <http://www.centraloregonoa.org/retreat>

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

### WORLD SERVICE NEWS

World Service has printed a new 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the OA 12 & 12. Available soon from the literature table at Intergroup!

The **OA Sea to Sky Intergroup** comprises the Lower Mainland of British Columbia and Whitehorse, Yukon in Canada. **Contributions** to the Newsletter are very welcome! Contact Jennifer at [seatoskynews@gmail.com](mailto:seatoskynews@gmail.com). The newsletter is distributed at Intergroup meetings and published online ([www.oaseatosky.org](http://www.oaseatosky.org)). **Subscribe** by following our blog to receive a PDF copy by email each month. Opinions expressed in this Newsletter belong to the contributors and may not represent our Intergroup or OA as a whole. This month's masthead image is Park & Tilford Gardens in North Vancouver, photo by your editor. The masthead quote is from the OA daily reader, *For Today*, on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Together we get better! It works if you work it.

## OA'S BIRTHDAY PARTY REPORT!

*Susan A attended the OA Birthday Party, January 12-14, 2018 in Los Angeles [http://www.oalaig.org/oa-birthday-party/]! Susan shares her experience:*

**Well, I am back from the 58th Annual OA Birthday Party in Los Angeles and I am full to my brim with program and phrases that are bouncing around in my head.** Not only that, but I also built up my wardrobe at the fund-raising boutique they set up – great clothes in all sizes! Some phenomenal finds, let me tell you. Oh, how fripperies can divert me!

I want to share some of what I took away from the speakers and panels and conversations I had during the weekend with compulsive overeaters, chronic dieters, bulimics, anorexics, women and men who'd released hundreds of pounds, who'd been abstinent for decades, whose lives had been saved by OA.

In the sponsorship workshop, someone shared that **sponsorship teaches us about boundaries.** Another person said that the only place honesty always happens in her life is with her sponsor. That she gets to say her broken ideas out loud and see her own lies. She realized that her sneaking food behaviours were connected with her dishonesty. Another shared how after she speaks with her sponsor, she always has a plan of action.

**Next, I went to a panel called "Letting Go of Old Ideas."** Some of the old ideas shared were "I am not sacrificial enough," "I have to lose so others can win," "We can't all really win," "I have to be perfect but no one else has to be," "I am afraid to believe in something too good." In recovery, one woman realized her skewed logic – "if everything that happens is my fault then I am all powerful, [and] then I am an incompetent Higher Power!"

New ideas that came with recovery included: "My attitude is the paintbrush of my day." "Life is not about the tap dance, not about getting YOU to like ME." One woman's sponsor suggested she imagine an equal sign = on everybody's forehead. Another was told that in OA, "we don't shoot our wounded."

**Someone asked what to do when the old ideas slip back.** All the panelists talked about the need to work the OA twelve steps and program hard and **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE with the new behaviours.** One talked about how she finds herself taking on "available blame" when she freaks out and attacks herself. **When she is gripped by the old fears, she says out loud to herself – "No, that's not true." Another asks herself "how is this old idea serving me and what character defects is it supporting?"** As the panel wrapped, one woman said if she is making deals with HP, then she is actually playing HP. That way of thinking always ends up with her needing to be perfect to satisfy a demanding Santa Claus-like Higher Power. Doubtless, HP likely has new and better ideas!

One speaker talked about her struggle of not knowing why she had to eat and trying to figure out who or what her Higher Power is. She said that when she stopped thinking about WHAT her Higher Power is and accepted THAT her Higher Power IS, all the noise in her head went away. She expressed gratitude for OA, her healthy body and her rich family life. She said, "you in this room gave me these gifts. I don't know how and why I got them, but I have the obligation and the privilege to give them back."

**In the workshop on Surrender, the leader talked about how the disease of compulsive eating told her again and again she could eat like a normal person. "And I had the strangest idea of what a normal person ate like!"** She shared her story and her recovery in OA and led us through writing exercises for step 1, 2 and 3, emphasizing that our success with our step work all depends on how sincerely we take Step Three, remembering that a decision implies further action.

A couple of other things that are still ringing in my head are "forgiveness is not condoning" and "a craving is not a command."

I didn't get to a fraction of all that was on offer over the weekend: comedy, prizes, marathon meetings, dancing, mediation, yoga and so much more. You can find many of the speakers over the weekend on the LA Intergroup podcasts. [Ed: <http://www.oalaig.org/laig-virtual-speakers-bureau/>]



I took some time to write down my highlights because I take this very seriously: I have received so much recovery from OA and from you, my fellows, that I do feel an obligation and I count it a privilege to give something back! – Susan A.

### BREAKING DOWN THE ANATOMY OF GIVING UP

**Sometimes it feels like I am in an endless cycle, an emotional loop, where I make some progress, I get scared or frustrated, and I either give up for a while (or I want to).** Right now, it's not about abstinence (thankfully). It's about struggling to do the work to help heal depression. Totally related struggles.

**There is an anatomy to this process that I repeat every time.** A runaway train of negative emotions. I am grateful for my counsellor (who has his own recovery from addiction) for identifying the mental steps I take that increase my risk of giving up -- he pointed them out in my own writing! **We traced the leaps of distorted logic that take me from "this is hard" to "I can't".** [Sometimes we do not clearly see our own patterns and this is where working with others in recovery is invaluable.]

**Now that I see the pattern, I recognize it in me and when I work with others in program.** It comes up when we are confronted with something emotionally challenging that requires us to honestly look at, pray, and then do the work to change our dysfunctional behaviours. For me, this pattern is active as I take steps to work through depression. In a sponsee, I often see it as s/he struggles to confront the past in the Step 4 inventory. It goes like this:

I think "this is difficult" (for my thoughts are a jumbled mess) which leads "this is impossible" (I cannot focus; "I can't") ... and transforms into "I am not good at this" (technically true; it is new) and the feeling "I don't like this at all" (I feel overwhelmed). From overwhelm I go to "I don't want to do this" (I am stressed because this is hard) ... and then I tell myself "this is crushing me, it must be wrong" (panic)... **The whole dysfunctional thought chain, if uninterrupted, ends at giving up, doing nothing. Or a binge.**

**There is a Japanese proverb that says "Fall seven times, get up eight." Which is great except when you want to learn to stop falling.** Getting up is hard. Learning not to fall is harder. More advanced. When I get to the point where I want to give up because working with my hard feelings (and then actually doing something to change them) is just so difficult, I remind myself what the Big Book says (p.417):

*Nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God's world by mistake. Until I could accept my compulsive overeating, I could not stay abstinent; unless I accept life completely on life's terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitude.*

**And I pray to accept that I am struggling and affirm to myself that I will not give up.** I will ask for help and I will try again. And then I remind myself that "faith without works is dead" [Big Book, p.76] **and I push myself to do the next right thing.** – Jennifer S.