




OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS®

Sea to Sky Intergroup
Newsletter
December 2018

Abstinent holidays are the best gift you can give yourself.

❄️ SEASON'S GREETINGS! ❄️

INTERGROUP NEWS & EVENTS



The Cloverdale Meeting's annual Candlelight Meeting is Thursday, December 13th at Cloverdale United Church, 17575 – 58A Avenue. All welcome.

Upcoming Intergroup Meetings: A reminder that our "December" Intergroup meeting will be on **Saturday, January 5** and our "January" Intergroup meeting is **Saturday, January 26th**. Everyone is welcome: 10 am at 1630 Edinburgh Street, New Westminster. Accessible with ample street parking.

Welcome to new Intergroup reps, Griffin from the Recovery Club Sunday meeting in East Vancouver, and **Teagan** from the One Aurora meeting in Whitehorse, Yukon. Thanks too to Teagan for the wonderful photo for this month's masthead!

Lots of recent abstinence milestones are being celebrated!! In the White Rock Lifeliners meeting **Carolyn** took her one-year coin at the end of October, **Patti S** celebrated two years on November 5, **Raina** one year on November 17 and **Courtney**, three years on December 3rd. Saturday's Stepping Out meeting celebrates **Deborah's** 25 year coin on November 3rd. In the West End, **Denise** takes her 1-year coin the same week and, in Shaughnessy, **Christa** celebrates 3 years as well. **Congratulations!!** Send your good news to seatoskynews@gmail.com.

Wednesday, December 12 is 12 Step Within Day! Make an outreach call or attend a meeting. Brown Baggers meet at Christ Church in Vancouver at noon, Langley Serenity (20550 Douglas Crescent) at 7 pm; and A Vision For You, 7:45 pm at the Britannia Ice Rink in East Van. See also: <https://oa.org/groupsservice-bodies/resources/twelfth-step-within/>

REGION 1 EVENTS & NEWS

Region 1 is hosting a 12 Step Within speaker meeting online at 7 pm on Wednesday, December 12. Join the meeting online (audio only) at: <https://join.freeconferencecall.com/region1> (log in early, you may need to download a installer) or dial 515-739-1458 and enter access code 781502. Back up numbers: 781-838-3270 or 781-838-3755 and the access code is the same: 781502. Long distance charges may apply depending on your phone plan.

Seattle Intergroup is having their Winter Retreat, February 1-3 and details will be posted at <http://www.seattleoa.org/events/>.

Oregon Intergroup's Serenity Retreat at Twin Rocks in Rockaway Beach, will be March 15-17, 2019. See www.oregon-oa.org for more information.

At the Region 1 Conference, the workshop on sponsorship posed some great questions for sponsors and sponsees to ask each other.

? For sponsors: ❶ What do I need/expect from my sponsees in order to work with them? ❷ What are my goals/intent as a sponsor? ❸ What can I offer my sponsees? ❹ What actions did I take as a sponsor that worked for me?

? For sponsees: ❶ List 5 things you want in a sponsor. ❷ List 5 things you need in a sponsor. ❸ List 5 actions you are willing to take to work with a sponsor. ❹ Why are you here today? What do you want out of working this program?

Thanks to Pat O'C, our Region 1 Trustee, for sharing from the Region 1 Convention workshop on sponsorship (October 2018).

The next Region 1 Assembly and Convention will be in Portland, Oregon. The Assembly is October 16-18, 2019 and the Convention will be October 18-20.-Plan to attend!



WORLD SERVICE NEWS

Upcoming phone marathons can be found at the new OA Virtual Services website. Check out the "Virtual Events" tab here: <http://www.oavirtualseervices.org>.

HOLIDAY TREATS: "THEIR FOOD," NOT OURS



Do you have trouble with the overabundance of holiday treats? I heard this from a fellow OA member and it's helping me.

Think of the treats, etc, as "their food, not ours". "Their food" is food that normal eaters can eat without repercussion; it does not trigger the physical craving that we have to keep eating or the mental obsession to justify just one bite.

"Our food" is the food each of us eats that is on our food plan and what we eat to maintain our abstinence. If it makes us sound special because we have our own food, well, so be it. We are special. We have eating disorders and we cannot manage our food without help.

So, for the rest of the holiday season, I am looking at it as "their food, not our (or my) food". - Adapted from OA Denver, with thanks to Bev J.

➔ Remember the telephone meeting marathons on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Call 712-432-5200 and enter Conference ID 4285115# (<http://www.oavirtualseervices.org/virtual-events-3/>)

TWELVE STEPS TO A BETTER HOLIDAY

1. We admitted that the holiday season has a deeper meaning than devouring food.

2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could help us see and celebrate the true meaning of the season.
3. We came to believe that our Higher Power could help us appreciate the joyfulness of the season as we understand it.
4. We made a searching and thorough examination of our relationship with food during the holidays and other things we enjoy about the season.
5. We admitted to our Higher Power the exact nature of our food habits during holiday season past.
6. We became entirely ready to allow our Higher Power to remove our attachment to food as a necessity of the holidays.
7. We humbly asked him to remove our desire to partake of holiday treats.
8. We made a list of all persons whose presence makes the season joyful for us and with whom we would like to share our joy.
9. We made plans to spend time with those people whenever possible, except when to do so would remove us from our primary purpose of abstinence.
10. We continue to enjoy the company of friends and family and other nonfood aspects of the season.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our appreciation of the season, praying for knowledge of its meaning and the joy we feel at the time.
12. Having realized that sharing the joy of this season with others far outlasts the fleeting pleasure of food, we gave ourselves the gift of abstinence throughout the holidays and gave others the gift of our full attention and appreciation. - *Edited and reprinted from New Horizons newsletter, November/December 1998.*

THREE LONG-TIME SPONSORS SHARE

The official OA statement on sponsorship is "Sponsors are OA members who are living the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to the best of their ability. They willingly share their recovery with other members of the Fellowship and are committed to abstinence. Sponsors help us with our program of recovery on all three levels: physical, emotional and spiritual. By working with others and sharing their experience, strength and hope, sponsors renew and reaffirm their own recovery." **How do long-term sponsors actually do it, though?**



Our Sea to Sky Reporter, Alicia D., interviewed three long term sponsors in our fellowship who asked to remain anonymous.

They have been in OA for over 30 years each and have been sponsors for 103 years altogether! All have had long term abstinence. Two have experience with relapse and recovery – their current abstinence is between 9 months and a year. The third has been abstinent for more than 35 years.

To start, we asked, "What do you consider to be your main role as a sponsor?" One of our long-term sponsors said, "To work with someone to go through the Steps. To show them how to get in tune with God's power to work the OA program in their life. Also, to identify which foods are their triggers. Helping them so they can realize their worth and they don't have to turn to food to fill the gap or emptiness anymore."

Another replied: "To be a sounding board and help people see things they may not be seeing themselves, because they're too close to the forest to see the trees. To be a friend who is willing to share openly my experience with the disease and recovery."

And the third said, "To pass along what was passed to me. I never talk about anything I haven't done myself. I talk about what I've done and what's helped me. I talk about what abstinence is for me and about losing abstinence."

We next asked, "what do you need or expect from sponsees in order to work with them?" Contact is a big one: One sponsor said, "We need to keep in contact, and therefore our schedules

need to coincide for discussion." For one of our long-time sponsors, the onus is on the sponsee: "I expect the sponsee to phone the sponsor."

A willingness to take direction is another thing these sponsors flagged as a necessity: "Sponsees need a willingness to listen to feedback." They also need a willingness to work within the fellowship: "I need them to phone other people besides me." Another said, "I can't help with making a food plan, so I need them to ask someone else to help with that part."



Sponsees also need to be actively working the 12 Step program. A sponsee needs to be ready to "go to

any lengths" [Big Book, p.58] to recover. One said, "When I see they have willingness and desire, and will go to any lengths, then I go to any lengths."

One sponsor shared, "I need them to be open to reading the Big Book and the original AA program literature." Another said, "They have to be willing to pray." Also, "They have to be able to live honestly."

What about sponsorship styles? Do you have a certain structure to the way you sponsor? One of our long-term sponsors said, "Each one is different as to the amount of time. More frequent contact for newcomers. Others, cosponsoring."

All said their focus is on the Steps. One described her sponsorship this way, "I use the Big Book. Start with Step One, with an emphasis on the second part of Step One, not the first. I am a believer, as is my [own] sponsor, that the first part of Step One gets you [into the rooms], so you've already taken the first part of Step One by coming here."

Another emphasized the use of the telephone as a tool for recovery: "Some of my sponsees don't live in Vancouver, so I've done the steps over the phone. We meet once every 1-2 weeks depending on availability."

Next, we asked, "what advice would you give someone who is looking for their first sponsor, or perhaps looking for a new sponsor?" One shared the minimum requirements: "Make sure the person you ask [to sponsor you] has done the Steps. Look for someone who is abstinent, and is willing to work with you."

Another emphasized how sponsorship is a working relationship: "You're not looking for a friend, you're looking for a guide - someone who can share their experience, strength and hope with the Steps."

And the third added that "Trust and confidentiality, [having your] best interests at heart" are key for a sponsorship relationship.

Lastly, we asked, "How does being a sponsor help you in your recovery?" One sponsor sees it as paying forward the gifts she has received from her own sponsors: "It closes the loop: as I was given, so I give. I repay the debt to my sponsor." At the same time, she says "It really, really reminds me where I came from; it makes me accountable to be available to people."

Another long-time sponsor said, "It keeps me abstinent, hearing myself talk about my life in program. I hear what's important to me by what I'm saying has worked for me. One thing I've learned from being in a long time is that you can't guarantee a sponsee's abstinence, but sponsorship helps you keep abstinent."

Sponsoring also helps keep sponsors from isolating themselves: "It's a blessing to have people trust you; it's an honour. Being available for service helps keep me from isolating, and makes me more reliable and responsible."

The last word goes to this long-time sponsor: "Sponsoring makes a huge difference. When I'm giving to others, it gets me out of me. It gives me a sense of usefulness. **The 12 Steps have given me a fabulous quality of life, and I am so grateful. I probably wouldn't be alive today if I hadn't come to the program.** -Jennifer S with interviews by Alicia D. Some answers were edited for clarity and length. Thank you to the sponsors who shared!