

The Northern Lights Newsletter

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Voice of AAI -- December, 2015



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** All material included in this newsletter is selected from within the OA Fellowship, including OA publications and/or OA program-related submissions from members. Personal stories express the experience of the individual members and not of OA as a whole.

**The Newsletter Editor will distribute The Northern Lights to the AAI meetings, members, and other service bodies via the AAI email system. Each issue will also be sent via email to Lifeline.

Note from the Editor:

Since this is my last month as newsletter editor, I want to thank all for your support and for those of you who sent in submissions and AAI reports. We all benefited. I've learned a good deal and will certainly assist next year's editor, Cynthia B, as needed.

In service,
Nancy, Northern Lights Editor
oanewsletter@oa-alaska.org

****To unsubscribe** to the member list please email our webmaster at oawebmaster@oa-alaska.org. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

December, our Twelfth Month...

Step Twelve: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Tradition Twelve: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Our Voices

Body Image, Self Image

My journey in physical recovery has been full of ups and downs, much like the number on the scale before coming into program.

I believed that if I could be a size sixteen in jeans (stretchy jeans that is), then I could live a fulfilled life; I truly believed I would die happy in a size sixteen. My Higher Power did more for me than I would've done for myself, however, because I now fit into a size 12 slacks (the ones with the ridiculous button and the little clips that you have to suck in your belly to latch, no matter what size you're wearing).

Unfortunately, I found myself just as concerned after fitting into my Size 12's. In some ways I had 'everything' I wanted, but physical recovery is not all there is to body image. Sometimes the voices and the 'old tapes' that declared me fat and ugly in my pre-OA days were just as loud as they ever were, especially about my self-worth --

until OA started the slow and arduous task to retrain my mind in this area. Part of me was sure I would be worth more love and kindness because I was a healthy body weight, but the other part of me understood that my mental self was still battered and believed herself to be worthless.

This is why the program of recovery exists on multiple levels. It is not enough for me to be the 'right' size; I had to find understanding, love and acceptance for myself at 300+ pounds, and I had to accept that the number was never the answer to begin with. The answer is in loving myself inside and out. With the help of program, the tools, my sponsor and my Higher Power, I am learning every day what I am worth.

It is enough, and so is everyone who reads this.

~~Anonymous, Anchorage

Holiday Abstinence

I have gotten through two evenings of fancy food at holiday parties, maintaining my abstinence and keeping corral foods where they belong – in the corral – all the while being social.

Last night, without food to take the edge off, I was able to listen and be more present with others, such as with a couple who had moved from out of state recently, the first in their families to leave in thousands of years.

Another young man was at the dinner who teaches Native games and was there to talk about youth and spirituality. The tribe elder who sat next to me shared stories of living in the Deep South as a Marine in the '60s.

I so often isolate in such situations, inside myself cringing that I will do something or say something that will give me away as

inept or "other." Without the food in the way, it was an entirely different experience.

This morning, I have gratitude for open eyes and a heart to see that humanity includes each of the people at the table....even me.

~~ Anonymous, Alaska

Anonymity: Practice These Spiritual Principles in All Our Affairs

I remember being new in the program. Before OA, I had tried everything out there. I was completely defeated. Nothing worked. I was so willing to use this program that I dove in headfirst. For the first time in my life, I felt that I had struck pay dirt. I was home. At one meeting, I said that I wished that I could bottle it (my recovery) up and give it to everyone. Someone remarked after the meeting that I was giving it away by simply sharing. I wanted to get on the rooftop and shout the glad tidings. I hadn't started Step 12, but I wanted to carry the message.

However, Step 12 isn't simply carrying the message. As this step states in the first clause, I must have applied the first eleven steps to the way I live life, and as a result, I will experience a spiritual awakening. The person I was will cease to exist. This means that the person that I was has changed. The ideas, concepts, and attitudes that once dominated my being have been tossed out, and a completely new set of ideas, concepts, and attitudes begin to take over. I was told that I had to change my entire life. They gave me a week to accomplish that. Of course, they were kidding about the table, but not the fact that I had to change.

They told me that then and only then can the message truly be carried and shared

with others. That is what we do; we carry the message. The importance is not the person carrying the message, it is the message itself that is of true value.

Members shared the message with me, they showed me how to live this program, and told me to pass it on, to practice it daily.

What is the best way to carry this message? I was told to practice these spiritual principles in all my affairs, to express the Big Book, to be a walking Big Book. They taught me this was the best way to express these spiritual principles, to put these 12 Steps and 12 Traditions into action, to live them. Action is the magic word in this program they said. I learned that have to walk the walk.

Part of the spiritual awakening I experienced was that I am a small bit of the whole. I am simply another compulsive overeater, no better or worse than the next. We are all equals. It was a true acceptance of anonymity. It isn't **my** program, it is **the** program; it is my recovery. It is my recovery. I receive as much as I give up. The more I surrender my will to God's Will, the more God graces me with recovery and the promises of this program become a reality. The more I give up my will the more anonymous I become. Of myself, I am nothing. God does the work, God works through us.

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our program. We place our principles (embodied in our 12 Steps and 12 Traditions) before the members, before personalities. We have no leaders; we have servants. Our servants don't have goals, plans, and designs for the direction of a group, intergroup, region, or world. No, they serve us. We have a bottom up organization, not the other way around. Our servants, members who recognize the importance of performing service, give back

to others and our fellowship. They aren't elected to a position, instead, they are willing to carry out the duties and responsibilities needed by a group, intergroup, region, or world.

We allow God to work through us during our practice of these spiritual principles. Personally, I believe we are disciples of God. We share our experience (God given) with each other to inform others, so they too can let God work through them during a group conscience, or simply learn from that experience. Others took their time to show me how to live this program. Some of those members are gone now, but the message continues. Today, I ask God for the strength to practice these principles in all my affairs, so I can carry this message to everyone, so I can continue to experience a spiritual awakening.

~ Anonymous, Alaska

Working the Steps

In my personal relationships, I frequently feel betrayal, anger, even hatred. If feelings become intense, I work the steps. I'm generally shocked to learn that it is I who requires restoration to sanity, not the other guy. When I get to the 7th step, and ask God to removed these defects of character, I'm often pleased to get insight into my own parts: expectations, projections of my past pain onto present circumstances, failure to see the other guy's motives and pain, failure to ask for what I need.

Oh, boy! When I am gifted, after the 7th step, with the above knowledge of my own failings, then I can FEEL what I need to do next: I may feel to let the issue go. I may feel to love the person more surely. I may feel to make an amends. I may feel to ask

him/her for an apology. I may feel to tell how I feel, what I have learned, and what I need for myself in the future. I could feel to end the relationship, or to communicate what I will need to do to take care of myself.

At any rate, the solution, when it comes from God, is never vindictive, never cruel, never cross, never hurtful in any way, never violent, always peaceful, always serene. If the solution seems to be otherwise, I think that I need to work the steps again. Some issues are so complex and I may not be ready for the Godly answer.

Using the steps ensures that relationships will be healthier. Relationships will be saved. Even if a relationship needs to end, it will end in a loving, peaceful way. For example, I could say that I am not healthy enough to appreciate your situation. I need time to myself to work it out. If not peaceful, I feel that I may still be in self-centered ego, which is a pre-step one condition.

~~ Anonymous, Alaska

Topics for our next Northern Lights . . .

On Beginning a New Year....

****Respond in any fashion to the following from *For Today*, page 1 – through a piece of writing, a sketch, cartoon, graphic art, or photo.**

"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

Whether it is the beginning of a new year or a new month, week or day, it's

tempting to make resolutions, to swear off, to promise to reform. Before OA I did not know that these pledges were misguided attempts to be in control, to try yet again to make a normal eater out of myself.

Do I want abstinence with peace of mind?

Have I been able to achieve it on my own?

I can admit my powerlessness now or I can wait for another calendar "beginning." But the best time to give up my will, my old ideas, my defects is any time I am ready to grow.

For today: Instead of resolutions, promises and vows, I mark this day 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.*

Also, of course . . . you may write and submit about any topic important to your recovery.

Submit to Cynthia at oanewsletter@oa-alaska.org.

Lifeline is always looking for submissions and accepts letters/articles, artwork and photos (no faces, please) for publication. More information and monthly topics are online at <http://www.oa.org/lifeline-magazine/monthly-topics/>

A Timely Reminder and Reason for the Season

(Republished by popular demand! ... A BIG thank you to Terri for the forward!)

TWELVE STEPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

- 1. Admitted that the holiday season has deeper meanings attached to it than the consumption of food, alcohol, drugs, shopping, etc.**
- 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could help us see and celebrate the true meaning of the season.**
- 3. Came to believe that our Higher Power could help us appreciate the joyfulness of the season as we understood it.**
- 4. Made a searching and thorough examination of our relationship with food, alcohol, drugs, shopping, etc. in connection with the holidays as well as all of the other things we have enjoyed about the season.**
- 5. Admitted to our Higher Power the exact nature of our food, alcohol, drug, and shopping habits in holiday seasons past.**
- 6. Became entirely ready to allow our Higher Power to remove our attachment to food, alcohol, drugs, shopping, etc. as an unavoidable necessity of the holidays.**
- 7. Humbly asked our Higher Power to remove our desire to partake of holiday treats, drinks, drugs, and excessive shopping.**
- 8. Made a list of all persons whose presence make the holiday season joyful**

for us and with whom we would like to share our joy.

9. Made plans to spend time with those people wherever possible, except when to do so would remove us from our primary purpose of abstinence/sobriety.

10. Continued to enjoy the company of our friends and family as well as all of the other enjoyable no-food aspects of the season.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our appreciation of the season praying for knowledge of the meaning of the season and the joy we feel at that time.

12. Having realized that sharing with others the joy of the season far outlasts the fleeting good feeling of the food, alcohol, drugs, shopping, etc., we gave ourselves the gift of abstinence throughout the holidays and gave others the gift of our full attention, love, acceptance, and appreciation.

PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE HOLIDAYS

- 1. I will make a plan of action to help me address holiday stress and interactions.**
- 2. I will have a food plan for each day.**
- 3. I will call at least three different OA people each day. I will share my experience, strength and hope with them.**
- 4. I will read OA and AA literature each day.**
- 5. I will write out my feelings and thoughts each day.**

6. I will call my sponsor and share my feelings, thoughts, and successes each day.

7. I will attend and support as many meetings as possible, particularly during the holidays.

8. I will practice the principles of 12 step recovery in all my affairs each day.

9. I will set aside quiet time each day to pray and to meditate.

10. I will give service in whatever way I am able.

11. I will love myself unconditionally today by making loving choices.

USE THIS SPACE TO LIST OTHER PARTS OF YOUR OWN ACTION PLAN.

AAI and Region 1

AAI Officers

(***a complete list of all all AAI email addresses, including group rep's can be found at <http://oa-alaska.org>)

Executive Board

ochair@oa-alaska.org	Randy
oavicechair@oa-alaska.org	Crystal
otreasurer@oa-alaska.org	Jody L
ocorrsecretary@oa-alaska.org	Wendy H
oaminsecretary@oa-alaska.org	Jody J

Board

oanewsletter@oa-alaska.org	Nancy
oaliterature@oa-alaska.org	Dave
oaregion1delegate@oa-alaska.org	Alice
oaawsodelegate@oa-alaska.org	Open

Standing Committee Chairs

oaetreat@oa-alaska.org	Gail F.
oa_special_events@oa-alaska.org	Open
oa_publication@oa-alaska.org	Open
oa_oasis@oa-alaska.org	Open
oa_twelfth_step_within@oa-alaska.org	Open
oa_outreach@oa-alaska.org	Open
oa_lifeline@oa-alaska.org	Sue
oa_finance@oa-alaska.org	Open
oa_policies_procedures@oa-alaska.org	Cassie
oa_technology@oa-alaska.org	David
oa_archives@oa-alaska.org	Open
oa_librarian@oa-alaska.org	Open

*** Several positions in our intergroup remain open, including meeting representatives. (A conference phone is now available for call-ins.) Downloads for intergroup reps, our bylaws/policies/procedures, and other important information are available on our AAI site, <http://oa-alaska.org/> under the Anchorage Alaska Intergroup tab.

AAI Summary Reports (in full)

Chair's Report

December 5, 2015

We are winding down our terms. A new group of members will be filling the duties and responsibilities for which we were elected a year ago. Yes, our Vice-Chair, Crystal, will host this month an in-service for our new officers, and we look forward to the date she will set for the training, but perhaps we outgoing officers can offer the incoming officers mentorship. The new officers take on these duties and responsibilities January 1, but perhaps we outgoing officers will walk them through the duties and responsibilities this last month. Hopefully, this will minimize any hardship for these members and assist the transition.

Last month, this body tabled Kay's motion asking AAI to assist the Tuesday meeting with rent and literature, so we could become informed on our past precedent. I have read the minutes for the past four years, asked member's their experience, but I could not find any mention of or heard back from them stating that AAI has paid the rent or paid for literature (with the exception of a new group kit) of a group. The closest instance I discovered while mentoring a member on how to be a group secretary was that AAI doesn't charge rent to the groups that meet at the Oasis. The meetings I attend pay rent and other expenses, then it splits the balance above the group's prudent reserve the suggested 60% to AAI, 30% to WSO, and 10% to Region 1. The groups that meet at the Oasis give their 7th Tradition to the AAI Treasurer to make the split for the group, but they don't pay rent.

Jody J has a motion to eliminate the error

message issued to the sender after sending an email to the aai_list@oa-alaska.org and the member_list@oa-alaska.org. This simple fix will resolve the problem. As a reminder, at the end of the year, since we have set-up this email system we will no longer encounter the situation of members, Region 1, and WSO sending email to former officers. The webmaster will simply send the new passwords to the new officers January 1st. If the new officers want to use the forwarder feature he or she can contact the webmaster to set it up. Further, perhaps our Vice-Chair can include in the training this month how to log into the AAI email account, or perhaps our webmaster can make a movie to send to new officers. In addition, please do not delete old emails. New officers may find the information useful. Lastly, as a reminder, one of the other plusses for using our email system is to improve communication between AAI and groups, which came up during our last IG Inventory.

Jody L has several motions concerning a 2016 Budget, including the budget in each monthly AAI Treasurer Report, and increasing the allotted amount for retreats on the Monthly Operation Summary Sheet from \$1500.00 to \$3000.00, which reflects the 2015 and 2016 budget. I was able to assist Jody with some charts, they span between 2004 and 2015 (except I didn't have November and December 2015 income and expenses). If you look at the bar graph of income and expenses, you will notice that AAI falls into a cycle of expenses outpacing our income for a couple of years, and then we experience a huge influx of income. This pattern is then repeated. We are currently in the middle of the cycle. However, we are still above our prudent reserve.

I want to thank our Special Events

Committee Chair, Jody W. for her and the committee member's service on the workshop. I heard that it was well attended. As I stated last month, it is great to see members working together and giving back to the program. As I was taught in the program, action is the magic word, and action makes recovery possible. Her service provided others to make recovery possible.

I also want to thank Paula, Nominating Committee Chair, and our Nominating Committee for their service. Last month, they proposed and you accepted the proposed slate of candidates for 2016 AAI officer positions. Now their task is completed. You have before you the ballot. Of course, as our bylaws states, nominations can still happen. And you will decide to close the nomination period by a 2/3 vote. Once again, it is gratifying to see members step up to give service. It is by rotating service that we express the true meaning of anonymity, that we value principles over personalities.

Lastly, I want to thank you for allowing me to serve these past nearly five years at the IG level. During my service in this IG, you have made many changes. You resolved the issue of our IG name, there was once some confusion about the name of our IG. Some thought we were called Anchorage Area Intergroup, rather than Anchorage Alaska Intergroup. This body decided to start a web page, which reaches new and current members, providing them of events and a meeting schedule, as well as a means providing information about OA and our IG. This body has hosted a few retreats, workshops, and conducted an IG Inventory. You improved the telephone service from GCI and purchased a conference phone for members in distant areas to call into the IG meetings. You adopted our current bylaws, policies and procedures, and service

manuals to help guide us. This body adopted a budget for the first time. You have done this and more. As my sponsor stated the other day, you kept OA alive, continuing the work and service of those that served in the past. Now, it is time for others to serve in IG.

I am grateful to serve you.

Humbly submitted by
Randy S, Chair

Vice Chair's Report

November 7th, 2015

December 5th, 2015

I do not have much to report for this month other than I am grateful to have had this learning experience and it is a job that carries a lot of chances for growth as well as change. I look forward to seeing where this next year will take us in Intergroup.

Any and all information I have from my reaching out into the groups, I will be sure to send on to the correct people as well as try and make sure that the new Vice Chair receives what I have brought in. I will also attempt to continue in the last few weeks of my position to check in with the other groups that I have not received information or word back on.

Blessing in Service,
Crystal

News and Outreach

Announcements below can also be found online:

<http://www.oa.org/>

<http://www.oaregion1.org/>

The WSO News Bulletin contains a great deal of information about ongoing and upcoming events. You can subscribe through www.oa.org.

New OA Video! Breaking Out of Relapse

Use the new Board-approved Twelfth Step Within video to help members in relapse return to their program and abstinence.

Free to download or stream, the [***Breaking Out of Relapse***](#) video is a resource for Twelfth Step service and outreach. Service bodies are encouraged to use and share the video.

<https://www.oa.org/membersgroups/program-inspiration/breaking-out-of-relapse/>

Support OA

Make an end-of-the-year contribution to Overeaters Anonymous. Contributions to the WSO within the USA are tax deductible. To give, go to the [Contribute](#) page on oa.org.

New Workshop! Importance of Working the Steps

Encourage Step work with the new [Importance of Working the Steps Workshop](#).

Developed as part of the 2015 [Strategic Plan](#) initiative to increase the focus on working all Twelve Steps, the workshop is a blend of readings, discussions, writing exercises, and more.

Groups and service bodies as well as sponsors/sponsees are encouraged to use the new resource in their program work and to support threefold recovery by working all the Steps.

A FREE Step Eleven Podcast to Download or Stream

To listen to the Step Eleven podcast and previous podcasts anytime, go to the [Podcast page](#) on oa.org. Groups and service bodies are encouraged to use these podcasts in meetings.

<https://www.oa.org/podcasts/step-eleven-november-8-2015/>

World Service Business Conference Dates

January 11, 2016: Conference e-Documents #2, including proposed new business motions and bylaw amendments and agenda questionnaire, posted on the [WSBC page](#) online.

February 2, 2016: [Trustee Nominee Applications](#) due to the World Service Office.

February 22, 2016: [Delegate Registration Forms](#) due to the World Service Office.

ANCHORAGE ALASKA INTERGROUP AND OTHER AK GROUPS' MEETING SCHEDULE

(To update a meeting, send the information to oawebmaster@oa-alaska.org)

Anchorage

Day	Time	Address	Type	Contact (907)
Monday	Noon	Kaladi Bros., 6921 Brayton Dr.	AA Big Book	Kathy 330-9442
Monday	6:00 pm	St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Lake Otis & Tudor	AA Big Book	Tanya 317-7451
Tuesday	5:30 pm	OAsis Turnagain Arts Bldg. 4105 Turnagain Blvd, #D1 (in back)	OA/HOW	Meg 248-0300
Wednesday	Noon	OAsis Turnagain Arts Bldg. 4105 Turnagain Blvd, #D1 (in back)	Writing and Sharing	Paula 830-2815
Thursday	6:30 pm	Lutheran Church of Hope, 1847 W. Northern Lights Blvd (Childcare available.)	There is a Solution	LauraBeth 631-2321
Friday	Noon	Kaladi Bros., 6921 Brayton Dr.	AA Big Book & OA Book	Rachel 632-3236
Saturday	9:00-10:30am	St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Lake Otis & Tudor	AA Big Book	Twyla 444-7251
Sunday	9:30 am	Kaladi Bros., 6921 Brayton Dr.	As Bill Sees It. VOR & For Today	Candy 350-5255, Jean 345-9805

Mat-Su

Day	Time	Address	Type	Contact (907)
Monday	Noon	Wasilla: Alano Club Snohomish/Fishhook Rd	Big Book	Terri 376-3227
Wednesday	6:00 pm	Wasilla: Alano Club Snohomish/Fishhook Rd	Topics	Gail 357-4644
Saturday	9:30 am	Wasilla: Alano Club Snohomish/Fishhook Rd	Speaker/Topic	Brenda 240-6331
Sunday	6:00 pm	Palmer: St. Michael's Parish, 432 E Fireweed Ave, in the office, the Knights of Columbus Rm.	Speaker/Topic	Randy 745-7485

Alaska MEETING SCHEDULE (cont.)

Homer

Day	Time	Address	Type	Contact (907)
Tuesday	5:30 pm	Homer United Methodist Church, 770 East End Rd. Knitting Room, upstairs	Steps/Trad/Lit	Julie 235-6696 Nancy 399-5944
Friday	Noon	Homer United Methodist Church, 770 East End Rd. Knitting Room, upstairs	Open	Julie 235-6696 Nancy 399-5944

Kenai

Day	Time	Address	Type	Contact (907)
Monday	5:30 pm	URS Club, Suite #71, in the Old Sears Mall		Ellen (518) 884-9936
Juneau				
Monday	5:30 pm	Faith Lutheran Church, 2500 Sunset Dr.		Joanna 321-3479
Wednesday	Noon	Unity Center, 119 Seward St. #1		Wendy 364-2240
Saturday	10 am	Juneau Public Health Center, 3412 Glacier Hwy Downstairs Conference Rm		Leslie 586-3259
Ketchikan				
Wednesday	11 am	Pioneer Home, Conference Center, 141 Bryant St.		Lesley 225-3277 or (503) 419-8707
Kodiak				
Tuesday	7:00 pm	St James the Fisherman Episcopal Church, 421 Thorsheim St.		Denise 942-0045
Unalaska				
Thursday	5:30 pm	Burma Rd Chapel 28 E Broadway, Rm 104		Rosie 359-5084
Friday	Noon	Baha'I Center Unalaska, 390 Bayview, Rm 104		Rosie 359-5084