

Anchorage Area Intergroup
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THE NORTHERN LIGHT

November/December 2012

Note from the Editor: This is my last issue as Newsletter Editor, and I am grateful to everyone who made our newsletter possible by submitting articles, proofreading, and keeping copies available at meetings. This has definitely been a WE effort, and I have thoroughly enjoyed my small part. The topics and dates of the next issue will be announced by our 2013 Editor, as soon as we have one. Thank you for letting me have fun this year and call it service. ~Rebecca S

Sponsorship:

In OA meetings where the Tools of Recovery are read, I heard about the suggestion to get a sponsor to help guide recovery. So my first sponsor, I say, was really chosen by my HP since I felt this strong impression to just ask the person seated next to me at the end of a meeting. That relationship consisted of me calling her each evening at 8:30 PM to commit my food plan for the next day. It was a bit amusing seeing as she suggested the timeframe and then was out the first three nights I tried to call her. We laughed about that rocky start to a long sponsoring relationship. Aside from the daily phone call we would meet one time per week to read from the front cover to the back cover of the AA Big Book just a few pages at a time. Then we delved into the AA 12X12. Lots of Saturday or Sunday afternoons spent in the literature with a trusted person. Then WE worked thru the 12 Steps. She didn't die of fright when I read her my 4th Step. She had been there. Wow. Together WE do recover. And by then she suggested to keep what I had it was time to start giving it away. So I volunteered to be a sponsor and was shocked when someone asked because they wanted what I had. With my sponsees and my sponsors I've worked the Steps in the Big Book and in the OA literature with the Workbook and with an online source and a workshop format and just about any way I've heard or seen. Some sponsees last a day with me. Some only ask if I'll be willing to be their sponsor and never make a call when I say yes and others have joined up for the long haul. I've moved three times in my time in OA and so at present have several long-distance sponsoring relationships. I think without an OA sponsor one misses out so much on what the OA Program has to offer. All relationships take time and effort. Even our relationship with food. From my sponsors I've learned that healthy, nourishing foods fuel my body appropriately and that OA and HP fill that cavernous void that cries out for excess toxic food substances.

A life lesson I've learned from sponsoring is that WE are all human and make mistakes but that WE are all loveable and worth the time it takes to work the OA Program.

One "old idea" that had to be destroyed was that I had to do life alone, self-sufficiently. In OA I have learned thru the example of many sponsors that life is meant to be shared and OA recovery is a WE endeavor. Together WE do recover.

But really asking someone to sponsor me was one of the most humbling experiences I've faced. And I look at the definition of 'humble' as remaining teachable.

Most of us come to OA with difficulties in the trust department. Experiencing the unconditional love and acceptance of sponsors has been instrumental in healing the hurts that blocked my ability to trust.

And there is freedom in the idea that if a sponsor/sponsee relationship is NOT working in your life that you are able to rely on your HP/God of your understanding to locate the sponsor who will offer what you need to continue to grow in your recovery. Being relieved of the compulsion to overeat is a miracle waiting for each of us and it is usually found via a vital sponsoring relationship based on a firm foundation of OA Step

work. What are you waiting for?.....ASK for HELP. And if you notice someone struggling in OA, you might want to OFFER HELP if you think it will be the right thing to do to protect your own recovery.

As always, take what helps your recovery and leave all the rest. Sponsoring is slimming. Oh, right, the cliché is service is slimming. Well give sponsorship a try....what do you have to lose except maybe a few extra pounds.

~Anonymous in Alaska

What would I do without my 2 sponsors--one regular OA, and one HOW? I know what is expected of me, and how to stay abstinent, because I'm reminded by just THINKING about my sponsors. If they can stay out of inappropriate food, so can I. One sponsor has lost 110 lb. and kept it off for 35 years. The other has lost 80 lb. and kept it off for about 12 years. They both show me by example that it is possible to get through normal days, stressful days, grief, excitement, holidays, others' expectations, and traveling while still staying abstinent. (Maybe not perfect, but still within the guidelines of my abstinence.) They show me that it's not life's happenings which cause me to be inappropriately hungry; it's how I react to life's happenings.

Recently a sponsee told me: "Nothing is going right. My sons don't call; my recipe failed; the weather is cold. There must be something wrong with me. Maybe I'm not supposed to eat abstinely." I replied that "Life is like that. We don't get what we want; the issue is, can we accept circumstances, and still know that God is with me (and you), and will comfort me, and keep me out of overeating?"

I feel that my sponsees help me as much as I help them. Somehow they have the words of wisdom I need when I just happen to be on calls with them, and am needy myself. It's a program of mutual support.

Here's how I work the steps on a given issue:

1. I'm powerless over (whatever).
2. I come to realize God COULD help me if I ask.
3. I turn the problem over to HP.
4. I inventory exactly what I'm feeling and where those feelings and attitudes came from.
5. I share or not.
6. I list all of the things I of myself COULD do about it.
7. I turn my will and life over again, in the form of the 7th step prayer in the Big Book. I say this prayer repeatedly, until I feel an answer is in my mind. I know my prayer has been answered.

Sometimes I am too stubborn to stop obsessing; but if I do STOP and work the above steps answers are given me. Problems solved many times over, using this process.

What could be more effective than following the above process?

~Anonymous in Alaska

I have a lot more experience having a sponsor than being one. My sponsors through the years have been such a help. In this journey of life it can get lonely. Feeling like there is someone that is there for me is such a wonderful feeling. Someone that understands and if I need to call, I can. I may not, but knowing I could, is so helpful.

Encouraged to and encouraging working the steps is how I've been sponsored and how I sponsor. Read Step literature every day. When you get through the steps, go back and read it again. There's always something to learn. I was encouraged to get through the steps right away. Don't put it off. It's how to get recovery. I do the same with my sponsees. Recovery is in the steps. The newcomer's zeal can be capitalized on to get us through

that first time.

All my life I have tried to be there for others. I find it difficult to ask for help for myself. But this program has taught me that I have to, if I want to recover. I can't do it on my own. It's good to learn to ask for help.

Being a sponsor is not difficult when I know that I only sponsor up to my own experience. It would not be healthy for me or anyone else if I tried to give something I do not have. As I have recovered, I am able to share my experience, strength and hope. I can share what has helped me and what is helping me.

~Anonymous in Alaska

As a sponsor, I have learned that HP is in charge, not me. I have learned that I do not have all the answers but they can be found in the steps, the tools, the strength, hope, and experience of other OA members, and prayer. My sponsees' journeys are not my journey, but I count myself so very lucky to have them in my life, increasing my capacity to love.

~Anonymous in Alaska

So many useful life lessons from my sponsors! Along the way I have learned that anything can be said in a kind and loving way; that I didn't had to be the smartest to accomplish things in life, I just had to persevere. Other sponsorly gems with wide applications include sayings such as that "if it ain't working at home, it ain't working" (ie practice the principles in ALL my affairs), that there is a difference between talking and being heard, to not quit 5 minutes before the miracle AND to not stop at the first miracle. Some of the long slow life lessons have included realizing that looking at my part is a good thing because I always learn something useful (fun inventories and funny/creative amends that we still laugh about years later... who knew??), plus perhaps best of all... that I am lovable even when I am not perfect.

~Anonymous in Alaska

ACRONONYMOUS

S- someone who's been there

P- powered by his/her HP

O-offering ESH daily

N-nodding off during the boring parts

S-stirring LOVE into each encounter

O-open-hearted 24/7

R-really saving his/her own skin

ANNOUNCEMENTS & SERVICE NEEDS:

Winter retreat: One day workshop in the Valley, Feb 16, 2013. More to follow.

Required disclaimer: the personal stories printed in The Northern Light express the experience of the individual member and not of OA as a whole.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Anchorage

Day	Time	Address	Type	Contact (907)
Monday	6:30pm	OAsis Turnagain Arts Bldg. 4105 Turnagain Blvd, #D1(in back)	AA Big Book	MaryJo 227-5078
Tuesday	5:30pm	OAsis Turnagain Arts Bldg. 4105 Turnagain Blvd, #D1 (in back)	OA/HOW	Meg 248-0300
Wednesday	5:30pm	North star Hospital 2530 Debarr Rd. Private dining room, past seating area.	Steps/Trad/Lit	Gail B 332-0049
Thursday	Noon	1st Congregational Church, 2610 E. Northern Lights Blvd	Steps/Stories	Alice 243-3056
Thursday	6:30pm	Lutheran Church of Hope, 1847 W. Northern Lights Blvd	There is a Solution	Carolyn 279-1942
Friday	6:00pm	OAsis Turnagain Arts Bldg. 4105 Turnagain Blvd, #D1(in back)	Step Writing	Jean 345-9805
Saturday	9:00-10:30am	St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Lake Otis & Tudor	AA Big Book	Paula Z 522-9910
Sunday	9:30am	Kaladi Bros 6921 Brayton Dr,	As Bill Sees It. VOR & For Today	Candy 350-5255 Jean 345-9805

Eagle River

Day	Time	Address	Type	Contact (907)
Monday	7:00pm	Holy Spirit Episcopal Church 17545 N. Eagle River Loop Road, in Library		Bev 694-7448

Mat-Su

Day	Time	Address	Type	Contact (907)
Monday	Noon	Wasilla: Mat-Su Regional Hospital, Matanuska Room (by cafeteria)	Big Book	Brenda 240-6331
Wednesday	6:00pm	Wasilla: Alano Club Snohomish/Fishhook Rd	Topics	Gail 357-4644
Saturday	9:00am	Wasilla: Mat-Su Regional Hospital, Pioneer Peak Rm, 2nd floor	Varies	Paula 745-8337
Sunday	6:00pm	Palmer: St. Michael's Parish, 432 E Fireweed Ave, downstairs		Randy 745-7485

Homer

**** NOTE NEW DAYS & TIMES FOR
HOMER ****

Day	Time	Address	Type	Contact (907)
Tuesday	5:30	Homer United Methodist Church, 770 East End Rd. Knitting Room - upstairs		Julie 235.6696 Nancy 235.5944
Friday	12:00 noon	Homer United Methodist Church, 770 East End Rd. Knitting Room - upstairs		Julie 235.6696 Nancy 235.5944

Juneau

Juneau OA Hotline: (907) 463-1224

Day	Time	Address	Type	Contact (907)
Monday	5:30pm	Northern Lights Church, 400 W. 11th St. Room 8 downstairs		Sara 209-6164
Wednesday	Noon	Unity Center, 119 Seward St. #1		Wendy 364-2240
Saturday	10:00am	Juneau Public Health Center, 3412 Glacier Hwy Downstairs Conference Rm.		Leslie 586-3259

Ketchikan

Day	Time	Address	Type	Contact (907)
Wednesday	5:30pm	Pioneer Home Conference Center 141 Bryant St.		Lesley 225-3278

Kodiak

Day	Time	Address	Type	Contact (907)
Tuesday	7:00pm	St James the Fisherman Episcopal Church 421 Thorsheim St.		Denise 942-0045

Unalaska

Day	Time	Address	Type	Contact (907)
Thursday,	5:30pm	Burma Rd Chapel 28 E Broadway, Rm104		Rosie 359-5084
Friday	Noon	Baha'i Center Unalaska 390 Bayview, Rm 104		Rosie 359-5084
