

Anchorage Area Intergroup
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THE NORTHERN LIGHT

July/August 2012

Note from the Editor: Thanks to those who took time from their busy summer and wrote about their experiences planning and attending OA retreats.

We have two interesting topics for the September/October newsletter. First, we'd like to hear about the "Gifts of Service" – How does service benefit you? What have you learned about yourself from doing service? Our second topic, for Lifeline, is "How hard is the program?" ...Please share on: What do you find easy about the program? What actions, Steps or tools help you overcome the hard parts?

*The submission deadline for both topics is **October 15, 2012**. Thank you for your service!*

~Rebecca S, Editor

Retreat experiences:

Since I returned to OA in 2003 (I attended OA meetings from '89 thru '91 but dropped out when my sponsor moved away), I have attended several OA retreats. I have found that when I offer to do service at the retreats I usually take away more from the experience than when I just show up and let others do all the work. My service can be something as simple as sweeping out a cabin or as complicated as sharing from my heart.

One of my most memorable OA retreats occurred in the mountains of Colorado in 2005. It was a retreat put on by someone who went thru all the Steps in that one weekend. It was very powerful. I had just moved to a small town and so we only had a handful of people who chose to go to the retreat but that really helped to bond us and show us that living the OA program as a WE program is vital to recovering.

And in October, 2008 I was able to attend a Region 3 Workshop Retreat in Colorado Springs only a week or so before I moved to remote Alaska. I was just bathed in lots of good wishes and great recovery as I departed. There were CDs made of the speakers and I brought them with me. One woman who has a Swiss background was up from CA spoke about the topic of gratitude and how as Americans we should always be grateful for flush toilets. I got just the biggest laugh when I saw my first Alaskan honey bucket. Gratitude, you say??

In June of 2009 I somehow learned about the OA Retreat in the Wasilla area. A friend was up visiting from Colorado and I suggested we spend time at the retreat before heading to Denali Park. It was one of the best times in my recovery. I met some wonderful people at all stages of recovery. People were fascinated to learn about the remote village I live in now and offered lots of helpful suggestions to keep working the Steps and remaining abstinent in the bush.

In February of 2010, I participated in a Winter Retreat at a local Anchorage hotel. It was a well planned event with lots of people sharing recovery. I like that OA has so many talented crafters and speakers. HP/God does such a good job of bringing people together. I liked that retreat most because the main speaker suggested to everyone to not leave without making sure each person had a sponsor. Another example of the message that yes, this is a WE program.

Another friend came up to AK in summer of 2010 so once again I attended the OA Retreat in Wasilla. It was another fun time of seeing people and learning new things to help recovery. The setting along the lake is wonderful and getting out in a canoe was a refreshing brave thing to do. The principle of Step 3 is courage and so each opportunity to practice courage strengthens my recovery.

The most amusing retreat story I have is in September of 2010. I was going to be in the Seattle area so I looked up a retreat “near” there. Well my HP/God has an incredible sense of humor as that retreat location was hours from Seattle but since I had already registered I attended it anyway. I loved it. Once again I met lots of recovering people and the only service I did was show up. From that retreat I got connected to a couple of online Loops where we discuss the OA literature and share recovery. That has carried me forward these last couple of years.

One interesting retreat I attended was the Silent Retreat. As a single person who lives alone perhaps silence and I are much better acquainted than most. Anyway, I did get some wonderful sleep that retreat and learned that HP/God heals us when we take the time to rest.

This summer’s Anchorage retreat was really nice. Distilling Program down to working the Steps via the AA Big Book is always helpful. No matter how many times I read the BB I find something new when others read it to me. The fundraising efforts for the retreat were good to see. The painted rocks were a big hit. I love that HP/God shows us ways to use our hands for something other than using them to stuff food in our mouths.

For me it is an effort to get to retreats. It is a big investment of my time and travel funds. It seems though that HP has lessons for me at each retreat I attend. I guess working on a retreat committee is like all other OA service in that it becomes a way to not only learn the Steps but the Traditions and Concepts as well. And what a better way to cultivate friendships with people who truly do understand us. WE are each uniquely wonderful and each have some gift or talent that can better us as a group.

Since I firmly believe in “Together WE recover” I guess I realize that getting together in a retreat setting is a way to show HP/God that yes, I am surrendered to OA and this new way of LIFE.

~Anonymous

Helping to plan retreats and do service at them stretches me in unexpected ways. It’s wonderful short term service that gives me a chance to develop and use skills I have, plus learn new ones in a safe and accepting circle. I find real-life applications of the Traditions and Concepts when I work on a committee. Contributing a bit of time to support a retreat is 7th Tradition, me participating in my own recovery. Working together for unity and common good is 1st Tradition. When I can remember that there is no “them” that puts on retreats, it’s all me and us, then I’m practicing Tradition 2’s rotation of service. Sometimes I need help remembering that I’m a trusted servant instead of the Governor, which means I get to ask my HP for help in not running the show. That’s always a good idea!

Concept 4 says participation is the key to harmony. The more people helping, the happier we all are. This lets me know that my input in planning venue, date, price, format or menu serves a valued purpose. Ultimately though, I do it all for me. It’s my life, my abstinence, my serenity that gets bolstered from planning and attending these special events. My first sponsor told me that gratitude is an action word. Showing up to help in whatever big or small way I can gives me a chance to thank OA for the gifts I’ve received.

~Anonymous

Retreats are a great way for me to connect with OA friends I haven’t seen in a while, meet new people and experience recovery in a setting where I’m not rushing off in an hour. It’s pretty easy for me to use my time, attention and money to benefit others, so committing to a retreat is one way I can say my own program is worth investing in too. The \$75 I spent attending our last retreat was a real bargain compared to what diet books, doctor bills and fat clothes cost me when I’m overeating. The gift of serenity really is priceless!

~Anonymous

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

E-LATED ABOUT E-RESOURCES:

Check out the new additions to our lending library of speaker and event CDs at the Oasis! They're great on-the-road meetings and great "I have bad hair and can't leave the house" meetings too. We appreciate any contributions you make so we can continue to expand this resource, and we appreciate you returning them timely so that others can enjoy too.

ACRONYMOUS

ISM- Incredibly Short Memory. I Sponsor Myself. I Sabotage Myself

ANNOUNCEMENTS & SERVICE NEEDS:

Intergroup next meets on Saturday, September 8, 11:15am at the MatSu Regional Hospital. We'll be discussing the ByLaw amendments presented last month.

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, 2 nd floor	Varies	Paula 745-8337
Sunday	6:00pm	Palmer: St. Michael's Parish, 432 E Fireweed Ave, downstairs		Randy 745-7485

Homer

Day	Time	Address	Type	Contact (907)
Friday	12:00 noon	Homer United Methodist Church, 770 East End Rd. Knitting Room - upstairs		Angela 299-6404
Sunday	6:00pm	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	6:00pm	Pioneer Home, 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
