



News from the AAI Chair

February 25, Body Image & Abstinence/Food Plan Workshop - This event was well attended. At least 26 of us came together and most of us were able to stay the entire time. Thank you to Paula and the Mt. Vernon Commons for the excellent space; it makes doing workshops very comfortable for all of us.

Thank you to Mary Ann for sharing her experience, strength and hope on Abstinence and Food Plans. She told her story about occasionally feeling drawn to compulsive food behaviors (even now), and how she uses the Steps, her sponsor, her writing, and a learned willingness for honesty, as vital components of her program. She also shared on giving herself the grace to be imperfect, while striving for change and improvement. Those actions have kept her in program for over twenty years, with the willingness to keep coming back. There is an OA handout that we used to share about the topic.

The Body Image CD from the 2015 Region 1 Conference, the 2013 Body Image Worksheet and Slogan Handout, gave us great insight into this hard topic. That information set the stage for a meaningful group discussion about old beliefs, new beliefs, fears, shame, and finding release and growth with the help of HP, sponsors, Steps, and Surrender. If anyone would like a copy of the wave file, and/or the PDF's let me know.

Next Intergroup Meeting - will be on March 18, 12-1:30pm at the Oasis.

Anchorage Meeting Changes - Look for new meeting locations in Anchorage on the front of the website (www.oa-alaska.org) for the Sunday, Monday, & Friday meetings. They will be in flux for the next month or two.

Region One Workshop - Join us May 20th at the Mt. Vernon Commons for a Region One Workshop. The schedule and topics will be released in April.

For Today

"It is in our faults and failings, not in our virtues, that we touch one another and find sympathy. - Jerome K. Jerome ... In OA, my would-be helpers were, by their own admission, overeaters. In unmistakable terms, they described the compulsion, the fat, the shame, the despair—and the spiritual recovery. My own recovery began that day..." (For Today, February 28)

Together we get better.
In Service - *Jody W.*

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...Keep Reading!

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Visit us Online!

<http://oa-alaska.org/>

Check Out these Abstinence Resources

OA's **Abstinence Resources Page** includes links to a number of resources to assist you in your abstinence, including the **Abstinence Resource Guide** and **Podcasts on Abstinence**.

<https://oa.org/members/working-the-program/abstinence-resources/>

The Simplicity Project is a simple idea to help YOU stay abstinent! Got program? Got an index card and a pen? Write the essentials of your program on the front and back of an index card, then carry that card with you wherever you go. Take the card out and read it anytime you need to reaffirm your program.

https://www.oa.org/pdfs/tsw_simplicity.pdf

Strong Abstinence Checklist

http://oa.org/pdfs/strong_abstinence_checklist.pdf

Step Three: *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.*

Once we compulsive overeaters truly take the Third Step we cannot fail to recover - (OA 12 & 12, p. 27). After telling my story at meetings, I get flurries of phone calls from old and new members asking for the "inside scoop" on how I really did it. It's not just the seventy-three pounds I released: people want to know about the serenity, what keeps me centered and calm despite hair-raising personal experiences in my life. What made the program's tenets click now, finally?

Simple: the Third Step corresponds to the principle of faith. Once we truly make the leap to believe, no matter what, that a power greater than ourselves will restore us to sanity and will take care of every other issue in our lives as well, we cannot ever fail to recover, and the compulsion to binge disappears. It has to happen! That power, I now know, has always been there for me, like a bridge waiting to be crossed. It's so simple that

most of us believe there must be more to it than that, some other trick or secret.

There are no secrets, no magic. Anyone can have what I have. I've been cornered, trapped. The gate to freedom has closed behind me. I looked inward and there was honesty. I looked outward and there was hope. I looked up and there was faith. (*Voices of Recovery, March 2*)

For journaling: *When have I simply had faith that my Higher Power would resolve a problem? Was that issue resolved?* (*Voices of Recovery Workbook March 2*)

OaAlaska Twitter Feed!

<https://twitter.com/OaAlaska>



My Best Decision: Becoming a Newcomer

I was guided to OA through an intuitive process, which involved a rather frightening dream. Five years before coming to these rooms (2007) I had completed one year of abstinence from sweets and confections, with a weight loss of almost 80 pounds. I was reading 12-step literature at the time, but I was too afraid and ashamed to ever consider joining OA. Besides, I thought I had it all under control. Then I met the love of my life (at age 45), and we began celebrating our newfound love with all sorts of sugary treats, even though I knew the results would be disastrous. Over the next five years I fretted and nibbled and binged and worried my way back up the scale, eventually regaining (and re-losing and regaining again) every pound and then some. I felt freaked out that my loving husband would leave me now that he knew who I really was. I was jogging, working out, and playing tennis, but my joints could no longer bear the extra weight, and I had to have total knee replacement in 2010. That led to an even deeper spiral... I was self-medicating with large

quantities of chocolate, on top of all the other sweets I was already eating.

By 2012, though I put on a brave face, I was quietly in despair. The trips to the store, bakery, snack-marts, and wholesale warehouses became an unending cycle, on top of which I was baking sumptuous meals and decadent desserts! I was preoccupied with food, and underneath my happy, active, “successful” façade I was drowning in shame and fear. When I had my “turning point nightmare,” in March 2012, I called a relative who was skilled in interpreting dreams, and he point blank said, “That dream is about you, not someone else, and have you considered joining OA?” I politely said “Thank you, I will think about it,” and hung up the phone.

To my own surprise, I went straight to the internet and found the Oa-Alaska website, printed out a meeting schedule, and taped it to my monitor. A month later I went to my first OA meeting. As I cried and shared some of my story, I saw and felt love and understanding from every person in that room. I cannot remember anything else about that first meeting except knowing that I truly belonged, and to keep coming back. By God’s power, I gave up sugary confections. I was afraid of people, food, and life in general, but I kept coming back. Each meeting was a relief to be among those who truly understood and accepted me as I was. I’m sure I said some pretty outlandish things in those early meetings, since my mind and boundaries had been so blurred by compulsive eating, but I was shown patience and encouragement. When I first heard the Promises (AA Big Book, page 83) I said “No way, that could *never* happen to me!” Some of the jargon and sayings made little sense to me, and frankly turned me off. How to actually work the Steps was a puzzlement. And I was completely horrified at the idea of doing a moral inventory (Step 4). But I clearly sensed my Higher Power’s

love, guidance – and, well, power! - in those meetings, and I kept coming back anyway.

As I now approach five years in OA, I still consider myself a *newcomer*. I continue to work the Steps with my sponsor each year. Except for several slips (outright rebellion and learning experiences), I abstain from my binge foods, use all the tools of the program, and continue to work towards a healthy weight. My food plan has changed as I have learned new things about nutrition and what is workable for me, while my obsession and struggle with food and body weight have gradually diminished. I am more aware of my motivations, my relationships are more honest, my boundaries are healthier, and best of all I now feel a level of serenity and security in God’s love beyond anything I could have imagined for myself. I used to believe deep down that I had to do ‘most everything for myself and by myself. Recovery from compulsive eating is showing me that God can do for me I cannot do for myself and that I am never all on my own in this life. Over and over my Higher Power seemed to say, “I’ll meet you in the rooms of OA, and I will take it from there.” All I did was become a newcomer and keep coming back! - *Cynthia B., Anchorage*



Next Intergroup Meeting

March 18, 12-1:30pm at the OAsis
4105 Turnagain Blvd Suite D-1
Please contact Jody W if you need to
participate by phone (jody.willing@gmail.com)

Tradition Three *The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.* When we apply OA’s tradition three, we find the treasure of friendship where we least expect it, with people we once would



have excluded from our lives. Such treasure is all around us, and all we have to do is open our hearts to receive it, because it is here that most of us first experience unconditional acceptance. (*OA 12 & 12*, p. 135)



Electronic Access to the Northern Lights Newsletter

Did you know you can download both full color and printable versions of *The Northern Lights* at www.aa-alaska.org? If you would like to receive *The Northern Lights* via email, send an updated email address to Cynthia at snowmagnolias@yahoo.com.

Blessed Beyond Anything

Even when God's plan feels difficult, by saying "I can do it today" and doing the next right thing, the todays add up. If I turn back, I'll never get to the destination.

Having worked the Twelve Steps, what did I learn about the Principles?

Honesty. I learned to look truthfully at ugly things that I am powerless over yet make my life unmanageable. It takes honest vision to fully understand there is a problem and that I have no way to solve it myself.

Hope. I came to believe I can have a relationship with a Higher Power who can do things for me that I can't and that I can be restored to sanity. There is hope that the painful parts of my life can change and that HP has a better plan for me.

Faith. It was a leap of faith that something would sustain me when I stopped my way of doing things. But what I couldn't imagine doing forever, I could do for one day. Those days added up to a miracle. Aligning my will with God's and going through scary places in recovery is faith working in my life.

Courage and Integrity. Note the word "fearless" in fearless moral inventory; fear and faith don't coexist. It takes courage and integrity to look back at unflattering moments and share them with another person. To overcome my fear, become vulnerable, and present my true self is the basis for real relationships and connection.

Willingness. It's the whatever-it-takes clause in the contract with God and being ready, in God's time, to let go not only of hurtful things we want to change but also defects we enjoy. That's a scary concept. It's also one filled with honesty, hope, faith, courage, and integrity – amazing how these Principles work together.

Humility. When I earnestly ask for help, God goes to work, but not necessarily in ways I expect. Humility is acceptance of who we really are and the need to live in harmony with God's will to find serenity.

Self-discipline and love for others. Life is easier when I avoid doing things that make me owe amends and when I admit my part as soon as possible. The "my part" piece is a revelation – no matter what, I can act with a loving approach.

Perseverance. Even when God's plan feels difficult, by saying "I can do it today" and doing the next right thing, the todays add up. If I turn back, I'll never get to the destination.

Spiritual awareness. I came to understand that God is with us always. Spiritual awakening is having a living God in my life; I am taken care of and will get what I need. We are enough and are loved for who we are. I experience God in my connecting with God in others. Connection with God requires work and practice. To hear and understand God's will, I need to clear my mind.

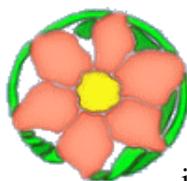
Service. I don't only carry the message – I am the message. I don't need to sell program. I just need to live these Principles. And to keep this recovery, I need to share my experience, strength and hope with others.

I came to OA thinking I had a problem with food yet learned I had a problem with life. I've been

blessed beyond anything I ever thought to wish for. (*OA Lifeline* April 2015)

Upcoming AAI Events

- March 18** - Intergroup Meeting: Noon-1:30 - Oasis
- May 20** - Intergroup/Region One/Workshop: 10 am-4 pm - Mt Vernon Commons
- Sept 16** - Intergroup: Noon-1:30 - Oasis
- Oct 13-15** - Region One Conference in Seattle
- Oct 21** - Intergroup: Noon-1:30 - Oasis
- Nov 18** - Intergroup/Idea Day Workshop: 9am - 4 pm - Mt Vernon Commons
- Dec 16** - Intergroup: Noon-1:30 - Oasis



7th Tradition Giving Helps

Carry the Message Your donation keeps our bookstore, intergroup office, web site, OA

retreats, and workshops going, as well as supporting Region 1 and WSO. Thank you for giving generously!

Sponsorship

Sponsors are OA members who are living the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to the best of their ability. They are willing to share their recovery with other members of the Fellowship and are committed to abstinence. Find a sponsor who has what you want and ask that person how he or she is achieving it. A member may work with more than one sponsor and may change sponsors. However, many of us choose to work with just one sponsor. In either case, it's helpful to avoid changing sponsors frequently. Ideally, we can find sponsors or sponsees in our face-to-face meetings. However, often times it is difficult or impossible to find a sponsor locally. To help members who are isolated, or in an area that has few members, Region One offers online sponsorship for sponsors and sponsees. Visit <http://www.oaregion1.org/find-a-sponsor-or-sponsee.html> for more information on virtual

sponsorship. Additional information on sponsorship is available at

<http://www.oaregion1.org/find-a-sponsor-or-sponsee.html>

Region One Convention

This year's Region One Convention is scheduled for October 13-15 2017, just a hop, skip and a jump (or red-eye flight) away, in Seattle WA.

<http://www.oaregion1.org/region-1-convention.html>

Northern Lights Submissions Please send your articles regarding our newsletter, to Cynthia B. snowmagnolias@yahoo.com. The next deadline is April 10, 2017. Write about any topic of your choosing. Please send a Word document with minimal formatting. (As in our meetings, the opinions shared by individual OA members do not necessarily reflect OA as a whole.)

OA Contact Information

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ALASKA OA MEETINGS

Important Notice: Please check the Oa-Alaska website for current meeting changes in Anchorage.
Kaladi's on Brayton has been under repair, so a few meetings are in new locations.

Day	Time	Location	Address	Contact	Phone	Topic
ANCHORAGE						
Sunday	9:30 AM	Starbuck's- Conference Room	Old Seward Highway & Dimond Blvd	Mary Ann	907-345-8630	Literature Study
Monday	12:00 PM	Starbuck's- Conference Room	Old Seward Highway & Dimond Blvd	Cynthia	907-764-1677	Literature Study
Monday	6:00 PM	Intergroup Office - Oasis	4105 Turnagain Blvd. E	Tanya H	907-317-7451	Big Book
Tuesday	5:30 PM	Intergroup Office - Oasis	4105 Turnagain Blvd. E	Meg	907-248-0300	OA H.O.W.
Wednesday	12:00 PM	Intergroup Office - Oasis	4105 Turnagain Blvd E.	Paula	907-830-2815	For Today, Writing
Thursday	6:30 PM	Lutheran Church of Hope	1847 W Northern Lights Blvd.	Mike	907-947-8881	Literature Study
Friday	12:00 PM	12100 Cafe -Classroom	12100 Old Seward Highway	Aaron	907-529-6774	None
Saturday	9:00 AM	St Mary's Episcopal Church	2222 Tudor Rd	Debbie	907-301-4180	Big Book
FAIRBANKS						
Wednesday	5:30 PM	Fairbanks Lutheran Church	1012 Cowles St	Kristi	919-200-3774	None
Saturday	10:00 AM	St. Matthews Church		Kristi	919-200-3774	None
HAINES						
Friday	11:00 AM	Human Resources Building	103 Third Ave S	Jennifer	907-766-2242	None
HOMER						
Tuesday	5:30 PM	United Methodist Church	770 E End Rd	Julie	907-235-6696	None
Friday	12:00 PM	Homer United Methodist Church	770 E End Rd	Angela	907-299-6404	None
JUNEAU						
Monday	5:30 PM	Faith Lutheran Church	2500 Sunset Dr	Patty	303-646-7182	None
Wednesday	12:00 PM	Unity Center	119 Seward St	Wendy	907-364-2240	None
Saturday	10:00 AM	Juneau Public Health Center	3412 Old Glacier Hwy	Leslie	907-586-3259	None
KENAI						
Monday	5:30 PM	URS Club	Kenai Spur Hwy	Ellen	518-884-9936	None
KETCHIKAN						
Saturday	3:00 PM	Pioneer Home	141 Bryant St	Lesley	907-225-3277	None

Day	Time	Location	Address	Contact	Phone	Topic
PALMER						
Sunday	6:00 PM	St Michael's Catholic Church	432 E Fireweed Ave	Randy	907-745-7485	Speaker/Discussion
Thursday	6:00 PM	St Michael's Catholic Church	432 E Fireweed Ave	Randy	907-745-7485	AA 12&12, OA Steps and/or Traditions
SEWARD						
Tuesday	6:00 PM	Seward United Methodist Church	321 4th St	PJ	907-299-3082	None
SOLDOTNA						
Thursday	5:30 PM	Central Peninsula Hospital	250 Hospital Pl	Christine	907-322-2778	None
UNALASKA						
Tuesday	12:00 PM	Baha'i Center Unalaska	390 Bayview Ave	Rob	907-581-3109	None
WASILLA						
Monday	12:00 PM	Alano Club	901 Snohomish Dr.	Janis	907-441-5629	Big Book, OA Second and/or Third Edition
Wednesday	6:00 PM	Alano Club	901 Snohomish Dr.	Gail	907-357-4644	Topic
Saturday	9:30 AM	Alano Club	901 Snohomish Dr.	Randy	907-745-7485	Big Book, OA Steps and / or Traditions Study

We do our best to keep this list up-to-date but we need your help. Please update your meetings by emailing Aaron@dtanc.com. Thank you!