

May 2008

Easy Does It



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NEXT INTERGROUP MEETING --

Thursday, June 5th at 6:45 p.m. - Mt. Olive Lutheran Church

WRITE FOR THE EDI

• Why do you stay in OA?

• How do you need to be sponsored? How do you sponsor?

• What does your daily program look like?

The EDI is always in need of personal stories. Stories can be emailed to the EDI editor: bonitas@nhi.net

or mail mailed to: Madison OA, P.O. Box 284, Madison, WI 53703

BIG BOOK STUDY is Coming Soon!!

The Big Book Study with Janet R. is coming up quickly! It's the weekend of July 25 – 27th! Register Now!! Come experience an amazing weekend retreat with other members of Overeaters Anonymous. This is what it's all about folks!

- Study the "Big Book" in depth and hear amazing background of the founding members of A.A.
- Experience the fellowship of being with others like you.
- Take comfort in knowing that all of your meals will be abstinently prepared - no sugar, no white flour!
- Here the experience strength and hope of Saturday night's speaker (as well as Janet R. on Friday night!).
- Retreat to your own private room (or if you like, share one with another OA member – we'll even pair you up if you would like!). Each room has its own bathroom complete with shower!
- Take a meditative walk through the on grounds labyrinth.
- Sit by the lake on a bench and have some two-way prayer with your Higher Power.
- Receive a free study-guide version of the big book (if you register by July 1st – but don't wait too long, the past 2 Big Book studies sponsored by Madison IG sold out!! Registration form included in this month's EDI!! REGISTER TODAY!

Twenty Years of Trudging the Happy Road!

Twenty years ago, fat and out of control, I entered my first OA meeting. Oh happy day! I think I had no conception that 20 years later I would be writing an article about my time in OA!

You see, I wanted a quick fix! And I also wanted all the people around me to change. I wanted to be thin and happy, and thought that if I were thin, that I would be happy. I didn't have a concept yet of the Fat In My Head.

But I came into the rooms, nonetheless, 12-stepped by the leader of a workshop I went to for a college program. The leader used the opportunity to work the 12th step of OA. While I had heard of OA and read about OA, I had never actually met someone in OA. His story was compelling. I took that first courageous step.

I'll never forget two things about that first meeting. One, walking into the room and looking at the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions banners on the wall, I zeroed in on the 4th step: "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." *"I don't need that!"* I thought to myself: *"It's all those other people that need to do a moral inventory!"* Ha! I can really laugh about that because I have done more than a dozen 4th steps, and am one of the most zealous proponents of that particular step—simply because it along with all the other steps have given me so many gifts in my life!continued on next page



Twenty Years . . .continued...

The second thing I remember about that first meeting was the end of the reading "Our Invitation to You" – "*Welcome to Overeaters Anonymous, Welcome Home.*" I still get a warm feeling inside when that is read. I truly and finally felt at home for the first time of my life at that first meeting.

What was it like, what happened, and what is it like now? Well, we all know the pain and misery of the disease. I won't dwell on that part. I will qualify by saying that I am a down and out, in the gutter compulsive overeater. I have been since before I have conscious memory. I have eaten burned food, frozen food, food from the trash, stolen food, food off the floor, food that I am deathly allergic to in this disease. These things I no longer do. I no longer "eat at people." Which is the most ridiculous behavior, but I did it nonetheless. The bottom line is that I hated myself intensely, used food to mask the self hatred, fueling the cycle for more self hatred and more out of control eating.

What happened—well, nothing right away! Perhaps just a wee smidgen of hope. Hope that if others recovered from this disease then I could too! Also action—I studied the *Overeaters Anonymous* book, *For Today*, and the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous*. OA did not have its own 12 & 12 at the time. I remember studying the AA 12 & 12 on a beach one summer vacation, not understanding much of it. It was beyond me spiritually. Nevertheless, I tried! I put forth the effort! I took seriously every word (that I could understand) and put it into practice, particularly praying for willingness.

At some point, I looked into the mirror and had a talk with myself. "*You don't have to sabotage this!*" I told myself. Soon, I became abstinent.

I had a sponsor and worked the steps. I will never forget my first 5th step. I couldn't believe someone could hear all that about me and not blink an eye. My sponsor was very loving. She said that she had done many of the same things that I had done. What a release of shame!

Unfortunately, I decided at some point after two years of abstinence that I was cured! So the road for me has been bumpy. I went out of OA and had a relapse to sugar hell. Fortunately, I was able to crawl back out, with the help of an amazing group of women in Madison, and I became abstinent again. This time I had nine years of back to back weighed and measured abstinence. I still didn't get it, though! I was still looking to be cured.

Out again, and into a relapse into quantities hell, and finally back into the sugar. This time when I came back to OA I was ecstatically happy to be back! I had completely lost the illusion that I am in control. My powerlessness and unmanageability are very apparent to me.

Today I enjoy a normal weight, a food plan that I love that is healthy, good relationships with my family, friends, Higher Power and myself! I enjoy service in OA and am involved in Intergroup and sponsoring others. I no longer have shame about this addiction. It simply is a fact. What is apparent to me over these many years is that OA works when I work it. And if it can work for me, it can work for you too!

~Anonymous, Madison

Program Boosts

For information on events below and more!!! Go to <http://www.region5oa.org/events/index.html>

July 25 – 27th, 2008
BIG BOOK STUDY RETREAT
with Janet R.
held in Oconomowoc.

LOCAL

MEETING NEWS

Thursday 7:30 p.m.

Speaker Meeting is in need of speakers! If you are a recovering member of OA and would like to share your story, please contact Rhonda 848-6879 or come to the meeting.

We Miss You!!!

Many meetings are lacking in attendance – try attending another meeting this week!

Call members you haven't seen in awhile – just to say – "Hi, this is from the ___day meeting. We miss you!" It just might save their life!

Do you have local meeting news you would like to put in the EDI?

email rhondas@merr.com
or snail mail to:

Madison OA
P.O. Box 294
Madison, WI 53703

Back to Basics!

By chance about a month ago I had to bring some materials to the Fitchburg Serenity Club (FSC). While I was there, I noticed a flyer that caught my eye about a meeting that was called "Back to the Basics." It spoke of a style of beginner's meeting modeled after those in the 1940's with Dr. Bob. Basically, over the course of 4 – 1 hour meetings, a person is taken through the 12 steps. The sponsor attends the meetings with the sponsee and helps the sponsee to a great extent in getting the footwork done for their first trip through the 12 steps. It is fast and furious but it got and kept 75% of AA members in Minnesota sober in the 1940s. I could not attend the meeting at the FSC because it was a closed AA meeting. However, I purchased a copy of the meeting guide and have since read it cover to cover and brought one sponsee through her 12th step and am working with another sponsee in this manner.

As a sponsor, I have needed direction and guidance in how to sponsor. I'm not good at being pushy with my sponsees, but this manner of studying the 12 steps quickly forces the issue and allows me to write my sponsees 4th step rather than waiting for them to complete it.

Once the member completes the 12 steps, they are asked to get a sponsee and do as they have done and by the end of 90 days, the book states they will have achieved a spiritual awakening. By teaching others about the Big Book, our knowledge of the Big Book has no choice but to grow.

I would love to begin a "Back to Basics" meeting for OA in the Madison Area but need others to commit to attending the weekly meetings (at least for 1 month at a time) to serve as temporary sponsors or "sharing partners." In addition, I would like to know if there are members out there stuck in the "one, two, three" waltz (stuck on step 4) and/or those newcomers who would like to be taken through the 12 steps in this direct of a manner.

Does this sound interesting to you? If so, please come to the June 5th meeting of Madison Area Intergroup. ~Anonymous, Madison

Why I Attend OA meetings

Every week I regularly attend my OA meetings. If I know I'm going to miss, I reschedule and go to a different meeting. If I go more than 10 days without a meeting, I notice! My cravings begin again, I get lazy, and I get irritable, restless, and discontented! The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous tells me that if I feel these things, I will succumb to my obsession of the mind and return to my compulsion! I don't want that....so, I get to a meeting....and PRONTO!

Here is why I attend OA meetings:

- It keeps me in touch with other OA members
- It helps me to admit my shortcomings of the past week through sharing – and thus aids my recovery!
- It gives me strength and hope!
- It gives me time away from home.
- It gets me in touch with my Higher Power.
- It allows me to hear the messages my Higher Power has been trying to send me all week – through other people, but to whom I refuse to listen. I listen to my OA friends.
- It keeps me IN THE SOLUTION!
- It reminds me I have a daily reprieve – and I am not cured, nor am I hopeless!
- I never feel shamed, I always feel loved!

~Anonymous, Madison

Helpful Websites

<http://www.oamadison.org>

<http://www.aabacktobasics.org>

http://www.oa.org/downloadable_files.html

Download OA Speakers!

<http://www.oalaig.org/speakers/>
<http://www.omahaoa.org/speakers.html>

<http://www.oabigbook.info/>

OA Podcasts!

<http://www.oa.org/index.htm#podcast>

Get a Sponsor, Be A Sponsor,
or Get an OA penpal

http://www.oa.org/service_by_mail.html

Beading Party

Madison Intergroup is in need of help making "Bling" for our Big Book Retreat in July.

If you like to bead, or would like to learn, now is your chance to help! We need crafters to make bracelets and other OA trinkets!

Contact Steff or Rhonda for samples or create your own designs and bring them to the next intergroup meeting!

If you have an idea on something else we can make and sell, please let us know! You can contact Rhonda at 848-6789.