

Time For Vacation... But Not From Program!

How One OA Member Packed Her Recovery and Brought it With Her

I was supposed to go on vacation to Florida and had already found out about meetings there when Hurricane Dennis put an end to those plans. Gratefully the time share consortium personnel found me a place in the Shenandoah Valley which was about 6 miles from anywhere. I went to the OA World Service website (www.oa.org) and found that there were three meetings about 14 miles from where I was going to be staying. I called the contact person and she greeted me warmly and assured me that there was a supermarket where I would be able to find the kind of food that most of us eat on our various food plans. I am such an urbanite that I think anything this far from Philly must still have general stores or sell only what some of us think of as "Southern" food. I attended all three meetings which were small but very observant of the steps and traditions. I enjoyed each one. There was one on Saturday morning when I am usually at a meeting, and the others were on Monday and Wednesday evenings.

Each one helped me to stay grounded. It was so nice to be with program people even though I was 300 miles from home. I gave them brochures for the Region Convention and told them about The WS Convention in Philadelphia in 2007. They are about a 5 hour drive from our area so it is a good possibility that they can make it. Unfortunately they are not in an Intergroup so they do not hear a lot of OA news. I am most grateful that I live in a large metropolitan area where I can drive just 15 minutes to get to any of 4 meetings and within an hour can get to close to one hundred (between BIG, PAIG, NJ and DE). It took me 45 minutes to get to the Harrisonburg meetings because of the mountain roads. I am a long way from when I used to be when I went on vacation and took a vacation from OA. Thank God that I realize how much better the time that I have is when I stick to my program no matter where I am.

- *Written by Cathe S.*

Ways to Stay Connected to OA on Your Vacation:

- Attend local OA meetings at your destination (Find them on the OA website www.oa.org, click on "All About Meetings → Find a Meeting")
- Pack your OA/AA literature
- Bring your journal and a pen
- Call your sponsor
- Call your OA friends long-distance and let them know how you are doing
- Send letters or emails to your OA friends

- Pack pre-measured portions of abstinent foods that may be difficult to find out-of-town

In This Issue:

"Friends I Didn't Even Know I Had" ...Page 2
An OA member finds recovery in a new location

"Working the Steps"Page 3
Seeing the steps from a new perspective

Step & Tradition of the MonthPage 3

Editorial Policy & Submissions.....Page 3

Announcements.....Page 4
Meeting updates, events, and more

BRANDYWINE INTERGROUP
www.aa-brandywine.org

Friends I didn't even know I had

What a relief! Lots of OA meetings. A welcome sight to a long-time OA member moving here from another part of the country. Rooms full of friends I haven't even met yet, but who will reach out to me with open hearts and unconditional acceptance. People whose names I don't know, but who share with me a common problem and - most importantly - a common solution.

I've been going to OA meetings since 1982. At 150 or so a year, that adds up to about 3,500. Wow! My usual line is, "I'll keep coming back until I get it right!" The truth is, I came and I've never left because I can't. I had one great obsession when I waddled through OA's doors: to die. Life had overtaken me and I saw no way out, except out, permanently.

OA saved my life, literally. It gave me a second chance. At age 42, it gave me a way to restart life's journey. Not a lot of people get second chances. Over the years in OA I've witnessed miracle after miracle through the transformation process of the 12 steps. What great joy it is to see the metamorphosis of some despairing and broken soul into a glowing human being full of zest and enthusiasm for life.

Big and small miracles happen all the time in our rooms. On my best days - when I'm feeling physically, emotionally and spiritually aligned - I acknowledge that I'm a miracle. On those gray days when I'm on automatic pilot - doing the drill, following the eating and living structure I've learned that I must, putting one foot in front of the other and doing the next right thing - I'm grudgingly willing to acknowledge that for today I'm free from the prison in which I was rotting away 23 years ago. Thankfully, there are more aligned days than gray days.

OA is not my life, but its principles for living are the basis of my life. Going to three meetings a week is part of my "keeping the gift" process. So it shouldn't be surprising (remember I am a compulsive personality) that I set out to try all the meetings on the Brandywine Intergroup list before deciding which might become my regulars. It's been exactly six weeks since we arrived in Pennsylvania and, although I haven't hit all the meetings yet, I have gone to 18 different ones (19 if you count Intergroup).

I'm now weighing the abandonment of the quest. Why? Not because I can't find some of these towns (which is true), but because I've found what I need. What do I want from meetings? What are the characteristics of a "good" meeting for me?

1. There are people there in recovery, working the program on a physical, emotional and spiritual level. This is a program of attraction. I can't help it; I'm attracted to people who are walking the walk, not just talking the talk.
2. The meeting has a format that helps people focus on the solution, not the problem. I know plenty about the problem. I need to reinforce my own recovery by hearing how others are using the steps, traditions and tools to do something about their life. In the beginning of my recovery, this "group strength" was my HP.
3. OA traditions are followed.
4. What I hear inspires and motivates me to work harder, to keep going and growing.
5. I spend time with people who speak from their hearts to my heart. How soul-nurturing it is to not wear a mask.
6. I hear things that I need that I don't hear anywhere else, including things that apply to my life situation. Every time I think I'm unique, I hear someone else talking about the same thing. So much for uniqueness.
7. God's truths are revealed through heart-felt sharing, or through the literature.
8. I can find a sponsor, as well as sponsees, because I need both. I don't have a choice.
9. I get to practice my relationship skills since meetings are a microcosm of the rest of my life.
10. I am reminded of the reality that I have the disease, will always have it, but that there is a way to keep it arrested. "Good" meetings help prevent the complacency and denial that can creep into recovery.
11. Meetings are an opportunity for me to really be of service by giving hope to some still-suffering newcomer or member.
12. Lastly, good meetings make me feel they are a place I can always come back to, no matter what.

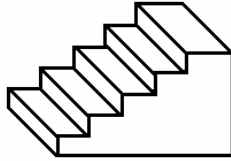
- *Written by Don C.
Phoenixville, PA*

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can, And the wisdom to know the difference.*

Working the Steps

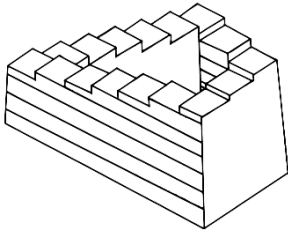
The Prize Isn't at the Top, It's Every Step of the Way!

When I first started coming to OA and heard about the 12 Steps, I imagined a typical staircase, where the first step was the lowest step, and the twelfth step was the highest step. It seemed to me that the goal was to start at "the bottom" and work your way to "the top", like this:



I used to think that people who were working on, say, the 8th step were much "further ahead" than those like me who may be on the 1st, 2nd or 3rd step. I also wondered, "What is left to do once you reach the top?"

Now that I have been in program for a little while, I am beginning to see the steps in quite a different way! Do you remember the optical illusion of the set of stairs that seems to go on forever? It looks like this:



Now I see the steps as more of a circular path. I see us all as equals who are focusing on different but equally important phases of the program. I see recovery as a continuous journey, rather than a one-way trip.

Step of the Month:

Step 8 - Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Tradition of the Month:

Tradition 8 - Overeaters Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

I have also learned that I do not always have to follow the steps in perfect order! Certainly, I must do the lower steps before progressing to the higher steps. But it's okay to go back and re-trace my steps if my sponsor and I feel there is still some work to be done! This also means that when I complete each of the 12 steps, I am never "finished"! There is a lifetime of learning and growth waiting for me at every turn.

Early in my program, with the help of a sponsor, I worked my way through the first 5 steps. At that time, several disastrous things happened in my personal life, and my step work came to a grinding halt. I struggled just to stay abstinent, let alone work the steps. As time passed and the healing progressed, I realized it was time to start over from scratch. The old me would have felt like a failure, beating myself up for not having worked the steps in perfect order, in a timely fashion. But thanks to all of you, I now see that recovery is a journey, not a destination!

- **Written by Kelly C.
Malvern, PA**

Recovery Submissions

We are looking for original articles, poems and writings to help share our experience, strength, hope and continuing recovery from compulsive overeating. Recovery is published on a monthly basis, and we need your input! Please send your contributions to:

Recovery Editor
P.O. Box 605
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010
Or email: info@oa-brandywine.org

We look forward to hearing from you!

Editorial Policy

The opinions expressed in Recovery reflect those of the writers and not the Brandywine Intergroup or OA as a whole. We reserve the right to edit for space and grammar, and it is understood that all copy may be reprinted by other OA groups without permission.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Meeting Changes/Updates

The **Monday 7:00am King of Prussia meeting** will be temporarily held in the King of Prussia Church of Christ, 590 W. Valley Forge Road, until further notice. Please contact Linda at 610-265-9270 with any questions.

The **Monday 10:00am Boyertown meeting** has changed locations. It is now held at St. Columbkil's Church, 200 Indian Springs Road. Please contact Jeannette at 610-367-0533 with any questions.



Special Events

- ❖ The Baltimore Area Intergroup (BAIG) of Overeaters Anonymous invites you to join them for the **Love Yourself in Recovery 2005 Retreat** August 19-21, 2005, Wellspring Retreat Center, Germantown, Maryland.
For more information, call Robin at 410-415-6525 or email Carol at cd454@nyu.edu.
- ❖ Don't miss the **2005 OA Region 7 Convention!** This popular retreat will be held November 4-6 at the Dunes Manor Hotel in Ocean City, MD.
For more information, visit the OA Region 7 website at www.oaregion7.org

DID YOU KNOW...

That you can have the most up-to-date meeting list with just the click of a mouse?

Go to <http://www.aa-brandywine.org/> and select "Meeting List"!

Print it out and give it to a newcomer at your next meeting... Keep it in your purse or wallet, "just in case"... Find a meeting you don't usually attend, and meet new OA friends!

