

# The OA SAIL



Syracuse Area Intergroup newsLetter  
2003 April, May & June Volume 12, Issue 2

Spring/Summer

## IN THIS ISSUE



The OA SAIL is a publication of the Syracuse Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous. Opinions expressed here are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editor, Syracuse Area Intergroup or OA as a whole. The OA SAIL is published quarterly and articles need to be submitted a minimum of two weeks prior to publication. **SHARE WITH US** We are seeking articles based on your OA experience, strength and hope. Please send submissions to [Hope88@prodigy.net](mailto:Hope88@prodigy.net) (note OA and your name in Subject) or call Cindy at 454-3150 for more info.

## REMINDERS

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- ✓ **Intergroup Meetings** are the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month. All are welcome to attend.
- ✓ **Clothing exchange** at the **Marathon** on **May 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Bring clean clothes, on hangers, and take some in return.
- ✓ Check your name, number, etc. on the **Phone List** done by *Caron*. Please notify her of any changes or additions, so she can have revised copies available at the **Marathon**.
- ✓ **Service** – Are YOU doing any? It can help the program, others, and YOU. Discover a way that you can!

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## FROM FLORIDA AND BACK

*A by Ree.*

Hello everyone!!! My name is Ree and I am a food addict and compulsive overeater. I am writing this from sunny (and warm) Florida. Having a wonderful time (much different than MY expectations) and wish you were here!!!! (Especially after the winter up there.)

I remember the fear and concern I felt prior to coming here in late December. What would OA be like here? All the old insecurities came rushing back. Then, I remembered that my Higher Power (God) is always with me, always providing for my needs. I just have to be willing to surrender and trust in Him. **“Let Go and Let God!”** And provide He did: meetings available daily within only a few miles of where I was staying; a Florida sponsor strong in the Big Book, living the steps and committed to abstinence; and a variety of compulsive overeaters/food addicts, like myself, who recite the 12 Steps together at the start of each meeting.

Although my disease goes with me wherever I go, so does my God and the OA program of recovery. The Sarasota meeting here in Florida ends its meetings with, **“It works if you work it and give a lot of love!!!!”** I send **my** love, prayers and hope to all of you. See you soon! **XO**



- ✓ Are you living in a remote area, away from nearby meetings?
  - ✓ Does your lifestyle involve constant travel?
  - ✓ Are you housebound and unable to travel to the nearest meeting?
- The Loner Program** was developed to support OA members unable to attend regular OA meetings for any of the reasons listed above. The program is free and offers benefits such as:

- Periodic mailings from the World Service Office (WSO)
- A Listing with the WSO
- A list of other loners worldwide

For more information about this exciting new program, please contact the **WSO** at **(505) 891-2664** from within the U.S. or at +1 (505) 891-2664 from outside the U.S. You may also e-mail us at [info@oa.org](mailto:info@oa.org).

## HOPEFUL WORDS FROM THE EDITOR

*✍ by Cindy M.*

So many contributions for this issue! Thank you so much! It turns the M in Me to a **W** for **We**, and illustrates what OA is. I look forward to each and every one of you having your say in the *SAIL*. **We** need your voice to sustain the strength of OA. There's a saying I love which expresses how I perceive the path **We** are on...

"HOPE is like a road in the country;  
there was never a road,  
but when many people walk on it,  
the road comes into existence." *(Lin Yutang)*

I am grateful to be able to walk the same path, no matter where I'm at in the program. All steps lead to it. I just need to accept myself as you all accept me. And in the same manner, you all need my acceptance and one another's. My prayer is that this will happen along the way. For now, I need to just listen. *Hopefully,*

**X DEADLINE for the next issue of THE OA SAIL NEWSLETTER is JUNE 21<sup>st</sup>, 2003. W**

## SPONSORS: GUIDES THROUGH RECOVERY

*UV by a grateful Sponsee &*

### Sponsor

I like to think of all of us in program standing somewhere on twelve imaginary steps. In my mind's eye, I see each step not as a rank but a location; a unique country. There is no status attached to the Steps. None of us is better than or inferior to anyone else because of the Step we happen to be on. Each Step has its own beauty and wonder. And each Step provides unique lessons to be learned.

Sponsorship is an important tool of recovery. For me, having a sponsor is like having my own personal tour guide through an unfamiliar country. Like a tour guide, a sponsor can share his/her experiences through that country. She/he knows the "terrain". She/he can assist you through the rough spots and rejoice in the fulfillment of completing the Step.

My sponsor understood my trepidation about writing my list of resentments and naming my character defects for the Fourth Step. She had empathy for the shame I felt in taking the Fifth Step and the fear I had that she would finally find out I wasn't "perfect". Lovingly and gently, she calmed my fears and gave me the encouragement I needed to work these Steps. As a result of the work she did on her Fourth and Fifth Steps, she had an abundance of peace and serenity in her life. Her experience, strength, and hope gave me the faith and courage I needed to work through my "tour".

Completing Step 5 was one of the highlights of my life! Admitting to God, myself and my sponsor, "**the exact nature of my wrongs**" made me feel such relief!!! Never before had I felt so light.

Think about sharing photographs (highlights) of a trip you've taken to another country with someone who has traveled there before you. That's what it was like for me to share my lightness and relief with my sponsor. She knew how I felt. It was wonderful to share that remarkable experience with her!

This is what we do when we sponsor each other. We guide, comfort, support, encourage, clarify, give feedback, and share our experience, strength and hope with our fellow travelers. Sponsorship gives us the opportunity to revisit that “country” to review the “snapshots” of the lessons we have learned.

All of us “in the rooms” are standing on a Step. We are all on this amazing “trip” together. Many of us complete the Steps and cycle through them again and again. We can revisit a Step many times as we change and grow. There will be new lessons to be learned and new perspectives to be gained.

Some of us are sponsors. Many of us have a sponsor. If you do not have a sponsor yet, get one! You can’t go through the Steps successfully without a sponsor.

If you are not sponsoring someone, get a sponsee. There’s a person in the “rooms” who needs a guide through a Step. Have you been to that “country”? Will you be his/her “tour guide”?

No one in the “rooms” should have to travel alone. Bon voyage!

## WORDS FROM A BIG BOOK THUMPER



by Sarah

(Those who know me know I’m a Big Book thumper, so please excuse my repetition of the book, which has restored me to sanity.) In the Big Book of AA, it is said that this disease can end with insanity or death. For some, the second would be a better option. When I first came into OA, I truly felt insane. I grabbed onto this program like a lifeline. I did not have time to sit and second guess; I just did it.

In the Big Book, they define a **spiritual experience** as a significant change in personality to bring about recovery. Although I am still somewhat new to this program, I have raced through the steps **“With all the earnestness at our command, we BEG of you to be fearless and thorough from the very first.”** For me, the very start was when I walked through that door. I think it’s cool that we can be **“recovered”** from this bodily disease and illness. This recovery is related to getting through the steps, all the way to Step 12. I am so thankful for this program. I could have not done it without the camaraderie of the fellowship, a true fellowship of the spirit. I have even tried to do the 12 Steps without going to OA, and the result was nothing until I could give myself completely. Thank you all who have been so instrumental in my recovery. I don’t want to sound like I am not struggling. I just know I have found the right answer, and that answer is through all of you. I have already experienced a remarkable personality change as far as my sanity is concerned. I still have a long way to go, but I have peeled through the first layer and am well on my way.

## WHAT I HAVE LEARNED FROM OA

Anonymous in Syracuse 3

**#1. I HAVE LEARNED TO TRUST GOD, EVEN IN THE DARKNESS OF EVIL.** Somehow it is the presence of God in my troubled life that steers me through catastrophe. I don’t believe that God causes the wreckage. I believe now that I cause it. It is my various forms of irresponsibility, laziness and dishonesty to myself that puts me in the positions of victim. I don’t watch the speedometer and I get pulled over and ticketed. I don’t make the phone call that I should because I’m too (fill in the blank.). And then my plans backfire, or I feel guilty in someone’s presence because I should have called her, or I obsess about something because I haven’t taken the moment to get the facts straight. I don’t pack my food because it **“will be OK this time.”** I trust that someone else’s OK food will be OK for me, too, without discussing it with anyone. On and on it goes. Each thing I have listed here has happened to me in the last week. The resulting actions have been: one more speeding ticket, I need more contact with others and am lonely, I can’t call because **“What will I say?”** I contribute to gossip which I will have to apologize for someday, and I eat an entire meal of crackers.

Clearly not God’s fault any of it. And I know I have to turn my life over in a real way. Not a knee-jerk for me, I was too abused by religion to get any real strength from that. I have to have a real conversation, asking for advice, looking for love, begging for mercy **“Please God, don’t let that happen to me!”**

Here’s the miracle: I get relief. The companionship, the clearing of obsession (especially for food), the fresh breath of the spirit in the clear air breathing across my face. I am not alone. What He gives me is what I should have.

**#2 I CAN MAKE MISTAKES.** I often do. I think before I act now. And some program guidelines are very clear, such as: **Don’t do anything you’ll have to make amends for later.** But still I say and do bad things. Some things I

do stupidly, such as bad wife jokes to a man whose wife has cancer, I-hate-my-mom stories to someone who doesn't have one, and a real stupid one was to a woman who picked up her 5-year-old son and carried him across a room as I said to her, "**Don't do that, he can walk.**" She looked me square in the eye and said, "**No he can't!**" Ouch. Well, that's it. Those things tend to carry their own price tags. Retribution is often swift from verbal quips.

However, I really mean the big mistakes. The moving, leaving, quitting type of mistakes. My own example of this is monumental. I wanted a child and manipulated someone into giving me one. The next 14 years were one after another of hurt and stabs of rejection. He loves the child; I am so much excess baggage (to him). I look to the heavens, "**Was it a mistake?**" I don't know the answer yet to that, but someday I will. Meanwhile, I look to the boy and know he's no mistake. I gave him life; it must be part of the Plan because he is a Miracle.

Job changing, house selling, decisions large and small; almost anything can be undone, revisited, set right. A new house is a new place to see the world from, a new job will teach new skills and maybe, new humility.

Before program my worst nightmare was being chased and not being able to run. My legs wouldn't work and I was just beyond the grasp of the killer and he would reach me...*I woke in a sweat.* I had this dream many times. I never have it now. I can go wherever I want, ask for what I need, and reveal my inadequacies *because I can make mistakes.*

## WHY ME?

???

by Dennis R.

Sometimes I wonder, "**Why me?**" Not the question of why I have the disease, or why this or that happens in my life – rather why do I keep going, and why do I have a fair measure of the recovery OA offers? Why do I have days of grace while others are still struggling or still "out there" in the grips of the disease? Why do I know peace and serenity in my life and others don't?

For a long time I thought "**the why**" had to do with the Creator's love or will for me. But I am coming to understand that such a concept can take me to some pretty strange places. For example, if I am traveling around in a snowstorm and I make it home safe and others don't, does that mean that God loves me more than those hurt or killed? Or perhaps I drive to the mall and get a good parking spot; is it God's will that I should not have to walk so far? I doubt it. Nor is it the Higher Power's will to see someone suffer under the lash of compulsive overeating. I have come to believe that the Creator loves us all pretty much the same and wants all of us to be well.

So what is the answer? Why am I so blessed with the OA recovery program? I think the answer is simple. It comes down to a **willingness to change**. Each of us sees people come into the rooms who are dying. Dying from the ravages of the disease. Dying emotionally. And dead or dying spiritually. Some stay and others never come back. Another bunch stays long enough, till they think they can do it on their own and then they drift away. We see people every day in shops, workplaces and in social gatherings who are dying from this disease. What is different about them and me? **Change** is the answer.

When I arrived at the tables of Overeaters Anonymous I had been beaten up, bloodied and bruised by the disease. It didn't take long for me to know that I was one of you. It took the steps, working with a sponsor, then becoming a sponsor, and continued inventory, prayer and mediation to know what I had to change. Just what did I have to change? I found that the answer to that quandary was simple, too: **everything**. I needed to change my "**whole attitude and outlook toward life.**" And I needed you people to show me how to do that. I needed to learn about binge foods that trigger the phenomenon of craving. I needed to find a definition for abstinence and a plan of eating. And I needed to learn how to live an abstinent life. I needed to learn how to be honest, how to love and how to be loved. I needed to grow up, to be responsible and accountable. I needed to learn how to serve and to think of others first rather than manipulating them to get what I wanted. I needed to learn how to talk to you about "**my stuff**", and I needed to learn how to listen to you about "**your stuff**". Not only did I have to learn new things; I also had to give up long-held ideas, notions and beliefs. I needed a complete overhaul. **Only the Creator – through the Steps and you people – could facilitate that magnitude of a change.**

We are promised that if we work the 12 Steps, changes will take place in our lives. And indeed that has been so for me. I have found a spiritual life that I never dreamed possible. I have some emotional stability. I can trust my mind in everyday matters, for as is promised in Step 10: "**For by this time sanity will have returned.**" (c. 2001 [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) p. 84) I am still a compulsive eater. But today I am a compulsive eater who has been given the solution to my problem:

the power to change by the Grace of God.

And just what is this change? We hear it all the time. ***“Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps...”*** (c. 2001 Alcoholics Anonymous p. 60) And just what is this ***“spiritual awakening?”*** Bill W. in Appendix II of the Big Book tells us it is personality change: ***“The terms ‘spiritual experience’ and ‘spiritual awakening’... upon careful reading, shows that the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism (compulsive eating) has manifested itself among us...”***

He goes on: ***“Most of our experiences are...the ‘educational variety’ because they develop slowly over a period of time. Quite often friends of the newcomer are aware of the difference long before he is himself. He finally realizes that he has undergone a profound alteration in his reaction to life; that such a change could hardly have been brought about by himself alone... With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves. Most of us think this awareness of a Power greater than ourselves is the essence of spiritual experience.”*** (c. 2001 Alcoholics Anonymous p. 567-568)

I have changed. I am not the person I used to be. Thank you Bill, AA, OA, and you people who carried ***“the message”*** to me.

## Tools of Recovery

α     Å     ✍     by Deborah A.

There are so many things that I did not understand the first time around, not the least of which was that ***I simply could not do this alone***. How can we build a strong foundation in OA without tools? Can a contractor build a foundation on his/her own without the help of some tools? The blueprints were readily available, now to “buy” the tools. (“*And if you are not completely satisfied in 90 days, return them for a full refund of your insanity*”).

☺) This was my plan:

**MEETINGS** – **A meeting everyday.** (Not possible without you!)

**PHONE CALLS** – **At least one call a day.** My rules – a busy signal on the other end does not qualify as a call! Leaving a message is not a contact! Call until someone is home. It may take a dozen tries before finding the person I was meant to talk with. It doesn’t have to be a bad day to make a phone call! (What great conversations!)

**FOOD PLAN** – **PLAN.** Write it down, call it in. Be honest!

**SERVICE** – **Everyday!** Be a part of the meeting – set up, take down, lead, read. Call a newcomer. If no service presents itself today, express gratitude to someone who has supported me.

**LITERATURE** – **Read** the appropriate Step in the OA book everyday. Choose one other piece of literature to read from each day. (My choice for now is *New Beginnings*.)

**WRITING** – **Write** about the steps, the literature, something that made a difference in a meeting or about a phone conversation. Write my actions for each tool in a ninety-day journal everyday.

**SPONSORSHIP** – In the beginning it was about finding/praying for, then asking the right sponsor. Now it is **regular contact each week.**

**ANONYMITY** – ... **to best of my ability** everyday.

I thought that OA had opened my life to a whole new world, and yet there was so much I hadn’t seen, so much more I still can’t see. My higher power, the steps and tools, and ***YOU*** are what I need to work this program. I am grateful that I have been given what I need to do whatever it takes.

## MY DAILY INVENTORY

📄 Shared by Sandy B.

LIABILITIES	☞ Watch for:	ASSETS	☺ Strive for:
self pity self justification self importance self condemnation dishonesty impatience hate resentment false pride jealousy envy procrastination laziness insincerity negative thinking vulgar, immoral thinking criticizing			self forgetfulness humility modesty self valuation honesty patience love forgiveness simplicity trust generosity promptness activity straightforwardness positive thinking spiritual, clean thinking look for the good

MONTH	DATE	CALENDAR of EVENTS for Spring/Summer 2003
April	30	WSO CONFERENCE ( <i>Albuquerque April 30 thru May 3</i> )
May	3	SYRACUSE MARATHON
	14	INTERGROUP Meeting/Elect Recording Secretary
June	7/8	RETREAT ( <i>Thornfield Center/Cazenovia</i> )
	11	INTERGROUP Meeting
	TBA	OA PICNIC

July	9	INTERGROUP Meeting
August	7-10	WSO Convention ( <i>New Orleans</i> )
	13	INTERGROUP Meeting/Appoint Nominating Committee

## MEETING LIST

### SUNDAY

Syracuse	5:30-6:30p	Eastwood Baptist 3212 James Street	D	Laurie	452-0384
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### MONDAY

Utica	7:00-8:00p	Heritage Home 1657 Sunset Ave.	D/WC	Janet	895-7600
Liverpool	7:00-8:00p	St. Paul's Church Vine & Hazel	BB	Janice	635-1172

### TUESDAY

Fulton NEW LOCATION	6:30-7:30p NEW TIME	State St. Methodist Church 1408 Route 176	D/V	Sandy	598-4063
Manlius (Newcomer Q&A)	7:00-8:30p (1 <sup>st</sup> Tues. open)	Christ Episc. Church 407 E. Seneca Street	D	Leesa Bernie	446-7405 455-6855

### WEDNESDAY

N. Utica	10:15-11:15a	Christ Comm. Church 1414 Herkimer Road	D	Sara	853-5918
N. Syracuse	11:00a-12:00p	St. Thomas Episc. Church 137 Gertrude Street	D/V	Mary Jean	963-8912
Syracuse	5:30-6:30p	Maria Regina Center 2500 Grant Blvd, Room 15	D	Lorraine	634-6926
Chaumont	7:00-8:00p	Lyme Free Library 12165 NY State Rte 12 E	D/O	Elsa Beverly	785-0756 654-4673

### THURSDAY

Manlius	Noon-1:00p	Manlius Library/SticklelyRm 1 Elmbrook Drive W.	D/WC	Bette	637-8256
Earlville (1 <sup>st</sup> Thurs step mtg)	4:30-5:30p	Earlville Library North Main Street	D/S	Phyllis	691-3909
Oneida	7:00-8:00p	First Baptist Church Main & Washington	D/O	Debby/Tom	363-2072
Liverpool	7:00-8:30p	St. Paul's Church Vine & Hazel	D	Caron	656-2389
Utica	7:00-8:30p	St. Elizabeth Hospital 2209 Genesee Street	D	Sharon	793-0775
Massena	7:00-8-30p	Emmanuel Congr. Church 39 W. Orvis Street	BB	Nola	769-2005

### FRIDAY

N.Syracuse	3:30 - 4:30	St. Thomas Episcopal Church 137 Gertrude Street	D	Melissa	668-2975
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### SATURDAY

Dewitt	8:00-9:15a	St. David's Church Jamar Drive	D/S/T	Linda	446-4914
Syracuse	8:00-9:15a	May Memorial Church 3800 E. Genesee Street	M	Leesa	446-7405
Potsdam	9:00-10:30a	Trinity Church Fall Island	D/S/V	Lynn	tba
Baldwinsville	11:00-Noon	Baldwinsville Library 33 E. Genesee/Story Room	V/WC	Anne P.	678-2875

Meetings that are italicized need our support!!! Meetings in BOLD are new!

KEY TO MEETING DESCRIPTIONS (All meetings are closed unless otherwise indicated – for compulsive overeaters only.) Special interest group meetings (e.g. men's, maintenance and Big Book) are recognized by OA to focus on individuals' special needs not necessarily addressed in regular meetings.

D Discussion, S Step study, M Maintenance for those w/long-term Abstinence at or near goal weight, BB Big Book study, WC Wheel chair accessible, T Traditions study, O Open, V Various OA books study, W Writing.

PLEASE CONTACT CAROL WITH ANY CHANGES/SUGGESTIONS  
PHONE 315-468-1588 EMAIL [cahern@twcny.rr.com](mailto:cahern@twcny.rr.com)







