

April 2008

Thoughts on OA Retreats

Taken from Lifeline

In my fifteen months as an ever-grateful member of Overeaters Anonymous, I have been led by my Higher Power to three OA-sponsored retreats.

Fear mixed with excitement took hold of me when retreat weekends approached. Each experience, however, pried open a bank vault of emotions, letting love and peace take the place of fear.

My first retreat was for OA women. I knew only one other person there, but I soon met many members with whom I could relate. In the course of the weekend they all became very important to my recovery. I listened, shared, wrote, cried and grew tremendously.



I learned to risk, to touch, hug and, most of all, trust.

At each retreat thereafter, I could see the incredible progress I have made in allowing myself to be open to all the unconditional love there is in this program. Every time I let myself be vulnerable and trusted these new friends with my innermost feelings, I got a hundredfold back.

Retreats are also a lot of fun. I learned to laugh again, to giggle, to be crazy and silly and lighthearted. One dear OA friend mentioned to me that she had never seen that side of me before. "Easy does it" had never been in my recovery program. After a weekend of joking, hugging and caring, I began to see the lighter side of my life and have not taken myself as seriously since.

I must be honest and say I have attended retreats for a variety of reasons: to "get" abstinence, to run away, to fix me or to find someone who could fix me, to be filled up.

But I've always come away believing that this program is divinely inspired and that my Higher Power has great plans for me if only I will listen. Retreats have shown me that God is in all of us and that God is the only one who can fix me.

How blessed I am to be a part of this wonderful program!

K.E., Seal Beach, California

EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH, HOPE

Suncoast Intergroup of Tampa Bay Overeaters Anonymous Monthly

Intergroup Trusted Servants:

Chair: Grace (727) 487-3207
graceterry727@aol.com

Vice Chair: Patti (813) 855-3239
impattischu@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Jean (813) 932-6639
alta_jn@yahoo.com

Secretary: Sandra (813) 903-0478
billandsandrad@tampabay.rr.com

Newsletter Editor: Crystal
suncoast.tampabay@yahoo.com

*7th Tradition contributions
can be mailed to:*

Suncoast Intergroup

PO Box 4762

Tampa, FL 33677

 **OVEREATERS
ANONYMOUS®**

What's the next step?

So, now you have some great reasons to get to an OA retreat. Despite the fear, the insecurities, the hesitations and rationalizations not to go, the benefits will out-trump the excuses, right?

Right!

So, now all you need to know is, how do I find such an incredible experience?

Here's your answer!

The Suncoast Intergroup of Tampa Bay is sponsoring our own retreat! So is the Freedom Intergroup. For information on the Freedom IG retreat, please see the "wooden" box below, and be sure to contact Jeannine, Sharon or Barbara for additional details.

For information on the Suncoast Intergroup's retreat... keep reading.

Spring Forward in Recovery!

When: April 11-13 2008

(you may choose to come Saturday only, April 12th)

Where: Rotary's Camp Florida in Brandon
(www.rotaryscampflorida.com)

How: Have you seen some bright yellow tri-fold pamphlets in your meetings? Grab one, read it over, then cut out the registration and mail with a check. Space is limited, so I encourage you to do this right away!

Another way to register is to visit <http://www.oaregion8.org/EventPDFs/SuncoastIGAApril2008.pdf>

If you want to receive the **early bird discount**, your registration will need to be postmarked by **March 31st**.

We definitely need help with registration, set-up, clean up and the boutique. Please indicate willingness when registering.

If you would like to request a "**work sponsorship**" (need a bit of financial help, and willing to pitch in and help?), please make that request to Grace by **March 31st**. (727-487-3207; graceterry727@aol.com)

Or, you can help by giving a donation to the boutique or "hospitality house."

Still need more information? Feel free to contact any Suncoast Intergroup trusted servant (names and contact information listed on front page of this newsletter), or your home meeting's intergroup representative.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to experience recovery in a new way, share experience, strength and hope, and get to know OA fellowship friends better.

I guarantee HP has something special for you, if you are have the willingness to give it a try. See you there!



2008 Conscious Contact Retreat

Sponsored by Freedom IG

May 16-18 2008, Franciscan Retreat Center, Tampa FL 33603.

For more information, contact Jeannine at (727) 849-3048, Sharon at (813) 782-6005, or Barbara at (727) 937-1964.

Tool of Service



Recently I was asked to speak at a marathon and, because I've never told my story anywhere but at my home group, I was really, really anxious about doing it. But I said I would because I thought it was the right thing to do, giving back to the program that has done so much for me. But I continued to be very nervous right up until the moment I got up to share. I even started out my talk by saying that I had been sick all week and had thought about canceling because I just didn't feel well, but then I realized if I didn't do it, all of the sleepless nights and butterflies in my stomach that I had been experiencing would have been for nothing!

Most of my nervousness went away as I began speaking and seeing all of my treasured program friends in the audience smiling and nodding at the things I was sharing. It was so encouraging to see everyone out there rooting for me and no one judging me!

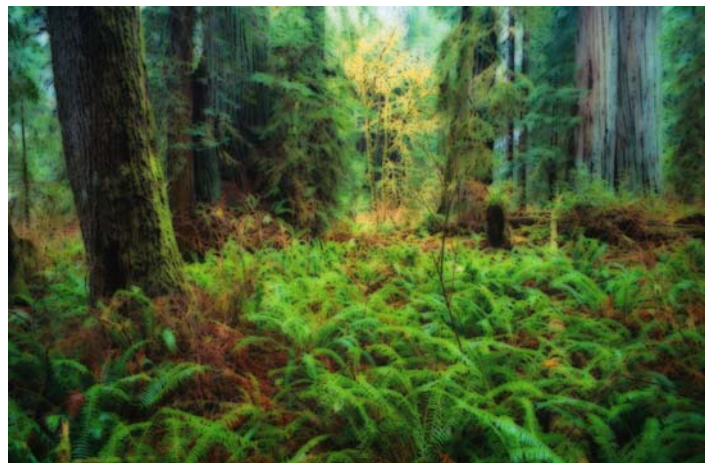
Interestingly enough it has also been very liberating for me. Because now that I've already done the hardest thing...in my opinion (speaking to a large group of people from a podium in the front of the room!) I feel like all of the other service I may be asked or led to do will be easy, in comparison. So I've volunteered to emcee the Friday night session at the retreat in April, and I'm hardly nervous at all :)

One of the things I remember learning at a Public Speaking course I took once years ago (it has always been one of my biggest fears) is that once you've earned the right to speak about something it will come naturally, and after all, what could be more natural than

sharing my OA story? No one else could do it better, because I'm the only one who has lived "my" story. And if I make a mistake in telling it, no one will ever know!

So I encourage anyone who has never shared in a marathon-type setting to try it because you get so much in return...like the people who come up to you afterwards and tell you how much they appreciated your story and how much it helped them. Not to mention the warm feelings of being so welcomed and accepted by people who are such an important part of your recovery.

And you can start small, like I did...just show up at an Intergroup meeting sometime and see what happens. The rewards are great, like the added weight loss I've achieved in the last year as a result of being willing to give up some foods I had previously been unwilling to give up. And I'm sure my newly acquired willingness is a side benefit of my commitment to service over the past few years. It feels so good to give back, please come and join us as we trudge the road to happy destiny!
Patti S.



Your Donation to Suncoast IG Helps to Carry the OA Message!

The Suncoast IG gratefully accepted donations from the following meetings during February 2008:

Good Shepherd YANA Discussion, Friday Temple Terrace, Brandon Butterfly Group.

All donations are used to carry the OA message of recovery to those who still suffer. To make a donation, mail your check payable to : Suncoast Intergroup, PO Box 4762, Tampa FL 33677

All donations are greatly appreciated!

Suncoast Intergroup of Tampa Bay Overeaters Anonymous

Meeting List for April 2008

*Closed meetings are only for those with a desire to stop eating compulsively. Open meetings welcome all visitors.

	Open/ Closed	Day & Time	Format & Contact Person	Location & Address
Monday	Open	Monday 12:00 pm	"Discussion/Step" Mary R (813) 931-3151	Sunlake Baptist Church 18908 Sunlake Blvd, Lutz 33558
		Monday 7:30 pm <i>(8:30 pm each 2nd Monday of month)</i>	"Abstinent Recovery" Arik (813) 956-4297	Village Presbyterian Church 4115 S Village Dr, 33618
Tuesday	Open	Tuesday 5:30 pm <i>Abstinent Meals Welcome</i>	"OA 12 & 12" Grace (727) 487-3207	St Catherine's Episcopal Church 502 Druid Hills Rd Temple Terrace
		Tuesday 7:30 pm	"By the Book" Maria (813) 650-0863	Apostle Lutheran Church 200 Kingsway Ave, Brandon 33510
		Tuesday 8:15 pm	"Through the Steps" Mimi (813) 909-3928	Bayshore Presbyterian Church 2515 Bayshore Blvd 33629
Wednesday		Wednesday 10:15 am <i>Abstinent Meals Welcome</i>	"YANA Discussion" Judith (813) 251-3789	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church 501 S Dale Mabry Hwy 33609
		Wednesday 7:30 pm <i>Elevator access to 2nd floor</i>	"12 Step Meeting" Mary (813) 634-7080 Retta (813) 633-8880	Prince of Peace Parish Center Rt 674 & Valley Forge Rd 2nd floor Sun City Center FL 33573
		Wednesday 7:45 pm	"OA 12 & 12" <i>No Contact</i>	Turning Point of Tampa 6227 Sheldon Road 33615
Thursday		Thursday 5:30 pm	"Big Book Study" Grace (727)487-3207	St. Paul Lutheran Church 5103 North Central Ave 33603
	Open	Thursday 7:00 pm	"Voices of Recovery/For Today" Clara (813) 903-9530	St Mark's Episcopal Church 13312 Cain Road 33625
		Thursday 7:30 pm	"Recovery & Abstinence" Chana (813) 375-9799	Jan Kaminis Platt Regional Library 3910 S Manhattan Ave 33611
Friday		Friday 5:30 pm	"Thank HP It's Friday!" Cheryl (813) 545-9588	St Catherine's Episcopal Church 502 Druid Hills Rd Temple Terrace
		Friday 7:00 pm	"Recovery & Abstinence" Barbara B (813) 902-8808	Bayshore Presbyterian Church 2515 Bayshore Blvd 33629
Saturday	Open	Saturday 9:30 am	"AA Big Book" Grace (727) 487-3207	St Catherine's Episcopal Church 502 Druid Hills Rd Temple Terrace
	*Closed	Saturday 10:30 am <i>Abstinent Meals Welcome</i>	"Butterfly Group" Marianne (813) 684-7598	Apostle Lutheran Church 200 Kingsway Ave, Brandon 33510
Sunday		Sunday 4:00 pm	"Step Study/Discussion" Amy (813) 352-4404	St Catherine's Episcopal Church 502 Druid Hills Rd Temple Terrace
		Sunday 7:00 pm	"For Today" Dennis (813) 875-9717	Bayshore Presbyterian Church 2515 Bayshore Blvd 33629
Intergroup		3rd Saturday of each Month, 11:00 am	Suncoast Intergroup Meeting Grace (727) 487-3207	St Catherine's Episcopal Church 502 Druid Hills Rd Temple Terrace

Online and Phone meetings: The most current meeting lists can be found on the Overeaters Anonymous website at http://www.aa.org/online_meetings.html. Online meetings are held 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Hot Line Numbers: Hillsborough (813) 254-4190 Pasco/Pinellas 1-800-544-6353

For updates, changes, or questions on the meeting list, please send an email to suncoast.tampabay@yahoo.com.
You may also write to us at Suncoast Intergroup, PO Box 4762, Tampa, Florida 33677.