

# The REACH OUT

Overeaters Anonymous, San Diego County Intergroup, Inc.

December 2009 - Issue 12

## STEP TWELVE

A man was walking down a deserted Mexican beach at sunset. As he walked along, he began to see another man in the distance. As he grew nearer, he noticed that the local native kept leaning down, picking something up and throwing it out into the water. Time and again, he kept hurling things into the ocean. As the man approached even closer, he realized that the other man was picking up starfish that had washed up onto the beach and, one at a time, was throwing them back into the water. The first man was puzzled. He approached the local and said, "Good evening. I was wondering what you are doing?" He replied, "I'm throwing starfish back into the ocean. It's low tide right now and all these starfish have been washed up onto shore. If I don't throw them back, they will die from lack of oxygen." "I understand," the first man replied, "but there must be thousands of starfish on this beach, and you couldn't possibly get to all of them. There are simply too many. And don't you realize that this is happening on hundreds of beaches up and down this coast? You can't possibly make a difference." The second man smiled, bent down, picked up yet another starfish and as he threw it back into the sea, he replied, "It makes a difference to that one!"

The principle of Step Twelve is *Service*. It states, "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs." I have learned we can make a difference, just like the man throwing starfish back into the ocean, one life at a time. Step Twelve begins with me. First, I have to change - I have to be the one to

have a spiritual awakening. I can't give what I don't have. There is an old rabbinical proverb that says, "If you change one person you change the world." The only person I can truly change is myself and, even then, I need God's power and the support of my fellows. The 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous states, "We gratefully follow in the footsteps of many others who have walked this way before us, and we're gratified to be making footprints of our own for others to follow." A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle. Along this vein, it is sometimes helpful for me to act as if the only arms God has are mine.

Step Twelve talks about a spiritual awakening as "THE result of these steps." In my experience, the spiritual experience that comes from painstakingly working and living the Twelve Steps in Overeaters Anonymous is unique in that it has resulted in a personality change that freed me from misusing food, and eventually anything else, to try to fill the God-shaped hole inside me. The downside: It took repeated work over an extended period of time. The Twelve Steps can be summed up in six words: Trust God, Clean House, Help Others. Cleaning house by taking inventory, becoming entirely ready to change, and making amends for harm done is sometimes the sticky part, but I know they have to be done. It is like a man with unbearable back pain who consults a specialist, and the specialist tells him, "The X-ray shows two broken vertebrae. You need an operation, two weeks in the hospital, and six months of rehabilitation." And the man asks, "Can't you just retouch the X-ray?" I can't skip the work and expect the

miracle of permanent recovery.

The second part of Step Twelve says, "...we tried to carry *THIS* message to compulsive overeaters." What is this message? It is embodied in the twelve steps themselves. The 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous states, "Though we may have been helped by therapies, church attendance, food plans, exercise programs, self-help books, metaphysics, and the like, we've found it best to emphasize our experience with the twelve steps, which are the basis of recovery for all of us." In fact, carrying the message of recovery to others is such a critical part of our program that an entire chapter was dedicated to the subject titled, "Working With Others" in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. It stresses, "Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from *overeating* as intensive work with other *compulsive overeaters*."

Step Twelve concludes by suggesting we "...practice these principles in *ALL* our affairs." It's not what I do between the opening and closing prayer that counts; it's what I do between the closing and opening prayer that matters. Between meetings is when the real progress is made. When I put the OA way of living into practice I face the acid test: Can I remain abstinent, keep in emotional balance, and live to good purpose under all conditions? Living by these principles not only makes me a force for good in the world, but it protects me from my character defects and poor free-will decisions, as well as from those of other people. Ultimately, recovery is an inside job. I get out of it what I put into it and the results are best seen in my home, work, and relationships. ~ Michael

## AVAILABLE SPONSORS

**Garry (men only)** 619-582-0469  
**Nicki** 619-582-3372

Available sponsors: Email your phone number to [dtyler126@yahoo.com](mailto:dtyler126@yahoo.com) to be posted in this space in the next issue.

## HOTLINE

**Ann Marie S.** 619-428-5231  
**Dave B.** 619-224-4500  
*(East Coast calls welcome) cell: 619-787-2937*  
**Don B.** 619-420-0357  
**Christine (anorexic)** 619-992-5344  
**Flor (Spanish speaking)** 760-931-9802  
**Gillian** 619-563-5167  
**Jill** 619-459-1018  
**Jo** 562-948-5040  
**Lisa (anorexic)** 775-790-2206  
**Linda J.** 619-415-3510  
**Liz** 858-336-7214  
**Mary Jane** 858-616-6472  
**Nicki** 619-582-3372  
**Shannon (bulimic)** 860-604-3122  
**Thomas F.** 619-280-1956  
**Wilma** 760-966-1812

## SPEAKERS

**Alice C.** 858-292-7643  
**Barbara R.** 619-448-3472  
**Barbara S.** 858-458-9415  
**Bill C.** 858-458-9415  
**Carolee** 619-589-1842  
**Dave B.** 619-224-4500  
*cell 619-787-2937*  
**Don B.** 619-420-0357  
**Garry** 619-582-0469  
**Jill** 619-459-1018  
**Joe C.** 858-571-5300  
**Pam T.** 619-207-1856  
**Phyllis S.** 858-569-1616  
**Nicki** 619-582-3372  
**Samantha** 858-565-1974  
**Steve P.** 760-231-1492  
**Thomas F.** 619-280-1956  
**Tracy** 760-489-6601  
**Virgil** 619-749-9810

*It is important that you are available and willing to return calls promptly.*

*To have your name added to (or removed from) a list above call Donna T. 858-673-5587*

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR . . .

I recently had to do some traveling for work. In planning for my trip, logically I knew that I would not be able to stick to my routine and eat the foods that I choose to eat and be able to exercise as I would if I were not traveling. I was giving it my best try to be positive and make the most of the trip I did not really want to go on. Of course, my disease immediately tried to take advantage of this situation by messing with my mind. I don't know about you, but for me, when my routine gets tweaked, I feel off kilter and sensitive to everything, which leads me right down the path to "stinking thinking". Of course, within the first day of travel, my mind was off and running with the Chicken Little routine of the sky is falling because I had to eat at restaurants. I did the next indicated step and each time I ate out, I was able to plan and prepare accordingly when ordering so that I could eat abstinely each and every time. I was also able to remain calm, serene and actually had a nice trip – which was a big surprise to

me. My disease did it's best to try to get to me, but I kept putting my faith in my Higher Power and following my program to the best of my ability. What I learned the most was that, in spite of my mind, the promises of this program still work even when traveling!



Happy Holidays ~ Tracy

## TRUSTED SERVANTS

<b>Chair</b>	<b>Tracy</b>	<b>760-489-6601</b>
<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>Rex</b>	<b>619-302-3003</b>
<b>Secretary (acting)</b>	<b>Heather</b>	<b>858-386-9448</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Dave B.</b>	<b>619-224-4500</b>
<b>Internal Information (acting)</b>	<b>David H.</b>	<b>858-525-2533</b>
<b>Literature (acting)</b>	<b>Mary</b>	<b>619-922-2468</b>
<b>Professional Outreach</b>	<b>Gina</b>	<b>619-758-1531</b>
<b>Public Information</b>	<b>Carolyn</b>	<b>858-228-6284</b>
<b>Reach Out Editor</b>	<b>Donna T.</b>	<b>858-673-5587</b>
<i>Submit articles to <a href="mailto:dtyler126@yahoo.com">dtyler126@yahoo.com</a> and put Reach Out in the subject line</i>		
<b>Recorder</b>	<b>Richard</b>	<b>619-750-8528</b>
<b>Region 2 Coordinator</b>	<b>Ginger G.</b>	<b>619-425-3000</b>
<b>Retreat Liaison</b>	<b>Iola</b>	<b>619-370-4594</b>
<b>WSO Coordinator (acting)</b>	<b>Ken</b>	<b>619-212-5292</b>
<b>Young People's Coordinator</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	
<b>12th Step Within Committee (acting)</b>	<b>Donna W.</b>	<b>619-549-0548</b>

## Halloween at the OASIS



For the second year in a row our OASIS was turned into a Haunted House with flashing lights, scary men, spiders in spider webs, bones and blood. Scary weapons and strange animals were running all over the place. All of these were donated and set up by a friend of the fellowship.

Then the members of the dance committee arrived to help set up. One member who wasn't even going to get to stay for the fun came to help between his jobs — just because he didn't want to miss out on the excitement of getting things ready for the big party. And big party it was.

D.J. Big Dawg rocked the OASIS like a real Disco and it packed out. It was so much fun. With continuous dancing. I danced with a vampire with fangs as big as her face, I saw another handsome vampire flapping around the D.J. Booth, and I danced with Alice in Wonderland. Hugh Hefner was there getting his picture taken with all the ladies including some six foot tall blond hairy vixen. There were quite a few pirates and a couple of sexy devils. A Charger fan and a Bronco fan both seemed to be on the same team at least for one night. And there was a beautiful angel who flitted about from place to place.

Okay, I'm still not through. The costumes were amazing. I am still not even sure what some of them were. There was a tall hairy dude with a scary mask that could dance pretty good but was not identifying himself and was making me and perhaps some other people a little nervous. And then there was the most beautiful and famous mermaid in the world — because of anonymity I am not allowed to divulge her name. There was also another much younger, beautiful mermaid. Then all of a sudden, out of nowhere, a hippie with hair down to his waist swoops in and starts showing everyone how to dance and play air guitar. We were all having so much fun.

When the party ended the rooms were quickly picked up. I was impressed that the OASIS was left cleaner than the dance committee had found it. And then about seven of us stayed around for two hours just talking. We talked about program, recovery and how lucky we are to be part of it. It was like having a really good meeting. I would rather be here than anywhere else.  
~ Iola

### *NO EXCEPTIONS JUST BECAUSE IT'S THE HOLIDAYS*

It seems as though lots of people are nervous and contentious at this time of year, but the good news is I don't have to be one of them because a couple of weeks ago at a meeting when I was in major league HALT (hungry, angry, lonely, tired) you reminded me that **I HAVE A CHOICE**. I can't believe how I forget what happens if I don't stick like glue to the program. My mood improved quickly after I reorganized my schedule and recommitted to the cleanest possible food

plan (no exceptions just because it's the holidays). I find that redoubling my efforts to have a good food plan gives me a great goal while attending parties where there are many food choices. And understanding that lots of people have issues around the holidays helps me to smile more, stay calm, and not take on their moods. **THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART** for showing me a better way every day you are all in my life.  
~ Marian

## **TRADITION TWELVE**

**Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all these Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.**

*People come to the Program loaded with negative and painful experiences. Stuff that I call "myth-information" as well. This stuff is difficult to get rid of. We are not people who trust others. I don't want anyone*

*to know what I am feeling, therefore, I stuff my feelings and crush them under the weight of food and other substances that I believe will disintegrate them. And, all that died was the person I was supposed to be.*

*An atmosphere of trust is vital to our recovery. We must not gossip about each other. We must leave the door open to any and all who wish to share their experience. It was not acceptable to be a compulsive eater. It was much more glamorous to be an alcoholic or drug addict. We've lived lives of guilt, shame, and fear and the time has come for acceptance of our willingness to be teachable.*

*We do that by sharing our experience, strength, and hope. We take the mess to our sponsor and the message to the group. We rejoice in each other's recovery. Recovery comes through the principles of the program, not through personalities. And, the principles of OA are failure-proof. Anonymity fosters humility and guards against reemergence of that blind self-will that leads to the compulsion to overeat.*

*We share credit with our Higher Power and our fellow OA members. We also accept responsibility for our actions looking only at our own faults and taking no one's inventory but our own.*  
~ Phyllis

# Announcements

## MEETING UPDATES

### NEW MEETINGS:

- Sunday, OASIS, 5:30 pm, Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning
- Tuesday, Ocean Beach, 7:30 am, AA 12&12 Book Study (call Kevyn at 619-550-2757 for details)
- Tuesday, OASIS, 6 pm, Relapse and Recovery
- Wednesday, OASIS, 5:45 pm, Young People

### CHANGE IN MEETING LOCATION:

- Tuesday, 7:30 pm meeting has moved from Vista to Rancho Del Oro Hills Community Church, 4055 Oceanside Blvd., Suite P, Rm 6, Oceanside
- Thursday, 12:30 Step Study and Literature Meeting has moved from Imperial Beach to First Baptist Church at 494 E Street, Chula Vista

### NEEDS SUPPORT:

- Monday, Chula Vista, 7:30 pm
- Tuesday, Serenity Shop, Noon

### NEED CONTACT PERSON:

- Tuesday, OASIS, 6 pm, Step Study
- Saturday, OASIS, 6:30 pm, 100 Pounder

### NEWCOMER MEETINGS:

- First Sunday of every month, OASIS, 6:30 pm, focus on Anorexia/Bulimia
- Monday, OASIS, 6:30 pm
- Saturday, OASIS, 8 am
- Saturday, Encinitas, 8:30 am (need sponsors)

## DECEMBER EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

- Intergroup Meeting:** December 2, 7 pm, OASIS
- 12/12 Workshop:** December 12, 2-5:30, OASIS
- Board Meeting:** December 16, 7 pm, OASIS
- Christmas Day Marathon Meetings:** December 25, 10 am to 4 pm, OASIS
- New Year's Day Marathon Meetings:** January 1, 10 am to 4 pm, OASIS (around regular meetings)

### Upcoming Events

- OA 50th Birthday Party:** January 15-17, 2010, LAX Marriott, Los Angeles
- 156th Serenity Retreat:** February 19-21, 2010, Warner Hot Springs
- 157th Serenity Retreat:** June 11-13, 2010, Camp Cedar Glen, Julian
- World Service Convention:** August 26-29, 2010, Hilton Los Angeles Airport Hotel

## Mailing Party

The fun begins at 10:15 am  
Even 15 minutes will help

*Next Party*  
**December 26th**

Call David H., 858-382-0014, if questions

## LITERATURE TEAM

The following members can arrange to sell you  
OA literature at the OASIS.

**Mary 619-922-2468**  
Literature Chair

**Rex 619-302-3003**

**Iola 619-370-4594**

**Dave B. 619-787-2937**  
Saturday: 9 am—1 pm

**Gina S. 619-758-1531**  
Tuesday: 11:30 am—1:30 pm  
Wednesday: 11:30 am—1:30 pm  
Saturday: 8:30 am—Noon

There may also be a literature person at your meeting,  
or you can order online at  
[http://www.oa.org/literature\\_catalog.htm](http://www.oa.org/literature_catalog.htm),  
or stop by the Serenity Shop.

## TWELFTH STEP PRAYER

Dear God,  
My Spiritual Awakening begins to unfold.  
The help I have received I shall pass on and give to  
others both in and out of the fellowship.  
For this opportunity I am grateful.  
I pray most humbly to continue walking day by day  
on the road of spiritual progress.  
I pray for the strength and wisdom to practice the  
principles of this way of life in all that I do and say.  
I need you, my friends, and the program every hour  
of every day.