

May/June 2018

# InterVoice

Channel Islands Intergroup—Santa Barbara  
& Ventura Counties Newsletter



**Remember to donate to Intergroup as part of 7th tradition and Thank You:**  
Ventura #35960 and #36068; Goleta #32642, #15648; Camarillo #56380.

## Big Book Comes Alive Retreat Amazing!

As you probably know, our Channel Island Intergroup (CIIG), held an amazing retreat in Port Hueneme on the week-end of April 6-8, during which Lawrie C, from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, took us through **The Steps** of the Big Book of Alcoholic's Anonymous.



We were at full capacity with 70 people attending from up and down the California coast with about half being from our Intergroup. One person came all the way from Atlanta, Georgia, which shows how far some of us will travel to attend retreats by inspirational and knowledgeable speakers such as Lawrie C in order to build our program.

Lawrie explained that while he was just getting over pneumonia (no longer contagious), it was essential for his own recovery to share **the message** with us as part of Step 12. He shared some before pictures and further qualified by telling us his story of compulsive eating, including when he was attending meetings and telling people that he was doing fine, when he was actually deep in relapse. The shyest person at the meeting came up to him and got him to share that he was having a hard time, after which he recovered and he has been abstinent and at a normal body weight for decades since.

One important point he made was that weight matters. New people need to see recovery when they come to meetings. Otherwise, they feel that there is no reason for them to be there. He warned against "fat serenity," which he described as being when we feel at peace with God, but are still overweight and not going down the scale. When we are eating more than we need to sustain ourselves we are using food to sooth us. If we are working the program we must cut our portions to achieve a normal body weight. As we read week after week at our meetings, abstinence is refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors **while working toward or maintaining a normal body weight.**

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### Contact Information:

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**\*\*\*Please consider submitting an article to InterVoice.**

Contact editor at  
[esaffan@icloud.com](mailto:esaffan@icloud.com)



### Responsibility Pledge:

*Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this I am responsible.*

## We Agnostics in OA—Telephone Meeting: Wednesdays: 4PM and 7 PM PST—(712) 432-5200 Bridge number: 579255

The focus of this meeting is to give Atheists, Freethinkers and Non-believers a voice and a safe place to share their OA experience. This is a literature and discussion meeting with a secular focus on living in the solution, "One Day at a Time."



## Big Book Comes Alive Retreat Amazing!

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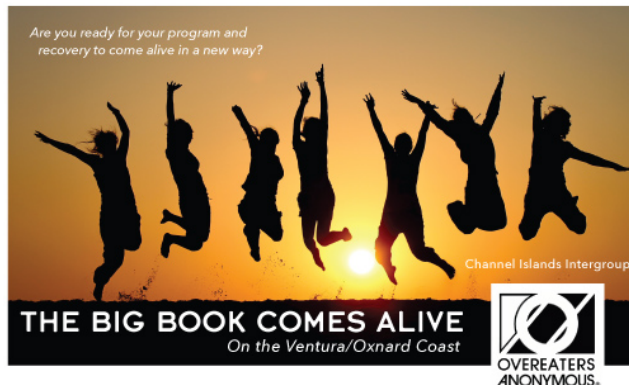
He stated that according to The Steps, our main purpose in life should be outward, being useful to others. Naturally we must take care of ourselves first to accomplish this. He systematically took us through The Steps, explaining that the first two steps are not taken, but are conclusions and that the third step is a decision, but not an action. Starting with Step 4 we are into actions. He also made clear that we had to **do the work**. Being spiritual by itself would not bring us recovery—we have to **work** the steps.

In Steps 4-9 and then in living in 10, 11 and 12, the key is seeing where WE have been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and fearful. He shared forms which were created by a recovered alcoholic named Blain, from his home town. They help us see our part—how we have been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking or fearful. In Steps 6 and 7 we are willing and we ask God to remove these shortcomings. (Forms available at [www. OAbigbook.info](http://www.OAbigbook.info))

Step 11, praying and Meditating, every morning and evening and throughout the day are essential. For Lawrie, a self-proclaimed agnostic, as he says "almost an atheist," this might seem difficult, but he said that it is not. His higher power is beauty, love, justice and truth and he turns his life over to this higher power as he knows he is powerless over food and much of his life, as are we.

Lawrie believes that to achieve recovery we can work The Steps of the Big Book with a sponsor, but we can also just work with another person who is on the same level as us. And we can even work the steps without a sponsor if one is not available and go to recovered people to answer our questions. While he only sponsors people face to face since he hates telephones, he does not refuse to sponsor anyone. But, he will not meet with someone who has not done the assignment he has given them. This has resulted in some cases when the sponsee was not willing to do the work at that time so did not call him back to schedule a meeting. Sometimes these people developed a willingness and came back at a later time. He explained that a sponsor cannot make someone abstinent. All we can do is share our experience, straight and hope and take them through the steps.

Lawrie said that by working The Steps we develop a pipeline from the heart to the brain, which is part of recovery. He believes it is important to acknowledge when we achieve recovery. While recovery is one day at a time, and while we will never be cured, we CAN be recovered and recovery is beautiful. This is what the BB promises and when we see and hear Lawrie we see recovery.



## Need Catchy Logo for CIIG!

The CIIG Intergroup is soliciting ideas for a new logo for our InterGroup. It can be a drawing or simply letters. Please include the OA symbol (see our masthead). All entries should be emailed to **Jojo** at [grateful\\_jojo@icloud.com](mailto:grateful_jojo@icloud.com)



# What I Learned About Sponsoring at the Big Book Comes Alive Retreat

One of the most significant things I learned from attending the Big Book retreat was how to change the way I sponsor. I'd been trying to do this for a while—ever since Sheila J's workshop that was held here in the Channel Islands region several years ago—but I hadn't know exactly how to go about doing it. Until the Big Book retreat.

The answer, ironically enough, came from realizing that the more I could point my sponsees back to working THEIR program through the Big Book, the more I could be of assistance as a sponsor. Having been a life coach and peer counselor for a big portion of my life, it is often hard for me to draw the line between sponsoring and coaching. I haven't always kept the boundary, and I've found it challenging to know exactly how to do so.

Until, that is, I was at the retreat and heard again "The 12 Provocations." One of which basically says that although a sponsor is very important for recovery, a sponsor is not **necessary** for recovery. What IS necessary for recovery is the program outlined in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Big Book IS the program of recovery. It is our textbook, and in this book, the steps to recover are outlined very clearly. This was an epiphany for me, and it felt great to finally get it. Why? Because, I learned that I am not necessary for anyone to recover in this program. I can be helpful, I can share my experience, but that's not NECESSARY. The way to recover is found in the Big Book, and NOT in my life experience, my coaching techniques, or my peer counseling training. My role as a sponsor is to help another fellow work through the 12 steps as quickly as possible, so that she can recover. It is not to provide therapy, give coaching techniques, or listen to her personal problems. This couldn't be clearer to me, now, and it has helped me to stay within my role as a sponsor.

Another reason why this epiphany is wonderful is because I got very clear that I don't need to talk to my sponsees at regularly scheduled intervals. Instead, my sponsees are welcome to contact me whenever they feel stuck, need to do a 5<sup>th</sup> step or need some suggestions. This allows my sponsees to be responsible for their own program. If a sponsee is working through the steps for the first time, we're looking to get them through the steps quickly, so that they can stop white-knuckling their abstinence and experience the recovery promised in Step 9. How quickly they do that, depends upon them, however, not me. My own experience in the program was that I desperately wanted recovery, so I took the initiative to contact my sponsor whenever I had finished an assignment.

One final reason (and for me, the most important one) I found this epiphany so wonderful, has to do with Step 12 and carrying the message to other compulsive overeaters. I have wanted to be available to sponsor more people for a long time. But, having regularly scheduled sessions, 2 to 3 times a week, with 5 or 6 sponsees really stretched my availability to the limit and didn't allow me to be of assistance to more fellows. Giving up regularly scheduled sessions with my current sponsees, allowing them to work their programs on their own and call me as needed, has freed me to sponsor many more people and help them get through the 12 steps as quickly as possible, so that they can recover through this program and then, in turn, reach out to help others recover. That is the essence of Step 12 to me: *"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other compulsive overeaters [italics mine], and to practice these principles in all our affairs."*

By Natalie G., (310) 488-2893; available to sponsor



## Talk to your Medical Professionals About OA!

Step 12 asks us to practice these principles in all our affairs and carry the message to those still suffering from our disease. The Professional Outreach Committee (POC) has been trying to do this by attending various health fairs and events where we can, get out the message. **YOU** can do this too. If you are Recovered be sure to share your OA experience with all your health care professionals. When our doctors see that we are losing weight and keeping it off, they will share this program with their patients. This is already starting to happen and it is a vital way for us to grow. The POC has specific literature for doctors and other health care professionals, which are available to you. Please contact Stephanie at (805) 729-4811 for literature.

# Meeting Schedule for Channel Islands Intergroup

Sun	SB 6 PM	<b>Literature Study: Big Book</b> (#11982), Unity Church, 227 E. Arrellaga St.. Meet in Prayer Room, across courtyard from office. Additional parking in upper lot on Valerio St.	Carla 805 450-4241
Mon	Ventura 8:45 AM	<b>Literature Study</b> (#51450), 21 North Dunning St., Meet back of Duplex.	Linda 805 607-3249
	Goleta 12 PM	<b>Leaders Choice</b> (#32642), Goleta Presbyterian Church, 6067 Shirrell Way behind Fairview Center. Meet in kitchen, through social hall, facing parking lot on the left. OK to bring lunch.	Barbara G 805 969-9942
	Ventura 7 PM	<b>Newcomers &amp; Pitch</b> (#31329), Bible Fellowship Church, 6950 Ralston St, at Johnson Dr. Meeting in Pavilion #1. Enter parking from Ralston St. Third Monday of month is a speakers meeting.	Jan 805 850-5657
	SB 7:35 PM	Big Book & Step Study Meeting. Newcomers Welcome!; (#51002), First Congregational Church, 2101 State St, Dorcas Classroom, through courtyard door on left (not patio door).	Elaine S 909 908-7069
Tue	Ojai 6:30 PM	<b>Literature Study</b> (#47208), Ojai Valley Community Church, 907 El Centro. Corner of El Centro and Loma. Park in lower lot off of Loma.	Natalie G 805 640-2528
Wed	Ventura 12 PM	<b>Literature Study</b> (#35960), Bible Fellowship Church, 6950 Ralston St. (at Johnson Dr.) Enter parking from Johnson Dr. Meeting at Building 300, room 302.	Brigitte 805 649-5716
	Camerrillo 12 PM	Step Study—New meeting! Permanent location has not yet been determined. Call Judith at 805 603-8947 for address.	Judith 805 603-8947
	SB 7:30 PM	<b>Literature Study</b> (#36031), Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 909 N. La Cumbra Rd. @Foothill Rd., across from parking lot.	Jojo L 818 400-5468
Thu	Goleta 12:00 PM	<b>Literature Study</b> (#15648), Goleta Presbyterian Church, 6067 Shirrell Way. Behind Fairview Center. Meeting in kitchen, through social hall, facing parking lot. on the left. OK to bring lunch.	Raven 805 453-2961
	Ventura 7 PM	<b>Topic Meeting</b> (#54396) Buenaventura Mobile Home Estates Club House, 11405 Darling	Dean 805 585-0842
	SB 7:00 PM	Literature Study, Casa Serina Residential Recovery Home for Women, 1515 Bath St, Fourth Thursday of each month.	Abby 248 933-3864
	Carpinteria 7:30 PM	<b>Channel Islands Intergroup</b> (#005-09068), 1st Thur of each month. Carpinteria Community Church, 1111 Vallecito Rd. Exit 101 at Casitas Pass Road.	Natalie G 805 640-2528
Fri	SB 10:00 AM	<b>Literature Study—Big Book and Step Study.</b> (#00243), Unity Church, 227 E. Arrellaga St. Meeting Bride's Room (upstairs). Additional parking in upper lot on Valerio St. Closed meeting—open to OA members and those who desire to stop compulsive eating	Sarah 805 564-3060
	Ventura 10:30 AM	<b>Discussion Dialogue</b> (#35404), Trinity Lutheran Church, 196 N. Ashwood Ave. At intersection of Loma Vista and Ashwood. Meeting in library.	Gary 805 766-7136
Sat	Ventura 10 AM	<b>Long-timers Pitch</b> —All are welcome! (#36038), Ventura County Medical Center, 3291 Loma Vista Rd. (at Hillmont Ave.) Meeting in Cafeteria Conference Room on bottom floor.	Carol E 805 208-1756
	SB 10:00 AM	<b>Step Study—Newcomers</b> (Second Saturday of every month. Unitarian Society, 1535 Santa Barbara St. Meeting in Classroom 1 in Courtyard. Location varies at times—look for signs.	Susan R 805 680-8371
	SB 10:30 AM	<b>Step Study</b> —OA 12 & 12 (36037) Unitarian Society, 1535 Santa Barbara St. Meeting in Classroom 1 in Courtyard. Location varies at times—look for signs.	Susan R 805 680-8371

Meeting secretaries: please notify the World Service Office of any meeting updates by visiting “Find a Meeting”