



# InterVoice



Jan/Feb, 2019

Channel Islands Intergroup  
Santa Barbara & Ventura Counties Newsletter

.....

Remember to **donate to Intergroup** as part of **7th tradition** and **Thank You:**

Ventura, Mon., 8:45 AM, #51450 • Ventura, Mon., 7 PM, #31329,

Ventura, Sat., 10AM, #36038

.....



As I write this in mid-December 2018, one day at a time, I look forward to January 5th, 2019, my 4th OA abstinent birthday. When I stumbled into that first meeting in 2015, I was desperate. But I had been desperate for over 50 years. Every year I would make plans for January 1st, thinking, "This year, finally, I have a diet plan that will work." Why I actually believed that given my decades of failure is, I think, part of the disease – which constantly tells me I don't have a disorder. The prior 15 years of diet plans were destroyed by 5:30 am on January 1st, and I would then swear that NEXT year I would find a plan, but this year was already a bygone failure! How sick is that?

At my first OA meeting, someone read the words in Our Invitation to You, "We have learned that the reasons for our illness are unimportant." I actually felt my ears burning when I heard that. I knew the reasons for my problem with food. My awful (meaning lack of a) childhood and an even more dreadful experience in Vietnam (being wounded in combat on my last combat mission, spending 2 years in hospitals undergoing many operations, living in pain for the next 42 years, and coming home to a country where I dare not mention that I'd even been to Vietnam), left me bitter and "deserving," having EARNED the right to eat myself to death. Well, food worked! It provided comfort when I could not find it elsewhere. The reasons for my illness are not important? I was stunned that such a concept existed.

But I managed to get a sponsor almost instantly, and found that as screwed up as I thought I was, others have equally compelling stories (or worse), and yet, I saw recovery in them. This peaked my interest. So I plunged headlong into program, and it has worked like magic. Not the kind of magic I'd hoped for - complete absence of the compulsion or a perfect adherence to my food plan. No, I dropped over 40 pounds and have gained a few of those back, and I must keep the program to a one day at a time level (sometimes one minute at a time) to find continuing success. Giving service, having a

*continued on page 2*

## Contact Information:

CIIG (#005-09068)  
PO Box 1321 Summerland, CA 93067  
805 947-0792 [oaciig.wordpress.com](http://oaciig.wordpress.com)

Region 2 of OA-4733 Torrance Blvd.,  
PO Box #335 Torrance, CA 90503  
[oar2.org](http://oar2.org)

World Service Organization (WSO)  
PO Box 44020  
Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4020  
505 891-2664, [oa.org](http://oa.org)

## Service Board:

Chair, Natalie G., 310 488-2893  
Vice Chair, Laura N., 805 687-4553  
Treasurer, Stephanie J., 805 729-4811  
Recording Secretary, Elaine S.,  
909 908-7069

## Volunteer Service Positions:

Retreats & Workshops:  
Natalie G., 310 488-2893  
[natalieg.oa@gmail.com](mailto:natalieg.oa@gmail.com)  
InterVoice: Peri L., 360 477-6796  
[perilebeck@tfon.com](mailto:perilebeck@tfon.com)  
Web: Elaine S., 909 908-7069  
[oaciig.web@gmail.com](mailto:oaciig.web@gmail.com)  
Region 2 Rep: **Position open**

## Outreach:

Stephanie J., 805 729-4811

*Share your experience, strength and hope here in the InterVoice. Your story is important and will help others!*

Contact editor: [perilebeck@tfon.com](mailto:perilebeck@tfon.com)



## Responsibility Pledge:

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

great sponsor and being a sponsor, going to every meeting I can possibly attend and working the program to the best of my ability has given me relief beyond my wildest dreams. For that I am grateful. I no longer hope that some day I will suddenly transform into a “Normie” and eat like other members of my family, nor do I imagine ever leaving OA. There are too many scary stories of those who have done just that and the results are always just as they would be for me, a return visit to hell.

The key for me was learning to face my issues in a healthy way, dealing with them through program to find emotional and spiritual healing. That has happened. As a result the weight took care of itself. As I reflect back, the concept of healing required a belief in a power greater than myself. “HA! I am an atheist, and this program requires a

belief in superstitious nonsense,” I cynically thought. But, in fact, it wasn’t hard for me to find that power and actually believe that it can restore me to sanity. My higher power is the entirety of the program, and never does it lack guidance. It takes the burden away and redirects me to a healthy way of eating. I just turn to a meeting, my sponsor, literature, podcasts, phone calls, sponsoring, and of course the 12 Steps for this “redirection.”

I could do more, I think, and I will endeavor to do that, but what OA has given me is priceless, and yet fragile. It requires constant attention to maintain abstinence, but that is OK, I never have shunned hard work, and the rewards speak for themselves. The gift of serenity leads to a wonderful feeling of gratitude. It is the magnificent change I had been seeking for half a century.

CHUCK S.



## Best of All, I Don't Have to Remember

I hope everyone had a holiday season filled with love, peace, friendship and sanity. If you didn't (as I didn't during one or two days), please remember that we all do our very best with this cunning, baffling and powerful disease. With me, it's definitely been progress, not perfection.

I've been in the sugar on and off since I came into OA and for the past several months. I have even tried abstaining from some forms of it, but that just turned out to be me trying to control my addiction. I've had lots of recovery physically (maintaining a 70-lb. weight loss), mentally (thank you step 10) and spiritually (having had a spiritual awakening) from this disease, but I'd never quite been willing to give up sugar (and all its forms) entirely. When the Big Book says: "Heaven knows, we have tried hard enough and long enough to drink like other people! Here are some of the methods we have tried: Drinking beer only, limiting the number of drinks, never drinking alone, never drinking in the morning, drinking only at home, never having it in the house, never drinking during business hours, drinking only at parties, switching from scotch to brandy, drinking only natural wines, agreeing to resign if ever drunk on the job, taking a trip, not taking a trip, swearing off forever (with and without a solemn oath), taking more physical exercise, reading inspirational books, going to health farms and sanitariums, accepting voluntary commitment to asylums—we could increase the list ad infinitum," it is describing my struggle with sugar.

Here are some of the ways I've tried long enough and hard enough: eating fruit-juice sweetened goods only, eating non-processed sugar only, limiting the number of sweets, abstaining from cookies, candies, cakes, pies and ice cream (but having everything else that is sweet like power bars and certain fermented drinks), not eating sugary foods in the evening, only eating sugary foods as a treat when I'm eating out, giving up all sugary foods except certain fermented drinks, letting my family know I can't eat sugary foods and asking them to not bring their sugary foods with them when they visit or hide it while I'm visiting, eating only certain forms of sugar, giving up all sugar (including grains and fruit), and on and on ad infinitum!

Every time I would try to control my food that way, it would backfire on me. I would end up slowly but surely eating small amounts of sugar again, and then, before I knew it, I was eating sugar whenever and wherever. I don't binge on sugary foods (partly because I can't physically handle eating a lot of sugar), but eating any amount of sugar just has me craving more of it and also wanting to binge. When I eat sugary foods, I unleash the compulsive overeater inside, and then it's nearly impossible for me to NOT overeat—not just sugary foods, but ALL foods.

Last week, however, I was finally willing to be abstinent from sugar, FOREVER, one day at a time. I had been visiting with my mom and step-dad. While I was looking at the gifts they got, I noticed my step-father had been given some of my favorite

candies. I put them down, because I had “decided” that I wasn’t going to have any sugary foods that day. But you all know where this is going. Of course and inevitably, I ended up having a couple of pieces of it. And then, the second I ate the last piece, I regretted I even let it pass my lips. And that’s what ALWAYS happens. I vow I won’t have sugary foods, because I know I shouldn’t (although I can never remember exactly why I need to be so strict with myself in that moment), I see some sugary foods and say “no”, and then I forget WHY I’m not having that sugary food, which of course opens the door to “what’s the big deal if I have it,” and then, in the next second I’m eating it, and THEN, ALWAYS, I am filled with “pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization.” Why did I do that?! Why did I eat that thing?! I know better than that! Regret, remorse, wishing fervently I could not have eaten that thing, and on and on. I ALWAYS feel like shit, physically. I ALWAYS get the shakes from sugary foods. I ALWAYS feel nauseated. I can feel the sugar hitting my bloodstream, just like I could feel drugs hitting me. And afterwards, I have a hangover. I’m snippy, unhappy, emotionally unbalanced. I break out. My joints ache. I crave food and overeating becomes almost impossible to avoid.

But I can’t remember any of this before I take that first bit of a sugary food. And THAT’S what I came to realize lying in bed that night. I’ll NEVER be able to remember why I’m not eating sugar if I’m the one deciding whether or not to eat it. I will ALWAYS forget why I’m not having it. I CANNOT bring to mind and body all the “pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization” I’ll feel if I have that sugary food. Logic tells me then, that the only thing I can do to protect myself is to give it up completely, and not have to know WHY I’m giving it up. It doesn’t matter why, because I’ll never be able to remember why at the crucial moment of decision.

That night in bed, I finally understood this. And, I became willing to give up sugar in all its forms. I asked my HP for help with this realization. I turned over my resistance. What came to me is that I don’t EVER need to know

why I’m not having sugar. That’s not my business. All I need to know is that I can’t have it, ever again, in my entire life, one day at a time. I had to really go there—to see my life without sugar in it ever again, otherwise it didn’t mean anything. No more cakes, cookies, pies (my favorite), candy, ice cream, power bars, etc. EVER AGAIN—one day at a time. If I think for one minute that I might be able to have sugar again someday, I’m sunk. My disease will find a way to take me there.

Am I sad about this? Somewhat. Mostly, though, I’m relieved. Will my life be less because I can’t have sugary foods? Hardly! My disease wants me to believe my life will be diminished because I don’t eat sugar. That’s bullshit! My life is expanded because I don’t eat sugar. I’m freer because I am not constantly thinking about how and when to get my sugar fix, how I can “have my cake and eat it too.” If I’m out with people or visiting them, I’m focused on them, and not the struggle to decide “should I have this sugary food or not” or dealing with the inevitable regret that comes if I do decide to have it, which takes me away from being present with others. I help my body to become healthier by staying away from something that is poison. My emotional life is more balanced, and I’m less likely to feel depressed, sad or upset.

Best of all, though, I don’t have to struggle to remember why I’m not having sugar. If a craving hits (and believe me, they still do), I’m learning to “recoil as if from a hot flame.” I say to myself, “NO, that’s not for me. I don’t need to know why. I just know it’s not for me.” And then I ask my HP for help (which ALWAYS comes).

I’m so grateful for this program, for all my fellows in the Channel Islands Intergroup and around the world, for my sponsor and sponsees who love and support me, for willingness (thank you, Jennifer, for asking if I was willing to be willing) and for recovery, which has given me countless blessings and a life filled with joy, peace and love.

NATALIE G.



## Happy New Year and Happy Valentine’s Day Everyone!

Heads up for some service opportunities available for the new year: **1.) Retreats and Workshops Committee**, needs new members or people who can generally help out. They plan to meet in January. Please Contact Natalie G. if you would like to join this fun group. **2.)** Natalie is not sure she can attend the **World Service Business Conference in May** so if anyone is interested please call her. Position also requires participation on committee level. Requires two year service above group level, and one year continuous abstinence. **3.)** We are planning to send out a **Survey about ways to make it easier for members to serve on our Intergroup committees**. Questions include what days and times might work better, as well as whether we should alternate meeting locations from Carpenteria to Ventura, as well as whether having an OA meeting before the Intergroup meeting in Carpenteria. Any other ideas for the survey would be helpful. **4.) Region 2 Rep**, Service opportunity —Must attend meetings twice a year and participate on a Region 2 subcommittee. **Intergroup pays all travel expenses.**

# Meeting Schedule for Channel Islands Intergroup

Sun	6 PM Santa Barbara	<b>Literature Study: Big Book</b> (#11982), Garden Court, 1116 De La Vina St. Meeting in Library A (use main entrance, go down hall). Street parking or visitor spots, <i>do NOT park in resident spots.</i>	Carla 805 450-4241
Mon	8:45 AM Ventura	<b>Literature Study</b> (#51450), 21 North Dunning St., Meet back of Duplex.	Susan A. 805 642-7627
	12 PM Santa Barbara	<b>Leaders Choice</b> (#32642), Goleta Presbyterian Church, 6067 Shirrell Way, behind Fairview Center. Meet in Youth Room behind Social Hall and Kitchen. Left parking lot, OK to bring lunch.	Barbara G. 805-969-9942
	7 PM Ventura	<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.	Lenore 805 654-8271
	7:35 PM Santa Barbara	<b>Big Book &amp; Step Study</b> (#51002), Newcomers Welcome! Garden Court, 1116 De La Vina St. Meeting in Library A (use main entrance, go down hall). Street parking or visitor spots, <i>do NOT park in resident spots.</i>	Elaine.S. 909 08-7069
Tues	6:30 PM Ojai	<b>Literature Study</b> (#47208), Oak View Park and Resource Ctr., 555 Mahoney Ave., Rm #1, in walkway between 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> bldgs. Park in diagonal parking, where sign says "Authorized vehicles only." Additional parking in lot across Mahoney. <i>Do NOT park on street in front of residences.</i>	Natalie G. 805 640-2528
Wed	11 AM Camarillo	<b>Steps and/or Traditions Study</b> (#56380) New Meeting, Center for Spiritual Living Pleasant Valley, 221 E. Daily Dr., Room 4.	Grace 805 910-9544
	12 PM Ventura	<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
	7:30 PM Santa Barbara	<b>Literature Study</b> (#36031), Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 909 N. La Cumbra Rd. @Foothill Rd., across from parking lot.	Quinn 707 334-1121
Thurs	12 PM Santa Barbara	<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	Sue E. 805-448-0094
	7 PM Ventura	<b>Topic Meeting</b> (#54396) Buenaventura Mobile Home Estates Club House, 11405 Darling.	Gary 805 766-7136
	7:30 PM Carpenteria	<b>Channel Islands Intergroup</b> (#005-09068), 1 <sup>st</sup> Thurs. of each month. Carpinteria Community Church, 1111 Vallecito Rd. Exit 101 at Casitas Pass Road.	Natalie G. 805 640-2528
Fri	10 AM Santa Barbara	<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
	10:30 AM Ventura	<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	10 AM Ventura	<b>Long-timers Pitch—All are welcome!</b> (#36038), Ventura County Medical Center, 3291 Loma Vista Rd. at Hillmont Ave. Meeting in Cafeteria Conference Room on bottom floor.	Rhiannon 805 535-5996
	10 AM Santa Barbara	<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
	10:30 AM Santa Barbara	<b>Step Study—OA 12 &amp; 12</b> (#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 [OA.org](http://OA.org) < "Find a Meeting."