

PACE

The Mid-Hudson Intergroup Newsletter *Positive Action Changes Everything*

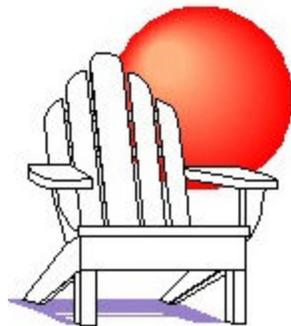
Vol. XXVII, No. 4

October 2005

Message from the Chair

Well, I, for one, had a busy, joyful summer, filled with family, friends, and fun. I'm so grateful program is portable and can go with me anywhere.

Our first Mini-marathon in August was a great success. We enjoyed many speakers and lots of fellowship, spending the day together. Many thanks to all the presenters and organizers, as well as attendees, for making a great day.



I'm really excited about the new website for our Intergroup. We've considered the idea for years and Anne O. is making it happen. Much appreciation for her service as PACE editor and now our Webmaster. Watch and listen for details.

Fall brings many changes and demands on my time. It's important for me to include OA activities, meetings, and service in my hectic schedule, to "keep my balance". I'm so grateful we have events every month to ensure my primary purpose is met: to extend the hand and heart of OA to all those who want it. Hope to see you all soon at the minithons and meetings.

Love in recovery,
 Mary Ellen

7th Tradition DONATIONS to MHIG Thank You!

Cornwall Groups #20165/35203/36029	\$100.00
Fishkill Saturday Morning	\$20.00
HOW Tuesday PM	\$100.00
Poughkeepsie 7PM Monday #35133	\$60.00
Saugerties Wed./Woodstock Mon.	\$17.00
Blue Mountain #22578	\$30.00
New Paltz #47415	\$60.00
Stone Ridge Saturday	\$300.00
Woodstock #39318	\$15.00
Beacon Monday & Wednesday	\$44.00
Woodridge #27311	\$60.00
Ellenville #27316	\$60.00

Letter from the Editor

We're online! If you haven't already, please visit us at www.midhudsonoa.org. You'll find the current meeting list, PACE - both this issue and the August issue, an Events calendar, contact information for our Intergroup service board, links to OA World Service, Regions, and other Intergroups, a link to OA's online literature catalog, information on how to subscribe to Lifeline. In addition, there is a wealth of information for the newcomer.

I'd love to hear from you. What would you like to see added to the website? You can email your comments and suggestions to webmaster@midhudsonoa.org.

This newsletter needs your input! The OA Preamble states: "Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to

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Letter from the editor – continued...

carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer." You can do this by sharing the story of your recovery here.

Suggested topics:

- Tell your story. Who were you when you found OA? How have you changed? Share your experience, strength and hope.
- A Step and Tradition study. Volunteer to write about Step 12 or Step 1, or Tradition 12 or Tradition 1 for the next issue of PACE.
- Write about the tools. Do you use them all? How? Is there one that you love (or hate)? Why? Does your sponsor require you to use any or all of the tools?
- What is your Holiday survival plan?
- Write about the gifts your recovery has given you.
- Write a poem
- Draw a picture that symbolizes recovery to you.

Don't let poor writing skills deter you from submitting an article. We edit for grammar spelling and content.

We'd really love to hear from you. Submit your story by email to PACEeditor@midhudsonoa.org

Anne O. – PACE editor
MHIG webmaster

The Feast

The first big feasting holiday of the year arrived just three weeks after I began abstinence. It was Thanksgiving, 1971.

Abstinence had come to me one bright Saturday morning after I had attended my third OA meeting the previous evening. I had gone reluctantly and returned



exhausted; certainly I had no reason to suspect what was about to happen.

On arising, I sat quietly in the sunshine, not wanting breakfast yet. I picked up the OA literature I had brought home three weeks earlier and began to reread it. It sounded good, the tone soothingly low, almost a whisper. Strange, how there was no stridency, no sternness, no moralizing, lecturing, haranguing, coaxing or appealing to my better – or worse – nature to lose weight. In fact, the word "weight" did not appear at all.

I found myself drawn repeatedly to a tiny folder entitled "Just for Today". It measured, and still does, 2¼ x 4¼ inches. Somehow, the size itself was reassuring.

Inside the folder, several passages kept pulling at me. I

read them over and over. Impossible to think that these amiable ruminations had anything to do with weight loss.

"Just for today I will try to live through this day only, and not tackle my whole life problem at once.

"Just for today I will be happy. This assumes to be true what Abraham Lincoln said, that, 'Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be.'

"Just for today I will be agreeable...talk low, act courteously...criticize not one bit....

"Just for today I will have a program. I may not follow it exactly, but I will have it. I will save myself from two pests: hurry and indecision.

"Just for today I will be unafraid. Especially I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful and to believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me."

I studied the food plan. It, too, looked good: simple, low-key and sweetly reasonable.

At length, I got up from the chair, showered, dressed and drove to the market. I was a stranger in the produce department. Had fruits and vegetables always looked this good? Large bunch of this, the choicest that; I was liberalizing the food list – not to any remembered specifications, but according to some inconceivable plan of idyllic moderation. (Who did you say *could* and *would* if he were sought? The question is asked at this point because I

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The Feast (continued)...

weighed more than 350 pounds and moderation had eluded me through a lifetime of physical selves that ranged from doll-like petite to sideshow fat, and because each step I took up and down the supermarket aisles proclaimed that sometime during the past ten or twelve hours my adversary of Twenty-seven years had been struck down.)

It was true. The war was over. Just like that. Suddenly all the rose gardens of the world bloomed. Tobacco smoke drifting through the market became at once and for all time the perfume of freedom. A singing began somewhere deep in my being, and I recognized it as the pure sound of joy.

I walked, talked, ate, slept, worked, rested and went to meetings suffused with this music.

Will it ever leave me?
No, never.

Thanksgiving Day approached. I had been talking almost daily with my sponsor, now friend, discussing Vietnam, the weather, politics, movies, love, friendship, miracles. Yes, mostly we talked about miracles, trying to fathom this magnificence, this abstinence, this cosmic gift.

The subject of my food plan seldom arose; there was no need to discuss it or to call in my food. Since that early November day, abstinence for me is all the goodness and beauty of creation, plus amazing quantities of delicious food. You'd have to be crazy

to think of rearranging all that. Happiness – the real thing – is its own discipline.

The day before the holiday, however, I confided to my sponsor a mild apprehension about allowing this precious – and who knew how fragile – possession to fly into the teeth of a family feast. I come from a family of “normals” who, like all good Americans, hold sacred the Thanksgiving tradition of gratitude through gluttony. And why not? Gluttony is for those who can handle it.

My sponsor is an exceptional human whose economy with words can be pure genius. At the OA meeting the evening before I got sober, she listened quietly as I spewed out my rage on the subject of “Why Can't I Eat What I Want When I Want It without Paying Such a Price? Only slightly abashed, I wound down with, “What is this abstinence, anyway? I can't figure it out.”

My sponsor's two-word answer was spoken so casually she might have been joking, but there was no trace of humor in her voice. What she said was,

“Be dumb.”

Now, she listened as I expressed concern about Thanksgiving dinner.

“What are you going to eat?”

“Turkey, green beans with mushrooms in butter sauce, salad and fruit.”

“OK.”

That was it. As routine as, “Hello, how are you?”

“Fine, thanks.”

And it was fine. The finest Thanksgiving I ever had, with music and dancing and feasting fit for the gods and the fragrance of all the roses of the universe filling the air.

~ Reprinted from *Lifeline*, November 1978

Gifts of Recovery

I realized something very important while working on the website these past weeks. I have been given a wonderful gift.

Before my relapse last winter, my then sponsor asked me what I would like recovery to give me. I thought about it for a short time and answered that I wanted my creativity to be rekindled.

I had always been creative. I'd done commercial stained glass for several years and had always been “crafty”. I made leather belts and handbags, wreathes, loved flower arranging. But, this disease had slowly taken that all away. And I missed it.

I had a “light bulb” moment recently. I was sitting at my computer working on the MHIG website when it hit me. My creativity is back! Not as I envisioned it – as artsy crafty – instead, it has turned to creating PACE and the website. What a magnificent gift!

I came upon a quote that I'd written down in my journal. Sarah Ban Breathnach wrote: “*You long to call forth your gifts. To explore your talents. To*

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Gifts of Recovery (continued)

discover and recover your creativity. But where do you begin? You begin by offering an open heart and a willingness to serve."

I am so grateful for the gifts I received through working the program.

I volunteered to edit PACE, not because I thought I could, but because my sponsor told me to. I still didn't want to do it (I was sure I'd do a horrible job). But, my inner voice reminded me that I *had*, by asking her to be my sponsor, surrendered the idea that I knew what was best for me. I took a leap of faith and trusted that she saw me more clearly than I could. And I volunteered.

I have so much to be grateful for. I am thankful that Creative Spirit has opened my heart and given me the willingness to surrender. I am grateful for my abstinence. I am grateful for the opportunity to do service in program and for the gift of creativity that came through this service.

~ Anne O.

Humor in Recovery or Reheated "Side Dishes"

Back by popular demand, here are more typos and misprints submitted by OAs over the years:

- Recently, I spent an evening stalking with an OA friend.
- I let God rake over.
- I sipped from my food pan.

- ... but our service centers may employ social workers.
- Once I got abstinent, plain feed tasted wonderful again.
- If I fake it one day at a time, I'll be okay.
- We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to battle us.
- I'm a compulsive overleader and your eater for this meeting.
- Came to believe that a Power grater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- By far the greasiest change in my life is my belief in H.P.
- Just for toady.

(Lifeline, July 1989)

"You long to call forth your gifts. To explore your talents. To discover and recover your creativity. But where do you begin? You begin by offering an open heart and a willingness to serve."

Laughing at Myself

When I have the ability to laugh at myself, it's a good indication that my humility is where it should be. When I take myself, and everyone and everything around me, too seriously, I fall flat into a big lack of humility. There have been days when I'm so busy controlling and manipulating and people-pleasing and lying that I couldn't possibly laugh. But when I'm abstinent, I'm more than halfway there, and when I pray and ask my Higher Power to remove my defects, I'm already on my way to being able to laugh at myself. And it's important to note that it's not self-deprecating laughter, but rather a clear view of a less-than-perfect me. I'm human and fallible and full of faults—and full of love for myself.

— Reprinted from Lifeline, January 1998

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Mid-Hudson Intergroup Events

- Date: Sunday, October 16, 2005
Event: **Surviving the Holiday Horrors**
Come hear how others manage the holiday horrors
Share your thoughts and concerns
Ask It Basket
Time: 1:30 – 4:00 pm
Place: Sara Brae
New Windsor, New York
- Date: Saturday, November 18, 2005
Event: All Member Intergroup Meeting
International Day of Experiencing Abstinence (IDEA day)
Time & Place: To be announced

Other Events in Region 6

- Date: Saturday, October 15
Event: Mt. Manresa Marathon
Metamorphosis – Our Transformation through the Steps
Workshops, raffles, OA literature
Bring your own lunch, coffee & tea provided
Time: 9:30 am – 4:00 pm
Sponsored by: Staten Island Intergroup
Place: 239 Fingerboard Road
Staten Island, NY 10305
For Directions: Call Mt. Manresa at 718-727-4881 or 718-727-3844
An event flier can be downloaded from
www.midhudsonoa.org - visit the Events web page
- Date: Friday, October 21 – Sunday, October 23
Event: OA Region 6 Convention
Location: Sheraton Nashua – Nashua, New Hampshire
Sponsored by: New Hampshire Intergroup
More Information: Call Sharon at 514-768-5656 or
Angie at 514-369-2573
An event flier can be downloaded from
www.midhudsonoa.org - visit the Events web page

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Other Region 6 Events (continued)

Date: Saturday, November 12
Event: New Hampshire Intergroup Fall Sharathon
"Staying out of slippery places prevents a fall!"
Time: Registration: 8:30 – 9:00 am
Speaker/Workshops: 9:00 am – 2:30 pm
Location: United Methodist Church
Lebanon, New Hampshire
Contact: Priscilla at 603-624-2748
Jane at 603-924-6128
An event flier can be downloaded from
www.midhudsonoa.org - visit the Events web page

Date: Friday, November 18 – Sunday, November 20
Event: Big Book Step Study Weekend Retreat
Location: Wonderland Retreat Center
Sharon, Massachusetts
Sponsored by: South Coastal Massachusetts Intergroup
Contact: Mark at 781-829-4278
Toll free (out of state) 877-317-2111
An event flier can be downloaded from
www.midhudsonoa.org - visit the Events web page

Date: Friday, January 20 – Sunday, January 22, 2006
Event: OA Meditation Retreat – (Focus on Steps 2 and 11)
Location: Holiday Inn Concord
Concord, New Hampshire
Sponsored by: New Hampshire Intergroup
Contact: Pat S. at (603) 746-4931
An event flier can be downloaded from
www.midhudsonoa.org - visit the Events web page

**The Connecticut Intergroup
Is holding
OA WORKSHOP SERIES
Sunday Afternoons ~ 1:30 to 3:30 pm
October 9 – Got Serenity?
November 13 – Staying Abstinent through the Holidays
December 11 – Steps 1, 2 & 3: Foundations of Recovery
Where: At the Recovery Club
118 Palisado Avenue (Rte. 159)
Windsor, CT 06095
For Info: Dan—860-653-3103
An event flier can be downloaded from
www.midhudsonoa.org - visit the Events web page**