



Coming to HP: Love is God

After almost a year in OA, last month my fear lessened just enough for me to ask someone to be my sponsor and begin working the Steps. This week I put my first Step 1 behind me: I admitted that I am powerless over food and that my life has become unmanage-

able. Now I'm consumed with Steps 2 and 3. Those steps are, of course, came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity; and made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.

As a liberal Quaker, my belief in God is universalist: that each of us has 'that of God' within her, and that a relationship with God is both personal and experiential. We worship together in silence, but if a person is led to

• Continued on page 8

Pain is the touchstone of growth

Pain is the touchstone of spiritual growth. Is that how it goes? Well that is my story. I used to wonder why anyone want to devote themselves to a higher power (I call mine God), do service;

and, here's a good one, treat their body as a temple. When I was a freshman in college I chose a dorm room, and a series of four or five girls brought their stuff into the room, and then left the room within 5 to 10 minutes. I mean this really happened maybe

three or four times. Finally, the young woman who 'stuck it out with me' was extremely nice and, I guess... spiritual or religious. At one point during our relationship I asked her something about the way she ate, and she replied that her body was a temple and that's why she took such good care of it. Can you imagine?

Well, fast forward 23 years and I've bottomed out on the food. I was eating until all hours until all the 'stuff' was consumed. I was hiding from my family eating, 'in peace,' in my room and

vomit -ing periodically so I could eat more.

So I get it, in order to save my ass, I have to do this stuff/program because my life depends on it. Literally, I must follow this path to the best of my ability or I will

die. Now there is my motivation.

Since coming into OA 10 plus years ago I've worked the steps several times and I continue to take personal inventory, pray and meditate daily, work with others and do service in all my affairs to the best of my ability. Why then if I'm putting my all into practicing this

My good news is that the more I move toward releasing my fear, pride and anger, and, very importantly, focusing on doing God's will the better my life is.

• Continued on page 4

Keeping it simple

The reason I surrendered to three meals a day for my abstinence was the simplicity of that food plan. At first I tried five food encounters a day, then four encounters a day but that was too many encounters with food for me to manage. It seemed that every time I turned around I had to make a decision about what to eat next, and of course I ate too much at each encounter.

Even with the three meals it was a challenge, so I kept those three meals as simple as possible. I ate the same breakfast, the same lunch and the same dinner almost every day for the first year I was finally continuously abstinent.

• Continued on page 4

Inside:

Calendar and Service Opportunities.....	page 2
Tool Time	page 2
Stepping It Up	page 2
Meeting List	pages 5&6

To contribute to the newsletter or receive the newsletter by e-mail, contact Rae at newsletter@oasouthernaz.org or rstrozzo@gmail.com

Next Deadline: September 5

Events and Service Opportunities

OA meeting at Amity.

Second Thursday of the Month at 7 p.m. This meeting is always looking for volunteers. Call John W. for more information. 520-971-9353

12th Step Within needs help!

The 12th Step Within Committee needs members and help to put together events like the Big Book

Weekend and other workshops! To help contact Wendy at 520-955-0710 or whascher@yahoo.com

Special Events Committee needs people!

The special events committee is looking for volunteers for retreat planning and other events. Please contact Claudia at 520-829-6968.

Big Book Weekend!!

It's coming! Friday and Saturday, July 29-30 at the Sheraton Fourpoints at Speedway and Campbell. Fri. 6-9 p.m., Sat. 8-6. Contact Wendy for more information or to help.

For more events and updates visit the SEAZ web site at <http://www.oasouthernaz.org>

Tool Time

A many-sided treasure

Abstinence is freedom - freedom to say, "No, thank you" to that dessert because my desires have been changed. I used to eat because I couldn't say no, and I couldn't stop. Abstinence frees me to choose healthy foods, friends and thoughts.

Abstinence is inner peace and clarity of mind to see that cravings, confusion, emotional binges, and excess pounds are all I'm giving up!

Abstinence is a gift from God. It's the number one action in my life so that God can be in the center. Abstinence frees me to hear God speak through others and through readings.

Abstinence is strength and power. God's power has become available because of my powerlessness. The longer I am abstinent the stronger new habits become and the faster old destructive fantasies fade from my mind. It establishes a new way of life.

**** Reprinted from The Abstinence Book, pg. 5**



Image: hinnamsaiy/Free DigitalPhotos.net

Stepping it up: Members and sponsors talk about working steps seven and eight.

Step 7

From a Sponsor:

When my sponsees reach Step 7, I ask them to carefully re-read that single paragraph on page 76 of the Big Book as well as the prayer. They look at each sentence in the prayer and carefully understand the language. Step 7 is an opportunity to look at how my concept of higher power has changed since the first six steps and to take a serious look at what humility means. This step is not about making me better as I understand it or being changed as I want to be, but about making me better able to serve by removing the shortcomings that get in my way.

The emphasis on being humble sets the tone for the next step because humility is required to be able to do Step 8. For me, Step 7 is also about understanding the difference between humble and humiliated. Both words come from the same root of the word human. This step separates me from my HP by making me more human and more willing to look to my higher power for help! And then it brings me closer to my HP in the action, the only action, I need to take in this step which is to ask for help.

Step 8

From a Member:

At first glance Step 8 seems simple. You just make a list, right? Look at the inventory we've just written and shared with our sponsor and just go from there.

But, if I'm honest with myself, some of my resentments are pretty deeply ingrained. I can feel that there is work to be done if I am to truly forgive the people I think have harmed me. The willingness I need to do that is actually a gift of my Higher Power and not something I can force entirely on my own. Neither can I just sit back and wait for it to just happen. There is footwork to be done.

A few years ago, a sponsee came to me with an article from an old issue of Lifeline magazine (I believe it was August 96 written by "Anonymous" in Tampa, Florida). It outlined a formula for getting the willingness called for in Step 8 which my sponsee felt would work for her and it did. I've kept a tattered copy of the article to pull out from time to time when I or another sponsee need to work on forgiveness. Here is an outline of the process:

1. Write out all of the reasons that I am angry/resentful with this person -how she has harmed me.
2. Realize that my anger and resentment are keeping me enslaved in this negative relationship.
3. Write out all of the deeds I have done to harm this person: gossip, defamation, sarcasm, and other harms. Looking at "my side of the street" is humbling, for sure.
4. Write a letter that I believe this person would write to me, how she feels about our relationship and the



Cruisin' with OA

In March, I was lucky enough to go on a sea cruise with 100 other OAers. What an adventure! Region 3 hosted its Spring convention on board, so it was the best of everything in one beautiful package. I had gone on a riverboat cruise in 1999, before coming into OA. What a difference in experiences between that cruise and this one. In 1999 I was many pounds heavier, thought about what I was going to be eating all the time, and felt trapped in my big, unsightly body 24/7. Even though I am 12 years older now, the pictures from this recent cruise show a person who is happy, content, and comfortable in the world. I enjoyed the physical challenges of climbing Dunn's River Falls in Montego Bay, snorkeling and swimming with the stingrays in Grand Cayman, and walking through the Mayan ruins in Cozumel. I started each day with a recovery reading and then some time on the walking track of the ship. I donned my swimsuit and cover-up a little shyly on day one but by day six, I forgot the cover-up and wore the swimsuit, letting my flabby arms swing



Image: salvatore vuono/FreeDigitalPhotos.net

free, without a hint of shyness. Amazingly enough, the food onboard was not a worry of mine. I knew that the choices would be good and healthy. Food was not everywhere in sight as some people had cautioned me beforehand. Or maybe, I just didn't see it everywhere as I would have before OA. The workshops I attended for the three days at sea were inspirational and the speakers' sharing of their experience, strength, and hope were what I needed to hear. My cabinmate, Meg,

is a good OA friend and we shared the adventures in good spirits with our Higher Powers nearby, especially when we were left behind by our tour bus at Seven Mile Beach in Grand Cayman. We stood steadfast in the rain knowing that we would be OK no matter what; although, with no money, ID, or cell phones we were a tad bit concerned! I am definitely ready to cruise again, so when Region 3 hosts another cruise, you can bet I'll be first in line to get a ticket.

**** Janis**

To share or not share: that is the question

I really love OA meetings. They are where I see my friends every week, the ones who really understand what I am going through. We laugh, we cry and we share what we are going through. Sharing our lives with one another is such a special thing and yet sometimes it is really hard to do.

I'll never forget when I first started attending meetings and got a sponsor. One of the first things she said to me was whenever you share at a meeting make sure to relate it to your program. When I asked what she meant she told me that I could and should share the rough times that happened through my day but also to remember to share how my program got me through it. She said this was called sharing my strength and hope. So now even years later when I start to share I also remember to share the good things that resulted.

All of us have been at meetings where someone has just down-loaded on the meeting, and then left it there. We all have terrible days at one time or another. You know the ones I'm talking about,

the ones where nothing seems to go right. However, there is always some strength and hope to share. I have had times where I had the burning desire to share, but could not find any strength or hope to go with what I had to say. At those times when I am struggling my sponsor's words always come back to me and I have to decide whether to share or not.

Does this mean not to share the hard times? No not at all. To me it just means to find something positive to share along with the negative. Even if it is just that you kept your boundaries or that you used one or more of your tools to get through it. That is strength and hope. Strength that you didn't give into your disease and hope that the program works because you used the tools it gave you.

Someone once told me to leave the mess for my sponsor, because that is what she is there for, and then take the message to the meetings. Seems like a grand idea for me.

**** Anonymous**

Step continued from page 2

things that are troubling her. Written entirely from her point of view, this part of the process often awakens compassion which paves the way to forgiveness.

5. Write a letter to HP asking for the willingness to forgive this person for her part.

After this process, it is important to meet with and share all of this with a sponsor. If the process doesn't seem to

work, i.e. the willingness is not there, it is possible that additional writing and prayer may be necessary. It is important to move forward through the steps in order to recover. However, it is a mistake to try to make amends before the forgiveness and willingness are there to smooth the way.

**** Anonymous, Oro Valley ;)**

Pain continued from page 1

way of life. Do I trip over these same character defects time and time again? You want me to mention the shortcomings out loud? OK The biggest notables are pride, anger and fear. [Step 6] Were entirely ready to have God remove all of these defects of character. [Step 7] Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

I have a theory about this. I believe that the reason it has taken me soooo long to make the progress I have in releasing these defects of character is that old habits die hard... and my pride and fear keep me stuck in the old ways. "But am I destined to become the boring hole in the doughnut with no substance or character?"

My good news is that the more I move toward releasing my fear, pride and anger, and very importantly focusing on doing God's will, the better my life is. To me the most valuable benefit of this practice is my peace of mind.

What's amazing is that I also get what I want most of the time. The catch is that getting what I want cannot be my motivation. My simple motivation and goal every day must be to be the best God employee I can. I must admit when I am wrong and I must always, always keep God in the front of my mind when dealing with people.

This amazing paradox has brought me success in personal and material things as a side effect. I now make two and a half times more than I did when I arrived in program, and my marriage has bloomed. I have a wonderful relationship with my husband. Its the best ever in fact. I have great relationships at work, and I actually have a handful of friends. I am abstinent, which for me is 3-0-1: three meals a day, zero food or caloric substances in between, one day at a time. I also eat no sugar of the recreational variety. In other words, sugar is ok if it's part of a non-binge food like, say, teriyaki sauce or salad dressing. The drama in my life has all but vanished, I am at peace, and my relationships are healthy. Wow, for a fat hopeless food addict I'd say that's pretty good.

****Anonymous**

I'm so glad that I don't have to listen to "poor me"

My home group has been my OA home for 12 years. I have had a concern that I have not been willing to share for many months. Today I revealed my secret. I have been experiencing some physical recovery from my disease for eight months. I thought since I had dropped 30 pounds, I must have been suffering from an incurable disease!

I shared my concerns with my husband and he got worried too! I scheduled an appointment with my doctor. She asked me what had changed in my life that may have caused the weight loss. I said, "I can taste my food and I feel satisfied after I've eaten a moderate amount!" I was sure there was something dreadfully wrong with me.

I asked for a full blood panel to be done. When the test results came in she called right away. Guess what? **THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH ME** (that a blood test can determine)!

I felt so relieved that I had been finally able to share my secret with my group. I ended my share that I am trying to work my program as diligently as possible because I do not want to get complacent. I want to stay humble and grateful.



Image:graur codrin/FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Since sharing, I have been wondering what would have prevented me (and may still prevent me) from enjoying how good I feel and how happy I am .

I guess some of my core beliefs are: "Nothing good ever happens to me." In other words, poor me.

"The Program may work for others, but it will never work for me." Poor me.

"I better not be happy; happiness is for other people, not me." Poor me.

"If I'm feeling good and I can appreciate life, then something is drastically wrong, and I'd better knock it off."

"If I'm happy joyous and free, then I'm probably dying!" Again, poor me!

I hope my fellow OAers can find the humor in this and keep working the Program as honestly as they can. Don't give up until the miracle happens!

xoxo

**** Dana D.****Simple continued from page 1**

Anything more complicated and I could not navigate life and my meals too.

Then I had to look at the rest of my life and realized that my 'to-do' list was just too long. The list was loaded with old ideas of what and who I should be. I had to simplify in every area of my life again and again in order to maintain the boundaries of abstinence. I could not keep as many balls in the air as I thought I could or wished I could. The more simple my life was the closer to serenity I got, every time.

It was a big adjustment to accept my limitations, but a relief too. The oa "invitation to you" says: "if you can honestly face the truth about yourself . . ." Well, the truth about me is I have to have my food as simple as possible and my life as simple as possible or I get lost in the busyness. I thank God for the solution of abstinence and the program of overeaters anonymous.

**** Michelle T.**

www.oasouthernaz.org OA MEETING LIST – July/August 2011				
DAY& TIME	GROUP NAME & NUMBER	LOCATION	CONTACT & IR	NOTES
SUNDAY 11:00 -12 Noon	MIRACLES HAPPEN Literature Varied Format #23957	4180 W. Sweetwater Dr. (WEST) Look for OA signs	IR: Sally H. 429-5318	WC
SUNDAY 5:30-6:30 PM	HOPE, LOVE & ACCEPTANCE Varied Format #45377 Tradition/Step and 1-1/2 hr Big Book Study	Streams In The Desert Lutheran Church Classroom A in Fellowship Hall 5360 E. Pima (CENTRAL)	Elisa M. 299-3200 IR: Susan C. 747-5018	WC
SUNDAY 5:30-6:30 PM	SEEKING THE POWER 11 TH STEP MEETING #49744	University Medical Center, 1501 N. Campbell (CENTRAL) Rm. E/F at S end of Cafeteria	Janet G. 795-7492 or Andrea M 977-9980	Fragrance-free* WC **Parking
MONDAY 5:30-6:30 PM	GOING SANE Big Book Study Speaker 1 st Monday #39507	First United Methodist Church, Carillon Room (4 th & Park), 915 E. 4th St. (CENTRAL) Park behind church, enter lot from 4 th Street ,	Felice G. 891-8900 IR: Johnathan K. 609-0939	WC
MONDAY 7:00-8:00 PM	FAR EAST ABSTINENCE / STEP STUDY #40522	Abounding Grace Church, 2450 S Kolb Rd (FAR EAST) N. of Golf Links on W. side	Michele T. 784-3597 IR: Jan H. 790-2658	WC
TUESDAY 10:30-11:30 AM	RECOVERY #3 0601	Posada Del Sol 2250 N. Craycroft (NORTHEAST) Park at Safeway	Judith H. 323-9845 IR: Kathy P 296-4390	Fragrance-free* WC
TUESDAY 10:30-10:45 10:45-12 Noon	NW TENDER SOLUTIONS Newcomers meeting OA 12 & 12/ Sharing #40963	Dove of Peace Lutheran Church 665 W. Roller Coaster Rd. (NORTHWEST) West of Oracle Rd.	Neva S. 877-8420 IR: Nancy F. 219-9685	WC
TUESDAY 5:30-6:30 PM	TUCSON MEN'S SANITY #49144	931 N. Fifth Avenue (CENTRAL) 1 ½ blocks south of Speedway	Jim D. 250-0509 IR: Ron R. 320-9675	
WEDNESDAY 7:30-8:30 AM	GOING TO ANY LENGTHS Big Book Study	St. Frances Cabrini Church, Education Bldg. Rm. 3 (East of the church) 3201 E. Presidio (CENTRAL)	Wendy A. 955-0710 IR:	Fragrance-free*
WEDNESDAY 11:30-12:30 PM	WELCOME HOME #04330 Sharing	Streams In The Desert Lutheran Church, Ginsler Hall S. Side of Church 5360 E. Pima (EAST)	Sue R. 358-7358 IR: Barbara M 327-2709	Beverage only
WEDNESDAY 5:30-6:30 PM	VOICES OF RECOVERY Leader's Choice Literature #49188	St. Thomas More Newman Center Library 1615 E. 2nd St. (CENTRAL) Cherry & 2 nd Park & enter from rear No meeting July 13th & 27th	Andrea M 977-9980 IR:	
WEDNESDAY 7:45 – 8:45 pm	YOUNG PEOPLE #51639	Arizona Power Yoga 8567 N Silverbell Rd. (WEST)	Amy 250-2331	
THURSDAY 10:45-11:45 AM	SEEKING THE SPIRITUAL PATH Book study #00439	Oro Valley Urgent Care, Conf. Room 13101 N. Oracle Rd. (Oro Valley FAR NW)	Diane 638-5583 IR: Marie R. 270-9568	
THURSDAY 5:30-6:30 PM	OVER AND UNDER MEETING Lifeline/Discussion #50226	St. Frances Cabrini Church, Ed. Bldg., Rm.3 (E. of church) 3201 E. Presidio (CENTRAL)	Beth M. 577-8745 or 349-0810 IR: Ellen F. 290-3235	WC
THURSDAY 7:00-8:00 PM	BIG BOOK STUDY #47942	Abounding Grace Church, 2450 S Kolb Rd (FAR EAST) N. of Golf Links on W. side	Meg R. 546-1168 IR: Mary M. 248-6480	WC
FRIDAY 7:30-8:30 AM	FRESH START #49600	St. Frances Cabrini Church, Ed. Bldg., Rm.3 (E. of church) 3201 E. Presidio (CENTRAL)	Janet G. 795-7492 IR: Lynne L. 745-5954	Fragrance-free*
FRIDAY 10:30-11:30 AM	LIVING IN THE SOLUTION Sharing #14251	Streams In The Desert Lutheran Church Class Room A in Fellowship Hall 5360 E. Pima (EAST)	Don B. 325-7053 IR: Bev C. 628-8580	Fragrance-free*
SATURDAY 9:00-10:00 AM	FAR EAST SATURDAY GROUP Varied Format #45696	Eastside Evangelical Covenant Church 551 N Camino Seco (FAR EAST) (North of Broadway)	Meg R. 546-1168 IR: Deb B. 885-0249	WC
SATURDAY 9:00-10:15 AM	Saturday morning Study group #12117	St. James Methodist Church 3255 N Campbell (CENTRAL) (N of Ft. Lowell; W side of Campbell)	Michelle 219-9574 IR: Nancy K. 820-0399	WC

IR=Intergroup Representative

WC=Wheel Chair Accessible

**No parking fees at UMC on Sundays

*In consideration of members who suffer from allergies, please refrain from wearing cologne or perfume. XX=no summer meetings

OUT OF TOWN OA MEETINGS						
DAY& TIME	GROUP NAME & UMBER		LOCATION		CONTACT & IR	NOTES
GREEN VALLEY						
TUESDAY 7:45-8:45 AM	Discussion #49982	St. Francis of the Valley Church 600 S. La Canada Dr	Library	Marj M. IR: Marj M.	248-9043 248-9043	WC
WEDNESDAY 7:00-8:00 PM	Literature Study #37169	St. Francis of the Valley Church 600 S. La Canada Dr	Library	Marj M. IR: Marj M.	248-9043 248-9043	WC
SATURDAY 9:00-10:15 AM	Step and Tradition Study #34898	St. Francis of the Valley Church 600 S. La Canada Dr	Library	Marj M. IR: Marj M.	248-9043 248-9043	WC
SIERRA VISTA						
MONDAY 7:00-8:00 PM	Monday Night Miracles Literature study #17537	Church of Christ 815 El Camino Real	Room 3	Leslie IR: Jan F.	378-4238 678-0369	WC
THURSDAY 6:30-7:30 PM	Newcomers #39367	Church of Christ 815 El Camino Real	Room 3	Marilyn IR: Jane	417-1645 378-9406	WC
SATURDAY 11:00-12 Noon	Varied format #40592	Church of Christ 815 El Camino Real	Room 3	Jan F. IR: Nancy R. 3817	678-0369 227-	WC
PATAGONIA						
TUESDAY 6:30-7:30 PM	Patagonia Tues. OA Varied Format #50474	United Methodist Church 387 McKeown Ave		Michelle S. IR: Leanne F.	520-604-6811 774-521-8932	
THURSDAY 6:30-7:30 PM	Patagonia OA Big Book Study #51744	United Methodist Church 387 McKeown Ave		Adrienne IR:	520-404-3490	
NOGALES, AZ						
				Ros V. Spanish/English Speaking	520-668-5950	
BENSON						
TUESDAY 4:00-5:00 PM	Rotating Format #47074	Sobriety House 225 E. 6 th Street		Peggy IR:	520-456-1676 OPEN	WC
YUMA						
MONDAY 1:00 – 2:00 PM	October thru April Only #47822	Gloria DeCristo Church 11273 E. 40th Street		Connie O. IR: Connie O.	928-305-0682	XX
TUESDAY 6:30-7:30 PM	Just for Today Rotating Format #49443	Central Church of Christ 651 West 28th St.		Lorraine IR: Lynn C.	928-782-1305 928-503-1229	WC
THURSDAY 12:00-1:00 PM	#00520	Central Church of Christ 651 West 28th St.		Lorraine IR: Open	928-782-1305	

IR=Intergroup Representative

WC=Wheel Chair Accessible

**No parking fees at UMC on Sundays

*In consideration of members who suffer from allergies, please refrain from wearing cologne or perfume. XX=no summer mtgs

MEETING LIST CHANGES: Please send corrections or changes to Roger S. at: roger_s47@yahoo.com

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS SOUTHEASTERN ARIZONA INTERGROUP #09078

P.O. Box 43221 Tucson, AZ 85733-3221 (520) 733-0880

SE AZ Intergroup meets the third Saturday of the month at 10:45AM, St. James United Methodist Church, 3255 N. Campbell Ave., Tucson

SE Arizona Intergroup Board

Officers			Committee Chairs		
Chair:	Roni B.	269-1025	PIPO Contacts	Janet G.	795-7492
Vice Chair	Marilyn B.	417-1645	Meeting List	Roger S.	404-6724
Secretary	Chris N.	721-1085/ 661-1991	Newsletter	Rae S.	239-784-9626
Treasurer:	Rhonda S.	370-5100	Special Events	Claudia P.	829-6968
Delegate (1):	Janis R.	325-4441	Tape Library/Lifeline	Pam T.	331-2107
Delegate (2):	Emily R.-S.	490-1409	IR Trainer	Jocelynne W.	982-0556
			Telephone	Susan C.	747-5018
			12 th Step Within	Wendy A.	955-0710
			Website	Nan B.	825-3867

WEBSITES: OA World Service: www.oa.org OA Region 3: www.oaregion3.org OA Southern AZ: www.oasouthernaz.org



Principles • Prayers • Promises

Friday and Saturday

July 29 -30

From 6-9 on the 29th

From 8-6 on the 30th

Sheraton

Fourpoints

on Speedway
and Campbell

To Register:

Contact Wendy

**or grab a registration form
from the website or your IR!**

“Trudging The Road of Happy Destiny”

Join us

for the Annual SEAZ Intergroup
Overeaters Anonymous Retreat!

Oct. 21, 22, and 23 Holy Trinity Monastery

Friday p.m.

Route 80

through Sunday noon.

in St. David, AZ

We hope to provide a quiet and reflective
atmosphere for strengthening our recovery as well as
opportunities to bond with new and old friends and receive
inspiration from those further along the road.

Registration will begin in August.

To volunteer contact :

Mary M. at howneat@yahoo.com

or Claudia P. at cpitzler@cox.net.

There are lots of ways to do service.

*The program will highlight the three aspects of
recovery: emotional, spiritual and physical.*

Donations Please!

Donate something you can do as a part of the silent auction!

For more information and to donate,
contact Mary M. or Claudia P.

Time to Shine

Join us for the
OA Region 3
2013 Convention
planning meeting!!

August 20, 2011

1:00 PM,

after the intergroup meeting

St James Church

3255 N Campbell Ave.

COMMITTEES:

Program • Publicity • Taping
Registration • Special Events
Printing and Copying
Entertainment • Signs/Decorations
Hospitality • Ways/Mean
Literature

If you are unable to attend this
meeting but want to sign-up with
your committee choice,

email Janis at

janisroth@msn.com

or call her at 325-444 1.

Love continued from page 1

speak, she stands and speaks from that sacred place within her. Each brings her own conception of God, or Spirit, or Light to the group dynamic. Beyond that, I've only had a vague concept of God.

In addition to my struggle to define God, I had been struggling, too, with some of the language in the Big Book. Although the Book says that recovery is available to everyone who can accept a power greater than themselves, no matter what that is, the Book's language comes from a Christian and patriarchal perspective. When I read from the Big Book, I was getting hung up with how to take the church out of God and the gender out of He.

Recently, I was in a bookstore that had a special section for recovery literature and gifts. I was drawn to a keyring and bought it. I put my keys on it, and then forgot about it. Shortly after that, a Friend at Quaker meeting asked me to contribute to a project of his concerning the various understandings of God to be found among us. Some Quakers are Christian, but others are Buddhist, pagan, atheist, agnostic, and myriad other beliefs. He especially wanted my non-Christian perspective. I wrote to him that I believed God wanted to have a relationship with each of us and approached us in the way each of us would be most receptive to. (Privately, though, I still wasn't sure how God would be revealed to me. Had God already tried to get my attention, and I wasn't able to see it?) With my response to him, I sent along this excerpt I have always been drawn to from *The Temple of My Familiar*, by Alice Walker:

"By this time, too, Mama Shug had decided to found her own religion, for which she used the house, and sometimes this was very hard, because of the way she structured it. Six times during the year, for two weeks each time, she held 'church.' Ten to twenty 'seekers' would show up, and they had to sleep somewhere. Usually it was on the floor, or, when there was an overflow, in the barn or the shed. Everyone who came brought information about



Image: akeeris/FreeDigitalPhotos.net

their own path and journey. They exchanged and shared this information. That was the substance of the church. Some of these people worshiped Isis. Some worshiped trees. Some thought the air, because it alone is everywhere, is God. ('Then God is not on the moon,' someone said.) Mama Shug felt there was only one thing anyone could say about G-O-D, and that was--it had no name...

"... [I was telling] Mama Celie and Miss Shug about how the Olinka used humming instead of words sometimes and that that accounts for the musicality of their speech. The hum has meaning, but it expresses something that is fundamentally inexpressible in words. Then the listener gets to interpret the hum, out of his own experience, and to know that there is a commonality of understanding possible but that true comprehension will always be a matter of degree...

"... So that is how they resolved it. They would hum the place G-O-D would occupy. Everyone in the house talked about ummm a lot!"

Last week I was sitting in an OA meeting when a woman spoke of her Higher Power, and as an aside added: whom I call LOVE. Wow! I had a visceral reaction to hearing this--it practically took my breath away. She had put a name to what had eluded me. I thought about what she said frequently in the following days. Could love be my Higher Power?

Then just a few days ago I was getting my keys from my purse and really had a good look at the keyring for the first time since I had bought it. On one side was the Serenity Prayer, and on the other side it said: What Would Love Do Now? It was another aha! moment for me.

It all came together for me this week: LOVE had been trying for a while to get my attention. Her taps on the shoulder weren't enough for me. I needed her to throw herself across my path for me to trip over. But she helped me up and kissed my wounds and reminded me of what I knew as a child but had forgotten: that LOVE is God. LOVE can also show herself to me as COURAGE, ACCEPTANCE, WILLINGNESS, HUMILITY. Whatever I struggle with, she is the embodiment of and she gives it to me freely and helps me to understand it. Whatever I fear, she knows the way through. She is holding me by the hand and will accompany me on my journey to sanity.

And now when I read the Big Book, I am increasingly able to read 'God' and 'He' and other artifacts of a Christian patriarchy from which I have long felt distant, and hear instead an internal hum. I hear those words now and fill that space with LOVE.

This Sunday, I was led to rise in Quaker meeting and--quite literally quaking--shared this story with the people assembled there. I felt released from doubt and enfolded in the arms of LOVE. In retrospect, I realize I had just taken my 2nd and 3rd steps. And now, as I look at taking a searching and fearless moral inventory, I know I have LOVE by my side.

**** Melissa Tibbals-Gribbin**