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OAsis

Summer 2023

OA Infoline:
(201) 528-3398

www.njioa.org

The quarterly newsletter of NJIOA — Northern Jersey Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous



Our Program is Portable

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY 2023

July 13 — NJIOA Intergroup Zoom meeting 7:30pm
Anyone is welcome to attend

July 29 — In-person Annual Kayak event
8:30am at the Monksville Reservoir

July 30 — Big Book Workshop on Zoom, 7:00pm-8:00pm
Lessons from the Jaywalker:
Breaking Free from Compulsive Food Behaviors

AUGUST 2023

Aug 10 — NJIOA Intergroup Zoom Meeting 7:30pm
Anyone is welcome to attend

Aug 20 — Sunday Sponsorship Day-details TBD

SEPTEMBER 2023

Sept 14 — NJIOA Intergroup Zoom Meeting 7:30pm

Sept 29-Oct 1 — Region 7 Fall Assembly — details TBD

Event flyers, meeting links & further info posted on our website: www.njioa.org

My program is portable. It goes with me everywhere. I can work the tools all day long, anywhere. My Higher Power is always there for me. It does not matter what I am doing, if its work or play, rest or activity, I need to keep my program close. It helps me know what to do or say next. It helps me to understand what is going on. It helps me make decisions and accept those choices and act on them. It helps me have energy and to balance the use of that energy. Most important, it helps me relate to others, family, friends, community, all the living beings around me. It helps me be caring and loving and have patience and compassion. It teaches me that resentments and anger and fear are not helpful but I can always pray instead. Program has to be portable. It has to come first. Without it, I am in the food, and I'm miserable.

—Karen S.



Where I Go, My Program Goes

I have been through many things, many situations, many vacations, many trips in my abstinence, and my program has always come with me. I have weighed and measured on vacation, called my sponsor from the ocean while on a cruise & brought my scale, brought my books & I know my program can go anywhere I've learned that. I got through, recently, my aunt's funeral in Florida. When I landed, I went straight to a supermarket and got my food. I also brought my weighed and measured food on the plane instead of leaving it up to chance. Sending pictures of my food to my sponsor really helped me stay abstinent and be honest and accountable. This program is such a gift because I know no matter where I go, I can take it with me. I don't have to worry if it'll work out or not when I trust God, He will supply all my needs when I surrender my food. My attitude and my behaviors are so different. I enjoy myself and I'm present to all that's around me because I'm not in the food. I remember going on a cruise when I was abstinent; by chance I was on the same ship I had been on before, when I was not abstinent — and my vacation was so totally different. I saw things completely differently. So I see how bringing my program with me opens up a new world. My life opens up — to the places around me, to the people around me — and it allows me to be of service to other people. It allows me to enjoy all that has been given to me. I see how it's so important to know that no matter where I go, I can bring my program with me and for that I am truly grateful.

—Ann Marie H

Program Goes To The Shore

Every year we save our money and go down to the glorious Cape May shore for a few days when the rates are lower before Memorial Day. Every year we make sure we get an efficiency suite with a refrigerator, microwave and range top and coffeepot. They provide us with pots, pans and utensils. I bring staples such as oatmeal and oranges, which are cheaper by me. I make sure to pack my measuring cups for carbs as well as my favorite cup, bowl, spoon and knife. There is a ShopRite right down the street, where I stock up on healthy abstinent staples, and I make sure I pick up a container of fresh fruit salad. We enjoy treating ourselves to fresh caught Jersey shrimp and seafood from a local merchant several times and thank God my



"Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors."

OA Preamble

wonderful supportive husband is a whiz at cooking up fish. I make sure I bring my cell phone, Big Book and Step books and program and religious daily readers and my Region 7 daily program journal and I join several meetings via cell phone from the comfort of my hotel room, on the sofa or enjoying watching the soothing ocean and gulls and people watching while listening and sharing while sitting out on the balcony. We always welcome the housekeeping staff to take and enjoy any milk, eggs or butter or margarine that we have leftover in the fridge when we check out. I get a lot of serenity on these trips, not to mention the restorative power of sea, air and I don't have to go home 10 or 20 pounds heavier because I loved myself enough not to use my well-



"This practice enables us to lend a hand, at the same time avoiding certain alluring distractions of the road, about which any traveling man can inform you."

Big Book, A Vision For You, p.162

earned vacation as an excuse to overeat and abuse my body.

— Marcy E

Program is Portable — Even To Hospital

If anyone has learned that this program is portable it is me. I have been in recovery for a number of years and have experienced some health challenges. When I have had to uproot myself to get treatment for one thing or another, my program also gets uprooted but it always works out. It takes a little persistence, knowledge of who I am and what I can handle or not as far as food, timing of food etc. I have had to speak with the dietary department of the hospital and/or the nursing

staff. Fortunately, asking for what I needed allowed me to get the food I need to maintain my abstinence. If that had become too difficult, I could have called on an OA friend or family member to bring me my abstinent food as needed. It really was not too difficult and I am grateful that my needs were met by some really caring people. No matter where I am or what is going on in my life, I take the program long with me, it truly has meant the world to me that this is possible to do one day at a time.

— Anonymous

I Follow The P's

According to the dictionary, something portable is compact, convenient, handy, lightweight, easy to be moved or carried. Is OA portable? Thankfully, yes! How you may ask? If you follow these "Ps" you too can travel away from home and still remain abstinent. Prepare – Be ready to work your program. Get your mind in the right place. Fix your resolve. Take your books and laptop or just plain paper so you can read and write about program, listen to podcasts, zoom meetings and make calls. Plan – Be intentional about your program. Decide on and arrange in advance your excursions, food, support system, how you will stay connected with a meeting and your sponsor. Pray – Earnestly ask your higher power to help you, be grateful, be humble and recognize your victories. Ack God in your suitcase, in your head and in your spirit. Have fun!!! — Amy



"Overeaters Anonymous is a Fellowship of individuals who, through shared experience, strength, and hope, are recovering from compulsive overeating."

O.A. Preamble

I Always Take Program Along

When I was in the food I never knew where or when my next meal was coming. I would never plan, which meant that I would eat the fastest thing I could find, boxed items and fast food. Nothing was healthy. Being in program I learned that my food is portable. I pack a lunchbox with my breakfast and lunch when I am going to my office. When I go out to an occasion or someone's house and I feel uncomfortable asking what is being made I have a lunchbox in my car with food just in case, or I eat before. Sometimes I call ahead and ask what is being served. I know that one meal is not worth me eating over and losing what I have. When I go away I can always get a meeting online or on the phone. No matter what is happening in my life someone has been abstinent in similar situations and can give me guidance. When a tragedy hits I have a network of people that come to my rescue. This program is portable in every situation in life, and my Higher Power is always right beside me. — Anonymous



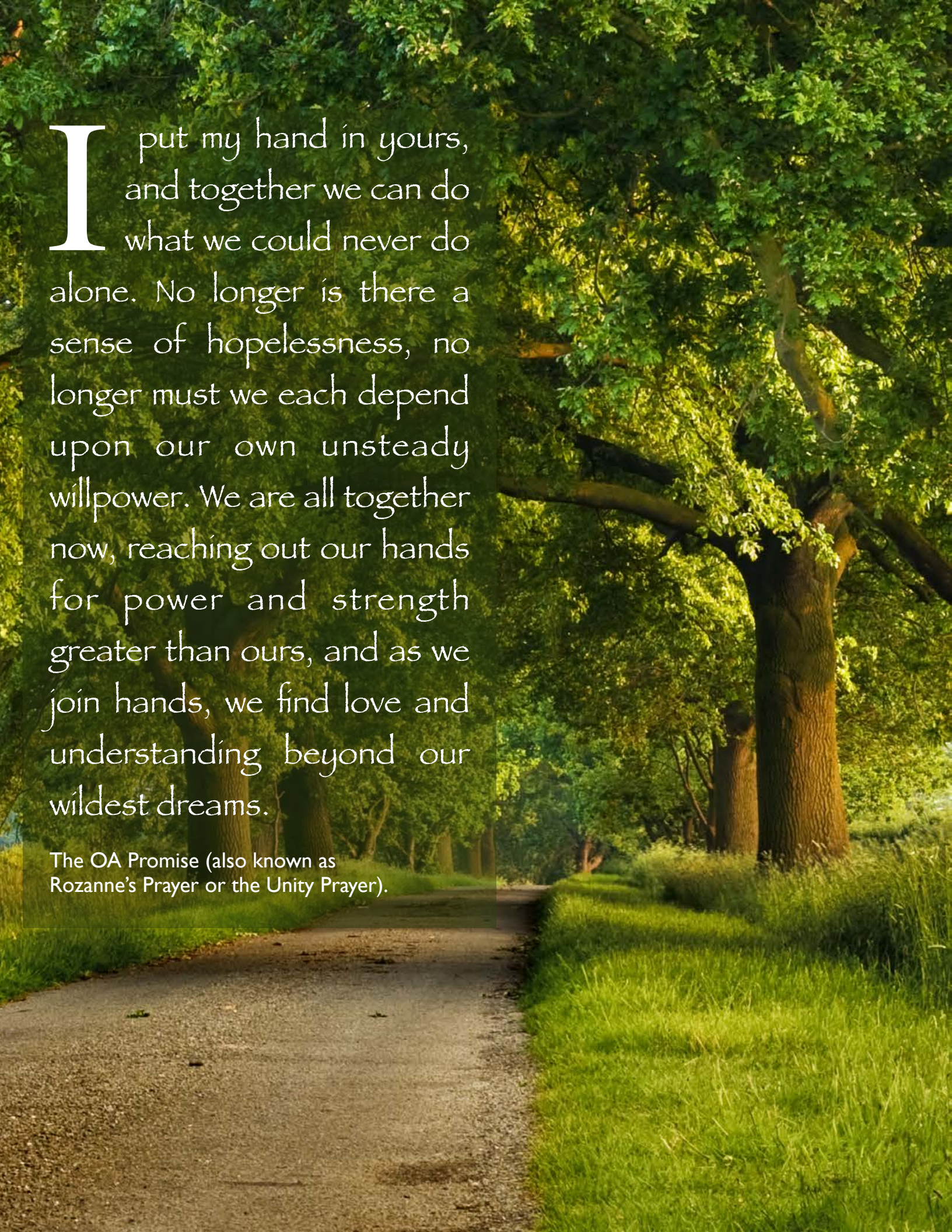
"The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively."

OA Tradition Three

How My Program Is Portable

The beauty is that my program is totally portable, when I find the balance to plan and have faith that my needs will be met. When I came into the HOW rooms last fall, very early on in program, I planned ahead and just brought my meals with me whenever possible. For destinations farther away, I ordered what I needed online in supermarkets in different cities and picked up my order upon arrival. There was some trying to control what I could, but early on it served a purpose and it eased some of the anxiety of being away from home. As I get more time in program, I do what I can to save some time and know that I'll always have what I need. Sometimes restaurants and menus have to be scoured. Sometimes local grocery stores have to be found. Sometimes phone calls have to be placed and arrangements made ahead of time. When I do this, I ask myself: Am I not worth it? Am I willing to gamble and take a chance on this beautiful serenity filled life I have now because I didn't want to take time to do a little planning? The rewards are so high when I do. Whether I am at home or away I can work my program daily. Sometimes I feel so blessed for the abundance of many promises that have come true for me. I just have to do my part. I just have to have the courage to have faith and trust, the courage to do the things I can, the courage to take care of my needs and the courage to accept wholeheartedly that I am worth it! Most of all, I have to have resilience and adaptability along with trust and faith. When I put my life and my will in God's hands, the outcomes are just what I need. I play my small part, but God has me covered and the pieces fall into place! — Ilene



A gravel path winds through a lush green forest. The path is made of small, light-colored stones and leads into the distance. On the right side of the path, there is a large, mature tree with a thick trunk and dense green foliage. The ground is covered in tall, vibrant green grass. The background is filled with more trees, creating a sense of a deep, peaceful woods. The lighting is soft and natural, suggesting a bright but slightly overcast day.

I put my hand in yours,
and together we can do
what we could never do
alone. No longer is there a
sense of hopelessness, no
longer must we each depend
upon our own unsteady
willpower. We are all together
now, reaching out our hands
for power and strength
greater than ours, and as we
join hands, we find love and
understanding beyond our
wildest dreams.

The OA Promise (also known as
Rozanne's Prayer or the Unity Prayer).

I Bring God With Me

My husband and I are moving to Israel this summer. We are moving halfway across the world with a different language, different culture, politics, weather, topography, banking and medical systems. Although I am anxious and scared, my program is portable, and I will bring God with me. I feel that God is with me every step of the move. When we put our house on the market to sell, we got an offer the next day that was way over asking. When we had to vacate the house quickly, I posted the furniture we wanted to give away. Seven people were interested, and they all wanted different articles.

OA is the most important thing in my life. In the morning, I pray and meditate. Throughout the day I ask God what my next steps should be, and, in the evening, I review my day and say the 11th step prayer. I can continue to pray and meditate wherever I am. My program is portable, and I will bring God with me. When I am irritable and discontented, I write, and God gives me answers. Moving and downsizing are extremely stressful - especially overseas. When I want to pick up the food, I ask, "How do I stop it, God? Only you know. Please help me." The answer that comes to me is acceptance. I must accept that this change is difficult. It is another ending and there are losses and lots of goodbyes. I will miss my OA friends and I hope they call me on What's App. My program is portable, and I will bring God with me. I have made many moves in my life, from city to city, from one country to another and now from one continent to another. I have gained weight with each move, but this time is different:

- I have OA.
- I have my sponsor.
- I have the steps and the tools.
- I have everything I need to take my abstinence with me wherever I go.
- I know that I am not alone.
- I have my program. It is portable and I will bring God with me. I look forward to a new beginning in the small city of Netanya on the

Mediterranean Sea. I will wake up to have coffee on my balcony listening to the waves roll in. Please come and visit — and bring your program with you!



— Frances U

My Program Goes Everywhere

My program is extremely portable. In the last five years, I have taken it with me to the hospital (for two years). It's traveled from New York to New Jersey and to Florida. It's traveled with me on numerous cruise ships,



"We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively."

O.A. Preamble

foreign countries and tropical islands, and I hope to be able to continue. When I first came into program over 50 years ago, I was told my program was portable. When I traveled, I found meetings all over the country, as well as in England (3 times) and Paris during my honeymoon. I carried my literature with me wherever I went and met Fellowship around the globe. With today's technology, I no longer have to find meetings prior to leaving. I can look online, when I get there, dial into a phone meeting, go to a zoom meeting or find a face-to-

face meeting! The only thing I find hard to do, is explain to the generation that came in during the pandemic, what they are missing by not going to a face to face meeting. My portable program consists of my smart phone, daily meditation books, people's phone numbers from around the country and good times to call them. If you're finding it difficult to take your program with you, then I urge you to take my phone number and I'll bring my program along! By God's grace and my foot work.

— Bonnie F

Serenity At The Airport

Airports can be challenging for me. People are rushing. Lines are long. Patience is thin. Employees are irritated. In such a fraught environment, maintaining serenity becomes my goal. I surrender to the day, and I try to stay in prayer as I walk through the airport, smiling and working my hardest to be calm and kind to people I meet. I say to myself, "God, just keep me smiling." I also pack my own food when I travel. I find that bringing food from home in my hand luggage has saved me many times — and it means I never worry about where my meals will come from that day. If I ever do have to buy food in an airport, I hunt for simple pre-made salads and grilled chicken. I send photos of food choices to my sponsor to stay committed and clean. I always decline the airplane food when I board. I don't want anything served that might accidentally trigger me. So the mix of prayer and abstinent-food-planning gets me to my destination safely and serenely.

— Alison L

Tips for Traveling with the Tools



Plan Of Eating

Planning abstinent meals on a vacation takes some advance thinking. It's helpful to consider about where meals will come from and how much control we will have. Before leaving, we can research local supermarkets at our destination. We can also opt to pack portable food during the journey, pack food in the luggage — some even ship boxes of food to the destination ahead of time. There is no wrong decision when it comes to protecting abstinence. Sometimes just making an extraordinary effort keeps the focus on recovery. In addition to scouting supermarkets, calling restaurants ahead of time is also a good choice. Making sure a hotel room has a mini fridge that is empty and cold on arrival.

Visiting the hotel kitchen and asking about clean options. The first thing many do at a new destination is locate a local grocery store and shop for fresh, clean food.

Securing abstinent food powerfully protects our recovery.



Plan of Action

No matter where we travel in the world, we need to work our program. Being separated from the Fellowship, surrounded by new food choices, visiting friends and relatives, can be challenging. Working the program by working the tools and Steps goes at the top of our daily Plan of Action. Everything else comes second.



Telephone

Staying connected to the Fellowship by phone and text is another powerful way to protect abstinence on vacation. Making calls or texting fellows back home keeps the focus on recovery. Making a list of friends who will answer calls is helpful too.

The more we plan in advance, the better things will go for us when we're away.



Service

Service is an essential tool to use while traveling. Busy airports, packed schedules, narrow timetables, visits with friends and family can be challenging. Service is a wonderful solution. Giving service can be as simple as smiling at airport staff. Being patient in line at security. Helping someone else with their bags. Letting someone go ahead in line. Sometimes service is as simple as a smile or a friendly word. Service can be actively avoiding disagreement. Service is always bringing God's light along and shining it on others.



Reading & Writing

Maintaining the habit of reading and writing each day is yet another way to maintain focus on recovery. We are fortunate that we can download the AA Big Book and the 12 & 12 onto our phones these days — or buy the mini pocket-sized versions of the BB and the 12&12.

There is also the slim volume on the Steps called "Little Red Book." Take along a printout or two of the Oasis newsletters! Or grab the much loved "For Today" book. No matter what we opt for, program literature is very portable.



Sponsorship

Staying in touch with a sponsor while traveling is extremely helpful. Using the phone to make a sponsor call is usually worth the effort or any extra cost. It's helpful to create a telephone plan with a sponsor before we leave — one that takes into account time differences and busy vacation schedules. Sometimes we enlist the help of a temporary "vacation sponsor" who volunteers to be available for a daily call at the right time. We do whatever is possible to maintain successful program habits by staying in touch with sponsors and committing food and writings each day, just like at home.



Anonymity

Some find it helpful to "break" their own anonymity on vacation — to share their program and explain to others that they are following a supportive food plan. This ensures that people in the group are aware and careful, and can even spiritually help make appropriate food choices in the moment.



Meetings

These days, if we have cell phone signal, we can find a meeting. Anywhere in the world, at any time of day, the meeting finder tool on www.OA.org can help find meetings in any timezone. The OA Fellowship is established worldwide and it's even easy to find local meetings wherever we go. Car rides, plane rides, beach blankets and lazy morning porch swings offer perfect moments to listen to a meeting podcast. Laptops and WiFi make online meetings possible almost everywhere. There are hundreds of podcasts posted across many different recovery sites on the internet. Print local meetings for any destination; download the podcast apps onto phones or iPads before departure — and off we go!



My Program Is Portable

Vacations used to be a food fest for me; an excuse to eat all the food all the time. And then I'd come home and be shocked at how much weight I had gained and how miserable I felt. Now, in recovery and in my senior years, I travel a lot

but vacations are no longer a food free-for-all for me. I have had to learn how to eat when I can't control my food and how to bring my program with me. The key to this for me has been understanding that, for me, it's not the food plan that defines my abstinence but rather the definition of abstinence defines my abstinence. "In OA, we define abstinence as refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living and working the OA 12-step program on a daily basis." (OA Statement on Abstinence and Recovery as quoted in "Where Do I Start? Everything a Newcomer Needs to Know", page 5) Sticking to my food plan can be challenging when I travel. I try my best to do so but often, I have little say over what food is

served to me and sometimes, I am so physically active on vacation that I need to increase my intake to compensate. The critical question then becomes what is my best possible food choice given what is available to me? Is my motivation to eat a food compulsive or recovered? Disease-driven or God-guided? With that in mind, I make my choices for each meal. I may have to forego the exciting local specialty but that's okay. I can handle that. I know I have eaten enough of those ingredients before to last two life times and

besides, I'm not

there for the food; I'm there to learn, see the sights and enjoy. It's not always easy but I am content when I have maintained my abstinence. With the guidance of my sponsor, over the course of several trips, I have begun to trust that I can make good food choices for myself.

Nevertheless, it is always a relief to return home to the structure and comfort of my regular food plan. I do bring food with me on trips, whenever I can. I find it particularly helpful to bring abstinent snacks if customs regulations allow me to. That way, when others are snacking on tempting items, I know I have an abstinent snack coming that I can eat at the appropriate time. Working the program can also be a challenge while traveling. If I can attend meetings, that is always wonderful, but often my schedule does not allow for that. Making and receiving phone calls is a huge help, but, again, sometimes even that is not a possibility. I usually bring some program



"Most emphatically we wish to say that any alcoholic capable of honestly facing his problems in the light of our experience can recover, provided he does not close his mind to all spiritual concepts."

Big Book, Appendix II, Spiritual Experience, p.568

reading material with me and I am blessed with program friends who are willing to



text me daily readings. These readings pop up on my phone whenever I am connected to the internet and are enormously helpful and sustaining. I call my sponsor when and if I can, and send her my food. If that's not possible, I write down my food for myself. Either way, I am accountable. I continue my daily practices of steps 10 and 11, staying connected with my Higher Power and receiving insight on how to handle the inevitable conflicts that arise. It's certainly not as straight-forward and easy as it is when I'm home, but I am grateful to be able to travel as a recovered and abstinent OAc.

— Anonymous



"Whether the family goes on a spiritual basis or not, the alcoholic member has to if he would recover."

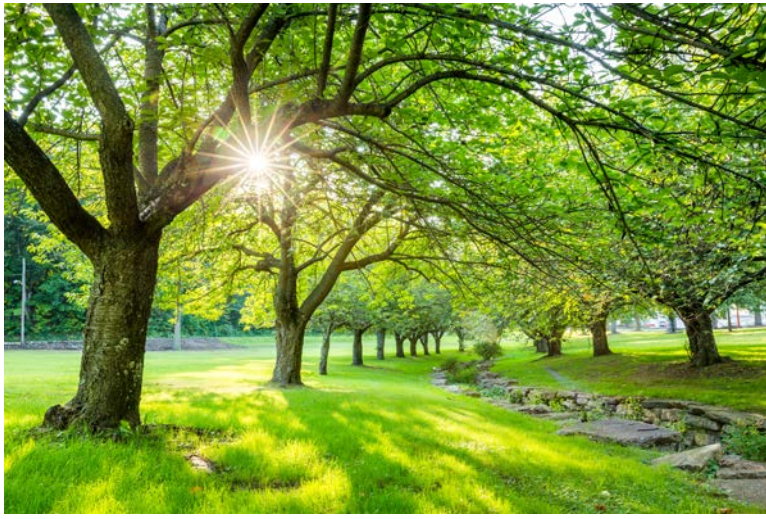
BB The Family Afterward, p.135

I Take HP with Me

My program is portable because my Higher Power is portable. He goes with me wherever I go. I am powerless over my food and over every other area of my life so He is my lifetime — a Friend at my side at all times. I am safe and protected, neither cocky nor afraid, as long as I keep spiritually fit.

— Fran V





PAST EVENTS

Cherry Blossom Stroll

Branch Brook Park, located in Newark, New Jersey, is renowned for its enchanting cherry blossom trees, making it one of the largest displays of its kind in the United States, surpassing even the famous Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C. The park is home to a remarkable collection of over 4,300 cherry trees, featuring diverse varieties such as Yoshino, Kwanzan, and Weeping cherries. On April 8, 2023, the cherry trees at Branch Brook Park reached their splendid peak, coinciding with the annual Cherry Blossom Stroll hosted



by NJIOA. As part of this outdoor event, attendees engaged in a meeting that

included a reading from pages 417 to 420 of the AA Big Book, specifically the chapter titled "Acceptance was the Answer." A particularly resonating passage from the reading explored the significance of serenity and emotional sobriety, emphasizing their value above all else. By prioritizing these aspects, individuals can elevate and sustain their well-being, at least for the time being. The reading sparked meaningful discussions and insightful reflections among the participants. Following the conclusion of the meeting, participants embarked on a leisurely stroll around the park, immersing themselves in the breathtaking sights and fragrances emanating from the cherry blossom trees. The occasion provided abundant opportunities for capturing photographs, fostering fellowship, sharing laughter, and creating cherished memories. Make sure to mark your calendars for next April, as this experience should not be missed!

— ToniAnn A.

PAST EVENTS

Our Spring Big Book Workshop

On April 30, NJIOA sponsored the Big Book workshop, "Breathing New Life into the Neglected Chapters of the Big Book." Three speakers from Minnesota, New York, and northern New Jersey gave enlightening presentations on chapters of the Big Book that are so often skipped over. The themes of relationships, work ethics, the importance of honesty, and how to grow closer to God while navigating difficult family relationships were all discussed. This workshop reinforced how the Big Book really is a design for living, and how a life surrendered to God is able to deal with the trickiest of situations.

— Janet B

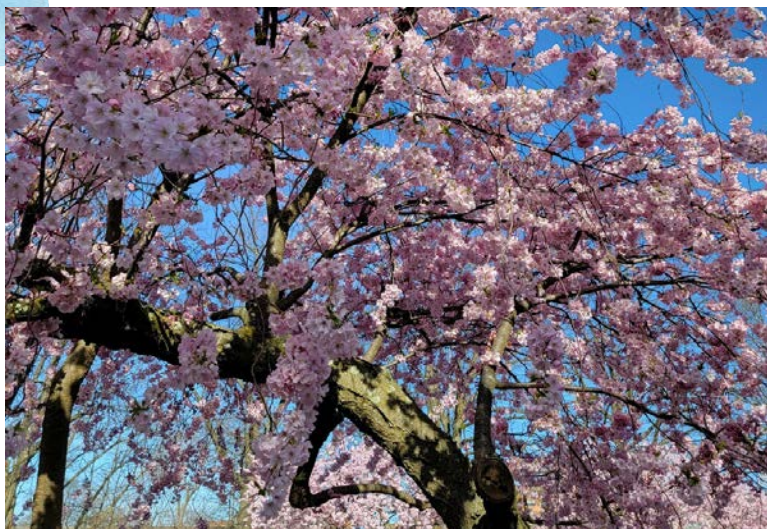


PAST EVENTS

"Healing Shame" — First Live Event of The Year

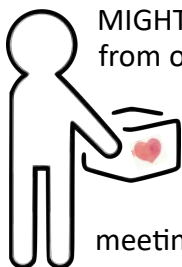
NJIOA had our first live in-person workshop of 2023, on Saturday June 3rd at the Dorothy B. Kraft Center in Paramus. The topic was Healing Shame: Steps 8 & 9. Three wonderful speakers shared their experience, strength, and hope in front of 18 fellows and 2 newcomers. Everyone expressed their appreciation for the speakers and the topic, but especially for gathering together in person. It was just wonderful to get hugs, see faces and share smiles in person — after all this long time. We were reminded of the pure joy of an in-person gathering of our dear Fellowship. "Together we can do what we can never do alone."


— Judy L



Original Photo By Toni Ann A.

CARRY THE MESSAGE



MIGHT YOU KNOW someone who could benefit from our program? Bill & Dr Bob said the only way to stay clean is to work with others. You could tell others about our program. Maybe send someone a newcomer packet. Invite them to a meeting. We have beginner meetings, newcomer meetings and meetings to support members coming back in from relapse. 

INTERGROUP MEETINGS

THE NJIOA INTERGROUP BOARD


meets on Zoom, once a month, at 7:30pm, on the 2nd Thursday of the month. Find the link on our website www.njioa.org. Everyone is welcome to attend these meetings, where NJIOA topics are presented for discussion, Board business and finances are discussed, and events are planned. If you would like to get a topic on the next meeting's agenda, please email Intergroup Chair, ToniAnn A., at:

chair@njioa.org



RECOVERY HELP LINE

Are you struggling and need to speak to someone? Do you live in a remote location and need contact? Please call our friendly volunteers below to remind you that you are not alone. **PLEASE try all these numbers until someone answers your call**

NAME	PHONE	AVAIL TIMES (ET)
ANDREA P	973-985-8169	4PM-6PM weekdays
ANDREA P	973-985-8169	8AM-6PM weekends
AUDREY C	201-819-5575	Please text first. 
JANET B	201-248-8001	Until 9PM
MARCY E	973-694-1274	ANYTIME
SUSAN L	973-704-6345	4PM-6PM weekdays
SUSAN S	201-960-1995	11AM-7PM
TERRY P	862-812-4467	9AM-11PM
TONI ANN A	973-945-0233	Before 11PM

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OUR 7th TRADITION

Please make a donation
Donations help our meetings, our Group, our Region, and OA World Service.

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Upper Montclair, NJ 07043

Venmo or Zelle: treasury@njioa.org



EDITORIAL NOTE

The **OAsis** is the quarterly newsletter of NJIOA (Northern Jersey Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous). The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of OA as a whole. The theme for the Fall issue is: **"The Spirit of Service."** Deadline for copy is SEPT 1, 2023. Please email your articles, poems or photography submissions to the OAsis Editors, at this email address: oasis@njioa.org.

Have a great summer, everyone!

