



Valley Voice

The Sacramento Valley Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous (SVIOA) serves the greater Sacramento Valley, Sierra Foothills, and Northern Nevada Sierra, including Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Carson (NV), Colusa, Douglas (NV), El Dorado, Inyo (NV), Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, Sutter, Stanislaus, Washoe (NV), Yolo, and Yuba counties.

**Vol 23 Issue 7
July 2023**

“Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion: for this, I am responsible.”

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STEP 7: SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: HUMILITY
 Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

TRADITION 7: SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: RESPONSIBILITY
 Every OA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

CONCEPT 7: SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: BALANCE
 The Board of Trustees has legal rights and responsibilities accorded to them by OA Bylaws, Subpart A; the rights and responsibilities of the World Service Business Conference are accorded to it by Tradition and by OA Bylaws, Subpart B.



Overheard at Meetings

The tools are the handrails.
 We use them to help us climb the 12 Steps.

My miracle occurred when I became willing to go to any lengths to take action.

Your future needs you.
 Your past doesn't.

The disease doesn't care how long you've been abstinent.

Forgiving someone else is for my benefit not theirs.

What I think is not important, it is only important what I do.

Don't give up five minutes
 Before the miracle happens.

F E A R = Frantic Efforts to Avoid Responsibilities.

SPONSORSHIP

**SATURDAY, JULY 22, 2023
 11 AM - 12:30 PM (PST)
 TWO SPEAKERS & SHARING
 ZOOM ONLY EVENT**

MEETING ID 853 4357 1493
 Passcode 849138
 Phone 1 (669) 900-6833
 Suggested donation of \$5

<https://www.sacvalleyoa.org/donations-for-events.html>

Hosted by the Tuesday Noon Sacramento OA Meeting
 For more info, contact
 Bonnie R. (305) 469-5855 or Janet M. (716) 418-9465

The Scariest Thing



The scariest thing I ever did was get abstinent. Living without the food thrust me into a world as alien and as threatening as a Martian landscape. For thirty years the food had been my worst friend and my dearest enemy. It was my companion. My keeper. And its loss left me shaky, alone and afraid. I was afraid of you. I was afraid of me. I was afraid of a God I wouldn't even acknowledge. And I was terrified I would binge again.

So I was very careful. Hugging my fragile sanity close, I moved gingerly through the days. Like a refugee crossing a swift stream, I felt for solid footing step by step. Away from home, I felt I had lost my skin. I saw scorn in every eye. Rebuff in every gesture. In my apartment, I sat reading at my kitchen counter, although the open living room was a half-dozen steps away. Somehow, on the comfortable sofa I might relax, binge on Netflix, lose purpose and eat.

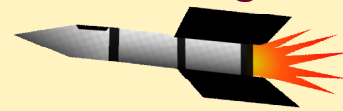
The home group I joined saved my life. It was my life. It's totally integrated into my life today. I took my fear to meetings and sat mute, listening. For an hour I was safe. For an hour I had a haven among those whose fear had once been as great as mine. I did not give my fear away - they took it. They eased it from my grasp with hugs and laughter. With shared experience. Slowly I became less brittle. I found I need not die nor go crazy. I learned to live with the one I feared the most - myself.

Since those days over a decade ago, I've had my life seriously threatened by an auto accident, then cancer. But nothing about death is quite as scary as the exhilarating terror of trying to accept life.

-anonymous

Relief-Seeking Missile

2



I call myself a relief-seeking missile. I don't like feelings: happy, mad, sad, glad, hungry, angry, lonely, tired. I'm always either disappointed in what I didn't get, or afraid the other shoe will drop and take away what I have gotten. So I'm constantly searching for something that will provide relief from ongoing misery.

I'm restless, irritable and discontent. In other words, I'm uncomfortable. I'm human. And so I'm subject to pain, uncertainty and fear. Where normal eaters may have coping skills for life's ups and downs, my strong feelings trigger my mental obsession for food. And soon I feel an overwhelming desire to eat that is beyond my control.

When I joined OA, I learned that I had made food my God. I believed food would bring me the serenity that only a spiritual experience could give me. But it never did. It numbed me for about eight seconds, and then those feelings returned. That's why that first bite is a sucker's game. It's as though I'm playing poker against someone who has me beat.

But until OA, all I had ever done was use food as a drug. I learned that I could pray for ease and comfort. And follow that prayer with useful actions. And I've discovered that there's far more ease and comfort in abstinence than there ever was in anything that came out of a box, a can, a bag, a jar or a wrapper.

I've come to learn that the only way to win is not to play. I must abstain from my "alcoholic foods" to prevent those physical cravings. But even with the craving gone, I have to learn to deal with my feelings. I've got to keep it simple and accept that sometimes I will feel discomfort. I lean on the fact that others with my disease have faced extremely painful situations without resorting to food.

I must work the 12 Steps of OA. They **ARE** the program. And they bring me into meaningful contact with something more powerful than myself.

-anonymous



Serenity in the Sierras

36th Annual Tahoe Retreat 2023

The 12 Steps - A Program of Recovery
August 4, 5, 6, 2023

[Click here to get on the wait list](https://www.sacvalleyoa.org/tahoe-retreat.html)
<https://www.sacvalleyoa.org/tahoe-retreat.html>

The very popular Sacramento Valley Intergroup Annual **Lake Tahoe Retreat** is coming up the first weekend in August! While the website indicates the event is sold out, you are encouraged to go ahead and register to be put on the wait list. There are typically several cancellations the last few weeks before the event.

The weather will be lovely, the retreat leader inspirational, and the fellowship and recovery renewal unforgettable. You don't want to miss it, and we don't want to miss you.

For general retreat questions, please call or text our Retreat Chair, Jan H. at (916) 616-1466. Registration-related inquiries should be made to our Registrar, Mary H. via e-mail at: svioa.tahoe.retreat@gmail.com

We hope to see YOU in TAHOE IN AUGUST!!

The Twelve Step ABC's



(A) What is the problem?

A body that craves more food when it eats.
A mind that thinks food is a solution despite negative consequences.
A spirit that seeks salvation comfort, money, power, prestige and appearance.

(B) What is the solution?

Never binge again.
Establish a relationship with God in recognition of the fact that "false gods" are the decorations of life, not its' substance. That the real substance lies in becoming a channel for God's grace to transform our lives.

(C) How do I get from A to B? - I TAKE THE STEPS!

1. I recognize the truth in Step One.
2. I stop seeing myself as being so different in Step Two.
3. I recognize the failure of the material life and the life of the ego in Step Three.
4. I realize in Step Four that I've been on a wild goose chase my whole life. And I forgive everyone for everything because their obedience to my wishes would not have yielded happiness anyway.
5. I get rid of the sense of separateness in Step Five.
6. I admit my way has totally failed in Step Six.
7. I humbly commit to a solution in Step Seven.
8. I see myself from other people's points of view in Step Eight.
9. I build bridges in Step Nine.
10. I become a guardian of my own thinking in Step Ten.
11. I create a spiritual superhighway in Step Eleven.
12. I bring heaven down to earth through sponsorship and service in Step Twelve.

-anonymous

STEP
7
HUMILITY

3

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

7th Step Prayer as a Tool

As I go through the day, I am tempted to think unhelpful thoughts (selfish, dishonest, resentful, or fearful thoughts). It is from such thoughts that all my bad behavior stems. I don't think recovery is about not having these thoughts; I think it's about turning away promptly from them.

A good way I have found to do this is to say the 7th Seven Prayer as soon as a negative thought comes into my mind. Generally, if I catch the thought in the first five seconds and replace the thought by plugging it in to my 7th Step Prayer, the thought does not return for a while. It is easier and more effective to do this than to let it embed itself in my consciousness and then to try and dig it out once it has grown roots. Here is one of my recent prayers:

My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to You and my fellows.

God, please remove

- My selfishness
- My self-centeredness
- My lack of communication
- My resentments

God, please strengthen

- My unselfishness
- My consideration of others
- My willingness to communicate
- My tolerance

God, grant me strength as I go out from here to do Your bidding. Amen.

-anonymous

BODY IMAGE

Healing the Distorted Lens

Tues July 11

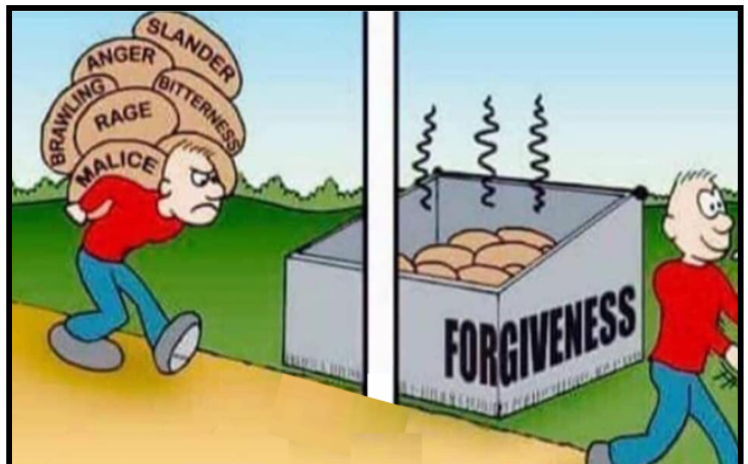
4:00 — 5:30 pm PT



Speakers, Q&A panel, general sharing

Meeting ID: 233 569 433
Passcode: 121212

Westchester United Intergroup
Hosted by Tues Night Body Image Meeting



Holding a grudge doesn't make you strong; it makes you bitter. Forgiving doesn't make you weak; it sets you free



Keeping Connected

A workshop on Sponsorship given by our Region 6 Chair and Trustee Liaison

Sun July 16 10:00am – 1:00pm PT

Topics Include:

Why sponsor? • Why have a sponsor? • How to sponsor • How to find a sponsor

Virtual Workshop:

ZOOM Meeting ID: 857 5959 9548 Passcode: 104764

<https://zoom.us/j/5759599548>



Greater Rochester InterGroup

I No Longer Feel Alone



OA is my home now. And it is everywhere. I go to meetings when I travel in foreign countries. And the people are like family because of what we share. As I write this in my twenty-eighth year of abstinence, I am amazed to look back and remember the woman - or the child - I was then. And to see how far I've come out of the abyss.

Overeaters Anonymous enabled me to move from fantasies about what I might do with my life into living it, one day at a time. In my first move that was not a geographic, I left the city and moved to the country. I left research and became a gardener. I'm fulfilling a long-time dream of writing fiction that's actually being published.

But these are things I do. Aspects of the life I'm living in abstinence. The most precious discovery is who I really am - a being far beyond any of the ego-selves, any of the fantasies I had made up.

That sense of being different, which had long plagued me, disappeared when I saw the threads that run through all of us. Sharing our stories and our feelings. It is the areas where we are the same that impress me.

The differences are but delightful flourishes on the surface, like different-colored costumes. And I enjoy them. But the basic ways we are human, the basic ways we simply are, stand out to me now. I came to see that we are all really one. And I no longer feel alone.

anonymous

I GIVE UP

My defects are not about wanting too much, but going about getting it the wrong way. Instead of relying on God for validation of my value, I rely on other people. As I rise and fall in the eyes of others, I became fixated on achievement and I condemn anyone who gets in my way. And all my problems arise from this.

I was looking for peace, happiness and comfort. And I found it temporarily in food. But I continued to eat compulsively well after it stopped working because I had no other option.

The real problem is reliance on self and my misinterpretations of flawed perceptions. I have to admit that I was wrong and that I personally can do nothing to change myself. And willingness is the only commodity I can bring to this process.

Resentment is suicide. This weapon always turns against me. And the same goes for fear. Because it stops me from living right here and right now.

Willingness to have God show me a different way requires me to admit I have no idea what I'm doing. I have to be willing to give up all my old ideas and to be blindly led by God, step by step, moment by moment, down new paths of thought and action.

There is nothing for me to give up but suffering.
 -anonymous



Any other hobbies besides suffering?

"WE CANNOT FORCE SOMEONE TO HEAR A MESSAGE THEY ARE NOT READY TO RECEIVE, BUT WE MUST NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLANTING A SEED."



Beyond Abstinence to Recovery

I came to OA because I was sick and tired of being sick and tired. By not bingeing and by going to a lot of meetings, I achieved the sort of "stark, raving abstinence" that made it unnecessary to overeat. And also unnecessary to discard most of my old ideas and conceptions.

I was free to not overeat, to not work well at my job, to be as irritating as a hangnail. And to judge everyone and everything about OA. I was an "equal-opportunity-deplorer." But even though I felt superior to all of them, I wasn't happy. In fact, I was very unhappy.

I changed jobs. I changed cities. And my sneaky Higher Power got me involved in an OA group of people who really worked hard on the program. I got myself a solid sponsor and went to work on the Steps. All twelve. Just like they're laid out in the Big Book.

Almost without realizing it, I was losing enough fear and gaining enough faith to feel okay. My life changed to such a degree that I was no longer afraid to be "happy, joyous and free." As I worked through the Steps, slowly my attitudes, my self-image, my relationships – virtually everything in my life – changed.

Through sponsorship, the program taught me, slowly and ever so gently, to love and to be loved. As I share what I know of the program and am willing to learn from those with whom I share, I find a deeper and more rewarding contact with God.

My understanding changes and broadens through wider and wider exposure to many different kinds of people from varied backgrounds. The one common element that runs through all these relationships is my strong desire to stay abstinent and to go beyond abstinence to full-fledged recovery.

-anonymous

It's Always Been About Love



A newcomer called me the other day about her craving, her desire to overeat. And it brought me back to the things I did in the beginning of abstinence, which is now over 40 years ago. Most of my craving and obsession lifted, thank You, God, on a Saturday morning when I surrendered. But I had had such a relentless craving for years, resulting major pig-out sessions on desserts. And I knew I'd be in deep trouble if I didn't get extremely busy.

And thank God for my willingness. I got busy. A large part of it was about not letting the craving get ahead of me. It's like taking an aspirin before the pain gets so bad. So I got into action. Here is what I did, thanks to God's grace:

- Followed my sponsor's instructions.
- Went to 3 meetings a week.
- Had a service commitment at each meeting.
- Had a food plan with no "alcoholic" foods on it.
- Hung out with people with a lot of abstinence.
- Got to know lots of people by doing service.
- Worked the Steps imperfectly.
- Made calls when I wanted to eat.
- Had fun!

At 40 plus years of abstinence, I don't do all these things today. But the life-and-death of it have not changed one tiny bit. I'm as powerless today as I was on day one.

Also, I never "committed" to abstinence. I had committed to too many diets year after year, and failed every time. Instead, I fell in love with OA. It's always been about love. I'm so grateful. I invite you to fall in love.

-anonymous



2023 OA Region 2 Convention

July 7-9, 2023

in-person or
online zoom

Recovery:
Putting the Pieces Together



OA Region 2 Convention
Orange County, CA July 7-9, 2023

"...No longer is there a sense of hopelessness,
no longer must we each depend on our own
unsteady willpower....." - Rozanne G.

<https://www.oar2.org/upcoming-convention.html>

find healing
find recovery
find solutions

Overeaters
Anonymous
oar2.org

in-person or
online
workshops

Anorexics/
Bulimics
welcome!

**THE
12 STEPS
ARE NOT
MULTIPLE
CHOICE**

Invisible Changes



My desire to see concrete results, and to see them now, fosters in me a certain resistance to working the program on all three levels. My weight loss was visible to me and others, so I abstained. But many of the program's benefits are not that obvious.

These include serenity, self-worth, love, humility, spirituality and countless others. No one publishes a notice in the newspaper when we refrain from having a temper tantrum. No one congratulates us when we stave off an emotional binge.

We feel the changes in ourselves and know they are far more valuable than the drop in weight measured by the scale or reflected in the mirror. Sometimes we wish they were more apparent to people outside the program who judge our progress by our physical appearance. But there's so much more!

I work the Steps and I live this program because I know what my life is like without it. I want it more than anything else. I work for it because I know at a gut level that returning to my old way of life would be slow death.

Emotions and spirituality are not tangible. I must be willing to simply feel the countless benefits I've reaped from OA in addition to my weight loss. Qualities that are perhaps not even communicable to others, much less visible. But I know they're there.

-anonymous



I am an addict. I have been an addict all my life. My drug of choice is food. I would lay in bed every night and pledge *"Tomorrow I will begin to get my life back in order. I will do something about my weight."* I finally hit bottom on December 15, 2020. By then I weighed 398 pounds. And my legs were crumbling beneath me.

I had already undergone two hip replacements and a knee replacement. I suffered from acid reflux and sleep apnea. I needed special stockings to control the swelling in my ankles and legs. I took medications for high blood pressure and cholesterol.

Even though I was a member of OA, I had never taken the Twelve Steps seriously. This time I was ready to apply the Twelve Steps to my illness of compulsive overeating. I admitted I was powerless over food, that my life had become unmanageable.

As of June 2023, I have two years of abstinence, which OA defines as *"refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors, while working towards or maintaining a healthy body weight."* And I've lost 145 pounds.

I use weight loss as one measure of my recovery, but I have gained a lot more.

- I no longer wake up gasping for air because of sleep apnea.
- My doctor took me off one blood pressure medication and cut the second dosage in half.
- I no longer suffer from acid reflux.
- I can tie my shoelaces without passing out.
- My ankles and legs no longer swell up like balloons.
- I no longer endure the humiliation of needing a seat belt extension when I travel by plane.

I have no idea how or why this program works, I only know it does. After fifty-six years of battling my demons, I was finally able to stop eating compulsively. I no longer see the promise of comfort in compulsive eating, only nightmares.

I also know this program is not a magic cure. It requires sacrifice and dedication to work the Twelve Steps, embrace a Higher Power as each one of us understands him, work with our sponsors, and above all be honest with ourselves.

But the bottom line is *it works!*

-anonymous

WE ARE NOT A GLUM LOT



: Lighten Up, Let Go, Laugh!

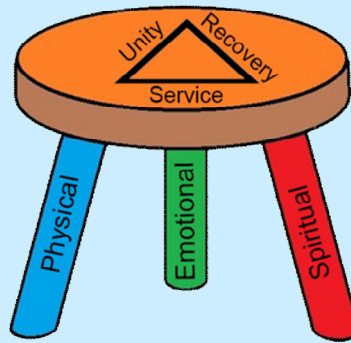
**Sun July 23
1:00 – 3:00 p.m. PT**

Meeting ID: 854 2874 9682
No Passcode

**Please join us
for a big dose of
HOPE and HAPPINESS**

Info: tsw@oasandiego.org

A Zoom Workshop presented by the OA San Diego Intergroup
12 Step Within Committee



“... recognize our emotions and walk through the pain they cause us. We then let them go, turning our feelings over to our Higher Power so that we can regain our *emotional balance*.”

OA 12x12 p.70

Got a Pain in Your Feelings?

I've been in OA and abstinent for five years. But I still bruise easily – at times. Just when everything seems to be going well, something is said or done and – ouch! – I've got a pain in my feelings again! Just when I've begun to pride myself in my humility. What causes it is not important. Whether my grievance is real or imagined, it doesn't matter. I don't have the kind of temperament that can handle a resentment.

I have a low boiling point. And it doesn't take much to get up a full head of steam in short order. Leave it to me to dramatize something all out of proportion to its actual significance. Someone says something derogatory about me, questions my motives, doubts my abilities, and a resentment gets stirred up that can upset my emotional balance.

A pain in my feelings is preventable if I pause to remember that as a food addict I am my own worst enemy. So I have come to look upon a pain in my feelings as **temporary indigestion of the mind**. My mental indigestion comes from some story, bit of gossip or circumstance that I've swallowed without thinking. When I'm in physical pain, I get relief with medication. When I start to get emotionally ill from indigestion of the mind, I prescribe more 12 Step and more God. So whenever I feel hurt, outraged, bitter, or resentful, I try to remember that I haven't been mortally harmed. It's just a "pain in my feelings!" So I try to check myself... before I wreck myself!

-anonymous

Binge Thinker

Before I was powerless over food, I was powerless over unhappiness. And my life had become unmanageable. I turned to food as the best self-help option I thought I could find. But food became an ever more elusive and flawed solution to my unhappiness. It began to create unhappiness of its own. My overall unhappiness was eventually much greater than what I had evaded and yet not solved at the beginning of my food addiction.

Long before I was a binge eater, I was a binge thinker. I tended to think incessantly, as if this were an essential part of staying alive. My mind either had no "off" switch. Or, if it did, I had no idea where it was. In this constant banter, I could find all sorts of resentments to chew on, grudges to hold, victimization to ponder and catastrophes to protest. Life was unfair, people were the harbingers of much injustice and unkindness. And I was justifiably withholding my seal of approval by not accepting what already was.

I create thoughts. I can do this by default when I wallow in my character defects. Or I can create thoughts when I remember that I actually have a choice about what to think. This helps me realize that I am not my thoughts. And this gives the choice to just observe them instead of reacting to them.

Once I learned to meditate, I was able to find the "off" switch to my thinking when it is not needed or useful to me. I now have the choice to use my thoughts rather than having my thinking use me. And this has opened the doorway to my emotional sobriety.

-anonymous

It's Not the Shoelace

Before coming to OA I used food to bury my feelings. I also used overeating to hurt others. I often ate at my boss, my mom, the police, the government... so I wouldn't have to feel. My immaturity came out in full force. Even if I didn't eat, I could be miserable and hold grudges. And that's when something trivial like a broken shoelace might lead me to a binge. Because it was the last straw. Without the help of God and a sponsor, I might never have known it wasn't the shoelace but a lingering grudge and my lack of emotional sobriety that led me back to the food again. When I held onto resentments, when I found things unforgivable, when I was unwilling to listen to a different point of view, when I reacted severely to criticism, I put myself in danger of losing my abstinence.

Step 10 tells me to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear.... because they block me from dealing in a mature, emotionally sober way with challenging situations. A friend of mine in program says, "**My biggest job is to become undisturbed.**" And to cultivate one or two responses when dealing with difficult people. Either (1) forgive them or (2) make amends.

I made a lot of progress in emotional sobriety when I finally realized that I did not have to react to a slight by striking back. I was told to live a day at a time. But it is impossible to do when I live in emotional chaos. If I strive for emotional sobriety, I will have a much better chance of living in the now, which can lead to joy and appreciation for the wonder of my life.

-anonymous

MEETING LIST

<https://www.sacvalleyoa.org/meetings.html>

EVENTS

<https://www.sacvalleyoa.org/events.html>

NEXT INTERGROUP MEETING

Tues July 11

7:00 — 8:00 p.m.

<https://zoom.us/j/98477821659>

Meeting ID: **984 7782 1659**

Passcode: **860953**

Intergroup Board

Chair	oachair@sacvalleyoa.org	Scarlet H	(916) 505-0360
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Secretary	oasecretary@sacvalleyoa.org	Raven Y	(530) 917-4979
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Intergroup Committees

Committee Title	Specific Tasks	Chair	Chair Email
Bylaws	Bylaws/Policy & Procedures Review/Update	---	oavicechair@sacvalleyoa.org
Events	Events Support	Janet Mc	shortred55@hotmail.com
Group Support	Meetings/Zoom Support	Andrea A	athorup@pacbell.net
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Answer Phone	Answer Phone	Kathy K	kappybook@yahoo.com
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Meeting List	Meeting List Coordinator	Dawn S	dawn.strickler@gmail.com
Public Outreach	Public Outreach Support	Nancy Mc	nancynandalion@gmail.com
Retreat	Retreat Coordination	Jan H	ron-janholm@sbcglobal.net
Special Population Focus	Special Population Support	---	
Sponsorship	Sponsorship Resources Maintenance	Katherine G	KATEJOE@msn.com




It's 12 Step Within Day!



Today is the perfect opportunity to reach out to OA fellows you haven't seen in meetings for a while. Your contact may be the biggest gift they receive today.

July 12

The 12th of every month and especially on 12/12.



zoom CLASSES

Hosting Basics
Wed July 12
3:00 pm PT

Zoom Tips & Tricks
Mon, July 17
5:00 pm PT


<https://oasandiego.org/zoom/>

Would Your Meeting Like to Sponsor an Event?



SOME IDEAS: Attitude of Gratitude, Tools in Action, The Traditions in Daily Life, Sober Eating, Relapse to Recovery, No God, No Problem (Atheists & Agnostics), Cleaning House (Step 6 & 7), Newcomers, Other? **Contact**

Janet Mc (716) 418-9465 or shortred55@hotmail.com



May the Valley Voice serve as a lighted lamp, shining rays of hope and experience to illuminate any dark corners in your life.