

# Society Pages

## The Newsletter of Unity Intergroup

### June 2006

#### Region IV Convention Is Almost Here

#### READY, SET, GO!

The Region IV 2006 Overeaters Anonymous Convention will be held Friday, June 23 through Sunday, June 25 at the Holiday Inn Select in Bloomington, MN.

The program for the convention is **READY** to go with two national keynote speakers with 22 and 33 years of abstinence.

Two local speakers will be featured during the convention's luncheon and banquet. They will be sharing how to use sponsorship and the Big Book to recover from compulsive eating or not eating.

We are **SET** to offer 5 OA meetings during the convention:

- OA Basics for Newcomers
- OA HOW Format
- Men in OA
- Sexuality
- Release from Relapse

And we are ready to **GO** with entertainment and fun for all including a Friday night dance, a Saturday night OA Mascot Contest, "Region 4 is More Singers" and a photo booth for you to capture memories of the weekend with your fellows.

#### Region IV Workshop Speakers Focus on Good Character Traits!

There will be 22 workshop speakers from 8 states sharing their experience, strength, and hope through their personal stories of recovery. Topics include:

- ◆ Abstinence vs. Denial
- ◆ Hope vs. Despair
- ◆ Faith vs. Doubt
- ◆ Courage vs. Delusion
- ◆ Integrity vs. Shame
- ◆ Willingness vs. Obsession
- ◆ Humility vs. Pride

- ◆ Self-Discipline vs. Compulsion
- ◆ Love vs. Fear
- ◆ Perseverance vs. Procrastination
- ◆ Spiritual Awareness vs. Solitude & Busyness
- ◆ Service & Fellowship vs. Loneliness

**Together We Can Recover.** Join us for this awesome recovery event! This is an experience you must not miss. See and hear how recovery is possible one day at a time!!!

Registration forms are available at your local meetings or you can register at the door.

#### OA Mascot Contest We Need YOU!

**Help Raise the Funds that Carry the Message from Region IV to Health Professionals and Individual Groups & Win a \$100.00 Prize!**

There is still time to sign up for the OA Mascot Contest and to be part of the fun and entertainment at the Region IV OA Convention and help raise funds for Region IV. You can register anytime up to the day of the contest. The entrance fee is \$5.00 and if you win you will be awarded a \$100.00 prize. All you need to do is dress up as a mascot in a costume of your choice and do a two minute performance for the Region IV convention goers. The audience will be the judge and vote for the best contestant with their \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$. Entry forms are available from your Intergroup rep at your local OA meeting.

#### Create Memories

Visit the Region IV Photo Booth! Get a picture with your fellows, sponsor, sponsee or the new OA Mascot! We'll be set up in the foyer at the convention.

#### Want To Learn About OA Service At The Region Level?

The Region IV Board would like to invite you to attend their board meeting on Friday, June 23, 2006 from 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Duchess Room just prior to the convention.

You are welcome to come and meet the board members, attend the board meeting and spend time with the Region officers. This is the perfect opportunity to see how Region IV works and to see if you would ever like to do service on the Region level.

### **Volunteers Needed**

Volunteers are still needed for the Region IV Convention "Together We Can." Together we can do the service needed to make the convention a successful recovery event. We need greeters, hosts for the hospitality room, literature sales, timekeepers, room managers, registration, and hostess/hosts for the luncheon and banquet. Call Sue B. 651-464-3225 or e-mail [rsbona@msn.com](mailto:rsbona@msn.com) to volunteer.

## **Step Six: Were Entirely Ready to Have God Remove Our Defects Of Character**

### **Defiance**

As I work this Twelve Step program I am constantly made alert to character defects of which I had been unaware. In addition, I have been afforded the opportunity to look closely at those defects I have been unwilling to let go. You know, the ones that are my own private collection of "ways I simply am. In the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions it states, "Looking again at those defects we are still unwilling to give up, we ought to erase the hard-and-fast lines that we have drawn. Perhaps we shall be obliged in some cases still to say, "This I cannot give up yet..," " but we should not say to ourselves, "This I will never give up!"” pp.68-69)

Recently, I became aware of my character defect of defiance. For years, I used to make a joke that I gave my Higher Power a run for their money because I was always strong-willed. Rules simply didn't apply. This kind of thinking got in the way of my program and definitely interfered with my ability to take direction from my sponsor. When I encountered the full effect of my cavalier attitude I realized if I truly wanted to "practice these principles in all my affairs," I needed to surrender this defiant attitude. By doing so, it has made the difference in my ability to experience contented sobriety. For this program I am grateful!

-- Dorie R.

### **Faith vs. Fear**

I wonder if I'll ever be "entirely ready" to let go of my defects of character. I certainly can relate to wanting to hold on to self-righteous anger, to lift myself up by running others down. Fear and doubt enter in when I think about it. To read about Step Six when I have yet to do Steps 4 and 5 feels like trying to understand the view from the top of the mountain when I've just begun the climb. But recovery has taught me that fear is the opposite of faith. Fear tells me I need to control or hide from life; I need to try to protect myself from harm. Fear lies to me and says if I manipulate enough I can control my life and make it manageable, but my addiction revealed my unmanageable life and I lacked the power to reverse the insanity.

Recovery has taught me much is possible when I let go of a self-directed life and allow God to work within me. It makes me excited and hope-filled when I think of what God could do within me if I were to get out of my own way. I see this theme throughout the twelve steps. They show me how to turn to God, clean house, and become useful to God and others to fulfill the purpose God has for me.

Most of my life I've been worried about what's going to happen to me, when all the while God has wanted me to be concerned with what I can do for Him. The bottom line is we have to get out of the way. Our transformation is not the result of us trying to act like God or trying to be like God, but rather God residing in us and working through us. I pray someday God will give me the willingness to be entirely ready to let go of my character defects so I can truly be of maximum use to God and others and know the joy God intended for me when I live my life under His care and direction.

-- LAH

### **Patient Improvement**

What's next after creating our inventory of defects of character? What's next after giving our 5th Step to our sponsor? We are actually ready and willing to have God remove all these defects of character. I remember thinking when first starting to work this Step, what magic happens? What conditions need to be present that, after living with these defects up to this point, they would just go away? I was confused and baffled because I doubted this could really happen. Where was I failing in this program to be at this point and still have doubts and questions?

There is no magic. The key words “entirely ready” answered my questions and relieved my doubts. This marks the beginning of a new journey where we are now aware of our defects of character, we want to remove them and, gratefully, have God to turn to for help. The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions says about Step 6 “this is A.A.’s way of stating the best possible attitude one can take in order to make a beginning on this lifetime job”.

At last we are going to pay attention to ourselves, and with the help of God and our sponsors, we are going to work on improving these defects of character. We don’t have to struggle with these things alone any more. We inventory ourselves daily and tell our sponsors about the day. What a relief there is such a safeguard in place that these defects of character, though still present, with the grace of God and the guidance of our sponsor, will not lead us directly to the food as they had in the past. We work on them and pray for patient improvement.

-- Anonymous

### **God’s Will – Not Mine**

It wasn’t until I surrendered to the HOW program that I was able to admit my powerlessness with food. After putting down the food, the fog was lifted and I was able to see the life I had been living with new clarity and honesty. After completing Step Five, I realized how much anger, fear and resentment were my knee-jerk reactions toward anything and everything in my life. I felt freedom in admitting my wrongdoings yet I knew there was more work to be done.

Rebellion and defiance, in any form, get in the way of my development and my relationship with my Higher Power. There is so much good I have experienced by surrendering my will and my life to His care – that when I am faced with my character defects, I find I am willing to reach for a new way – God’s way. There are days when I think that by simply being aware of my actions and reactions I can begin to stop before I start. Unfortunately, when I have tried this method, I feel more like I am on a diet – watching what I eat, obsessing over my actions and reactions, feeling ashamed, and being afraid to admit that I am not perfect. This type of thinking shifts control from my Higher Power back to my hands, which nearly always leads to bigger problems.

Step Six helped me to see that my Higher Power can do for my defects of character what He did for my compulsive eating. I must be willing to be mindful of my character defects, willing to pray for guidance, and willing to do God’s will (not mine). “We seek progress not perfection.” Perfection is one of my character defects and for that reason, I have to remember that Step Six outlines a perfect ideal – which is the yardstick by which I measure my progress.

Every day I am faced with challenges and problems where my first reaction is to be filled with anger, resentment or fear. With each challenge, I learn more about my motives, my thinking, my desire for control, which helps me to recognize the thoughts and behaviors that lead me away from trusting in my Higher Power’s ability to guide me. My Higher Power has shown me how to respond to life from a place of humility, grace and love that result in strong relationships, trust and serenity. I do not claim perfection – I am far from it – however, today I am willing and open to move toward God’s will for me.

-- Nea

### **Walking Toward Perfection**

"If we would gain any real advantage in the use of this Step on problems other than alcohol, we shall need to make a brand new venture into open mindedness. We shall need to raise our eyes toward perfection & be ready to walk in that direction." Bill W. 12 & 12 p.68

If you were to ask me if I wanted my character defects removed I would say, "Of course I do!", because who doesn't want to be defect free? But if you asked me if I wanted to be "irritated and huffy" free, I would say "sure" but a part of me wouldn't believe it was possible.

So many of my defects seem "natural" and unavoidable and not really worth bothering God about. In reality my experience has been that anything no matter how small that I lay at my HP's feet has gotten better. This is how I "walk toward perfection". Not because I will ever be perfect but because it is better to have perfect goals and make steady progress than to aim for apathy and mediocrity.

-- Rebecca W.

## Personal Stories

### What I Tell Myself

For two and a half years I have followed a weighed and measured food plan and used the other tools of the program in a structured way. This has worked beautifully for me and has saved me from ME! I have heard that it is said at some meetings, “We abstain from compulsive eating and from negative thinking”. I now know how to abstain from compulsive eating thanks to desperation and willingness to ask what to do and then do it, but I discovered not too long ago that I hadn’t quite figured out how to abstain from the negative thinking part. I spent a lifetime moaning and groaning, perfecting the art of cursing, swearing, and muttering. I thought it was pretty funny. Not anymore.

In abstinence my negativity (now more subtle) is rooted in fear, projecting bad outcomes, worrying and fearing the worst. Much of it revolves around basic daily living. I have caught many “I don’t want to” “I can’t” and “no” messages buzzing through my head at 90 miles a minute.

I realized I would have to *work at being positive* every day just as I work at being abstinent everyday by planning and measuring. I began to write down gratitude lists and positive affirmations and read them out loud (“I *want* to go to the dentist and have my teeth fixed”). I also made lists of everything my heart desires. I realized my heart desires to be positive, to be vibrant and upbeat, energetic and happy. I want to be happy, joyous, and free like the Big Book promises, not negative and afraid all the time.

So I tell myself that I have patience for the changes that take time, that my Higher Power can and will help me to change, that I want to be changed. I cooperate by telling myself repeatedly, I *want* to wash the dishes, I *want* to walk the dog, I *want* to floss my teeth -- it is very simple and it works. My self esteem increases as I do estimable acts and I find my thinking becomes more positive as I feed my mind positive messages. Now I *want* to call my sponsor and then I *want* to walk the dog when I am done on the phone!

I am going to have a great evening, abstinent and grateful for all that I have. Wishing you all the same

and so glad to be working the program with you, one day at a time.

-- T.H

### The Ladder

A couple of weeks ago, I received a gift along with my 30-day medallion. It was a new understanding that the seven tools of the program are the WAY OUT of my addiction. They serve as a seven-rung rope ladder, thrown down to me as I struggle alone, separated by uncontrollable eating from the abundant life I believe God intends me to live.

Here’s how I perceive the ladder:

Rung One is the long, leg-stretching to reach up to ***Abstinence***, the foundational rung.

At Rung Two, ***SPONSORSHIP***, the ladder stops swaying. I am upright, and I can see people at the top of the ladder, holding the ropes that bear my (hefty!) weight.

***PHONE CALLS***, Rung Three, require me to communicate with these supportive people. They ask how I’m doing. I say I’m feeling shaky and spent. They determine that I’m doing something incorrectly. They are encouraging but tell me bluntly that if I insist on doing it my way, I’ll slip.

Finally, they coax me up to Rung Four, ***MEETINGS***, where they lay out the plan for my recovery. When I show up and listen, I hear practical things that keep me going, as well as stories that inspire and restore me for the rest of the climb.

At Rung Five, I find a world of help in ***READING*** program literature. It opens me to the experience, strength, and hope of the worldwide recovery community. ***WRITING*** allows me to respond.

It’s a struggle for me to grasp Rung Six, ***ANONYMITY***. Urging me to try harder, the people supporting me tell me the unity of the program depends on my getting a secure grip on this rung. With effort, I understand that a serious breach of anonymity could tear the group apart, pitting people against each other, and jeopardizing the recovery of all.

With ***SERVICE***, Rung Seven, comes the understanding that my recovery means nothing in isolation. To get a secure hold on this rung requires me to imagine myself in Akron, Ohio, circa 1935. There, a newly recovering alcoholic, standing alone in a hotel lobby, is making a momentous decision: Should he walk to the left into the hotel bar? Or

should he walk to the right, to the phone to call a minister, explaining that his own recovery depends on his reaching out—RIGHT NOW—to some anonymous, still-suffering alcoholic? I get it: My recovery is possible because 70 years ago, a guy named Bill did the next right thing: He made a phone call.

-- Anonymous

### **Free of the Burden of Compulsive Overeating**

I have been an overeater for as long as I can remember. As a child, I remember sneaking food out of the kitchen, trying not to make any noise so my family wouldn't know what I was doing. I can remember one summer when I ate dinner with my family and then would tell them I was going for a walk when in reality I would walk to a fast food place, eat a second meal, and then go get ice cream and eat that too. At a very early age, I knew that the way I ate was not like other people, and my eating and my weight became sources of embarrassment, secrecy & shame. I gained more and more weight each year as I went through school. My clothes never fit me right, and I never felt like I fit in either. I only tried to lose weight once or twice, and it never worked. I could never follow a diet for more than a short amount of time. The problem just got worse and worse, and by the time I graduated from high school, I weighed almost 300 pounds, or maybe even more since I rarely got on a scale.

I found Overeaters Anonymous when I was 28. It took me three years of coming back to meetings to find recovery, but I did. I have not overeaten even one time in over two years, and I am a healthy, normal weight. At 150 pounds, I weigh half of what I used to. OA finally gave me a solution to my problem. What I have learned in OA is that my problem wasn't weight or even food. My real problem is that I never knew how to cope with life, even as a child. In order to address this problem, I had to be willing to follow structured guidelines around my food. I have a specific food plan that I follow no matter what. This allows me to take the focus off of food and weight while I use the 12 Step program of recovery OA offers me as a way of dealing with my life problems. When I do this, I find I do not need or even want to eat any foods that are not prescribed to me on my food plan. Losing weight used to be my biggest fantasy, but it is not the biggest gift I have received in OA. I have a whole new life and a whole new attitude because of this program. It has worked for me, and it can work for anyone. Compulsive overeating stole away

many years of my life, but I am free of that burden today. There is a way out, and for me that way out was found in OA.

--Jason R.

## **Unity Intergroup News**

### **2006 World Service Business Conference**

The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual World Service Business Conference (WBSC) was held May 1 – 6, 2006. There were 16 Trustees and 166 Delegates from all over the world present creating 182 voting delegates. There were many others present who volunteered their time to help the conference take place. The theme was "OA Without Borders". 3 Region Trustees and one General Service Trustee were elected: Region 3: Debbie Wilson, Region 6: Margaret Ann Brady, Region 9: Dominique Buffet, General Service Trustee: Michael Buckley (only one person ran from GST, so there is a vacancy.)

There were 4 new business motions and 3 bylaw amendments proposed. Only one new business motion passed. The name of HIPM (Hospital, Institutions, Professionals, and the Military) Committee was changed to the Professional Outreach Committee.

There was lively discussion on a motion that a ninth tool, a plan of physical activity, be added to the current list of OA Tools. A 63 for and 115 against vote defeated this motion. A 2/3 majority of delegate votes was required to pass the motion.

As we listened to the Officers' Reports, we were asked to have individual OA groups review and update their group information quarterly as the WSO gets lots of inquiries and has been giving out outdated information.

Region 7 reported they are busy planning the 2007 World Service Convention, "Ring in Recovery: Declare Your Freedom From Compulsive Eating" to be held August 30 – September 2, 2007 at Loews Philadelphia Hotel in Pennsylvania. (This is a recovery event for OA members throughout the world, so please mark your calendars and we hope to see you there.)

Sheila attended the Professional Outreach Committee (formerly HIPM) meetings. Some of the goals for the next years were to 1. Encourage OA members who are professionals to write articles for the Courier. 2. Seek to have literature generic to all

professionals, not just specific to clergy or the military. 3. Change the name of the committee (yeah, that's done!) 4. Create database for professional events coming up.

Stephanie attended the Conference Literature Committee meetings. This committee will be reviewing and updating several pamphlets. (To the Teen, Treatment and Beyond, A Guide to the 12 Steps for You and Your Sponsor, Maintaining a Healthy Weight) The committee will also complete work on a new pamphlet with stories from black OA's. A new pamphlet addressing diversity within OA was also proposed and will be brought to the Board of Trustees for approval.

The Finance Committee created a plan for creating budgets in Intergroups. This may be requested by emailing Louise A at [lla@ipns.com](mailto:lla@ipns.com).

The Twelfth Step Within Committee came up with two goals. 1. Encourage recovery and preventing relapse of current members. 2. To create a format for a Twelfth Step Within Meeting.

There were nine workshops, one forum and one presentation and discussion as well as the 5 Business Meetings, and the Committee Meetings.

The workshop topics were:

- ◆ Travel Buddies: You and Your Sponsor
- ◆ Map It Out: The Tools
- ◆ Anonymous Traveler: The Stigma of Membership
- ◆ Passport to Freedom: Hearing is Believing
- ◆ Avoiding Detours: The Disruptive Member
- ◆ Travel Itinerary: All About Conference
- ◆ Border Guards: Tradition Four Issues
- ◆ Inside the Terminal: Review of Parliamentary Procedure
- ◆ Borderless Program: The Internet

The Forum was titled Crossing Borders: Sharing Region Information. This started with a presentation by some of the Region Chairs, and then each table answered some questions on various topics. The answers were presented during the last part of the Forum. Lots of great ideas were generated.

The discussion was titled Customs Declaration: Cultural and Ethnic Diversity.

If you'd like to know more about the conference, please contact either Sheila H. at 952-758-2962 or Stephanie A. at 651-298-1423. Either of us would be happy to spend time on the phone or to visit your meeting to talk more about the conference. -- Stephanie A.

## July Society Pages

The July Society Pages will feature Step Seven, "Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings." The group sponsoring articles for July is Wed, OA HOW St. Louis Park. Articles on the step or a personal story are still accepted from other OA members, however. Please send your contributions to [cmkareninmn@yahoo.com](mailto:cmkareninmn@yahoo.com) for publication in Society Pages.

**The deadline for submission of articles is 12:00 noon on Saturday July 1.**

## Calendar of Events

Society Pages Deadline	July 1, 2006
Intergroup Meeting	July 8, 2006
Newcomer meeting	6/17/06 & 7/15/06
Region IV Convention	June 23-25, 2006
Frontenac Retreat	Sept 15-17, 2006
MN State Convention	Nov 3-5, 2006
List of Local Meetings	<a href="http://www.overeaters.org">www.overeaters.org</a>
Region 4 Web Site	<a href="http://www.oaregion4.org">www.oaregion4.org</a>
World Service Web Site	<a href="http://www.aa.org">www.aa.org</a>

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