

Society Pages

The Newsletter of
Unity Intergroup September 2009

www.overeaters.org

Carrying the Message

Now you can read the Society Pages online every month at www.overeaters.org.

Step Nine: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Step Nine Reflections

Most people I have talked to in recovery struggle with Step Nine. It seemed so alien to me. It went against my grain to go through those motions and I'd never done such a thing. Even figuring out how exactly to do an amends took me lots of time, input, and instruction from our Fellowship and prayers to my Higher Power for willingness.

Did I do it perfectly? Certainly not. Coming to accept imperfection has been as much a part of my recovery as the Steps themselves. Letting that perfection go has taken continual work on my part. In the beginning I thought I'd have to do the Steps perfectly; that everyone else did, and expected the same from me. I have come to see only a Higher Power can be perfect. It has eased my burdens to not be pushing for perfection and beating myself up when I inevitably fail to be perfect.



Another critical part of my amends has been the "living" amends. Some harms were not going to be fixed by a verbal amends. Instead I have to find my part and work to not commit that type of harm in the future.

This working of Step Nine circles back on Steps Four to Seven, where I fearlessly search for harms I've committed, and surrendered those character defects to my Higher Power. I alone cannot rid myself of defects. Instead I prepare myself to have my Higher Power remove those defects.



These preparations include prayer, sharing, reading, and writing. Then I consciously, humbly, ask my Higher Power to remove my shortcomings. That done, I sit back and get on with the actions I can take, and leave the rest to my Higher Power.

~Anonymous

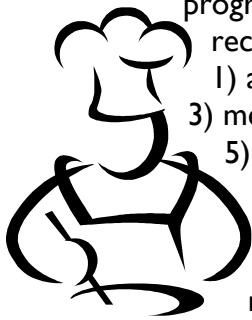
Cooking With OA

Before recovery in OA, everyone would say I was a great cook and talented baker. Only problem was all that taste testing along the way.

Now, I have to read recipes and follow directions to make sure a non-abstinent dish turns out well for my very large family. For example, I once said on an OA phone call, "Yeah, it's going okay today, I just got done making banana bread abstinently." Well, of course my OA friend wanted the recipe for making "abstinent banana bread!"

Now I follow the simple, but not-so-easy recipe that's laid out for me in the OA program. The ingredients for my recovery recipe are:

- 1) abstinence, 2) sponsorship,
 - 3) meetings, 4) phone calls,
 - 5) anonymity, 6) service,
 - 7) literature, reading and writing.
- These have to be on hand every day or my recipe for recovery will not



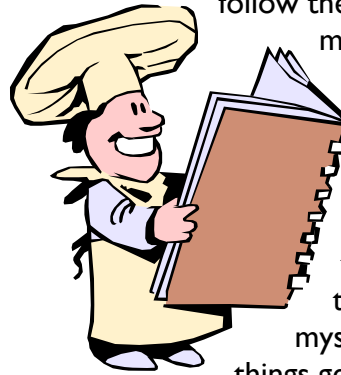
turn out. For me to not have a sponsor would be like not having yeast to make bread or soup without salt!

Meetings are really to me like the oven where all of the ingredients are mixed up and things start to heat up, they are the warmth that makes the bread rise and bake. Phone

calls are like eggs, a binding agent that ties me to another sufferer (i.e. we're all in this together).

The other part of my successful recovery recipe is to be able and willing to follow directions. The instructions on the box say to

follow these 12 Steps. So every morning I take the first three steps and give up my will and ask for the divine Baker's will for me. Then as my day gets cooking, I'm bound to make a mess of things, so I take the next three steps and clean up after myself. Sometimes though,



things get a little too hot in the kitchen and someone gets hurt by my sizzling emotions or cutting comments, so I humble myself, apologize for the mess I've made of things and pick up all the broken pieces and start over, noting of course for the next day how I can improve on my recipe for recovery.

The best part of being a cook is sharing the fruits of my labors. In OA this means that I can share this recipe for recovery with those people around me who hunger for something they just can't find in the fridge. We do this 12th Step work in hopes that one more sufferer will get a taste of how sweet it is to wake up abstinent one day .

~Anonymous, Abstinent & Always Cooking!

A Change In Behavior

Even though I have made amends to friends, former lovers, and family members, I like to think of Step Nine as a change in behavior and a showing up for my relationship with my Higher Power. With that in mind, I'm less likely to be afraid or worried about the outcome when going into an amends. It's between me and my Higher Power, and how I show up for that relationship.

~Anonymous



A Look Back Through 2009



As I write a few words for the September issue of the Society Pages, I am amazed that time has flown by so quickly. The July Intergroup meeting marked the half-way mark of the current board's term, and it feels like we're just getting started! But when I take a closer look at what our Intergroup reps have been doing over the past several months, I can see the value of recovery that we have to offer in the Twin Cities. Since the last update in the Society Pages, here is what our Intergroup representatives have been working on:

- Sent five Representatives to the Region Spring Assembly in April, and four delegates to OA's World Service Business Conference in May;
- Set strategic priorities for the next year;
- Enhanced Unity's website (www overeaters.org) so that the Society Pages, Intergroup agenda, minutes, and treasury reports are available prior to our monthly Intergroup meetings;
- Set up telephone conferencing equipment so that reps from affiliated virtual groups are able to attend Intergroup meetings;
- Acquired a digital recorder in order to make audio files of OA speakers from affiliated groups available on our website;
- Staffed a table in Loring Park at the Pride Festival in June;
- Will staff tables at:
 - The National Eating Disorders Association annual conference at the Minneapolis Hilton (Marquette) on Sept 10-12;
 - National Diabetes Expo on Sa Oct 24 at the Minneapolis Convention Center;
- Upcoming recovery events include:
 - Frontenac Retreat on Sept 18, 19, & 20;
 - State Convention at the Sofitel in Bloomington November 6, 7, & 8.

There are so many events and activities going on and so many ways to carry the message. There are many exciting projects in the works! While fall is around the corner, there is no time like right now to get engaged and involved and enhance your recovery through all of these opportunities. Not only do these give each of us a chance to focus on our own recovery, there are lots of opportunities to help in order to make them happen – take the 12th Step challenge and see what you can do to carry the message! Whether you choose to give service in a way that is tried and true or whether you choose to try something new and develop a new skill or meet new people, everything that each of us does in this regard helps to carry the message to the still suffering compulsive eater. Together we can do what we could never do alone!



~Catherine W., Unity Intergroup Chair

Facing Amends

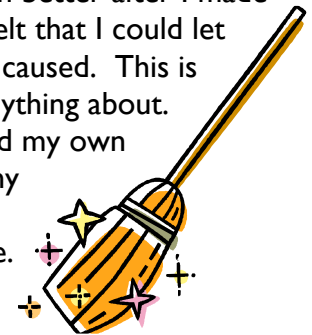
In moving from Step Seven to Steps Eight and Nine, I found myself venturing out from a more introspective process and beginning work on relationships; on repairing the damage I had done in the past. The action of making amends was truly the work of faith. Steps Eight and Nine presented the most intense test of my faith than ever before. I struggled to come to grips with whether I had actually harmed anyone and how. I struggled with how to make amends and put the amends into action. This was particularly difficult with those I believed had caused me harm. How could I humble myself in their presence? It also was very difficult with those I knew I had harmed, and felt so bad about. My launching pad for these amends was my faith – that my Higher Power would do for me what I could not do for myself. “Faith without works is dead.” The works of developing and making amends strengthened my faith. It was through this process that my faith became more vital – a living, breathing, dynamic experience affirming that my Higher Power is there to lovingly support me in the next right thing, to guide me in my amends, to show me the unexpected gifts.

In facing amends, my self will insisted on getting in the way. It chattered: “How will I come across? What will they think of me? How will they respond? Will they think I’m crazy?” My self will also led me to focus my amends on demonstrating to another person that I realized what I did was wrong, so . . . “See? I’m not such a bad person. I now realize that what I did was crazy.” In this way, I would try to erase the mistake in the hopes that the other person would think better of me. This missed the point of amends and perpetuated the delusion of perfectionism. As this became apparent to me, I cancelled many amends, because I



realized that I hadn’t really caused harm to the other person; rather, I just had caused harm to myself, because I had acted a fool and looked like an idiot! So, it wasn’t really about amends at all, but about polishing my image. This helped me to realize that our purpose is not to get closer to an illusory “perfection.” Our real purpose is not about us, but is about following God’s will for us, to be of greatest service to God and to others. My self will’s interference in my amends reminded me that, no matter what process I embark upon in my recovery, my self will is always trying to concoct some way to prevail, to undermine the progress of my recovery. The antidote is to humbly ask my Higher Power, what would You have me be? That simple question cuts through all the pretense and confusion.

Another problem I encountered was overcoming resentment toward others with whom I no doubt had harmed, but who I felt had hurt me worse. “We are there to sweep off our side of the street.” I had to remind myself of this principle many times during the Ninth Step. I understood that, no matter what harm the other person had done, we are to let that go, as it is none of our business. In the Ninth Step, we literally are cleaning up the wreckage of our past. For me, that’s a big enough task without having to mind anyone else’s business. I really had to face this with my brother. He has done some things that were really harmful to me. But I had to let them go, to focus on my own shortcomings and the harm that I certainly had caused him. That is the charge of the Eighth and Ninth steps. Clean up my side of the street. It felt so much better after I made amends to him. I really felt that I could let go of the wreckage I had caused. This is the only thing I can do anything about. That’s why I need to mind my own business – because it is my business and only my business that I can change.



~Anonymous



Frontenac Retreat September 18-20, 2009

Come join us for a recovery weekend! Registration begins at 6 p.m. on Friday and we will close with lunch on Sunday. Throughout the weekend, speakers will share their experience, strength and hope and we will share in small groups. Personal time will be available for reflection and fellowship throughout the weekend.

At the Villa Maria Retreat Center

Registration Information

Space Is Limited—Register Early!

| Registration Received | Shared Room | Private Room (Limited Number) |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Before August 22, 2009 | \$164. | \$189. |
| After August 22, 2009 | \$174. | \$199. |

The registration fee includes two nights' lodging, three meals on Saturday and two meals on Sunday.

Due to our commitment to the retreat center, there will be **no refunds**. Please find your own replacement. Final registration deadline is **September 10, 2009**. We reserve the right to cancel due to insufficient reservations.

Scholarships

We have a limited number of partial scholarships available. For information, contact Chris L. at (952) 945-0558 or e-mail cleick@comcast.net.

The Retreat Center

Villa Maria Retreat Center, 29847 County 2 Blvd., Frontenac, MN 55026 (www.villamariaretreats.org)

- Sleeping rooms are not air conditioned, but fans are provided.
- Handicap accessible (ramp & elevator)—refrigerator & microwaves available—swimming pool, labyrinth, walking trails.
- Menu, Map & Schedule—Include your e-mail address (or a self-addressed stamped envelope) for a copy of the menu, map and weekend schedule.
- Directions—Villa Maria is near Frontenac in southeast Minnesota. From the Twin Cities, take Hwy 61 South to Red Wing. In Red Wing, stay on Hwy 61 South and go 12 miles to Frontenac. In Frontenac, stay on Hwy 61 South and go 1.3 miles. Take a left (north) on County Road 2 and go 1 mile. The retreat center is right after the bridge overlooking the marsh.

Questions or Special Needs: **Linda (612) 813-0535** **Lrg1909@gmail.com**

PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE RETREAT CENTER DIRECTLY

Frontenac Retreat - Registration Form

Name: _____
 Name Tag should read: _____
 Street Address: _____
 City/State/Zip: _____
 Home Meeting: _____
 E-Mail: _____
 Phone: _____
 Other Phone (optional): _____

Male Female

I am new to OA This is my first retreat

Have you previously been to this retreat center?

Yes No

Would you be interested in a tour of the center?

Yes No

Would you like your name, phone and e-mail included on the contact list distributed at the retreat? Yes No

Preference: Private room Shared room

Roommate: _____

(If you don't list one, one will be assigned.)

I am willing to:

- Be a speaker Lead a small group
 Hear a 5th Step Be a sponsor
 Do service at retreat

I would like to donate the following item(s) for the auction _____

Make check payable to OA Retreat Fund.
 Send check and registration form to:
 Deb S., 5608 Woodland Rd.,
 Minnetonka, MN 55345

Translations Fund Helps Carry the Message of Recovery Around the World and In Our Backyards



This spring, a new fund was set up to assist in the translation of OA literature, forms, correspondence, Web site and other materials to languages other than English. This fund unites recovering compulsive eaters by breaking down barriers of language and culture. It brings to life the OA Responsibility Pledge “Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this I am responsible.”

Through the Translations Fund we can reach out our hands to spread the message of recovery across countries and cultures, to persons in and outside of the US for whom English is not their first language. As Minnesota grows more diverse with time, it is increasingly important that our literature is accessible to all, regardless of language and culture.

OA members or groups may contribute directly to the Translations Fund by going to www.oa.org. To donate online click on Members/Groups and choose Make a Contribution. Or, if you would like to mail a check, click on Meetings and choose Group Secretary Materials to print off the Contributions Form to send with your donation. Either way be sure to check the box for Translations Fund to support fellow compulsive overeaters throughout the world.

Mark Your Calendars!

2009 OA MN State Convention

The 2009 OA Minnesota State Convention is coming! The three-day recovery event is a venue for a variety of OAs to come together, explore, inquire, learn, grow, and continue on the path of recovery. Regardless of your duration of attendance at meetings, of your meal plan, of your current level of step work - there is a place for you, and a need for you!, at this year's convention.

Amy D. shares, "Convention is a place where I meet people who follow many OA formats, and listen to how they work their program, taking what I want and leaving the rest. I have never left a state convention without a new way to tweak my program and bring me even closer to my higher power and a life of serenity!"

Experience the convention for yourself!

Save These Dates: November 6, 7, & 8

Save money: Send your registration in before September 30 to pay a reduced rate!

OA TO HAVE BOOTH AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The National Eating Disorders Association National Conference is coming at the Minneapolis Hilton (downtown) September 10-12. We are sorry to report that we were not chosen to present a Conference Session, but we will have an information booth.

We need lots of volunteers to help man the booth!

Please contact Dianne M. at diannemahoney@tds.net or by calling 320-485-2544. We would especially like to have a broad representation from our various manifestations of this disease. Service is part of our recovery, and it has been reported to us that this is a very inspiring experience! So please join us in this unique and rare opportunity to share with professionals and fellow-sufferers that there is a solution!

Thanks to all who have already called. We will be sending out schedules and instructions in August.



SUPER SATURDAYS

We reviewed the Strategic Focus from the previous Unity Intergroup meeting on the Service Workshop (OA Tradition Five 'Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the compulsive overeater who still suffers'). At each Intergroup meeting two of the ideas from the workshop will be discussed. The two topics chosen for this month (July) are 1) Adopt a sister Intergroup, and 2) Purchase a digital recording device for recording speakers to post to Unity's website.

Plan to attend upcoming Unity IG meetings to find out more about these suggestions, see them get put into action and the service opportunities for giving back what you have been given.



Looking For Speakers

The following meetings are looking for speakers. What a great way to do service and strengthen your own recovery!

Owatonna, Mon 7 PM. Please contact Michelle M mundt68@yahoo.com

Faribault, Tues 5:30 PM. Please contact Roxie B brennanroxie@hotmail.com

Bloomington, Tues 6 PM. Please contact Julie C at danejulie@hotmail.com or call 612-558-3687 if interested.

Other Outreach Opportunities

Public Information Chair

October Society Pages

The October Society Pages will focus on Step 10: "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it." and will be sponsored by the Saturday 8 a.m. Eden Prairie group. Although one meeting generally sponsors each newsletter, we welcome articles from anyone. Please indicate if it is okay to print your name with your article and email your contributions to Julie C. at juliecoig@earthlink.net by Saturday, September 19.

Mark Your Calendar

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Saturday, September 5 | Web Updates Deadline |
| Sept. 10-12 | Outreach at Natl. Eating Disorders Conf. |
| Saturday, September 12 | Intergroup Meeting |
| Sept. 18-20 | Frontenac Retreat |
| Saturday, September 19 | Society Pages Deadline |
| Saturday, September 19 | Newcomer Meeting |

More information available at www.overeaters.org

Link Into Recovery at the Unity Intergroup Website

www.overeaters.org

What you'll find on our Website:

- Calendar of recovery events and happenings in the OA community
- Flyers for retreats, conventions, workshops, and Newcomers meeting
- Local meeting list
- Society Pages newsletters
- Unity Intergroup meeting minutes and financial reports

The creation of a new "Our Stories" section is underway. OA members are invited to submit their personal stories of recovery. This is a great opportunity to share your experience, strength and hope with newcomers and the fellowship. If you'd like to share your story online, email flycurvewhirl@yahoo.com.

Conference Dial-in Number: (218) 339-4600

Participant Access Code: 468702#

Details of the telephone system and keypad options;
<http://www.overeaters.org/conferencing.html>

Intergroup Board

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Catherine W., Chair | 612-205-0930 | oaforme@gmail.com |
| Amy D., Vice-Chair | 952-270-0098 | unityig@yahoo.com |
| Rebecca P., Treasurer | 612-803-6060 | rebecca.parrell@gmail.com |
| Sheri O., Secretary | 651-437-2052 | unity.secretary@yahoo.com |