

Society Pages

The
Newsletter of
Unity Intergroup May 2005

Carrying the Message

News from Unity Intergroup

Lee Ann has volunteered to head up a new committee to address Public Information. If you would like to be on this committee please call her at 763-458-3248

OA World Service Business Conference in New Mexico is a hotbed of ideas

(Because of space constraints, this article is not printed in its entirety. It will be continued in the June issue of Society Pages.)

Nearly 200 OA delegates from around the world gathered in Albuquerque, New Mexico during the week of April 25-30 to discuss ways of carrying the message to the still suffering compulsive overeater. OA members heard workshops packed with ideas for reaching out and debated proposals over everything from literature, to by-law changes, to the definition of abstinence.

The World Service Business Conference (WSBC) is an annual event that in recent years has been held in Albuquerque because it is close to the world headquarters of Overeaters Anonymous, which is located in Rio Rancho, N.M. Delegates came from across the North and South America, Europe and Asia, with people coming from as far away as Australia and New Zealand.

Despite a variety of differences—which is a staple of such conferences—there was a unity over fundamental goals, reflected in the title of the Conference, “Singleness of Purpose.” On several occasions where differences were strong, delegates stopped, held hands and said

the Serenity Prayer, before voting, a reflection of the basic unity we share. There were also traditional daily OA meetings, morning, noon and night, and one evening there was a men’s OA meeting, organized on short notice by one of the male delegates.

The conference approved the publication of an important new pamphlet, “OA Members Come in All Sizes,” which will focus on the stories of anorexics and bulimics, and others who enter the rooms of OA at a normal weight. Over the years there has been a growing sense of the need for such a pamphlet.

The literature committee is also developing pamphlets over the coming year that are aimed at people coming out of treatment, a pamphlet on African-Americans and blacks from other countries, another pamphlet for people who are living in recovery, and a pamphlet aimed at teenagers. The committee is seeking more stories on African Americans from both men and women, but is particularly interested in finding stories from black men because we have a shortage of such stories. If you know of someone in the Twin Cities area or would like to submit a story yourself, please email randyfurst@msn.com or call 612-822-0317.

Abstinence issue debated

The Unity Intergroup, which represents OA groups in the Twin Cities, voted to approve a proposal, first developed by the Mass Bay Intergroup in Massachusetts, that would expand the definition of abstinence. Later, by a very narrow margin, Unity Intergroup voted to endorse sending the proposal before the world

conference. OA's current "Statement on Abstinence and Recovery," says that "According to the dictionary, the word 'abstain' means to refrain from. Abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous is the action of refraining from compulsive eating. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve-Step program."

The proposal by the Mass Bay and Unity intergroups added one phrase, stating that abstinence in OA is the action of refraining from compulsive eating "in a manner that reflects a desire to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight." The proposal drew strong and passionate support on both sides of the issue and was ultimately defeated 99 to 88. The proposal—or ones like it—have been before the conference before and is likely to be brought forward again.

A second controversial proposal would have altered the way proposals are brought to the conference. Endorsed by the chairs of OA's 11 regions, the idea was to have new proposals from local Intergroups first approved by regional assemblies before reaching the conference floor. That idea was defeated by a large margin. Also overwhelmingly defeated was a proposal that would require OA groups to read or display the short form of OA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions at all OA meetings. While reading the steps and traditions is an idea that virtually everyone at the conference favored, there was a general sentiment that such a procedure should only be a suggestion rather than a requirement, since each OA group is autonomous.

Big plans continue to develop for booths and displays at major meetings of healthcare professionals. Among the big meetings this year, OA plans to staff a booth at a convention of the American Dietetic Association in St. Louis that is expected to draw 10,000 people. OA will be using the booth display belonging to our Unity Intergroup in the Twin Cities. OA is looking for OA volunteers to help staff the booth from Oct. 23 to 25.

Contact randyfurst@msn.com or 612-822-0317 if you want more information.

Workshop leaders urged members to look for similar conferences in their communities. We should keep our eyes out for big meetings in the Twin Cities and pass along information about them to your Intergroup representative.
--Randy F. and Sheila H.

(Both Sheila and Randy are available to speak to OA meetings in Minnesota. Sheila is available for daytime meetings, only. To reach her, call 952-758-2962. Randy's phone number is in the text of this article)

Unity Sponsored Events

A New Beginning Summer Retreat

Join us on June 24, 25 and 26 at Villa Maria Retreat Center in Frontenac, MN. The cost is \$117 for a shared room or \$142.50 for a private room if you reserve by May 24. Call Judy M with any questions about the retreat, at 763-473-4920. Come and join us!

Unity will again have an informational booth at the Gay Pride Festival which is held on June 25-26. If you would like to volunteer to help at the booth please call Kristie 612-822-1443 or Jason 952-942-2903.

Group Contributions March 2005

| Meeting Day, Time & Location | Contribution Amount |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Tuesday 7pm-Eagan | 90.00 |
| Saturday am – Roseville | 60.00 |
| Monday 7pm – Highland Park | 150.00 |
| Eden Prairie | 194.00 |
| Saturday – St Paul Mac/Plymouth | 120.00 |
| Wednesday 7pm – St Louis Park HOW | 120.00 |
| Sunday 7pm – St Louis Park HOW | 255.00 |

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| Monday pm – White Bear Lake | 90.00 |
| Monday pm – Lynnhurst | 144.10 |
| Wednesday afternoon – Blaine | 49.00 |
| Personal donation | 30.00 |
| Saturday – Golden Valley Unity | 60.00 |
| Tuesday 7pm – Woodbury HOW | 114.00 |

Thank you to all groups for your support.

Meeting Announcements

The Saturday morning Eden Prairie meeting has scheduled informational open sessions for anyone who would like to learn more about OA. They take place at the regular meeting times, 9:00-10:30, at Pax Christi church. The upcoming dates are August 13th and December 10th.

A new OA/HOW meeting has started. It meets at St Andrews church, 13600 Technology Dr, Eden Prairie, Saturdays 8:00-10:00. Come check it out!

Subscriptions

Society Pages is available by subscription for individuals outside the Unity Intergroup region. The cost is \$6.00 for one year. It is also available at no cost on the website www overeaters.org. For a subscription, please send your name, address and zip code, along with a check made payable to Unity Intergroup (with Society Pages in the memo section) to: Sheila Hyde, 311 First Street NE, New Prague, MN 56071-1821

Intergroup Board

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The next Intergroup meeting will be on June 11, 2005 at 12:30, at 1660 Parkdale Dr., St Louis Park, MN. Every group can send two voting representatives to the meeting, but all are welcome to attend. Please join us!

Personal Stories

A few simple actions

What I knew when I walked into OA/HOW was that my life wasn't working and I couldn't live the way I had been-anything was better-it had to be!

The few simple actions started by writing down my food, calling my sponsor, eating what I said, making calls, going to meetings, doing service. It was very simple compared to the mental gymnastics, twists and turns this disease was doing to me. What I am learning is that I needed to grow up. I needed to act like an adult in my relationships with people in the fellowship, with my family and at work. I need to pay my bills return business calls and be responsible and accountable.

All of this means my relationships with family have improved, I'm recognized at work for a good job, my relationship with my partner ended clean, my credit rating improved to the point where I could buy a nice home. I don't live in fear. I can, one day at a time surrender to a Higher Power the belief that I don't know crap. This program and the people in it are teaching me how to live the way I was intended to live.

I am so grateful for the life I have today. If, in my recovery I have moments where I feel fat, or I should work out, that's 1,000 times better than the moments of terror and frustration I lived with 24/7 before recovery. I am grateful that I have a belief in a power greater than me and that my only road block is forgetting to call on that Higher Power. I

am frequently reminded because I have great people who are kind enough to remind me.

Anonymous

I am only in infancy

I came to OA vulnerable and needy, largely unable to get my true needs met in a grown-up fashion. By accepting this and admitting my need for help, a great door has been opened. I have willingly come to see myself as like a baby coming into a new world vulnerable and needy, only beginning the process of growing up.

If recovery is like a growing up process, then I am only in infancy. It is helpful to remember and accept that I am consequently undergoing the tasks of infancy. My job as an infant is to absorb the world around me and to reach out for caregivers. I am developing a sense of basic trust and security in myself and in the world. I am only beginning to learn who I truly am and feel safe enough in the world to show it. I am learning about the boundaries between myself and others, and about how to connect with others while still maintaining separateness.

Through my dependence, I am internalizing more mature ways of stabilizing and regulating myself and my emotions. I am grateful to have been taken care of in many ways in my life. I have experienced good-enough care giving that has been a pretty good platform for growth. But I have nevertheless come to a point where I have needed rebirth. And I have a new awareness of my true needs. I am understanding and accepting the inadequacy of my old ways of functioning in which I depended on external gratification and regulation like food & shopping. I am also accepting that only a dependence upon God is

adequate to meet my needs at this point.

I cannot depend exclusively on myself or on other people, but I can depend on God. He is my Ultimate life coordinator & caregiver. He is not only the Ultimate Twinkie and the Ultimate Purchase, but the Ultimate Mother and Father and the Ultimate Friend and Partner. Just as an infant takes time to develop an exclusive and special and functional attachment to a particular caregiver, I am only beginning to turn my infant eyes to God.

And God is using OA to hold me. How is OA “holding” me as a recovering infant? Through the loving containment of my food plan, which provides my physical body with exactly what it needs. Through God’s surrogate caregivers to whom I connect on hook-ups and at meetings. Through the surrogate mother of my sponsor who listens to me and guides me each day dependably and lovingly, sharing wisdom that comes from her own growth process. Through the life instruction found in the literature, which helps me maintain my focus on the keys to peace and serenity under all of life’s conditions. I am securely attached to OA. Thank God for the secure base of the program!!

BP

The June Society Pages will feature Step Six, “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.” If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please send your reflections on the step, or a personal story to rboe@mn.rr.com. Deadline for submission of articles is Wednesday, June 1.

“The moment we say, “No, never!” our minds close against the grace of God. Delay is dangerous, and rebellion may be fatal. This is the exact point at which we abandon limited objectives, and move toward God’s will for us.” *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*