

Society Pages

The
Newsletter of
Unity Intergroup October 2005

Carrying the Message

State Convention 2005!

Greetings OA Fellows. The MN State Convention is just one month away, on November 4-6. Registration forms are available and more information can be found at www overeaters.org, including on-line registration. Please pass along copies of Society Pages, with articles about recovery at convention, to newcomers with a personal invitation to attend convention. There are many ways to participate and get involved. Encourage others to attend by inviting someone to come and hear a speaker, signing up for service with others or as an entire group, asking someone from your meeting to join you in staying at the hotel, just to name a few. The recovery shared at this special event is enriched by all who attend it. The common bond of our disease and the solution found in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions will always lead the way to recovery if I pick it up and use it. I hope to see you in November.

Sarah S. Outreach Co-chair MN State OA Convention

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE AT THE MN STATE CONVENTION

(The following are brief biographies of the keynote speakers for the 2005 Convention: subject to change)

One of the featured speakers is a 42 year old female from Vermont who calls herself a "garden variety addict." She is married and has two children. Her compulsive overeating pushed her weight to 320 pounds. She joined OA in April of 1998 and has been abstinent since Dec. 14, 1999. As a result of practicing the 12

steps and using the tools of OA to become and stay abstinent her weight went from 320 to 143 pounds. She says the gifts of spiritual, emotional and physical recovery have manifested in her life.

In February of 1978, a sick young woman from Danvers, Massachusetts attended her first OA meeting. Hope was born that first night that she could stop binge-eating, starving, vomiting, over-exercising and eating during the middle of the night. It took six years of experimenting in program ("there is nothing worse than a head full of OA and a belly full of food") to get abstinent and stay abstinent one day at a time for the past 22 years. She maintains a 120 lb. weight loss through daily practice of "every tool every day," study of the 12 steps, and the help of a Higher Power she calls God. She is one grateful recovering food addict....

MORE LETTERS FROM OUR FELLOWSHIP ABOUT RECOVERY AND CONVENTION

I have been coming to OA meetings regularly for 18 years. During that time, I have experienced more and longer periods of relapse than of recovery. Five years ago, as a direct result of going to our state convention, I parted company with desserts. Yet even with my single biggest binge food removed, I still slipped back into relapse and in the end, continued gaining weight. Then one miraculous day, fifteen months ago, the forces of wisdom from within and without came together to create a grand explosion of awareness that resulted in acceptance of who I am as a compulsive overeater and a willingness to do what I need to

do to recover. Since that day, I have had back-to-back, imperfectly perfect abstinence. Conventions, for me, have been one of the more powerful forces that came together that day. In fact, going to convention has been like going to a meeting with the message of hope amplified many times over. There I heard this message of hope. I heard a message of sanity. I heard a message of recovery. And, I heard them loud enough that while my little internal addict was screaming in rebellion, my recovering self was busy gathering and storing these sane thoughts like a squirrel gathers acorns for the day they will be needed. One may wonder why I need to go the convention now, since the miracle has finally happened for me. First of all, I am a compulsive overeater, and by definition I am very forgetful about my disease. Going to convention reminds me of who I am, re-energizes my program and reconfirms my commitment. Additionally the speakers are phenomenal, the entertainment is fabulous, the atmosphere is joyful and celebratory, and I get to be immersed in recovery all weekend. What's more, going to convention year after year has extended my OA family so that I feel like I am going as much to a family reunion as to a recovery event. I highly recommend this weekend to all.

Annette

One of the highlights of the state OA convention every year for me is to hear the national speakers. Their stories of hopeless food addiction, finding the rooms of OA, their long term food sobriety, and their transformed lives never fails to inspire me to keep trudging along my own recovery path. I enjoy being able to hear from people who, even though they live in different parts of the country, share my exact same problem, and my same solution. As a compulsive overeater, I need to see what is possible, so that I can strive for that myself. I did not know that recovery from compulsive overeating was possible until I came to the rooms of OA and saw other recovering members. I didn't know that long term recovery

was possible until I started going to my first few conventions and saw long term recovery in front of my own eyes, in the form of the national speakers. The convention is also a place for me to carry the message of recovery to other members. As I am able to meet other local members for the first time, or meet people who drive from out of state to get here who are still struggling with the food, I find opportunities at this yearly gathering to share what I have been so generously given and do my job of conveying the possibility of physical abstinence and the spiritual awakening promised by the Big Book. Convention is also a place to celebrate with my fellows the life that is possible out of food and food obsession. I heard a program person say recently that when we come to meetings, we are in an environment where "compulsive overeating is the norm." That's what I get when I go to convention as well. I am surrounded, in an entire ballroom, by people for whom compulsive overeating is the norm. In a society that dismisses, trivializes, misdiagnoses, and mistreats the condition of compulsive overeating, it is a relief to be submerged in a sea of people who experience what I experience with food, and seek a solution just as I do. I love the convention!

Jo M.

The November, 2001, OA Convention was a turning point in my life. I had returned to OA after several years of being away in which my weight had steadily gone up despite several attempts at Weight Watchers and various other diets. The latest diet I had been on required total abstinence from sugar and I had had some success until a fateful sore throat started me back on ice cream (for medicinal purposes only!!) and off I was—despite the fact that the sore throat cleared up, the ice cream continued daily, along with muffins, cookies, candy, chips, ad infinitum. The only thing I remembered from my earlier OA days was that I knew deep down I was one of those compulsive overeaters who used to attend those meetings and that, having failed everything else, the only remedy left to

me was OA. Despite my previous failure there, I knew I had to return. So in October of 2001, return I did. That's where I heard about two things—an upcoming convention and OA-HOW. I decided that to jump-start my diet again I needed to attend the convention. I also wanted to start right out with a sponsor, because in my previous OA experience I hadn't really worked with a sponsor much. I asked the convention chairperson to please help me find a sponsor. I was desperate! So before one of the keynote speaker talks, the chairperson announced that Mary P. was looking for a sponsor and would anyone who would be willing please raise a hand. Having heard about OA-HOW and its strict requirements, I secretly hoped that whoever responded would not be a HOW person. If I remember right, only one person, someone in the front row immediately raised her hand and we arranged to meet after the talk. Wouldn't you know it turned out to be a HOW person, and, although she was to be my sponsor for only a few brief days since she had a full load of sponsees already and needed to be only a temporary sponsor, it was to be the beginning of a recovery from compulsive overeating I had never been able to even dream of before. Besides getting a sponsor and beginning an incredible journey of abstinence, I heard in the stories of so many people that weekend my story of addiction to food that was like the other, more infamous addictions. I knew that the time had come for me to be part of this group and get serious about my recovery, or I would get deeper and deeper into the problem and would die a very unhealthy and very obese person. I urge anyone who is new and is seeking a way out of the hideous drive to overeat that prevents any attempt to lose weight from working to attend the convention and hear your story and perhaps get a sponsor and get your recovery underway.

Mary P..

SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

There are many service opportunities at the convention. We need people to be greeters, help

with registration, sell literature and put up and take down decorations to name just a few. If you are available to volunteer during any part of the convention weekend please call Stephanie at 651-298-1423 or e-mail dandresen@yahoo.com Partial scholarships to attend convention are available, for more information call Sharon R.S. at 763-544-5955 or e-mail ssund@skypoint.com. For registration information call or e-mail Tammy D. at 952-440-9328 or tammy.drummond@co.dakota.mn.us

Remember! All convention information can be accessed online at www overeaters.org

Group Contributions to Unity Intergroup September 2005

Meeting Day, Time & Location	Contribution Amount
Thurs OA/HOW Burnsville	180.00
Sat. 10 AM Nokomis Lutheran, Mpls	89.75
Rochester OA/HOW Monday 7pm	73.80
Monday 6:45 PM Walker Group, Mpls	30.00
Sun Night OA/HOW, St. Louis Park	134.40
Tuesday 7:00 PM, Brooklyn Center	60.00
Saturday OA/HOW	132.00
OA Apple Valley, Saturday 9 am	60.00
OA , Anoka, Mon 7 PM	60.00

Thank you for your contributions!

Meeting Announcements

New Teen OA Group, Thursdays 7:00-8:00
 Unity North Church 242 Northdale Blvd NW,
 Coon Rapids, MN
 Directions: Take Hwy 10 to Foley Blvd. go North on Foley to Northdale Blvd. Turn east on Northdale and go one block into Unity Church

parking lot.

Contact Persons: Bernie R 763-712-8051

Emma 651-633-9264 Jim 651-639-1319

Receiving the newsletter at home

Society Pages is now available via internet or e-mail. Go to www overeaters.org to download a copy of current or past newsletters. To have Society Pages sent directly to you, send your email address and request for direct mailing to Sarah L cricket@alumni.lyon.edu

Society Pages in hard copy is also available by subscription for individuals outside the Unity Intergroup region. The cost is \$6.00 for one year. 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

Sharon R.S., Chair 763-544-5955

ssund@skypoint.com

Sarah L., Vice-Chair 612-929-1211

cricket@alumni.lyon.edu

Maggie Rose M., Treasurer 612-382-5257

maggie_muldoon@mac.com

Judy M., Secretary 763-473-4920

dobedoberjudy@soncom.com

The next Intergroup meeting will be on November 12, 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!

Step Ten

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

My reading this morning referred to “living the program and practicing the steps” rather

than “working the program and taking the steps.” I like this distinction. To me, working the program implies a concerted effort for a period of time, followed by some hours of freedom from the hard work. Living the program is really what I have to do. I don’t get to utilize the principles I am learning for a few hours each day and then go out and binge again for the rest of the day. I don’t get to take a day off from my reading, writing, and food planning. I have to incorporate the program into my life a little at a time.

And I practice the steps – I don’t have to do them perfectly. I can’t wait until I finish a perfect 4th step before I go on to my 5th step. I can’t wait until I’m absolutely sure that every person I have ever harmed is on my 8th step list before I start my amends process. One thing is pretty certain in my life – I am never going to be done with this program. I am practicing this new way of life – and I get to continue practicing a little bit each day.

Many of us heard the saying “Practice makes Perfect” as children. A program friend of mine reminds me that the phrase should really be “Practice makes Progress.” I thank the Universal Spirit that I am learning how to practice these steps each day.

“Above all, we should try to be absolutely sure that we are not delaying because we are afraid. For the readiness to take the full consequences of our past acts, and to take responsibility for the well-being of others at the same time is the very spirit of Step Nine.”

Alcoholics Anonymous 12 Steps & 12 Traditions pg 87

The November Society Pages will feature Step Eleven, “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.” 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. The Deadline for submission of articles is Friday November 4