

Society Pages

The newsletter of Unity
Intergroup

Sharing Experience, Strength,
and Hope

January 2005

Happy New Year!

(The opinions expressed are
those of the writer and do not
represent OA as a whole)

Summer Retreat Set!

Mark your calendars – the Summer
Retreat will be held the weekend of
June 24th-26th, 2005!

Thanks to the very hard work of the
Summer Retreat (formerly
Farmington Retreat) organizing
committee, a new retreat center has
been found. It's the Villa Maria in
Frontenac (south of Red Wing),
about 90 minutes from the Twin
Cities.

The center was recommended by the
committee and then approved by
Unity Intergroup for its various
benefits, including the capacity for
OA members to bring in food from
the outside, the prime reason for
searching for a different location
than the Farmington facility, where
outside food was prohibited.

The Villa Maria has natural beauty,
available refrigerators for guests, a
campfire, swimming, and other
amenities.

Thanks to the organizing committee
for not letting the annual event die
out and ensuring we'll still have a
summertime retreat available to all
OA'ers!

New Meeting in Brooklyn Center

A new OA/HOW meeting
is starting in Brooklyn
Center beginning
January 10th, 2005.

Place: Cross of Glory
Lutheran Church
(5929 Brooklyn Blvd
West side of Brooklyn
Blvd between Bass Lake
Road and 63rd Ave.)

Time: 7-9 p.m.

Contacts:

LeAnne 763-785-2798
Barb TW 763-780-2793

Women's Expo in Minneapolis

The Twin Cities Overeaters Anonymous Unity Intergroup is sponsoring an outreach booth at the Women's Expo in Minneapolis the weekend of January 14-16th. We will be available with OA literature as well as the willingness to answer questions to passersby.

The Women's Expo is attended by thousands of people, and therefore, a great opportunity for us to make ourselves available for service to those still suffering from active compulsive overeating!

TRAVEL TIPS FOR OA'ERS

There's a saying, "A goal without a plan is just a hallucination." In order for me to stay abstinent, additional preparation is required when I travel, whether for pleasure or business. My eating disorder does not ever go on vacation.

I break my trip into three segments: traveling to the destination, at the destination, and returning home.

Traveling to the destination:

I take certain foods along to make the trip easier. I have purchased a soft-sided cooler pack where I put dairy products. I add an ice pack and it is good for about 10 hours of travel. The longer the trip the more ice packs I use. This pack goes with me in my rolling carry-on bag so that if anything happens to my checked

luggage, I still have it with me. I also take plastic silverware.

I split my dry foods into carry-on and suitcase. I travel with pre-measured starches which travel well (Kavli and Wasa crackers). I also take apples.

I pack all my meals for traveling, and one extra meal. These go into a backpack with me. I do not ever rely on an airline to have what I need. I pack the extra meal to prepare for unexpected delays. I have been in situations where flights were delayed hours on end, and I had my food right there. No added stress of running around an airport, or being stuck on a plane without my abstinent meal.

Travel can be high stress. I avoid the stress and risk of temptation of having to negotiate my dietary needs.

I always pack two scales, measuring spoons and cups. I use one in my hotel room and one out and about with me. One goes into the carry on and one into the suitcase. Leaving a measuring cup in a restaurant is no big deal, but it can be a hassle trying to find a store that sells them while traveling.

I find out what the restrictions might be for bringing in fresh fruit, meat or vegetables to my destination country. I often throw in tuna in a foil pouch and a pop-top can of pineapple.

I take my cell phone. I pre-program in lots of numbers so I can spend the waiting time at an airport with phone calls to my fellow food addicts.

I buy time on an international calling card service (IDT), which works from hotel rooms and pay phones.

I check the time zone difference so that I'm calling back home at appropriate times.

If I'm traveling to a destination where phone calls are difficult, I take addresses with me to write postcards.

I call the hotel and request a small in-room refrigerator. The magic words for this are "needed for medical reasons" or "for medication".

At my destination:

I set up a little kitchen in my hotel room. I have packed a few key pieces of Tupperware, a bowl with lid, lots of plastic Ziploc bags, a sharp knife, a spoon etc. If it's an extended stay I might ask for a small cocktail round (table) with a tablecloth to be sent to my room and I set up everything on that. Although not a guarantee, some hotels do provide microwaves as well, or even a toaster. I throw in saran wrap and a scrubby sponge to clean dishes. I order abstinent food through room service and keep the plate to use again and again.

I pre-measure my cereal in bags, and I use yogurt as a protein because I don't have to measure an 8 oz carton.

I plan ahead for the next day so that I have a rough idea if I need to make a salad the night before for a day out and about, or when dining out I save leftover meat in a baggie and use it the next day in a salad.

I find out how far away the closest grocery store is and what the kitchen hours are at my hotel. I call room service during the day and talk to the manager and introduce myself. Somehow that makes it much easier to get things I require.

If you are on a business meeting trip you can find out what is planned for meals ahead of time.

I am very up-front about my weighing and measuring. I do it at every meal, no exceptions. Weighing and measuring in front of others is a service. I don't know who might be watching and later approach me with questions for themselves or a loved one. It also establishes a safety net for me. People who know me and work with me now expect it and are often my best advocates and support when dining out. I have gotten more and more comfortable with this over time and now don't usually give it a second thought. I have found it best to keep explanations about why I am doing what I am doing brief and to the point. I then change the subject. If someone wants to discuss it I say something like this: "I welcome the opportunity to chat with you further, but let's do it later."

There are small scales out there, which fit neatly into a purse or briefcase and some people use a plastic cup with a one-cup line drawn on it. This can then be thrown away after use.

Returning home:

I pack my meal for the return trip the night before. This gives me one less thing to do on departure day. I again

pack an extra meal in case of travel delays.

I also have a meal ready in the freezer at home, or I know what I have available so that if I'm tired I don't have to make a stop at the grocery store the first day home.

I hope there is something here that is helpful to you.

~Elizabeth P.L.

2005 Outreach Priorities

The Unity Outreach Committee has started a campaign to collect old/good condition Lifeline magazines for distribution to offices of health care professionals. The Committee is creating a sticker that will be affixed to each magazine and will include the name, phone number and website of our local OA Intergroup. This is a great group-level service project. The stickers will be distributed to each OA group through their Intergroup representative.

Each group is encouraged to collect the old Lifeline magazines, affix the stickers, and develop a plan for distributing the Lifelines to health care professionals in their community. The Outreach Committee would love to hear about your plans!

Please contact Anne Mc. at 763-473-3672.

Step One:

“We admitted we were powerless over food, that our lives had become unmanageable.”

Every January was the same for me. It promised a fresh start. I could eat what I wanted when I wanted – with complete abandon all through the holidays and then January would be a fresh start.

Every Monday was the same for me. It promised a fresh start. I could eat what I wanted when I wanted -- with complete abandon all weekend and then Monday would be a fresh start.

Every morning was the same for me. It promised a fresh start. I could eat what I wanted when I wanted --with complete abandon all evening and then the morning would be a fresh start.

I lived in a fantasy world where I believed, even against all evidence to the contrary, that I could somehow control my eating. I told myself that this time it would be different. This January would be different, this Monday would be different, this day would be different. It never was. Day after day, month after month, year after year it was always the same. I had lost the power of choice with food.

No matter how strong my desire or my will, I was unable to stay away from that first compulsive bite of food. I was not going to admit I was powerless over food as long as I lived in the delusion that I could somehow stop eating compulsively the next morning or on Monday or in January. I certainly did not want to suffer the consequences of my

eating, but I wasn't quite ready to give up the food either.

The consequences of my addiction progressed right along with my disease. The excess weight I had to lose became greater with each passing day I lived in denial that I had a problem. The mental torture I lived with each day was relentless. I finally realized that every morning, every Monday and every January was going to be exactly the same for the rest of my life and that didn't look like much of a life to me.

I admit I am powerless over food every day. I don't ever want to forget that I am a food addict. I don't ever want to try to negotiate with a disease that will have me by the throat once I take that first bite. I don't want to live in that delusion anymore that this January, Monday, or day will be different if I take just one bite. Following the simple suggestions of the tools, steps, and traditions one day at a time, ensures that not only do I not have to pick up that first bite of food, but that I don't want to pick up that first bite of food. That is nothing short of a miracle! ~KM

Group Contributions December 2004

Lynnhurst Mon pm = \$88.82

Sun pm HOW St. Louis Park = \$99.00

Tue pm Brookdale Covenant = \$32.58

Sat am Golden Valley = \$100.00
(delegate fund)

Wed pm Crystal babysitting = \$84.00

Winona OA Sat am = \$50.00

Sat early bird St. Paul = \$1,200.00

Sat am Eden Prairie = \$143.00

Sat am Spiritual Focus Mpls = \$12.00

Your contributions help pay for OA outreach across the Unity region!

People Liked the Convention

The satisfaction surveys have come back from those attending the OA convention back in November and here are some of their comments:

“Best OA convention ever”

“Excellent convention”

“Don't know how you are going to top this year”

“Learned a lot”

“You are the MN God-squad of recovery”

“Beautiful celebration of recovery”

“Impressive”

Thanks to the OA Convention Committee for a fabulous job!

Service

We compulsive overeaters are given a unique opportunity. Coming from a place of selfish regard, fueling our addiction, we are handed a set of tools which has the potential of helping us become contributing members of society

for the first time in our lives. It's part of growing up.

We start as recipients of those who come before us, our sponsors and OA groups. We see by their example what it is to love another unconditionally and to help others along the way. By that modeling, we come to see first how we can get up and out of our disease of compulsive overeating. Then, as our heads and bodies clear, and we, through working the steps, are relieved of the baggage of past mistakes and regrets over how our lives have developed, we come out of that darkened cave into the light of day to the world as it really is: full of hurt, pride, inequities, power struggles. The miracle of this recovery program is that I am now presented with opportunities to help others, and that I can help them. That IS a miracle.

I used to be known for being good at crisis management. The adrenalin would flow. I would be totally wrapped up in the emergency situation. Afterwards, I would crash. I actually got something out of it, a sense of being needed, wanted, of being "enough."

Today I was able to help feed a grieving family, facilitate coordinating meals for them for the four days before, during, and after the day of the funeral. I knew this was not a moment of glory or recognition; I did not need credit for it. For once, it wasn't about me...whether or not I was doing it right or performed beyond others' expectations. IN truth, the family was under the impression someone else was "in charge" of this coordinated effort. Instead of resenting the (ten hours plus) of non-stop phone calls, instead of resenting that I may not

be recognized for "my" efforts, I am totally at peace. The service training and mentality of my fellows has taught me that doing someone a good deed and not getting found out is a blessing. (From the "Just for Today" reading). It has also taught me to be grateful that I am in a position to help. And the great benefit, HUGE, is the sense of well being I feel not having ONCE thought about myself for the last 48 hours. That is the bonus of service. It teaches us how to get up and out of ourselves, and is essential to recovery from compulsive overeating. It is an essential part of coming out of that cave of darkness in which we so often lived with our disease.

-Kay H.

Subscriptions

Society Pages is now available by subscription for individuals outside the Unity Intergroup region.

One Year = \$6.00

Please print your name, address, and zip code, along with a check payable to Unity Intergroup (with Society Pages in the memo section) to:

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Editor's Note: This is my last issue as editor of Society Pages. Thank you for

**this opportunity to serve the
fellowship! ~Patty M.**

**“AA (OA) has done more for me than
just stop me from drinking
(overeating); it has brought me back
to life again.”**

Big Book, pg 524 (3rd ed.)