

# Society Pages

The  
Newsletter of  
Unity Intergroup April, 2006

## Carrying the Message

### Unity Intergroup News

#### Sponsoring Society Pages

At the March Intergroup Meeting, a suggestion was made that each month a different OA meeting sponsor the gathering of articles for Society Pages. This was met with great support from everyone, particularly the editor. The step articles this month were sponsored by the Tuesday OA HOW Woodbury meeting. May is being sponsored by the Friday OA HOW St. Paul meeting. The Sunday OA HOW St. Louis Park meeting has volunteered to sponsor the June edition.

Even though there is a particular meeting sponsoring each month's edition, messages of experience, strength and hope are welcomed at any time from any member. Please send your contributions to:

Karen W at [cmkareninmn@yahoo.com](mailto:cmkareninmn@yahoo.com) .

#### MN State OA Website Statistics

For the past month we had over 7600 hits (visits) to the site. 4,575 were visits from different computers. The busiest day was Tuesdays and the busiest time was 10 a.m. The hits were very high on March 22 and 23. This is probably due to the interest created by the recent newspaper article on compulsive overeating.

This is very exciting because this means a lot of new people are checking out our website and hopefully getting meeting information and coming to our meetings. This is especially important because the internet is a perfect way to help other isolated compulsive overeaters learn that there's a solution for their problem of food addiction.

#### Receiving the Newsletter at Home

Society Pages is available via the Internet or e-mail. Go to [www.overeaters.org](http://www.overeaters.org) to download a copy of current or past newsletters. To have Society Pages sent directly to you, send your e-mail address and request for direct mailing to Sarah L.

[cricket@alumni.lyon.edu](mailto:cricket@alumni.lyon.edu). A hard copy of Society Pages 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.

#### Group Contributions March 2006

Mtg Day, Time & Location	Contribution Amount
Information not received prior to publication. Look in this space next month for March and April contribution amounts.	

#### Calendar of Events

Society Pages Deadline	May 6, 2006
Intergroup Meeting	May 13, 2006
Newcomer meeting	May 20, 2006
Region IV Convention	June 23-25, 2006
Summer Retreat	Sept 15-17, 2006
MN State Convention	Nov 10-12, 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.oa.org">www.oa.org</a>

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## Region IV Convention News

### Unity Intergroup to Host Region IV Recovery Event

It's time to register for the Region IV OA convention and reserve your opportunity to give your recovery a boost and to carry the message to the newcomers who still suffer.

Let's share Unity Intergroup's recovery with the other 8 states and Canada in Region IV and take time to listen to their message of recovery. All who attend will be enriched as we share the bonds of recovery across state lines and international borders. Together we can experience the solution and recover!

The convention will be held on June 23-25, 2006 at the Holiday Inn Select in Bloomington. Further details about events and meals can be found on the Region web site at [oaregion4.org](http://oaregion4.org) or from your local Intergroup Rep.

Please help us spread the news and encourage others to attend by inviting newcomers, asking your sponsor or sponsee to have lunch or dinner with you at the convention or inviting an OA friend to share a hotel room with you or join you to listen to a keynote speaker.

### Together we can create a wonderful recovery event!!

#### Mascot Contest

At the convention, Region IV will be hosting an OA Recovery Mascot Contest to raise funds to carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer from compulsive overeating.

The contest will be staged after the convention banquet on Saturday night June 24.

Entrants will dress up in their version of the **OA Recovery Mascot** and do a two minute performance. Individual or group entries are welcome. The entry fee is \$5.00. First place will win \$100.00, second place \$25.00. The crowd will

be encouraged to vote with their wallets for their favorite entrant. Watch for fliers at your meetings.

### Region IV Convention Service Opportunities

#### Jobs

We will need approximately 70 volunteers to run the Region IV Convention on June 23-25, 2006. If you are able to help us out by volunteering for any of the following jobs, please call Sue B. at 651-464-3225. Time commitments are from 1-6 hours and are available at various times of the day.

- Greeters
- Registration Desk
- Literature Sales
- Timekeeper
- Room Manager
- Lunch or Dinner Hostess/Host
- Back-Up Speaker

If you would like to help out in the Hospitality Room, please call Marguerite W. 763-441-8827 or Diana S. at 763-241-9786.

#### Donations

We are collecting the following items to make tool kits for the convention:

- scales/cups/spoons
- new or slightly used OA literature
- toy telephones
- telephone books
- blank notebooks or journals
- teddy bears (10 inches)
- OA tapes or CDs
- Lifelines

Please give these items to Sue B. or call 651-464-3225 to arrange for a pick up.

The tool kits will be used for decorations and then given away to groups to give to newcomers.

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**Several members shared their  
previous Region IV Convention  
experiences with us:**

**From Shelley N.**

**Omaha NE:**

The past two region 4 conventions I have attended have provided me with unique opportunities to meet and form friendships with people from all over my region. I always get to hear great speakers, and the opportunities for fellowship abound.

I am really looking forward to the Region 4 Convention in Minneapolis, and I am even planning on bringing my family to enjoy the Mall of America while I am enjoying the convention.

**From Randy F., Minneapolis, MN:**

I attended the Region IV meeting in Omaha in 2004 and it was a great opportunity to meet other people, learn from them and strengthen my program. It was also an opportunity to meet folks who were just coming around OA, and so I felt it was very useful to share my experience with recovery.

I used to overeat every day and talking to other people about my disease is enormous help in keeping me from reactivating it. I also made some new friends at the conference which I cherish. It is great to talk to other OAers around the region. It broadens our experience and makes us better people and better messengers.

**From Nancy H.**

**St. Louis, MO:**

I have been to 2 Region Conventions, one a number of years ago in Minneapolis, and the one in Omaha was a great boost. It is really awesome to meet people from all over the Region who are recovering from this disease, just as I am, one day at a time.

**From Isabel W.**

**Northern MO:**

I drove five hours to the July 2004 Region IV Convention and it was so worth the trip. I didn't know people, but they were really friendly, and I even spoke briefly in one meeting. There were no meetings in my small town, and it was wonderful to

see real recovery. I even told one person the truth about the binge food I was struggling with, and that helped to put things in a new perspective, and finally break its hold on me.

I bought the tapes and have listened to the whole set 4 or 5 times, and some of my favorite tapes, over and over. They help remind me of the principles of the program, whenever I need a boost. I know fellowship is one of the tools, and you need real people, but for a couple of years, the tapes have been like a meeting in a box!

A convention is a great way to see the 12 Steps in action. And you can take it with you when you go.

**From Jana G.**

**St Louis, MO:**

I have been to several region conventions. I love to hear new people share from different areas in our region. Some stories are alike but yet different also. Does that makes sense to anyone but me? It is amazing to me how we meet people in other meetings and IG's but they share the same problems, concerns and family dysfunction.

I have learned that my OA family all over the world can help me when I can't help myself and my HP is always there for me when I reach out to Him.

**From Angie T.**

**St Cloud, MN:**

The Region IV Convention was exciting and really boosted my recovery. Being surrounded by 200 people that understand me and live in recovery was life changing. So many great ideas were shared. I made new friends. Sharing the gift of recovery was an incredible experience. The speakers, workshops, entertainment and fellowship were terrific.

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**From Linda C  
Peoria, IL:**

I had only been in OA for a few months when I saw at one of my meetings a registration form for a convention in Omaha, NE. It just got my mind to thinking and my heart racing!! I am going to OMAHA I said to myself. I had no idea how I was going. I never have any extra money and I drive a really old car, but I knew I was going. It was a God thing for sure.

I came home, filled out the form and called in for a hotel reservation. That all was the easy part; I charged that on a credit card. I started looking for the money to go. I asked my husband about money we always put in a large jar and he said I could have it. So I got it all shook out of the narrow opening and off to the bank I went. I had over a hundred dollars.

So I sent in my money months ahead of time and had money left over for the gas and such going out there. I started to pray for someone from our group to make the trip with me. I knew I was going but now I wanted some company. It took awhile but then not one but two were going. I was so thrilled.

All the while I was waiting for the big day, I was saving my money. I picked up cans; I took my lunches and did not go out so much.

The trip out to Omaha was a blast. I drove my old car and made a wrong turn in Des Moines, Iowa. Somehow no one noticed it until we got to Missouri. It was a 150 mile oops!

I did finally get us all to Omaha and everything was so wonderful. The hotel staff and the food was just great. All the sessions were so powerful and touched my heart and soul so much. I met people just like me from all over the region. I was so turned on by everything and everyone I knew. I would never leave OA. Heck I never wanted to leave Omaha!!!

The auction of the baskets was a fun event, the juggler was just funny and the skit from the Kansas city group was great. I cried when Jeff noticed Sheila was there after a long recovery from surgery that almost took her life, and I didn't even know any of them.

The most important thing I learned was there were folks just like me, who suffered just like me, who struggled all their lives just like me, trying so hard to be normal, trying to find the right diet to deal with life and they all turned to FOOD just like me.

They truly were my brothers and my sisters. I found them all at an OA convention In Omaha. I plan on having a family reunion in Minneapolis in June.

**From Helen M., Emmetsburg, IA:**

***There is a solution—together we can!*** The theme of the Region IV OA Convention for 2006 is a shot of hope for me today. I have had such good times at Region IV conventions in the past and want to encourage you to give yourself the gift of experiencing one.

***Together We Can:*** We have a disease of isolation. I have spent so much time alone with food. OA events are an antidote to those dark times. You will hear stories to crack you up, inspire you, make you think, help you grow and remind you that you are not alone anymore. Do you like your local meetings? Going to the convention is a weekend of meetings, surrounded by people who share your compulsion and who are seeking solutions. You will also get to have fun. The Friday night dance alone is worth the registration price! You don't need to know how to dance; bring your body and the fun will come. Actually, that last line applies to the whole Region IV Convention experience.

***Go! Celebrate recovery! Have a reunion with your OA family, especially the ones you haven't met yet!***

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## Step Four

### Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves

#### Action, Action, Action

Step 4 seemed such a daunting task. How could I be rigorously honest when my whole way of operating had been so dishonest as a food addict? I read in the Big Book that Step 3 could have no “permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort” to face those things in myself that cut me off from God. (P.64) Well, I already knew my self-will, my self-sufficiency, my need to control had cut me off from the very people who wanted to help me. So first things first. I knew I had to surrender to the help and guidance that was so lovingly offered. I was not alone in my defects; others had searched out their resentments, fears, self-will and as the result of working this step had begun a road to freedom from food obsession. I wanted what they had so I did what they did. I found out I had been wrong about so much in my life. I had compromised my values and the evidence was revealed in Step 4. My wrong judgments manifested in resentments, my wrong beliefs turned into fears and my wrong actions hurt other people. My lack of consideration and selfishness were written down on paper and could no longer be denied. Slowly the delusion was smashed and I could face this inventory as being my gateway to freedom, joy and peace.

--Janice P.

#### Work in Progress

I started coming to OA HOW because I'd stopped finding any joy in my life, and had nearly given up hope of ever finding it again. I hated my body; I couldn't stop the mental obsessions around food, calories and weight; and I could not stay stopped from bingeing. As my husband said before I found recovery, “This house is very a very dark place to be when you're in the food.”

What I did not come for was to become a better person. I didn't even come to get relief from my fears or jealousy of others. It was the obsession with food and body size which drove me to the program, but in fact, the program is helping me in all these

other areas every day. As a result of working the Fourth Step, and especially writing my Daily Inventory, I'm quicker at seeing my part when I'm angry, resentful, jealous, etc—basically, whenever some person, place or thing bugs the !@#% ^&\*! out of me.

By holding myself responsible for my reactions, I'm inching my way toward emotional adulthood (FYI: I've been a chronological adult for decades.) I try not to make everything all about me anymore. I work harder at listening and using “restraint of tongue.” I try very hard not to give advice except when it's been requested—this program has taught me to talk about my experience and leave it at that. I remind myself that I have no control over others; I am only accountable for my own behavior.

As a result of the program, I'm learning to follow through on commitments and can be trusted to do what I say I will do when I say I'll do it. This, by the way, is a novel concept for a food addict like me who lied constantly to cover for myself. I'm working on not playing the victim, even when technology conspires to paralyze me. I try instead to “act as if” I was all grown up!

I am a work in progress and still occasionally, a piece of work, but I feel myself transforming into a person I can respect. So although I came for the food, I've stayed for the party games! There's a lot of joy in that.

--Anonymous

#### Doing the 4th Step -- A Good Housecleaning

I hate to admit this, but I'm kind of a lousy housekeeper. There's way too much clutter in every room of my house, the floor doesn't get swept as often as it should, and there are dust bunnies the size of Chihuahuas under the beds. And my closets are the worst – they're jam-packed with stuff, much of which doesn't work, doesn't fit or hasn't been used in years. I'm always meaning to tackle the clutter, but it seems like life gets so busy -- and when I do have a little time, there are so many more pleasant things I'd rather do than delve into the mess. Sound familiar?

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As I went through my 4th step inventory, I was struck by how much it was like doing a really energetic housecleaning. Some of my faults and defects are like that clutter, taking up space in my head and making me feel stressed and scattered. And some of the old feelings and mistakes from the past are smoldering in the back of those closets, ignored but still powerful. I've found some fine treasures, too -- good things about myself that I didn't even know about until I took the time to sort through who I am.

It wasn't fun or easy - but then, how many of us sing for joy as we clean the old stinky food out of the fridge? How many of our hearts go aflutter at the thought of cleaning out under the sink? But as I pulled out all the stuff I'd avoided looking at and sorted it into the "keep" and the "I guess I'd better get rid of this" piles, I could get a better idea of just what my character consisted of -- both the healthy and the unhealthy, the faults and the shining virtues. If I don't know what's there -- my strengths and faults -- how can I grow?

When I've got all that stuff laid out, then it's time for that 5th step - to open the door and take a trusted friend on a guided tour. That won't be easy either -- but I trust that he or she will understand. After all, we all have closets to clean out!

When it's all done, the best part is that I don't have to just shovel all that stuff, good and bad, back into the closets. My Higher Power is going to help me cart out the junk, box by box, bag by bag, and every day I'm going to have a little more room to breathe and grow. And as more and more of that old junk is gone, I'll have room to bring in some brand new treasures: serenity, service. and self-acceptance. Phew!

So if you're getting ready to do your 4th step, take it from me -- it isn't easy, but it sure will make your life easier in the long run. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have some more cleaning to do!  
--Heather J.

### **Fear & Courage**

I'm going to start this with a quote of Mark Twain: "Courage is the resistance to fear, mastery of fear-- not absence of fear."

I was raised by very fearful parents; and for many years I adopted their negative way of thinking. Only in OA did I finally start resisting fear big time. In my family of origin if I was afraid of something they'd say "then don't do it." I followed that advice and missed out on a lot of things I really wanted to do. The things I regret are the things I wanted to do and didn't take the leap of courage.

I've always been afraid of the dark, afraid to be alone in the house, afraid of rejection, very afraid of public speaking, afraid of failure, afraid to drive on the freeway etc. I knew all kinds of long cuts to get around so I didn't have to drive on the dreaded freeway. Basically, I was afraid of life. When I was in high school I hid in food/obesity because I was afraid to date.

I don't recall who said it but someone said that courage is fear that has said its prayers. When I am ready to face down a fear, something or someone appears in my life to show me the way. I was waiting for my daughter in the library one night when I saw a book someone had put down. It was regarding overcoming phobias. I was trying to overcome my fear of the freeway so I looked up the chapter that dealt with that. In essence it recommended entering the freeway and going to the next exit and getting off and then repeating this exercise every day for a week. Then gradually increasing it to driving until the 2nd exit appeared and then getting off and practicing it for another week. Then doing the same thing with the 3rd exit. I followed this advice until I was free of the irrational fear of the freeway.

--Barb S

### **Resentment, Fear, Sex Conduct:**

These are the three categories that got reviewed in the last 4<sup>th</sup> step I did. I've done a number of 4th step inventories over my 26 year in the program. Each time, they have been wonderfully illuminating for me. These last 4 years I did a thorough 4th step using the above mentioned forms. The resentment form has proven to be the most significant one for me. I am firmly convinced that my over and under eating was directly correlated to the resentments I kept alive and well in my mind and heart. I fed those hungry critters with fear, rationalization,

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justification guilt, shame, anger and of course food and over-activity. Today, I have the food DOWN. I don't pick up for anything. With 2 years and 3 months of clean, weighed and measured abstinence, I can say that I've gotten a ton of relief from my resentments, fears and bad behavior. Each day I do a daily 10th step. (page 86 of the Big Book) and this keeps things clean. The 4th step was like BFI coming to haul the garbage out after a home renovation -- there were 2 big dumpsters. The daily 10th step is like dumping the household garbage cans each day. Some days there's a little garbage there, some days a lot. In any case, it feels good to do the big house cleaning and the daily cleaning too.

--Mary T

### Step By Step

Working my 4<sup>th</sup> step was a mighty eye opening experience. For me, it was like combing through the past and picking out the fears, resentments, and discomforts. I worked this step with the help of the 4<sup>th</sup> step forms available at our meetings.

First off, I made a list of all the people, institutions, and principles that I held resentments against. Going back through the list, I wrote about all the causes for these resentments. Next I checked off whether or not they affected my self-esteem, security, ambitions, personal relationships, sex relations or if there was any fear involved. At this point I began to see a definite pattern in my behavior. I could see just how fearful I was and how I played the victim role and blamed others for my misfortunes.

Next, I said the Resentment prayer found on P. 67 of the Big Book: "God, please help me show \_\_\_\_\_ the same tolerance, pity & patience I would cheerfully grant a sick friend" for each person listed. This was an amazing spiritually healing process. I found it to be calming and centering.

The next part of this step had me put out of my mind wrongs others had done and focus on my own mistakes. Where had I been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking or frightened? I took a fearless and honest look at my past and listed my faults. Once again I could see patterns emerging. This step isn't meant to beat ourselves up over; it's designed to give us a golden opportunity to admit our wrongs and clean

up the muck of our past. My defects affect all aspects of my life. These were the issues that I ate over time after time. The process of the 4<sup>th</sup> step is at times uncomfortable, yet it is also cathartic. It was essential to my recovery to work this step thoroughly in order to move on with life and my program.

--Julie B-H

### Control Is Not One of the Promises

From the fourth step in the AA 12x12, page 47: "We thought "conditions" drove us to (compulsively overeat), and when we tried to correct these conditions and found that we couldn't to our entire satisfaction, our (eating) went out of hand and we became (food addicts). It never occurred to us that we needed to change ourselves to meet conditions, whatever they were."

I spent so much time in my disease trying to change people, places and circumstances to fit my own desires. I thought, "if only he would do this, if only I was there instead of here, if only I had a different job, family, body, life..." What I've learned in the program of Overeaters Anonymous is that outside circumstances are out of my control, and if I try to change those circumstances, it results only in wasted time and energy.

The fourth step inventory is my guide to differentiate between the things I must accept and the things I can change. I have rationalized and justified my own behavior for so long that, on my own, I cannot be rigorously honest. With the help of my Higher Power and the guidance of my sponsor, I find the clarity to see where I have been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking or afraid. Sometimes it feels hard to get beyond what the other party has done to me, but to stay there is to be stuck in resentment and fear which will eventually lead me back to the food. It is a victory to find my part because then I have identified something that can be changed. I learned that under most circumstances I had set things up in a way that others felt threatened or defensive and they simply acted out their feelings. In many situations, particularly things from childhood, my only part is that I won't let something go. I then must ask myself, How long am I going to allow this to hurt me? How much more of my life will I give over to

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this resentment? As they say, "first time a victim, second time a volunteer."

Living in the program and practicing these principles in all my affairs does not mean that I will gain control over outside things. Control is not one of the promises! What I am promised is serenity to match any calamity. It has finally occurred to me that I need to change to meet conditions, whatever they are.

--Anonymous

## Personal Stories

My adult eating behavior was actually full of starts and stops. But today, my not eating isn't because I'm trying to put on a front. That never stopped me before. I always "got by", "passed" without noticeable physical evidence to the outside world. Inside I was struggling. Inside even my level of overweight caused my knees to hurt, my cholesterol to rise and my cardiologist to say he needed to be seeing me more often. My obsessive mind was constantly going. I struggled with food thoughts, food concerns, and shame about what I had or had not done.

Alarming as it may seem, this illness never lets up. Even while I'm in recovery, it is working underground. It keeps on going – like the underground Mole Men in the movie, "Superman and the Mole Men" from the 50's or 60's. These "Mole Men" created a whole city underground unbeknownst to those living above. The same is true of my illness of compulsive overeating. It may not be evident on the surface, but my family, who has seen me over the years struggle with this illness, may be right on to suspect that no matter how long I've been abstinent, my illness will rear its head again. It will resurface. All I know is, as Dr. Bob said, "As long as I'm thinking as I'm thinking, and as long as I am doing as I'm doing. I don't believe I'll take that first bite."

--Kay H

## May Society Pages

The May Society Pages will feature Step Five, "Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs" The group sponsoring articles for May is Friday, OA HOW St. Paul. 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.

Please remember Tradition 10 when submitting an article: "**Alcoholics Anonymous (Overeaters Anonymous) has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. (O.A.), name ought never be drawn into public controversy.**"

**The deadline for submission of articles is 12:00 noon on Saturday May 6.**

## Intergroup Board

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**"Beginning with Step Four, we commenced to search out the things in ourselves which had brought us to physical, moral, and spiritual bankruptcy."**

AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Page 10