

# Society Pages

The Newsletter of Unity Intergroup

May, 2006

**Region IV Convention  
June 23 - 25, 2006**

**Holiday Inn Select  
Bloomington, MN**

## **National and Local Speakers to Share Their Experience, Strength and Hope with Convention Goers at the OA 2006 Region IV Convention June 23- 25, 2006**

The Region IV Convention will feature **two national** and **two local keynote speakers** and many more workshop speakers who have found a solution to eating issues such as compulsive eating, anorexia, bulimia, over exercising and food abuse. Speakers will be from 8 states and Canada.

The **Friday night keynote speaker** is a woman from Omaha, Nebraska who started OA in 1982 and gave herself a Valentine's Day present by becoming abstinent on February 15, 1984. She has remained abstinent for 22 years. She refrains from physically abusing her body with food and is dedicated to healthy eating and having a full living experience. She found out that a power greater than herself could love her

until she could love herself. She has learned that the "fat between her ears" has been the hardest fat to lose. The 12 steps, sponsoring and service are very important to her. She is very active in OA.

Our **Saturday night keynote speaker** is a woman from Wichita, Kansas. She has 33 years of abstinence and is maintaining a 54-pound weight loss using the diabetic exchange plan. She started OA in 1973 and got abstinent right off the bat and by the grace of God and the fellowship of OA she has not picked up that first compulsive bite since 1973. She has maintained her abstinence through cancer and triple bypass surgery and is currently in good health at age 81.

Our **Saturday evening banquet speaker** is a man from Elk River, MN, who has been substance free since November 7, 2002 – no sugar, white flour, alcohol, drugs, caffeine or nicotine – and has maintained a 105 pound weight loss for 2.5 years by following a weighed and measured food plan prescribed by his doctor. He weighed 101 pounds in the second grade. He says, "staying abstinent is his most important priority, but alone it is not enough, we must work the Twelve Steps to be able to recover and live a happy and free life."

Our **second local speaker**, a 57-year-old woman from Minneapolis has a two-year "weighed and measured" abstinence, which includes no sugar or wheat, 3 meals and an evening snack. She has lost 156 pounds and has been at her goal weight since February 16, 2006. She believes that "abstinence is the most important thing in her life, without exception and that her greatest service is abstinence." She also says, "Don't leave before the miracle happens," as she started going to OA in 1979. She will be speaking at our Saturday afternoon luncheon.

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## **There is a Solution...Together We Can Recover**

The convention will feature a dance with Jukebox Express on Friday night. Literature will be for sale and the Hospitality Room will be open until 11:00 pm for fun and fellowship. On Saturday night the entertainment will include a delightful mascot contest and inspirational recovery-filled singing by local OA members.

The Region IV OA Convention is one of the highlights of the year for our fellowship. It only happens every other year and it hasn't been in Minnesota since 1998. So take advantage of this once in a decade recovery happening and come see and hear how recovery is possible when we help each other one day at a time. See you there!!!

### **Reasons Why You Should Attend the Convention**

Sign up and join us at the Region IV OA convention to:

- ✓ Boost your recovery
- ✓ Enhance your program
- ✓ Share your story with newcomers
- ✓ Spend dedicated time with your OA friends
- ✓ Carry the message
- ✓ Hear keynote speakers with 22 and 33 years of abstinence
- ✓ Hear 24 workshop speakers tell how they use the tools and work the steps
- ✓ Attend an OA Meeting
- ✓ See and hear all about recovery!

### **Raising the Funds to Carry the Message**

The Region 's mission is to ensure that the OA message of recovery is carried from the Region level to the individual OA member and healthcare professionals – valuable Twelve Step work.

The funds raised by these four happenings will be used by the Region to carry the message to

still suffering compulsive eaters during the coming years.

If you would like to join in the fun and help raise funds to carry the message you might like to:

1. Have your photo taken with an OA friend or a group of friends so you will have a treasured keepsake from your recovery weekend. Have your picture taken with your sponsor or sponsee or a new friend you've met from another state or Canada. Capture an OA hug on film or take a picture with the OA Recovery Mascot. Each print costs \$5.00. Look for Cyndy and her photo booth at the convention.
2. Register for the OA Mascot contest. Dress up in costume as the OA Recovery Mascot and do a two-minute OA cheer during the entertainment on Saturday night. Individuals or groups are welcome to join in the fun. The audience will vote for their favorite contestants with their wallets. So far, Minnesota has one contestant who is challenging 3 other states. Come help Minnesota be voted the first OA Recovery Mascot!
3. Stop in at the Hospitality Room and purchase a bottle of water, diet pop, coffee or tea. This is a great time to share fellowship and program tips with OA friends.
4. Take an OA friend or your sponsor or sponsee to lunch or to the evening OA banquet at the convention. During the meals you can hear two local keynote speakers tell their stories and how they use sponsorship and the Big Book to recover.

*“Service is Slimming”*

### **Be Part of the Region IV Convention: Volunteer**

We will need approximately 70 volunteers to run the Region IV Convention. If you are able

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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
- ✓ Hospitality Room

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 Needed**

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.

## **Attend the Region IV Board Meeting – Learn How Region IV Works**

The Region IV Board would like to invite you to attend the Region IV Board Meeting on Friday, June 23, 2006 from 3:00pm to 5:00pm in the Duchess Room. The meeting will take place at the Holiday Inn Select just prior to the convention.

You are welcome to come and meet your board members, attend the Board Meeting and spend

time with the Region Officers. This is a perfect opportunity to see how Region IV works and to see if you would ever like to do service on the Region level.

## **Region IV Convention: An AWESOME Recovery Event Presented by Several Midwestern States and Canada See you all there!**

**Step Five  
Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**

### **No More Secrets**

Why is it so important to admit to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. Isn't it enough to just write them down on paper and know them for ourselves and let our Higher Power take care of them? In the Big Book on pgs. 72-73, it states, "In actual practice, we usually find a solitary self appraisal insufficient. Many of us thought it necessary to go much further. We will be more reconciled to discussing ourselves with another person when we see good reason why we should do so. The best reason first: If we skip this vital step we may not overcome drinking. Time after time newcomers have tried to keep to themselves certain facts about their lives. Trying to avoid this humbling experience, they have turned to easier methods. Almost invariably they got drunk."

I certainly didn't want to share some of my deepest darkest secrets with another person. What would that person think of me? How could I show my face to that person again after sharing such things? Well the truth is that if I didn't do a thorough housecleaning and share my Step #4 inventory with another person, then I would go back to the food.

So when I did my most recent 5th Step, I sat down with my sponsor and just read all that had come up in writing my 4th Step. Was I afraid? You bet, but I knew that was the thing I needed to do, if I wanted to keep my abstinence. What was her response? She listened for about 2 1/2 hours, wrote down some things that she heard me say, and at the end gave me some feedback about some of the patterns in my

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behavior she heard me talk about. She wasn't appalled by what I shared, instead she could relate to some of the things I had said, and gave me some really good information about what she heard. This is probably the most powerful 5th Step I can remember doing.

I haven't had to do another 5th Step, like that one, since that time. Probably, because when issues arise for me now, I work Steps 4-9 quickly. I need not let my issues fester for any length of time. I get them out on paper and then share them with another human being and my Higher Power, as soon as possible. I also do a daily 10th Step, which is very important to my program, and I give it away to my sponsor on a daily basis. This way I don't let my resentments, selfishness, dishonesty, self-seeking and fearful behavior take over my life on a daily basis. I am able to name them, claim them, and dump them. This process frees my mind and allows me to go on living without the mental obsession that happens when I keep all those things to myself.

Who would have thought talking about my secrets could be so freeing? I sure didn't, but that is exactly what happened. This isn't always the easiest step but it is the start of relieving that mental chatter that took over my life. It gave me freedom not only in my mind but also in my life so I could be present for others and really live life the way my Higher Power intended life to be lived. So if you have been putting off this step, take some action and talk to someone whom you trust and schedule a time to meet with them. You will be amazed at the results. You don't have to be alone with your secrets anymore. You can give them away to another person and start the process of freeing your mind so you can be present for the better things in life.  
-- Dawn S.

### **Relief, Love & Understanding**

The Big Book says that the person we share our inventories with should respect our anonymity, have a full understanding of 12 Step recovery, and encourage our willingness to recover. By giving my Fifth Step to my sponsor, I knew these qualities would be met. My sponsor, like myself, respected my anonymity and privacy. She listened to my inventory with respect and humility. Having worked this step thoroughly herself, she had absolute understanding of why I had to be free of my defects and fears in order to recover from compulsive eating. Lastly, respecting my desperate need to be free of my compulsion and any roadblock to

recovery, my sponsor never tried to change my course of action or play God. She simply listened and allowed me to share the nature of my wrongs, as Step Five says.

My sponsor thoroughly led me through the writing of my inventory and then made herself available to hear what I had written. I believe that she was a channel through which I could admit my defects and harms to God and ask for removal of my fears. Upon completing this step I felt relief, love, and understanding. I was humbled by the experience and grateful for the love and support we give each other in this program. Again and again, we give back to others what we have so graciously received!  
-- Laura D

### **Beginning of Freedom**

On page 73 of the Big Book of AA we read, "We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world." It goes on to say, "More than most people, the 'compulsive overeater' leads a double life. He is very much the actor. To the outer world he presents his stage character. This is the one he likes his fellows to see."

When I came into this program I was rarely completely honest with anyone, least of all myself. I had no idea how to be truly vulnerable in relationships until I took, what is in my opinion, the most important and most liberating of all the steps: Step 5.

I came to meetings and heard my feelings and experiences coming out of other peoples' mouths. That gave me the courage to begin a 4<sup>th</sup> Step and eventually do a 5<sup>th</sup>. The Big Book states the best reason to do a 5<sup>th</sup> Step is that "If we skip this vital step we may not overcome [compulsive eating]." That was motivation enough for me!

I felt oh so unique when I first entered the program. I thought NO ONE did with food what I did and no one's character defects were as bad as mine! I came to learn that this was a character defect I had, called grandiosity.

My first 5<sup>th</sup> Step experience unlocked the door to abstinence for me after having been in OA for five months. My shame was so big that I had to pick someone I didn't know and had continued to do so with each subsequent 5<sup>th</sup> Step I've completed until my last, a couple of years ago.

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Prior to my first 5<sup>th</sup> Step experience, I shopped for sugary treats at a local grocery store before meeting with the minister who was to hear my 5<sup>th</sup> Step. Upon completing this step, the minister bid me to go in peace and I was truly able to do that. I felt a joy I had never felt before in my life. I felt a love and acceptance for myself exactly as I am, with all my defects and all of my assets. I immediately threw away the sugar that awaited me in my car. It was the beginning of freedom from compulsivity with food. No fighting off, no swearing off...I was placed in that position of neutrality that the Big Book promises. It was and is a miracle. I still feel that unconditional love and acceptance of myself today, after having completed three more 5<sup>th</sup> Steps and 25 years having passed since completing my first one.

Interestingly, it is in these rooms that I feel most loved! One of the greatest gifts of this program is learning about and truly knowing who I am. This has been revealed to me as a result of working the 12 Steps.

In case you are new and feeling afraid of this Step, here's something to keep in mind: Everyone I know who completed a 5<sup>th</sup> Step has lived to tell about it! And most only regret that they didn't complete this most liberating step sooner.  
-- Linda G.

#### **A Little Girl No More**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Step was one of the most humbling and empowering steps of my journey thus far. The preparation to Step 5 was completing my 4<sup>th</sup> Step. That was so easy to do when it came to identifying the people who I thought had harmed me. Getting to column 4 of the resentment sheet, "reluctantly looked for our own mistakes" was so much more challenging. I dragged my feet and had many emotional moments because the truth was I had never truly looked at my side of the street. I had spent my life focused on others -- judging them, being fraudulent with them, or caretaking them, etc.

So I had to get honest with myself and another human being about the ugly of me and the assets or good of me. I selected a man who has been hearing 5<sup>th</sup> Steps for decades and we sat down. Like my sponsor who has held my hand and guided me through this program, I believe he did the same through my 5<sup>th</sup> Step process.

My fear at the beginning was that I'd continue to be

emotionally dishonest, yet as I went down the lists the feelings came out. One of the greatest gifts of this process was the feedback he gave me and the 'ah ha' moments of total clarity regarding behavior patterns in my life. I did not like some of the things I saw but I believed the steps would lead me to a different way of living. There was a freedom in this process, in that I felt I was truly beginning to live my life as a responsible adult.

Through continuing to work these Steps I continue to feel like a woman, not a little girl. I am close to forty and feel hopeful that I am living life being conscious and beginning to engage in relationships as the adult I am meant to be. I am also living in the awareness that food has not been an option or a solution for my unmanageable feelings or life's natural ups and downs for 15 months. What a miracle!! I am grateful for OA HOW because the gifts keep coming, one day at a time.  
-- Mags, WI

#### **What to Talk About**

Overeaters Anonymous is a WE program. Step 5 helps me to see I AM ONE AMONG MANY. I'm the same in many ways, not different & apart from. I am part of the WE.

At a dinner party recently, everyone volunteered a little bit about themselves in the conversation. One guy talked about looking at Mars through his telescope at 3:30 that morning. One guy talked about his passion for his artwork. A couple of people talked about stresses in their current or past job situations. I didn't really take part in the conversation, because I didn't know what to say about myself.

I feel like not much is new in my life, but everything is new! But it's not what I am DOING that is interesting, but more what I am not doing (bingeing, stressing out over work, criticizing & judging others, talking about other people behind their backs.) And I am diligently working the 12 Steps so that I will continue to grow, mature, and be of service.

But how would I talk about that? In a world that seems so focused on what people DO, how interesting is it that I get up at 5 a.m. every day, read & journal, pack my lunch, go to work, and DON'T DRINK and DON'T BINGE? How interesting is it that I talk to people at work with a genuine interest in their lives, regardless of whether they are an office professional, a mechanic or a housekeeper. My life seems very uninteresting; but I am happier

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than I have been in years; probably happier than I've ever been in my adult life.

And maybe others would be interested in knowing more about me, how I have lost weight and kept it off for several years now, and why I seem happier than I used to. One thing I have learned in 4th and 5th Steps is that I am self-centered and self-seeking. I want everyone to think well of me. If I talk about some of the activities and beliefs that are so central to who I am, I risk other peoples' rejection. But that's what relationships are all about, right? It is the people I have been most vulnerable with that are my closest friends. And my closest friends are the people I can feel more vulnerable with. When I am spirit-centered, the risk doesn't feel as daunting.

The Big Book says "we must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world." I know they are talking about your sponsor and/or the person you give your 5th Step to. But, for me, this also means that I have to trust my instincts about what other people I can be honest with. It's a continuing adventure!

-- E.W.

## Personal Stories

### Seeds

It's springtime, and I consider, once again, growing a garden. I am usually revved up and buy packets of seeds and sometimes even plant them. I rarely pay attention to what the seeds need to grow. I want to grow what I want to grow. They need full sun? I'm sure they wouldn't mind growing in the shade of my shed. They need how much space apart? But I believe the more, the merrier, so cram them in. They need to be weeded out after they grow so high? Gee – which ones will I pull? I'd feel bad if I pulled out the ones that would have grown best if I hadn't weeded them! They need watering when it is dry outside? Let's let nature do its thing and water them when the weather dictates. They need consistent weeding through the whole growing season? Forget it! So my garden, begun with all its good intentions, ends up a weed patch, yielding nothing more than an eyecore.

So, too, it can be for me with working the Program. I know what works for me. Am I doing it? Am I calling fellow OA'ers? Am I reading and writing every morning? How is my quiet time? Am I following my plan of eating? Am I being honest with my sponsor? What step am I on? More

importantly, am I paying attention to the seeds God is planting in me? Am I cultivating the garden of my heart and soul? Am I trying to grow things that don't fit for me? Am I willing to do daily weeding?

Just for today, I will use the tools to the best of my ability to grow and tend the garden plot my Higher Power has given me. The soil is rich. Growth is possible and likely if I just show up daily, use the tools, and reach out for help.

--Anonymous

## Unity Intergroup News

### OA Members Carry the Message to Annual State Dietitians Meeting

Dietitians across the State of Minnesota got a close-up glimpse of how Overeaters Anonymous can successfully deal with overeating and obesity at the state dietitians' annual meeting in Alexandria, Minn. during the last week in April.

Some 75 dietitians packed a room at the Arrowwood Resort on April 27 to listen to a workshop by Linda Block, a licensed dietitian and certified diabetes expert, explain how Overeaters Anonymous was a value to hundreds of her clients. Block said she was especially conversant with the HOW method of practicing the OA program, and discussed how successful it was for her clients in achieving abstinence. People doing the HOW program get a dietitian, nutritionist or doctor to develop a food plan for them.

Block said she was conducting the workshop because she said other dietitians were being approached by OA members following the HOW program, and she wanted them to know how it works so the dietitians could work with them successfully. Three of Block's OA clients, at Block's invitation, addressed the workshop, discussing how the program worked for them. Photos projected on a large screen behind them showed how they looked before they joined the program and afterwards.

The dietitians asked a number of questions, indicating how seriously they took the subject. A packet of material containing information produced locally and by the OA World Service was distributed to the 75 dietitians in the room as well as about 200 other dietitians attending the conference. Volunteers organized by the OA Unity Intergroup in the Twin

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Cities staffed a table display that was set up next to other vendors at the conference. Several dozen dietitians talked to OA members at the table.

That evening a shortened version of an OA HOW meeting was conducted at the conference, open to the dietitians, so that they could see what a meeting looked like.

A total of 11 OA members from the Twin Cities drove to Alexandria for the dietitian meeting. It was a long day for our OA members but a great service in carrying the message.

The medical community and dietitians and nutritionists play a critical role in helping us battle this insidious overeating disease that so many of us suffer from. Linda Block and some other dietitians and people in the medical community have been in the forefront of explaining this disease to the public and the value of our 12-Step program. We are enormously grateful for their efforts.  
-- Randy F.

### **OA Needs You**

There are some great and exciting things going on in our OA community. I heard of one group that had seven newcomers at one meeting. There are people who need and want our OA program of recovery. Together we can get the OA message of recovery to them. Individually we need to be anonymous but OA is not intended to be anonymous.

Unity Intergroup is working to get our message of recovery to the still suffering. We just finished having a panel at the MN Dietician's Meeting in Alexandria. We will again be having a booth at GLBT Pride and we have plans for doing outreach to the medical professional. We wanted to participate in the Women's Expo and other community events but didn't have volunteers to head these outreach opportunities. This is why we need you. If you could come and do a little, together we can get a lot accomplished.

In building our community from within we have several upcoming events: the first being the OA Region IV Convention, followed in September by the Summer Retreat. Also, in September we're planning a Sponsorship Workshop. We'll wrap up the year with the MN State Convention.

We hope that each group will send at least one representative (each group is allowed two) to work with us to reach those who need recovery and to

build our OA community. You are welcome to join us even if you're not a group rep. We meet the second Saturday of each month from 12:30-2:30 at the 1560 Parkdale Plaza Building, St. Louis Park.  
-- Sharon R.S.

### **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: Becky Pihl, 3151 36<sup>th</sup> Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55406.

### **Outreach Volunteer Opportunity**

OA will again be having a booth at GLBT Pride held at Loring Park in Minneapolis on Saturday and Sunday June 24 & 25. Volunteers are needed to staff the OA booth and answer questions about our program. If you are interested in helping out for a 2 hour shift, please contact Beth S at 612-382-7290.

### **June Society Pages**

The June Society Pages will feature Step Six, "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character." The group sponsoring articles for June is Sunday, OA HOW St. Louis Park. Articles on the month's 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. **The deadline for submission of articles is 12:00 noon on Saturday June 3.**

Editor's Note: The **Group Contributions** found in the March issue of Society Pages (the blue one) was erroneously titled January 2006 contributions. It should have read February 2006.

## Group Contributions March 2006

Sat AM Roseville	87.00
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Mtg Day, Time & Location	Contribution Amount
Mon & Wed PM OA Wisconsin Grps	100.00
Tue PM OA Eagan	18.00
Sat AM OA Golden Valley	60.00
Sat AM OA St. Paul (Lost & Found)	157.50

Calendar of Events	
Society Pages Deadline	June 3, 2006
Intergroup Meeting	June 13, 2006
Newcomer meeting	June 17, 2006
Region IV Convention	June 23-25, 2006
GLBT Pride	June 24-25, 2006
Summer Retreat	Sept 15-17, 2006
MN State Convention	Nov 3-5, 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>

## Group Contributions April 2006

Mtg Day, Time & Location	Contribution Amount
Sun PM OA HOW St Louis Park	363.60
Mon PM OA Lynhurst	98.36
Mon PM OA Highland Park	
Mon & Wed OA LaCrosse	65.00
Mon PM OA HOW Rochester	28.60
Tue AM OA Roseville	60.00
Tue PM OA Brooklyn Center	96.00
Tue PM OA HOW Woodbury	333.00
Wed PM OA HOW St Louis Park	180.00
Sat AM OA HOW Circle Pines	210.00

Intergroup Board	
Sharon R.S., Chair	763-544-5955 <a href="mailto:ssund@skypoint.com">ssund@skypoint.com</a>
Randy F., Vice-Chair	612-201-5522 <a href="mailto:randyfurst@msn.com">randyfurst@msn.com</a>
Kathleen C., Treasurer	612-729-6435
Catherine W., Secretary	612-205-0930 <a href="mailto:Catherine_oa@hotmail.com">Catherine_oa@hotmail.com</a>

**“The dammed-up emotions of years break out of their confinement, and miraculously vanish as soon as they are exposed. As the pain subsides, a healing tranquillity [sic] takes its place.**

AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Page 62