

Society Pages

The Newsletter of
Unity Intergroup September, 2006

Carrying the Message

News from Unity Intergroup

Do You Want To Know More About Sponsorship In OA?

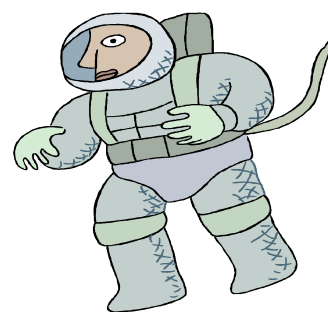


Unity Intergroup will be hosting a Sponsorship Workshop open to all interested OA members. The workshop will be held on Saturday, September 23, from 10:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. in the first floor conference room (the same room as the monthly Intergroup meetings.) The address is 1660 Parkdale Plaza Building, St. Louis Park, MN.

The workshop will be a combination of speakers and small group discussion. Four OA members will share their experiences in sponsoring and being sponsored. There will also be time for small group discussion and sharing your ideas with the total group.

There is no requirement for participation in the workshop other than the willingness to share with other participants. If you have never been in a sponsor/sponsee relationship or if you have been sponsoring and being sponsored for decades, you can have an impact on the workshops' effectiveness. Please join us for this opportunity to grow and learn.

If you have questions, call or e-mail Barb (763.535.1220; brsadler@mninter.net) or Laura D. (612-702-4474; lauramarie22@hotmail.com) See you on the 23rd.



Rocketed Into the Fourth Dimension

Minnesota State Convention
November 3-5, 2006

Calendar of Events

Frontenac Retreat	Sept 15-17, 2006
Newcomer Meeting	September 16, 2006
Sponsorship Workshop	September 23, 2006
Society Pages Deadline	October 5, 2006
Intergroup Meeting	October 14, 2006
MN State Convention	Nov 3-5, 2006
List of Local Meetings	www.overeaters.org
Region 4 Web Site	www.oaregion4.org
World Service Web Site	www.oa.org

Personal Stories

Attending the State Convention

Last year, I volunteered to be part of the entertainment for the November 2005 OA Convention. Thank God for that convention and the people I met involved with entertainment.

For the first time in my life, I met people who had real and consistent abstinence, day after day, year after year, people who had been through hell with their eating, and now were "rocketed to the 4th dimension", as the Big Book says, living a life of "sane and happy usefulness". They got up in the morning, called their sponsors, committed their food, had their sponsees call them, and that is how they started their day every morning. I admired that so much, but I didn't know if I had it in me.

Turns out, I did. As of December 10, 2005, I have maintained back-to-back abstinence, I call my sponsor every day, my sponsees call me, I am working on my life and character defects. I have a changed life today, thanks to the 2005 convention and the people involved who so generously gave their service.

They served me through their abstinence, sharing their stories with my during down time at rehearsals, and through extending the "hand and heart" of OA to me. Thank you to all those involved in the 2005 convention. I have a new life because of your service to the fellowship, and to me, a former newcomer.

~ Anonymous

Only One Person Need Hear.....

On November 6, 2005, I gave a presentation on Step 11 at the Overeaters Anonymous Minnesota State Convention. In preparation for that I did a lot of reading and thinking about this step. I made myself prepare a succinct version of what it was like for me, what happened, and what it is like now. I explained my prayer transformation from giving God directions (before program); saying the resentment prayer (at the beginning of my program); and now saying the Step 11 prayer asking only for

discernment of God's will and the grace and courage to do it. I also noted the order placement of Step 11 in the context of the complete 12 steps. I read and commented about some different processes used for prayer and meditation.

Unfortunately, my presentation put most of the audience to sleep. When I explained to another 12 stepper who leads guided meditations that I must have been boring, she suggested that maybe I was "soothing". Whatever the case, the audience reaction to my presentation was unexpected.

I concluded my presentation by giving the audience a list of the Step 11 promises to use for their own version of prayer or affirmations. Preparation for this presentation really gave my own recovery a boost. And for me, recovery is the name of the game. I have to trust that what I presented was meant for at least one person to hear. Maybe that person was me.

~ Ruth D

Finding the Solution

I have attended the MN State OA convention now for 10 years. I can honestly say, it truly keeps getting better and better. I enjoy the clear focus on how to work the steps as well as the inspiration stories from OA members. Each year when I have left the convention I have left with a new strength for my program. Each year I come away with so much gratitude that I have been blessed to find the solution.

~ Anonymous



Frontenac Retreat Sept. 15-17, 2006

"Step into Recovery" at the beautiful Villa Maria Retreat Center in Frontenac, MN Friday evening thru Sunday Noon. Registration forms are available thru Unity Intergroup website www.overeaters.org and at your meetings. Please join us and hear speakers share their experience, strength and hope in a lovely, peaceful setting. Questions, contact Etta W. via email at ettawith@aol.com or 763-560-3493.

Receiving the Newsletter at Home

Society Pages is available via the Internet or e-mail. Go to www overeaters.org to download a copy of current or past newsletters. A hard copy of Society Pages is 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 Unity Intergroup, Attn: Kathleen C., 3208 W Lake St, #45, Minneapolis, MN 55416..

October Society Pages

The October Society Pages will feature the Minnesota State OA Convention and Step Ten, "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it." The Tuesday Woodbury 6:30p.m. group has volunteered to write for that issue. Articles on the Step or a personal story are still accepted from other OA members, however. Please send your contributions to knitleslieknit@aol.com for publication in Society Pages.

The deadline for submission of articles is 12:00 noon on Saturday, October 7, 2006.

Outreach Opportunities

The Public Information Group and the Outreach Committee meet just before the Intergroup meetings at the same location from 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Join us and help find ways to reach others who suffer from food addiction. We need you! Contact Peg M at 952-920-9496, Nea D. at 612-227-3854 or Robin H. at 612-724-5506 for more information.

We need your help with three upcoming events:

1) Governor Pawlenty's Summit for Returning Veterans. **Thursday, September 21st from 4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.** Minneapolis Convention Center. Contact: Jimmie C., 612-735-7276. We will be participating in a Veterans Resource Fair at the conclusion of the day's workshop that will highlight services available for the approximately 3,000 returning veterans in March of 2007.

2) Diabetes Association. Minneapolis Convention Center, Saturday, **October 21, 2006.** Contact: Robin H., 612-724-5506.

3) Women's Expo. Minneapolis Convention Center, **January 26, 27, 28, 2007.** Contact: Peg M., 952-920-9496.

...we are the message



Mark F. died July 31, 2006 from complications after surgery. He had been a member of Overeaters Anonymous since 1990 and active in service work at the group, Intergroup and region level. Those closest to him knew he worked a strong program well founded in the twelve steps of Overeaters Anonymous and the use of all the tools of recovery, especially service to others.

Mark said that compulsive overeaters wear their disease and Mark did wear the ravages of his disease. You may have wondered why Mark didn't have more physical recovery having been a member in OA for such a long time. Well, Mark did have significant recovery initially, but that changed about eight years ago when he suffered two major health consequences after surgery. First he contracted hepatitis C from a blood transfusion. The hepatitis caused advanced cirrhosis of the liver. The liver cleanses toxins from the body, helps break down fats, regulates glucose in the blood and performs other metabolic functions. His liver functioned in the poor range but it was not sick enough to make him a candidate for a transplant. Second, Mark had serious lymph edema and as a result carried a significant amount of fluid as he moved about his daily business.

Before his health problems really slowed him down, Mark held several service positions in the Twin Cities intergroups. The list includes Intergroup registrar, newsletter editor, Secretary, Treasurer as well as group

representative. Mark, with his love of OA and organization skills, was a key member of the intergroup transition committee. Even as his health deteriorated he continued to help Cathy D. publish the monthly updates from Intergroup business and recovery events.

Mark would claim his work with newcomers as his most important service work, including co-founding the weekly New Members Series that ran for several years beginning about 1994. Nancy F. says "Mark led the weekly Newcomer's group that I attended my first year. He launched many a Newcomer into the 12-step program. Many came back week after week; several considered it their home group. It was a beautiful, meaningful group where he shared his story honestly and openly."

Marilyn B., past Region IV Trustee recalled his service as Region Representative, parliamentarian and newsletter editor. She said "One of my favorite memories was the day the Region Board took a break from a weekend Board meeting in Minneapolis to attend the Newcomers' meeting, where Mark introduced each of us and allowed us to share our experience, strength, and hope. Mark was an inspiration, not only to the newcomers, but to us 'long-timers!' He will be missed!"

Mark passed away after a long courageous struggle of living life on life's terms. I think he would like to say good bye with a favorite quote from page 106 of the OA twelve and twelve, "Those of us who live this program don't simply carry the message; *we are the message*. Each day we live well, we *are* well, and we embody the joy of recovery which attracts others who want what we've found in OA."



Step 9
Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Step 9: My Behavior Impacts Others

More than any others for me, Step 9 is a life-changing step. In doing this step, I am finally, forcefully and dramatically pushed into consideration of how my behavior affects others. I learn that my past actions have impacted others directly, indirectly, and sometimes subtly; and I discover that the way I do amends can also affect others. The result is that I become a more responsible person and one that even I can respect.

In steps 4 & 5, I became aware of and admitted my defects of character. I did some deep soul searching, sweeping the spotlight on self, looking for the ways I had learned to handle life ineffectively. At this stage, I was aware on some level, that my behavior had affected others; yet it was still very much about me. In steps 6 & 7, I became willing and asked to have these defects of character removed. I was however, still thinking primarily about self and was mostly unaware of the people that had been affected by my actions.

I am currently working on step 8, and starting to move into step 9. In doing the eighth step, the single greatest realization for me was that the things I do impact others in so many ways. Interestingly, as soon as I started to actively work this step, I had two experiences which drove the point home to me.

The first was a phone call from a solicitor which I took at work. Two of my defects (fear of the confusion I felt about how to handle such calls and selfishness with my time) jumped into action right away. The result was that I was quite rude to the caller. I immediately felt regret, but unfortunately not in time to repair the damage. I saw that my behavior had affected

the caller (directly), but also my employer (indirectly) via the image of our company.

The second experience was a bit different. I have adopted habits on my job which amount to a sort of safety net for me, ensuring that things don't get out of control. (Does anyone see the defects of fear and control here?) I had already been told that I don't need to use some of these habits, yet, I continue to do so. Because our office will be moving soon, time is becoming a premium commodity. It dawned on me that my 'self-preservation' habits may have made me feel safer, but were wasting company time and affecting my co-workers by limiting the time I have to give to help out.

As I move into Step 9, I see that I need to consider others at an even deeper level. I need to meticulously weigh each amends on a scale balanced by two questions: will it hurt them and will it hurt others? These are questions which are not always easy and which will require help from God and my sponsor.

Let's return to my two experiences. With the phone call, I knew that given the opportunity, I would apologize to the caller, but that is not likely to happen. Therefore, indirect, living amends is my only recourse. In fact, I had an opportunity to do so a few days later. I was able to be pleasant to a solicitor. I also spoke with our primary receptionist to see how she handles such calls. The question of what amends to make to my employer is less clear. Living amends is a given. I must be courteous to all callers. But I am not as sure about making an apology. In the other situation, it is pretty clear that I need to make living amends via letting go of my 'safety net' habits. Do I need to apologize? I don't think so, but I can't be sure because I can't always trust my 'thinker' which is easily shaded by fear or other emotions.

Even now as I work with my sponsor and God to carefully craft the amends I need to make, I am beginning to experience many of the promises of the program as described on pages 83 & 84 of the AA Big Book. I am beginning to comprehend the word serenity and know peace, I am starting to lose interest in selfish

things and gain interest in others; selfishness is beginning to slip away; fear of people and economic insecurity is starting to diminish and many times I realize that God is doing for me what I could not do for myself. I can only imagine what will happen as I actually complete the amends and go forth into the world a free woman.

~ Anonymous

A Level of Love and Intimacy

Step 9: "Practicing the principle of love we learn to accept others as they are, not as we would have them be...slowly but surely we are establishing the best possible relationship with each person we know." p. 105 OA 12 and 12

This passage has meant a lot to me. Before practicing step 9, I really believed that making amends had nothing to do with love, which our OA 12 and 12 says is the underlying principle to this step. No way could it be linked to love! I associated making amends more with admitting my faults, and admitting my faults was really hard to do! How could making amends really bring love into my life?

Before Program and recovery, I spent a lot of time creating an image for the outside world to see of being in control and self-assured at all times while my insides were a mass of insecurity. I heard at a meeting recently that an addict is an egomaniac with an inferiority complex -- that was *me*. What I found to my amazement was that when I finally admitted my humanness by admitting my part in hurts that I caused others, love poured in. I was forgiven on many levels - by the people I made amends to, by my Higher Power and by myself. My walls came down, and I now experience a level of love and intimacy with myself, HP, and others I could never have imagined. It is such a gift!

I think the amends that have made the most difference to me are the living amends I make to those closest to me - my immediate family and my family of origin. To amend means to change and every day, I have the choice of living life on my terms or on life's terms. Slowly but surely, one day at a time and sometimes one moment at a time, I am establishing the

best possible relationship with each person I know -- and love is the result.

~ Anonymous

The Promises of the Program

The Big Book tells us that we must be willing to go to any lengths for recovery, but what does this mean in a practical sense with regard to Step 9?

One, I think that I need to first forgive all those on my amends list. Without having forgiven, any amends I make will be clouded with my own hurt feelings, angers, resentments, etc. Also, without having forgiven those I make amends to, I will naturally go into the amends process with some expectations about how it will go. If I am seeking their apology, I will not be sincere in my own. As with everything in my program, I need to seek my higher power's help. I cannot forgive on my own any more than I can stop compulsively overeating on my own. I need my higher power's help to do for me what I can't do for myself. In this case: to forgive.

Two, I need to be willing to seek counsel on what type of amends to make. On my own, I may not think certain amends are necessary. The outside help of a sponsor can help me determine what lengths are necessary. It may be that I need to search people out to make amends. It may be that I need only be willing to make the amends if my path crosses theirs. Regardless, I am not always able to determine on my own which type of amends to make. I need the help of my higher power and my sponsor.

Three, I actually make the amends. I think it is invaluable to have a safe place to land after making the amends. It can be a very emotional event and having a safe, listening ear to talk with after can help prevent negative outcomes for me. Sandwich calls can be a useful approach with this step, talking with another OA member immediately before and after making the amends.

Four, I let go. Sometimes this can be the most difficult part for me. No matter if my amends

are received positively or negatively, I need to let go. The purpose of this step is to “sweep off our side of the street”. If I have done this with honesty and humility, then I need to let go of the results.

Why work Step 9? For me, the answer is simple. In the Big Book, we read that it is in this step that the promises of the program become actualized. I want “to know a new freedom and a new happiness”. I want to “not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it”. I want “that feeling of uselessness and self-pity to disappear”. I want my “whole attitude and outlook upon life to change”. I trust in the program and the experiences of those who have gone before me. I have faith in my higher power that these things can happen for me, too, if I work this program.

~ Dorothy A.

How to Make Amends

I had a unique experience with working the 9th step. A few years ago, several sponsees and friends in the program including myself had completed the 6-week fourth and fifth step workshop and had moved through steps 6-8. I realized that all of us were kind of in the same place and were all talking about how to make amends. I mentioned this to one woman and she said wouldn't it be great if we had a group to work on the 9th step? Well, that was a revelation to me and I quickly asked all the women involved if they were interested and we began meeting.

We met weekly at my house for several weeks. At our meetings we initially laid out a particular harm that we had done and our ideas for making amends. We asked for feedback and

suggestions and received it from other members. We then hammered out the specifics together. Was a letter a good idea? How about a phone call? Meeting in person? We tossed around ideas about what to do if the person was deceased or we had lost contact with them. We tried out different words and asked, are we focusing on what we did without excuses? Without blaming them? Or, are we taking their inventory? We helped each other see when and where we were doing well and where we could do better.

We went out and made the amends then came back to the group and shared our stories. It was wonderful to be part of the healing process of several women as well as my own healing. Many of us were relieved of burdens that we had been carrying around for years. Some of us began to work the 10 step while the group was going on and shared how to keep the burdens from building up so much. It was a wonderful experience for me. I think of the group from time to time and am blessed to still have some of these women in my life and know that I'm connected to the rest through shared experiences in the program and the higher power.

~ Ana S

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Overeaters Anonymous Minnesota State Convention



**THERE
IS A
SOLUTION**

November 3, 4, & 5, 2006

Come hear abstinent speakers share their inspiring stories;
& learn how you can recover from compulsive overeating.

Registration Begins Late Summer 2006

www.overeaters.org Sponsored by Unity Intergroup

ONLY IF YOU ARE NOT ALREADY ON THE CONTACT LIST:

E-mail Tammy D. tammyd@integroonline.com or call - 952-440-9328 to be added to registration mailing.

WE NEED YOU! Recover Through Service

Volunteer Service Opportunities;
Contact Mary R. 763-537-0336 or mary.Randolph@allina.com

Entertainment Committee;
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Convention Boosters Needed at Local Meetings;
Call Greg C. 763-441-3918 or greg@drywallguy.com

Convention Held at Radisson Hotel & Conference Center

With a prime location in Plymouth adjacent to a nature preserve & just minutes from downtown Minneapolis, the Hotel Minneapolis offers warm hospitality and an inviting atmosphere.

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