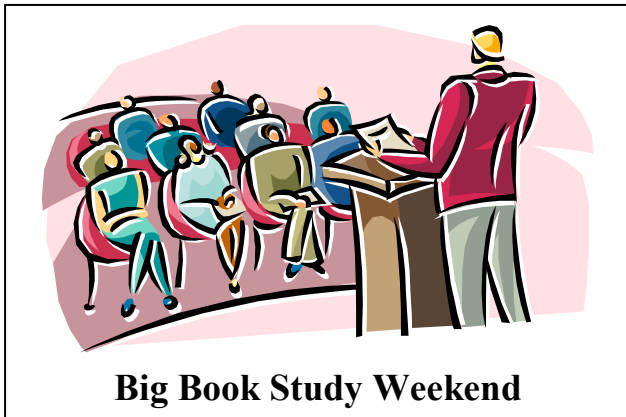


Society Pages

The
Newsletter of
Unity Intergroup July, 2006

Carrying the Message

News from Unity Intergroup



Big Book Study Weekend

Unity Intergroup is presenting an OA Big Book Study Weekend August 26th – 28th this year at the Minnetonka Community Center 14600 Minnetonka Blvd Minnetonka, MN. The speaker is a recovering Overeaters Anonymous member from Winnipeg, Canada. He will lead this study of the Big Book—a wonderfully inspirational interpretation—concentrating especially on how the message in the Big Book applies and works as well for compulsive overeaters as it does for alcoholics. With fascinating insight into the history of the founders, the speaker offers his own unique perspective of how the Big Book powerfully supports OA recovery. Our speaker also goes into detail on actively working all the 12 steps. The 4th-step inventory material used by many in OA will also be presented.

Workshop Cost is \$20 per person. 90 seats are available on a "first come, first served" basis, as payments and forms are received. Please call the OA hotline at 612-377-1600 to assure availability before sending in your registration.

Service Opportunity Available

Unity Intergroup is in need of website support. We need someone who can commit to making timely changes and updates to our website. Call Sharon R. S. if you can help at 763-544-5955.

Sponsorship Workshop

Mark your calendars, Unity Intergroup is presenting a Sponsorship Workshop. Tentative date is September 23, 2006. More information to come..

New OA HOW Meeting in Mankato

OA-HOW is a division of Overeaters Anonymous that is more structured in its approach to compulsive overeating. We started our meetings on Wednesdays, June 14. The group meets from 6:30-8:30 at Orness Plaza, 900 Hope Street, Mankato, MN 56001. Please ring #406 to be let into the community room. For further information on this meeting, please contact Kelly at 651-235-6180. If you would like more information about OA-HOW, please visit our web site: www.OAHOW.org.

Calendar of Events

Society Pages Deadline	August 5, 2006
Intergroup Meeting	August 12, 2006
Newcomer meeting	August 19, 2006
Big Book Study	August 26-28, 2006
Frontenac Retreat	Sept 15-17, 2006
Sponsorship Workshop	Set 23, 2006 (Tentative)
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.aa.org

Intergroup Board

Sharon R.S., Chair 763-544-5955
ssund@skypoint.com
 Randy F., Vice-Chair 612-201-5522
randyfurst@msn.com
 Kathleen C., Treasurer 612-729-6435
 Catherine W., Secretary 612-205-0930
Catherine_oa@hotmail.com

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 will be 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.

Region IV Convention Shares Experience, Strength and Hope with Compulsive Overeaters!

The message "There is a Solution-Together We Can Recover" was carried to 230 people at the Region IV 2006 OA Convention on June 23-25 at the Holiday Inn Select in Bloomington, MN. People attended from twelve states: California, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

We raised \$3,918.57 after expenses, which will be used by Region IV to carry the message to health care professionals and make OA known throughout the Region.

Thanks to All Who Made the Region IV Convention Possible

A **BIG** thank you to our wonderful volunteers ...who gave so much of themselves to make the convention a success:

- The Region Board
- The Convention Committee
- Unity Intergroup
- Our Luncheon Speaker
- Our Dinner Speaker
- Our Two Keynote Speakers
- Our 22 Workshop Speakers
- Our 5 Unity Singers
- Our 8 Mascots
- Our Stage/Entertainment Directors & MC
- Our Set Up Committees
- Our Decorators
- Our Dance Chair
- Our Clean Up Crews

And to over 100 volunteers who staffed the registration desk, the literature tables and the hospitality room and who greeted the convention-goers, timed speakers and managed the rooms.

And to all those who made and brought decorations to carry the message visually with Big Book quotes and Northwoods décor.

And to our lovable mascots...especially the OA CAN – CAN sisters who won the contest and inspired us that we can – can recover. The sisters are from Kan-Kan, Kansas. The other six mascots were delightful too. In addition to entertaining the convention goers and making us laugh, the mascots raised \$300.00 for Region IV.

And to the Unity Singers for inspiring us to recover through the words of their songs:

Body & Soul
When You Believe
Prayer of St. Francis
I will Get There
Let Go and Let God
Circle of Friends

To our dance chair for providing good music, exercise and plenty of fun.

And to all those who attended the convention and supported our Region.

Together we can recover, enjoy life and be happy, joyous and free!

-- Sue B.

Group Contributions May 2006

Meeting Day, Time & Location	Contribution Amount
Mon pm, OA HOW, Brooklyn Center	170.00
Tue am, OA, Roseville, St. Christopher	60.00
Wed pm, OA HOW, Minnetonka	144.00
Thur aft, OA, Minneapolis, Mt Olivet	90.00
Thur pm, OA HOW, Burnsville	204.00
Sat am OA HOW, Eden Prairie	180.00
Sat am OA, Mpls, Lake Nokomis	100.00
Sat am, OA HOW, Circle Pines	161.25
Sat am, OA, Eden Prairie Pax Christi	233.00
Sat am, OA St. Paul Mac/Plymouth	180.00
Thank you for your contributions!	

August Society Pages

The August Society Pages will feature Step Eight, "Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all." The Monday OA HOW group in Rochester has enthusiastically volunteered to write the articles for the next issue. Articles on the Step or a personal story are still accepted from other OA members, however. Please send your contributions to cmkareninmn@yahoo.com for publication in Society Pages.

The deadline for submission of articles is 12:00 noon on Saturday, August 5, 2006.

Step 7 Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.

Action vs. Inaction

My Creator, I am now willing, that You should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that You now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to You and my fellows. Grant me strength as I go out from here, to do Your bidding. Amen.

This is a prayer of action and action is living. What I did in the past was inaction; like lying on the couch all day, overeating, not getting dressed and not enjoying life. Hiding in the house from decisions, people and life in general. I was choosing to isolate from the world, for I had little knowledge of how to handle trouble or even happiness without food.

But action is what this program is teaching me. I choose to be willing. I choose to put my food in a cup daily. I choose to reach for my Higher Power and I choose to hand over every single defect of character that He reveals to me. I am grateful that He reveals these defects one at a time and grants me guidance, strength and hope of being useful to Him and my fellows.

May God continue to do for us what we could never do for ourselves.

-- Mary Ellen

Sane and Happy Usefulness

In Step 1, we learn that we are powerless over food and our lives have become unmanageable. Once that gets under control through the working of the Steps and the Program, we begin to see that we are also powerless over many other things, and that although they may not each make our life unmanageable, we begin to sense that God has a life for us, a "happy, joyous and free" life waiting for us to claim. Yet, if we insist on clinging to our old life, minus compulsive overeating, we are cheating ourselves out of the life we could be living, and the message we could be carrying.

When people look at us, they see not only whether we are able to abstain from compulsive overeating or not, but also, how the rest of our life looks. Is it a life of "sane and happy usefulness?" Or is it a life of confusion and disarray amidst the anchor of our program that keeps us hanging on by a thread? Most days, I have to admit that my life is more the latter, due to the fact that I am often unwilling to truly surrender my entire being, including my favorite character defects to my Higher Power.

I do have hope, though, that this will not always be the case, and that 6 months of working this program is going to look different than 6 years, and 6 years will look different than 26 years. I am in this for the

long haul. Yet, I do not want all my character defects to be in it for the long haul with me!

I have hope that gradually, through small steps, and diligent work, that this life of “sane and happy usefulness” can be mine someday. I know this for two reasons.

First, I have seen something I thought was unchangeable about myself be transformed into my biggest asset in life. God has transformed me from a struggling compulsive overeater, to a recovering compulsive overeater, and there is a world of difference between the two. Secondly, I have heard stories of where others have been, and I see the better place they are in today. I know that there is hope for me; there is hope for everyone who will submit themselves to this simple program.

-- Anonymous

Turning It Over

In the process of exploring Step 7, I came across an exercise which asks me to catalog my character defects and then to list the assets God can transform them into. It was easy for me to itemize my glaring defects. It was nearly impossible for me to record what assets these flaws could become, so my sponsor suggested that I simply inventory my assets separately. I struggled at first, but as I concentrated, they became apparent. Whew! I do have assets!

However, it proved extremely challenging to cross-reference them with my imperfections. Some were obviously connected but most were not. I was getting bogged down. Then I was struck with divine intervention. Instead of working so hard to try to force a connection, I turned the whole exercise over to my Higher Power to work with both lists as necessary. I really don't have to fuss with them or try to figure it all out. The Divine Power of the Universe is in charge of how my defects are transformed into assets and how I will continue to grow and evolve. All I have to do is be willing. What a relief. It is one of the marvelous gifts of abstinence and recovery and I am truly grateful for the journey, one day at a time.

-- Coe Ann

Free of Character Defects?

In Step 6, I became willing to let go of my defects of character. In Step 7, I asked God to remove these

defects of character. This also includes issues and behaviors that have bogged me down. I asked God to also remove unresolved feelings that have blocked me from the sunlight of the spirit. Being a very process-oriented person, I approached the Steps in an orderly way. But when I got to Steps 6 and 7, I was stymied. How shall I do this? How can I make it happen? What is my part? Do I ask just once and never have to ask again? I had many questions and few answers.

The answer for me turned out to be that I don't have to contort myself to make myself change. I ask God for what I want and need. Then, I trust that God will show me my part and trust that God will surely do His.

The great part is that change happens and there is a path for continued growth. I cannot ever be perfectly free of my character defects. But I can make continued progress with Step 10. It is all about having the courage to change. It is about being willing to allow God to mold me into that which He has intended for me. After all, what did I have to lose, but a lot of misery in the form of judgment, resentment, anger and self-pity.

-- Anonymous

According to God's Plan

So often I find myself, and others, hard at work trying to remove our own shortcomings or defects of character. We seem to forget. We go back to old ways of thinking and behaving. The truth, for me, is that I m unable to stop these beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. It is simply not within my power. That's why the first word of Step 7 is *Humbly*. It takes humility to admit that I can not do this thing—I need help. So, I ask God to intervene. Sometimes my prayer is for the strength to survive or the courage to endure, but in Step 7 I ask for more. In Step 7 I ask to have the shortcomings totally removed so that they are no longer even an issue.

As I have worked the Steps, I have been faced with many character defects. One of them is gossip. When I first became willing to surrender gossip I asked God to take away my gossiping. But, it didn't just go away immediately. I experienced a process in which I was gradually relieved of the habit of gossip. I would first realize that I had just gossiped. Soon I would realize I was in the middle of

gossiping. Then sometimes I'd realize that I was about to gossip, and I'd continue to do it. Finally, I began to think about gossiping, I felt the temptation to do it because of some feeling it would generate, but I was able, with God's help, to not gossip. I'm now beginning to lose the habit of gossiping altogether. This has often been the pattern I experience when I have asked God to relieve me of a character defect. I am relieved according To God's plan and in His time--not according to my timetable, which is always NOW.

When working Step 7 my job is simple. Once I become willing to let my defects go, I ask God to remove all my shortcomings. After that I trust that He will do the work and I will experience the miracle. The Steps take us on an amazing journey.
-- Stacie Y.

Personal Stories

Fear or God's Guidance?

"Fear is surely a bar to reason, and to love, and of course it invariably powers anger, vainglory, and aggression" --Bill W. *The Best of Bill*

So many times I have seen fear become a barrier to my good reason. Rarely however, are my fears reasonable or grounded in past experience, truth, or reality. My mind ceases to trust God, who is immutable truth and begins to run off course following any distraction or stimulus. Knowledge isn't always, and actually rarely is the cure. Acting in fear, I fail to follow the guidance of God or reason and I begin to act purely on instinct, which rarely follows the path of logic.

Fear is also a fatal bar to love in my life. I refuse to allow myself to be vulnerable to others out of my instinct to self-protect, which stems from the fear that I may be hurt. This is actually rational fear for I have been hurt in the past and it did come as a result of letting down my guard. This does not mean, however, that one builds up walls to evade any vulnerability or openness. The instinct for self-

preservation is not wrong; it is God-given. But when I carry the instinct too far, to the point of being dominated by the paralyzing power of fear rather than by the almighty power of God, which drives out all fear, I am acting in self will and manifesting a clear lack of faith. In the process, I shut myself off from that which I so desperately need which is love.

To impede fear's potential to spark in me a rash of power, vainglory, and aggression, and thus damage my relationship with others, I have tried to make a commitment that whenever I have a strong urge to say something to someone of a "tough love" nature, that I pause and examine myself. I ask myself, and maybe my sponsor or another OA member, to discover if what I want to say needs to be said, and then whether or not it needs to be said by me. Most importantly, I inventory my motives to see if I want to speak because I love the other person or because I am afraid of a possible outcome. Not surprisingly, I usually decide to shut my mouth and wait.

There are circumstances, however when this pressing urge may actually be justified, but prayer, patience, reflection, and the counsel of others will help to insure that I am speaking from a place of genuine love and concern rather than fear. Angry, vainglorious, or aggressive words, not surprisingly, are rarely well-received by any audience. Words spoken in love, on the other hand, show compassion and genuine concern, even if they are difficult to say and unpleasant to hear and accept. In order to live and act with reason and love, without aggression and anger, I must pray to be removed of fear and instead filled with the faith that God has all people and circumstances ordered in the palm of His hand.

-- Jacki C.

An Honest Woman

Recently I renewed my driver's license. When filling out the form, it asked for my weight. I put it in. I looked at what it was four years ago when I renewed. I was about 25 pounds down from that weight. However, it doesn't really mean much since I was lying through my teeth at the time! Now I'm an honest woman.

-- Barb S.