

Society Pages

The Newsletter of
Unity Intergroup April 2007

Carrying the Message

Notes from the Intergroup Board

Greetings, fellow compulsive overeaters!

I am humbled by the honor of serving as Intergroup Chair for 2007 and excited to work along side the group reps and board members of Unity Intergroup. I have a lot to learn and am grateful for this opportunity. Celebrating 11 years in program this month, doing service is the least I can do to begin to give back what I have received through Overeaters Anonymous. If you don't currently have a representative from your group attending Intergroup meetings, you have my personal invitation to come and visit. Our Intergroup is made up of 52 meetings and we have had about 25-30 groups represented at the monthly meetings lately. We would love to see more reps and alternate reps participate, for "together we can". We have a section on our agenda for "How is your group doing?" and encourage you to share with us your successes or challenges at the group level. One of the Intergroup's roles is to support the individual groups. We would like to hear from you to determine the best way to do that.

Another Intergroup goal is outreach/public information to help the compulsive overeater. This is done in many ways: conventions, retreats, workshops, newcomer meeting, newsletter, website, etc. In order to support or grow the ways in which we do outreach/public information, we need people to attend the events and volunteer to serve.

Currently, we have many needs for the existing committees. Adding about two dozen more volunteers would assist our current projects greatly. You do not have to be a group rep to participate on a committee. Please contact the members below if you are interested in serving and sharing your talents to reach the still suffering.

Newcomer Meeting: Sue L. (952-933-4104)

Anoka Treatment Center Outreach: Gerrie (763-421-8917)

Newsletter Editor: Ellen W. (952-925-3801)

Newsletter Print Coordinator: Keith C. (612-728-3983)

Phone Volunteer Coordinator: Cathy G. (612-728-3983)

Web Administrator: Julie W. (612-616-0453)

Outreach: Nea D. (612-227-3854)

Public Information: Julie W. (612-616-0453)

Bylaws: Howard W. (952-930-1212)

Literature: Amy D. (952-270-0098)

Sponsorship: Gerrie (763-421-8917)

State Convention: Ann D. (763-521-6599)

2007 Buffalo Retreat: Emily L. (952-884-3417)

Hope to see you the second Saturday of the month!

In Fellowship,
~Becky T.

Our Secretary – Janelle N.

As an OA member for just over three years at the St. Christopher's Saturday 8am meeting in Roseville, I am excited to work the 12th step and provide service as secretary of the Unity Intergroup Board of Directors. The miracles of recovery are present each day that I choose, with the help of my higher power, to not take that first compulsive bite. I'm grateful to carry the message.

My continued recovery from compulsive overeating plus the many positive changes working in my life (through my OA fellows and my higher power) allow me the energy and enthusiasm to serve in this capacity.

~Janelle N.

Our Vice Chair – Julie B.H.

I've been coming around OA since 1988. I now have 4 years of back to back abstinence and am maintaining a 100+ lb weight loss. I was an InterGroup (IG) rep for over 2 years and am now honored to be on the IG board serving as Vice Chair.

Service in OA has made a profound difference in my program of recovery. In my early years in OA, it was all I could do just to show up at meetings. I don't know who I thought set up the chairs at meetings much less who kept the wheels of OA turning. Service wasn't a big part of my program. I strayed away from OA for years and finally found my way back. This time I began helping out at meetings. I got to know more people in the fellowship and came to enjoy giving back this great gift. The more I gave back, the stronger my program became. When first asked to consider sitting on the board I said "No way". My disease wanted me to sit in the back of the room, or better yet, at home with the covers pulled over my head. Recovery pushes me beyond my comfort zone and into the world. Recovery is teaching me new life skills such as serving on boards and interacting with people. It's not about my fears and self imposed limitations. It is about giving back to a community that works together.

Thank you for the honor and opportunity to serve as Vice Chair.

~Julie B-H

Notice to OA Group Treasurers: You May Need to Change Your EIN Number

An EIN is an identification number assigned to entity such as an OA Group, just as social security number is an identification number assigned to an individual. In the past, many OA Groups have used the Unity InterGroup EIN, or they have used someone's individual social security number, to open their group checking account.

After considerable research regarding tax obligations and legal liability, Unity InterGroup has determined that we need to cancel our current EIN (Employer Identification Number) and apply for a new one that will be reserved solely for the use of Unity business. The effective date for the cancellation of Unity's current EIN (41-1266123) is May 31, 2007.

If your group's checking account is currently using Unity's EIN 41-1266123, please update your bank account information immediately. It is simple to apply for your own EIN number - see below. When you do so, it is important that you keep a copy of the form and all of the information used to obtain your new number. Once you have your own number, contact the bank and replace Unity's EIN number with your new EIN number.

To apply on line, go to this link:

https://sa1.www4.irs.gov/sa_vign/newFormSS4.do

To apply by phone, fax, or mail, use this form. Form SS-4

<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fss4.pdf>

Please refer to the flyer inserted in this newsletter for the details you will need to fill in the form. Contact Amy D. (InterGroup Treasurer) with any questions: amydunker@yahoo.com / 952-270-0098

Links

List of Local Meetings	www.overeaters.org
Region 4 Web Site	www.oaregion4.org
World Service Web Site	www.oa.org

Spring OA Open Meeting: "Living In Recovery"

The Saturday 8am Roseville meeting cordially invites you to our Spring OA Open Meeting on Sunday, April 29, 2007 from 6:30pm-8:00pm. The focus of this open meeting is "Living In Recovery". The evening will feature the experience, strength and hope of OA members who are newer to recovery plus those who have experienced long-term recovery from compulsive overeating. The open meeting will also share perspective from the friends and family of OA members and how their lives have changed as their loved ones live in recovery. We welcome new, former and existing members of OA, their friends and family or anyone curious about Overeaters Anonymous to attend this meeting and learn more about OA. For details, contact Janelle N. at 763-780-2794. St. Christopher's is located on Hwy 36 and Hamline Ave. in Roseville, MN. We hope you can join us!



Hello from Wisconsin!

Did you know there is now a HOW meeting in Wisconsin? The first HOW meeting in Wisconsin was started last summer and has made a good beginning. We are a group of about 6-8 people each Saturday morning from 9:30-11:30. We're growing, but we need help!

We really need speakers to share and inspire our newcomers!

If you have just stepped up or are shy about speaking in front of large groups, why not come speak to a small group? We really need your help!

If you're interested in signing up to speak, please give Colleen a call at 715-772-4701. Thanks!

~Heather J.

Convention Corner

Mark your calendar! The 2007 Minnesota State Overeaters Anonymous Convention is scheduled for November 2-4, 2007 at: Holiday Inn Select & Suites, Minneapolis Airport Hotel Mall of America, Three Appletree Square (I-494 & 34th Avenue, Exit 1), Bloomington, Minnesota 55425, Phone: (952) 854-9000 Fax: (952) 876-8700.

This is an excellent opportunity to share your experience, strength and hope by serving on the convention planning committee. Listed below are the sub-committees with current chair or co-chair openings. Please contact Ann D. at (763) 521-6599 if you are interested in any of these service positions.

- Convention Vice-Chair
- Decoration Committee
- Public Relations Committee
- Literature Committee
- Treasurer
- Program/Speaker Committee & Sub-Committee

We are in need of a convention booster from each meeting. This person will serve as the contact for the Convention Outreach and Volunteer committees. Contact Greg C. at 763-441-3918 or greg@drywallguy.com.

We are making an exciting addition to this year's convention. We will be presenting a slideshow at the convention depicting all different levels of recovery. If you would like to be a part of this dynamic production, please send your before and after pictures (depicting recovery on a spiritual, emotional or physical level) to Jim C at 612-735-7276 or at tigerbasellc@comcast.net.

Step 4
“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

The Blessings of Step 4

My fourth step was guided by a booklet. I seriously followed every recommendation and turned it into a lengthy and thorough process. I was shocked at my many transgressions—insensitivity, unkindness, thoughtlessness, white lies (which are after all real lies), resentments (where I did actually play a part, much to my chagrin), petty theft of foods, neglect of family and friends so I could hide out with my most trusted friend, and more. It was a painful, lonesome journey—made more so because I was so locked into isolation by my shame that I could not bring myself to have a sponsor or discuss it with anyone else in my OA group.

I went to my 5th step meeting filled with fear and certain that I was the worst possible kind of person. After I had revealed my worst—this lovely, elderly Congregational minister took my hands and said three of the most welcome words I had ever heard. She said, “Is that all?” She patiently explained that my character defects were easily remedied by amends and suggested several books relating to another 12 step program. I walked out of that little house in South Minneapolis feeling lighter than I had in my entire life. Years of shame had been washed away by her understanding and admiration for the courage it took to take these steps.

Thank you for the opportunity to remember and share. As always, take the best and leave the rest.

~Judi

I Love My Body

In celebration of my first year of abstinence, I signed up to be the abstinence speaker at my regular meeting. I was nervous. Abstinence is a tricky topic. It involves our food plans but isn't only about that. Some of us seem “struck” abstinent and others of us struggle with it on a daily basis. Talking about abstinence felt like trying to talk someone into joining my religious denomination when I know they already follow something else. So instead of just talking about abstinence, I decided to talk about my body.

Before I came to OA, I'd spent most of my 42 years hating my body, loving my mind and thinking that was all there was to me. My mind believed that the majority of what was wrong in my life would be fixed “if only” my body looked different and stopped defying my control. My body, despised, deprived, assaulted by food and unkind thoughts, mustered through each day exhausted. If something uncomfortable happened my mind would check out and leave my body behind to deal with it.

OA and abstinence have changed that. I can now say that I love my body. Though I have lost weight, my size and shape are not the reasons for the change. Rather, I have a different relationship with my higher power and I believe a spark of that power resides in me. I've discovered a homing device within my heart that yearns for the One who placed it there. I can only hear the call when I'm abstinent. For me, that abstinence requires loving the vessel, my body, where that spark resides.

Waiting to speak I looked down at my “before picture.” It showed me from the back jumping off a high rock ledge into Lake Superior. I was close to my heaviest weight. Suddenly, I was filled with love for that body, too. It was in that body that I took a daring leap into the water and it was in that body that I took the leap into OA. I do not regret that body nor do wish to close the door on it. Instead, I passed the picture in gratitude to my body, then and now, and in gratitude to OA and to my higher power for the gift of abstinence I have received.

The promises of the program do come true.

~Sally

You Have to Work the Steps ...Including Step 4!

"You have got to be kidding!" That was my reaction to Step 4 when I first started coming to OA meetings 14 months ago. I wasn't familiar with the "steps". I was, however, very familiar with 30 years of clinical depression. The last thing that I wanted to focus on was bad things about myself. I felt much relief from the isolation of depression, sugar addiction, and compulsive overeating after embracing the OA fellowship, and I wasn't about to jeopardize my newfound serenity.

Besides, I'm a compulsive, obsessive, perfectionist and could hardly say the word character d-d-d-d-defects. And I'm angry. I'm angry about the way a number of people have treated me. Was I really supposed to consider how it was my fault? No way was I going there. But I saw members in my OA group with light in their eyes and peace about their demeanor that I wished I had. From their stories I learned that their personal histories were every bit as difficult as mine, some much worse. They all had the same mantra: "you have to work the steps". So I started to nibble around the edges of Step-4. I would sit down with my 12 & 12 workbook and write answers to a few questions. My list began. But every time, I either started concentrating on how it wasn't my fault, or my memory failed me.

Then I tried a new approach. I started a list of uncomfortable memories, like the time I said something mean to my mother and still feel embarrassed and bad about it today. And, like the time I repeated what someone had told me in confidence, and could never shake the guilty feeling – oh how I wish I could take back those words. They were little things, but they were a start. I had dipped my toe into the water of a moral inventory.

If I had stopped there, I would have spiraled back into self loathing. But I didn't. A crisis in my professional life helped me over the resistance. A client was challenging an invoice and whether I had been authorized to do the work. This was a first for me, and I was extremely uncomfortable and defensive about it. I felt very unappreciated and professionally insulted. Then, in my heart of hearts, I realized

that my personal style contributed to the situation. You see, I don't like to be micro managed. I don't like to get permission for every little thing I do. In my mind this is inefficient and causes me to lose momentum on the project. Besides, I know best what the client needs. After all, I am the consultant. I have been operating like this for years, as most clients don't want to fret about the details — they just want the job done. But I had failed to recognize the difference with this client. I began to realize that my number one job is to service the customer and do what they hire me to do, not what I think needs to be done. So, there you have it. I was honest with myself for the first time in years. I was humbled. I was relieved of my anger. I was able to call the client and calmly talk it through. (And, yes, I got paid.)

That was the day I started to understand the phrase in the Serenity Prayer "...and the Wisdom to know the difference". The wisdom is about separating what is my responsibility from what is not (things that belong to others or to the higher power). There is huge relief in that for me, and a powerful coping tool.

That was just the beginning. When I finally moved on to a 5th Step two weeks ago, I was blessed with a miracle of recovery. I didn't feel the huge relief that I was expecting, but later that day I noticed I wasn't craving diet coke or french fries any more. After a 30 year addiction to diet soda and eating french fries almost daily for years, I was amazed – scared – cautious – and hopeful that this could be real. It was hard to believe that the cravings had been lifted. But it has been 15 days now, and I am free of diet soda, caffeine, and french fries. Those addicting chemicals have no power over me any more.

Thank you, members of OA who have come before me, for sustaining the organization so that it was here when I was ready. Thank you, OA, for the tools to live a happier, hopeful life free of sugar addiction and compulsive overeating. Thank you, AA and OA, for the 12 steps and 12 traditions that are guiding my spiritual journey. Thank you, Higher Power, for the gift of recovery and serenity.

~Michele H

THE 4TH STEP IS A GIFT

Over two months ago, I was asked to share my experience, strength and hope with the 4th Step for "Society Pages". I happily agreed since the deadline was months away. As the deadline approached, my character defects "kicked in" – negative thinking about my writing skills, fears of not meeting the deadline, disappointing the person who had asked me to contribute, and feeling like I have nothing to offer. While these defects still exist to some degree, they have much less power over me because I've worked the 12 steps and specifically the 4th step.

In my process of preparing to write something about the 4th Step, I ran into some of the same character defects I faced while trying to write a 4th step – Procrastination and Perfectionism. I fret and fret inside until a deadline appears and then at the last minute I spring into action. This is a messy process that I hate while I'm in the middle of it, but it has improved over the years and it seems to move me to action. The good news is that while these defects still rear their ugly heads because "life happens", they happen less often because I now have an OA support system that helps me address them. The more action I take, the more confidence I have to work through the next issue that life brings my way.

I have done several 4th steps throughout my recovery. Each one focused on areas that needed attention at that point in my life – alcohol, food, sex, relationships, family, etc. Several years ago, I participated in the 4th step workshop offered by our fellow AAs. It gave me the structure and the tools to do an in-depth inventory of my relationships. One of the gems I heard at the workshop was to "not sit in it for too long". They encouraged us to schedule a 5th step. Scheduling an appointment motivates me to write and helps me accept that I won't do it

perfectly. I've learned that the 4th step needs to have a beginning and an end, otherwise I'd ruminate in the negative which could lead me back to the food.

This program gives us a fellowship so that we don't need to walk alone. Having this support is especially important while writing a 4th step. Although writing a 4th step may appear scary, it is a beautiful gift that we can give to ourselves. We no longer need to live in fear, resentment and anger. The 4th step helps us move beyond the food into a state of grace and love.

~Anne S.



May Society Pages

Thanks to the Golden Valley 10am Saturday Morning Meeting for writing articles for this month's Society Pages. The May issue will feature Step Five; "Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs." The Saturday morning Apple Valley group has volunteered to write for that issue. Articles on the Step, a tool or a personal story are welcome from other OA members also. Please indicate if it is OK to include your name with your article and e-mail your contributions to ellen_oa@hotmail.com with the words "Society Pages" in the subject line. We also need groups who will "sponsor" future issues. Contact Ellen to volunteer for this service.

The deadline for submission of articles is 12:00 noon on Sunday, April 22, 2007.

Intergroup Board

Becky T., Chair	952-423-1527
Julie B.H., Vice-Chair	715-381-8470
Amy D., Treasurer	952-270-0098
Janelle N., Secretary	763-780-2794

beckytio@frontiernet.net
jbhgold@hotmail.com
amydunker@yahoo.com
janellenelson1@mac.com