

Society Pages

The Newsletter of
Unity Intergroup January 2007

Carrying the Message

"We are people who normally would not mix. But there exists among us a fellowship, a friendliness, and an understanding, which is indescribably wonderful... B.B. page 17"

On behalf of the 2006 OA Convention Team, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for supporting the 33rd Minnesota Convention of Overeaters Anonymous. It was great to see old friends and also to make new ones. If you were not there, we missed you. There were over 400 members registered for the convention. This year we celebrated with OA members from fellowships in Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Washington, Wisconsin and Canada who along with us, were **rocketed with us into the 4th Dimension.**

A special thank you to the over 225 volunteers along with the convention steering committee who helped to make this weekend possible.

Because of your support and contributions we were able to cover the cost of the convention along with making a substantial donation our local Unity Intergroup. This contribution will help to further spread the message of recovery. If you enjoyed the experience of this convention, please take the opportunity to volunteer for the 2007 Minnesota Convention of Overeaters Anonymous. More details will follow in subsequent issues of the Society Pages. ***"When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hands of AA always to be there and for that; I am responsible"***.

Yours In Humble Service,
Ann D.
2006 OA Convention Chair

PI/Outreach Committee

The Public Information Group and the Outreach Committee meet just before the Intergroup meetings at the same location from 11a.m.-12:15p.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.

Women's Expo

Minneapolis Convention Center, **January 26, 27, 28.** Contact Peg M. at 952-920-9496.



February Society Pages

The February Society Pages will feature Step Two; "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." The Tuesday, 9:30a.m. One Day At a Time 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 ellen_oa@hotmail.com for publication in Society Pages.

The deadline for submission of articles is 12:00 noon on Wednesday, January 24, 2007.

Links

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



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 Monday night meeting in Apple Valley needs visitors. Our attendance of 2-3 people per meeting does not provide enough 7th tradition contributions to keep us self-supporting. In this literature discussion group, we have finished reading the Big Book, and have been reading the 2nd edition of Overeaters Anonymous (the "brown book"). The meeting has an informal format of reading and sharing while upholding no cross-talk guidelines. If you have any questions, please call Shelly (952) 431-2074.



Step 1

We admitted we were powerless over food--that our lives had become unmanageable.

Honest About My Feelings

Powerless. How well I know the feeling, and how grateful I am that I've learned how to express this feeling rather than having to compulsively overeat before I went into recovery- almost 18 years ago now. Although I have been humbled by 2 summer relapses, I have been graced with several years of abstinence, which could only be possible with the help of my Higher Power. I came in for the vanity but stayed for the sanity - or maybe I better say I'm staying for the sanity because I need to remember how close the disease can still be for me. I have suffered on both ends of compulsive eating and compulsive restricting at different times in my life. Both were extremely painful and crazy for each way took me away from the loving arms of my Higher Power and the intuitive voice I depend on to live a life of truth and serenity - no matter what's going on around me.

At one point I was in the hospital (due to ulcerations of the esophagus) and the Doctors kept telling me to eat. Once the ulcerations started healing I decided to "show them" I knew how to gain weight and my addict found the scones in the lobby coffee shop. I was off and running. Of course I was only going to gain 15 lbs or so and then stop. How tricky that disease can be disguised in medical clothes this time!! Well, after a few more months of hell, when all I could think about was my next fix, how sick I felt, and how out of control my life had become yet again, I found a new sponsor and began going to a 2nd meeting as well as doing service.

I'm grateful to say my OA program continues to nurture me thru each new step of powerlessness in a gentle and loving way. So, whether it's 1 of my kids, a colleague, money,

my chronically ill body or January in Minnesota, being honest about my feelings brings me to a place of grace and serenity. All the food in the world could never give me that.

~ Pat

3 Days of Abstinence

I'm back from a 4-month hiatus from OA. After 2 years I really thought I was doing fine and could continue to do a program without meetings. My spiritual parts felt healed and I had stopped the binging. I felt OK. I wasn't where I wanted to be at the weight I wanted to be at, but I could do it on my own. I was cured... Slowly, I slid backwards into the food addiction. I could still handle it though. I was staying on course, or close enough to my standards, which had also slipped. Then the spirituality went, depression appeared and the hiding, eating, planning, seeking out the forbidden foods and eating came along with it. My powerlessness over compulsive overeating had come back full force.

I still fought going to meetings. I kept putting it off. "Wait until after the holidays", I thought. Then, I had a major binge where I ate until was sick. I was up all night, missed work and felt ill for 2 days. I was back at step 1-powerless over food and my life was totally unmanageable. My spiritual self was hurting.

I had to swallow my pride, pray for the strength from the God of my understanding and go back to my OA group. They, of course welcomed me with open arms. I felt at home again. Now, I have 3 days of abstinence under my belt, and I am beginning the climb back out of the hole of compulsive eating. I'm getting back to turning it over to my HP trusting that he will help a day at a time. I am working Step 1 as a newcomer, back to working on my workbook, adding to my already filled step 1 pages. I have learned, as I often have to, the hard way. I hope to always remember this experience so I don't have to relive the throws of addiction again. Wouldn't you know, upon returning to my group found they had committed to submitting articles for the newsletter on Step 1? Thanks HP; I needed that.

~Kathy

Spring is Just Around the Corner

I love the first step. Why? Because it asks me to be myself - to be honest - to be vulnerable. Though I've only been in the OA fellowship for 6 months, I feel like I've been here forever. Why? Because my life has been nothing BUT "unmanageable." And to suddenly have an opportunity to put a name my circumstance, my disease, and in such a forthright manner, is indeed a blessing!

We are such a "Go-It-Alone" society. As Americans, we worship individual independence. Don't cry out for help! No matter if your leg is broken and you're hanging upside down in a tree. For God's sake, don't cry out for help! "Go it alone!" What could be more foolish! I have bipolar disorder, and I know you can appreciate it when I say, mental illness is just another "dirty secret" in our society, not unlike compulsive overeating. I can't tell you how many times I longed to be in a wheelchair, so both strangers and family could put a face on what I have, and be comfortable in my presence. Isn't that insane? And I think that's what's at the heart of Step 1 -- acknowledging that we have no ready answer in the face of this mystery. That self-will and good intentions mean nothing, in the face of this monster disease. The flames from the mouth of this dragon can fry us to a crisp in only a few seconds. Just one more bite! So insidious! And how isolating!

When I began that first question in our "Twelve and Twelve" workbook -- the one that asks us to do an inventory of our history of eating -- I was stunned to see what poured out of my pen. When I was 10 years old, the minute my folks went out the door on Thursday, I was rummaging in the kitchen, dragging out a huge kettle to make food. I'd box it up and hide it in my room, before my folks got home. Talk about crazy! And when my folks came home, I looked them square in the eye and said, "What smell? I don't smell anything!" That devil box had such a grip on me!

I know now, even from my short 6 months in OA, that this recovery is for a lifetime. How I continued to use food to keep me apart from others. It is amazing how much shame I still

carry about this wellspring of powerful emotions inside me. For over 60 years, I used food to smother the fears, to mask my anger, to conceal my loneliness and sense of being "different." What a blessing to have found all of you in OA! What a joy to know I have such eloquent company on my storytelling journey! I am filled with hope about being "teachable" -- to be capable of change and growth.

Today, the Saturday before Christmas, I received my first seed catalog in the mail. I laughed right out loud, as I carried it up my front steps from the mailbox. "Spring is just around the corner," I said to myself. OA has brought me an early spring, with your honesty, your modest presence, your laughter, and your ongoing service.

I thank all of you here in OA, and all over the world, for bringing me spring at the darkest time of my life -- in my 66th year, as I struggled to learn the daily discipline of exercise, as the result of a car accident. I may not be that flexible physically, and there are still mornings when I nearly fall on the floor as I get out of bed. But there is now a flower garden here in my heart for all of you, and a fragrance of lilac in the air, every time I attend a meeting, every time the phone rings -- that I could never before have imagined.

Thank you for teaching me to hope, to have faith. Thank you for teaching me to meditate, to pray. Thanks, most of all, for teaching me I don't have to "go-it-alone" ever again! Blessings to You and Yours, in the NEW YEAR!
~ Judith M.



Personal Stories

What Am I Going To Do Now?

That was the thought in my head as I left the clinic. My doctor had encouraged me to join the diet and exercise group there. How many times had I joined diet or exercise groups and failed? Food was my friend, my constant companion. I had continued to deny the truth, continued to insanely consume food, and continued to wreak havoc on my body.

Over the years I had tried everything, with the weight coming off, yet always returning. The thought of returning to that cycle made me sick; I knew I no longer had the will to even try. Somewhere, in the back of my mind, I remembered reading about OA and had always thought that it would be my last resort. It was time.

I was so ready for something new, yet so afraid of walking in that door. I felt confidence and warmth as I held hands and listened to the group recite the Serenity Prayer. As I listened to the reading from For Today the words seemed to be directed at me. And as each person spoke of his/her journey, it was my journey as well. I was presented with a newcomer's medallion, a tangible reminder of the support that is always there for me.

I recognize the insanity that has controlled my life since I was a child and also recognize that I cannot use self-control to clear this hurdle. I am powerless by myself and need the power of the OA program. I leave each meeting with new strength, firm resolve, and positive energy. The connections I make nurture me and I nurture others in return. I am not alone.

~ Anonymous

My Serenity Prayer

Following is what the Serenity Prayer means to me:

God: I am calling out to You and reaching out to request that You shine a light on my path, to stand by me in this time of struggle. I trust that You will answer my call.

grant: I am asking You, God, to consent or give me something that only You can do. My focus is directed to You with an open and trusting spirit.

me: You always tell me how important I am to You, and how connected we are spiritually. I personally want something from You. It's not my ego that thinks I have the right to ask. It's what You promised me.

the Serenity: expresses calm and tranquility. That is what I want in my life. To shut out the world's pressures and give me peace with my food issues.

to accept: to receive something willingly. To agree to accept what it is that I am willing to acknowledge or feel. To take on whatever is coming my way.

the things: that are tangible, intangible, personal, or any problems that I have in my life.

I cannot change: tells You, God, that I am powerless, and helpless, and have no influence to make things different.

Courage: is asking for strength from You to guide me on my path. It is a request because I trust You. I know I will gain strength to accomplish what it is that You want me to do.

to change the things I can...: means that I do have the power to influence, to know a direction to go because You have given me that power.

and the Wisdom to know the difference: says that I am asking You to help me see and gain the knowledge so that I can make the right choices in my life that You have already put in place.

Thy will, not mine be done: says that I have given up my will, and now I am in Your hands for You to give me what You want me to have, by Your grace alone.

Amen

~ Norma

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