

Society Pages

The Newsletter of
Unity Intergroup October 2007

Carrying the Message

MINNESOTA OA STATE CONVENTION There is a Solution NOVEMBER 2, 3, 4, 2007

Greetings OA Fellows: The 2007 Convention is less than three weeks away!! This year's convention is being held at the Holiday Inn Select in Bloomington, near the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport; one mile from the Mall of America.

On behalf of the Convention Steering Committee, I would like to invite you to join us in celebrating the solution that we've found. "We are people who normally would not mix. But there exists among us a fellowship, a friendliness, and an understanding which is indescribably wonderful." (*Big Book page 17*)

Under the guidance of our Higher Power, we have taken great care in planning every detail of this convention with you in mind. The program includes a dynamic keynote speaker who has maintained a 250-pound weight loss for 16 years, more than 20 abstinent OA speakers, two meetings, entertainment and abstinent meals. If you are still deliberating about attending the convention, here are a few reasons why we believe that you should:

1. Take out additional insurance to guard your abstinence as we approach the "eating season" of Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and New Year's.
2. Meet OA members from all across the country and attend the Virtual Meeting Reception to meet face-to-face with people you know only from telephone and internet meetings.
3. Rekindle friendships with fellows whom you have not seen in a while. "To watch people

recover, ... to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends—this is an experience you must not miss." (*Big Book page 89.*)

4. Share your experience, strength, and hope in the Recovery Slideshow. To contribute a brief account of your physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery to the slideshow, contact Jim C. at 612-735-7276 or send your video clip or pictures to tigerbasellc@comcast.net.
5. Listen to stories of people who have food experiences just like yours, including gastric by-pass survivors, anorexics and bulimics, and those who have struggled with relapse.
6. Offer your service: "Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from eating as intensive work with other compulsive eaters." (*Big Book page 89.*) If you are interested in being a volunteer, please call Sue B. at 651-464-3225 or Ann T. at 952-941-5117.
7. Support OA in carrying the message of recovery—all registration funds in excess of convention expenses will be donated to Unity Intergroup.
8. Become immersed in the whole convention experience. Use this weekend as a retreat.
9. If you are struggling, this may be just the boost that you need. And remember, somebody needs you.
10. Come for the fun, stay for the recovery!

See you in November – do not delay! Register today! Registration forms and information can be found at www overeaters.org.

Yours In Humble Service,
Ann D.
2007 OA Convention Chair

To Go or Not to Go...That is the Question

There might be people there that I don't know.

There might be people there that I don't know that I could meet and make into new friends.

It costs too much.

It only costs \$30 before September 30 and only \$40 after that. Meals there are inexpensive too. Scholarships are also available

I'm too busy.

It's only one weekend out of the year.

I won't be able to follow my food plan.

The convention caterers have been carefully informed of OA's special needs.

They will expect me to volunteer.

Volunteers are only asked to commit to one hour of service. What a wonderful way to give back to OA what you've been so freely given.

I've never done anything like this before.

The welcoming spirit of OA will make you feel at home.

I won't be able to find the location.

There's always Mapquest or you could call for directions.

I don't have a car, I can't get there.

Public transportation is available or ask an OA friend if they can give you a lift.

I'm too afraid.

Ask your Higher Power for strength. "I put my hand in yours, and together we can do what we could never do alone."

I'm too fat; people will laugh and judge me.

Your OA friends will never laugh at you, only with you, and they will not judge you because they've been where you are.

I don't feel like it.

Ask your Higher Power for willingness.

Dates: November 2,3,4, 2007
Location: Holiday Inn Select & Suites
Minneapolis Airport Mall of America
I-494 & 34th Ave (Exit 1)
Bloomington, MN 55425
Phone: (952) 854-9000

You can make excuses all day why you shouldn't do the right thing, but you only need one reason to do the right thing, because it is right. Go to the 2007 OA Convention.

Recovery Insurance

As my recovery education continues, I know that my reasons for coming back to the Minnesota OA Convention in 2007 have to do with getting another year of “recovery insurance.”

After coming back to OA after 14 years of relapse, I came to the 2006 Convention with one question in mind: “Why would anyone leave the program?”

What I heard boiled down to three things:

- Cockiness.
- Watering down the program.
- Trying to do it on my own.

My singular reason for joining OA each time was to lose weight. But the program is about so much more than weight loss—losing weight, whether 10 or 100 pounds, will never change the “click” in the brain that says: “Hey, you can eat that [specific food] again—you are thin.” Getting cocky is part of the decline back into the disease.

Second, “watering down the program” they said was related to not being willing to maintain the discipline of a “weighed and measured” (W&M) life. I had heard my sponsor say “we go from weighed and measured food” to weighed and measured time, relationships, life, etc. I have to continue to W & M as a commitment to self care.

Third, and finally, those who came back to the program said they tried to do it alone and failed. That tape is still in my head and is waiting for me to make the choice to not use the tools: W&M life, long meetings for repetition of the program, “hook up” calls each day and more. You know the drill.

My sponsor says, “We do the drill, so that when life gets hard and we really need the instincts to stay in recovery, the drill is in us. I want, choose, desire and need to be in the OA fellowship, mind, body and spirit, 24/7.

So, I come to the 2007 Minnesota OA Convention, happy, joyous and free with gratitude for a year of “the drill.” I want to renew my insurance policy for another year. Do you?

~KS, Iowa Fellowship

My Convention Experience

The convention of November 2003 literally saved and changed my life. And I wasn't even at that event! A friend of mine shared the convention tapes with me. One message on those tapes was about the structured HOW concept and the difference it made for the speaker. As I listened to the tapes, I thought “No way! I'm not doing that!” But little did I know...

In February of 2004 my mother became critically ill and was hospitalized in Minneapolis. I stayed in the city for one week and watched her 350 pound body being transferred by 6 or more people. She also needed special equipment because of her size. She and my father rejected medical help from any doctor who dared to suggest that her obesity was part of the problem. During the entire week, I practiced my abstinence. I avoided chocolate, cookies, candy, and ice cream. I didn't graze. I was careful with food selections in the cafeteria, and I still managed to gain 5 pounds!

I was scared, and desperate. I didn't want to regain the weight I had lost up to that point in OA. I certainly didn't want to be in the same poor physical health as my mother and suffer the humiliation she was enduring. I came home, I listened to the convention tapes again, and on April 2, 2004, I attended the Buffalo retreat. I found a sponsor, and my last “sugar binge” was on April Fool's Day of 2004.

Today, by the grace of God and the loving support of OA friends, I am maintaining a 115 pound weight loss. I am healthy and active. I hold down two jobs and am of service to my family and friends. I am learning to set boundaries around my commitments, just as I set boundaries around my food. I am living a life of sane and happy usefulness for the first time!

I am grateful that I am able to attend the convention in person for the first time this November. Overeater's Anonymous really does work if you work it, and you know you're truly worth it!

~RL Greater Minnesota

Feet Firmly Planted in Recovery

Before moving to Philadelphia last June, I lived in a small town in NE Missouri for twenty years. During that time there were several attempts to get an OA meeting afloat, and I was very grateful for our 2006 three-person meeting. I read the literature and listened to tapes. I struggled and struggled with abstinence. Though I lost 20 pounds, my abstinence was on again, off again, and more off than on! It finally got through to me that I needed a sponsor, and more fellowship (it was right there in the literature all along!) So...I started going to conventions and retreats in Region IV.

The weekends were always amazing. I didn't know anyone, and stayed to myself a lot, but heard things from every speaker that made me feel more and more like maybe I wasn't so "hopeless and helpless" after all. These people expressed all the fears, reservations, "disease-thoughts" I struggled with, and here they were doing ok, laughing and having fun. They had the solutions to my problems.

I heard a speaker in Omaha who was from MN. I bought lots of tapes, and listened to his tape over and over for a few months. In Minneapolis, I went up to thank him, and told him his talk in Omaha had gotten me to the MN Convention, and he said, "I just have one piece of advice: Don't leave here without a temporary sponsor."

My recovery took a huge leap forward when I did as he suggested. I'd never had a sponsor. Now, suddenly, as a direct result of driving 7 hours to MN, I found myself calling a sponsor everyday, weighing and measuring my food, and I'd added writing to the tool of literature. I did a lot of thinking about the steps, tools, and the disease of addiction. I went to a lot of phone meetings, as we still only had the three person meeting back in MO. The hardest part of finally working an OA program was using the telephone to call people every day. I still struggle with it. But the suggestions in our literature really work when you follow them! Who knew?! I had months of abstinence, lots of new friendly people to call, sponsors who were so kind

and present, everyday, day after day. What a great gift! I lost another 20 pounds, this time with the help of a Higher Power and the fellowship of the program.

My move from Missouri to Philadelphia has been a big change in my life. My recovery, which is dependent on open communication with others who have my disease, feels less secure than it used to. But, from going to conventions, I know that what I want is available when I become willing enough to ask for help. At conventions, so many people share their stories, their experience, and their hope. You see service modeled in the excitement and commitment of all who make the convention possible. Conventions are a huge shot in the arm for recovery. I was thinking that might be a bad metaphor, but, actually, it's close to the truth. Some of the things you hear can be painful. The input can feel overwhelming and tiring at times. But afterwards you feel so much better and you know you are doing the things you need to do to keep getting healthier. Progress and change may be slow, but a convention plants your feet firmly on the path of recovery. I know I want the life I see at conventions—a life of sane and happy usefulness, working the steps and using the tools to the best of my ability, one day at a time.

~Anonymous

SAVE THE DATE!!
MINNESOTA OA
CONVENTION
NOVEMBER 2, 3, 4, 2007

Learning from our Fellows

I recently attended the World Service Convention in Philadelphia. I learned some wonderful things from the 1200 members of our fellowship. I learned that a lot of my behaviors that trigger my compulsion stem from my feelings of inadequacy and fear.

How I developed these feelings is of no use to me today. I need to ask my Higher Power each day for recovery.

Each day upon awakening, I meditate and pray that my Higher Power allow me to walk with him/her throughout the day. I visualize that he is taking my hand. I ask God to help me with my character defects. One of those is perfectionism—I have demanded a lot from myself and others. This perfectionism makes

me hard on myself and judgmental of others. I know now that the only inventory I need take is my own. As part of my morning meditation I ask my Higher Power to help me be mindful if I am resorting to my character defects throughout the day because I want to catch them immediately and make things right.

In the evening, I review my day and make sure I have followed my higher power's path. I try and remember if I have resorted to any defects in my dealings with others or myself. If I have, I make a plan to set things right the next day and instead of beating myself up for making a mistake. I remember that it's "progress not perfection." If I need to, I discuss the situation with my sponsor who provides clarity. I am willing to do these things so I can "join the ranks of those who have recovered." I wish the same for all of you.

~Joni O



Help Wanted: Society Pages Print Coordinator.

Unity Intergroup is looking for someone to be the Print Coordinator for Society Pages. The job responsibilities are

- Order Supplies (toner, paper, envelopes)
- Print newsletter and labels each month
- Take the newsletter with envelopes to the sponsoring group's representative; they will collate and deliver to Intergroup.

The job requires about 6 to 10 hours a month. The volunteer must have a computer and Internet access. Contact Keith (612-251-6690) or KJ_Connolly@hotmail.com if interested.



New Step and Tradition Meeting

A new OA Step & Traditions meeting is starting in E St. Paul. It will be held on Wednesdays at the Woman Well Spirituality Center, 1784 La Crosse Ave, St. Paul, MN 55119. The Newcomer meeting is at 6pm and the Step/Tradition meeting starts at 6:30pm: Contact Eileen M (612-270-2924 or 651-774-2303 emckenzie@fspa.org) for info.



November Society Pages

The November Society Pages will be a special CONVENTION issue sponsored by Unity Intergroup. It will be distributed at the MN OA Convention, November 2-4, as well as through normal distribution channels. 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. The deadline for submission of articles is 12:00 noon on Tuesday, October 16th.

Step Ten: “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.”

A Little Step 10

At this moment I am struggling with step 8, but I recently had an opportunity to jump ahead and do a little tenth step, and it had strong repercussions in my program. Since my disease causes me to isolate myself, I made the commitment this summer to accept any invitation offered, even if I wasn't completely gung-ho about attending. An acquaintance invited me to her going away party, and I accepted, but when the day came, I was mired in worry about the reliability of my car (would I get there?), the unfamiliar route that I would have to take (no 35-W bridge), and the prospect of not knowing anyone else there except for the hostess. For those reasons I decided that it would be safer to stay at home, turn my phone off, and go to bed, but I was wrong.

The next day I received the inevitable message from the hostess as well as the inevitable heap of guilt from myself. I know that I should have called her, but because of my selfishness and insecurity, I didn't. It would be 3 weeks of deafening silence between us and struggling with my food and conscience (HP) before I was given enough courage to e-mail my acquaintance.

She wrote back immediately and said not to worry. At that moment, my food got back on track and I physically felt about 100 pounds of guilt lift off of me. If this is the physical, emotional and spiritual relief that comes with doing just a little step 10, I can't imagine the benefits that will come when, with the help of my Higher Power, I finally complete steps 8 and 9.

~Anonymous

Three Parts of Step 10:

I better understand step ten when I read it in three parts. The first part is “Continued to take personal inventory”. I like knowing that after doing the hard core house cleaning in step four, I have step ten to remind me to keep looking at my behavior and it's impact on my physical, spiritual and emotional health.

Part two of this step is “And when”. I love this line. It does not say “if we are wrong”, it says **when!** The assumption that is being made is that at some time I will be wrong. No matter how fearlessly or long I have worked the program, at some point a behavior that I think has long been removed in step 6 will rear it's ugly head and I will need to be humble enough to use this step.

Lastly, the step says, “promptly admitted it”. What a blessing! I do not have to wait until I do another fourth step or until I am back in the food. I have today, this moment, to own my behavior and address it in a healthy way based in recovery.

In the end, Step Ten is a reminder to me that I do not graduate from this program; I have to keep doing the step work and using the tools.

~Anonymous

Thanks to the Wednesday evening St. Joan of Arc's group for sponsoring this month's Society Pages. They did an outstanding job and submitted more articles than we are able to print in this issue. Some of the articles will be printed in the November or December Society Pages.

Who God Wants Me to Be

Steps 10 - 12 allow me to focus on living in the present because Steps 1-9 cleaned up the mess of my past. Now I can focus on the here and now with my mind directed on my Higher Power. I can work on my positive character traits because each morning I meditate and pray. I always say the 7th Step prayer to again ask God to remove my defects of character.

I become my own personal observer of myself by taking an inventory on a daily, hourly, or, if needed, moment by moment basis. I admit my mistakes, make amends or do my living amends. (Most of my amends are now living amends.) Step 10 allows me to live in and by the Truth of who God wants me to be – my very best self.

I can now hear my Higher Power more easily because I am allowing myself to be open and receptive to listening. Today my HP told me to relax and let go – I am all stressed out over stuff that is easily fixed and I am wasting valuable time and energy.

My sponsor suggested I may be trying to pack too much in to the stream of my life. I finally feel like I have a life and I do not want to miss out on anything. But I must remember "Easy Does It". I am so grateful not to be doing this all alone - thank you God, thank you to my sponsor and thank you to each one of you.

~Cathy D.

Wash Rinse Repeat

I can't find the words to describe how truly grateful I am for the Steps. Working Steps 4-9 was a life-changing process. That process enabled me to forgive others for not being and doing what I wanted; to forgive myself for not being who I thought I was "supposed" to be; and to leave the past IN THE PAST. What a blessing it is to be able to truly move on from the hurts, disappointments and wrongdoings in my life. As the Big Book says, I was able to look the world in the eye.

As soon as I got used to feeling good (after years of feeling bad about myself), I didn't want the serenity to wash away. Step 10 gives me the daily choice of acting and reacting to life according to the will of my Higher Power and the 12 Steps, or reverting back to self will, bad habits and character defects.

At the end of most days, I ask myself a few questions that essentially take me through Steps 4-9. If I want to keep that "clean" feeling of serenity that came from working the Steps, then I need to do Step 10 often. Like the instructions on a shampoo bottle say – wash, rinse, repeat. Before OA, I didn't want to reflect on what I did or how I felt each day because the fear, shame and remorse lead me to binge. Today I can openly look at the good and bad of each day, and with God's help, make amends when I need to, face my fears and be grateful for all that I have, all that I am and all that God wants me to be.

~Denise

Links

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

UNITY INTERGROUP CALENDAR

October 2007		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	-Outreach/PI Mtg -Intergroup Mtg
14	15	16 NOVEMBER SOCIETY PAGES ARTICLES DUE	17	18	19	20	-Newcomer Mtg -Convention Planning Meeting
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30	31	November 2007			
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	CONVENTION 8 am - 10 pm -Outreach/PI Mtg -Intergroup Mtg
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	-Newcomer Mtg
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29	30		

Intergroup Board

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