

News and Noteworthy

The Unity Intergroup Bylaws have been amended.

Please review the changes online. There will be vote on the changes on Saturday, February 12 at the Intergroup meeting. Go to overeaters.org.

Registration is open for the 2022 Buffalo Retreat!

Friday, April 8 to Sunday, April 10.
At Christ the King Retreat Center in Buffalo, MN.
More info on page 5.

Fourth Annual Men's OA Retreat is Coming Spring 2022!

April 22-24
More info on page 9

Relapse Recovery Meeting

Thursday evenings at 6:00 pm CT
Zoom ID: 871 0023 6034
Passcode: 93D9ie or Call 312-626-6799, Same ID, Passcode: 546650
See page 8 for more info or contact Annette:
aprlovesoa@gmail.com

“Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on OA unity.”

Tradition One is genius. I've really enjoyed reviewing OA's Tradition One to prepare a few paragraphs for the January "Expressions of Unity" newsletter. The name of the newsletter itself takes us right to the heart of Tradition One – Unity.

The OA 12x12 begins by pointing out that the disease takes us down the path of isolation. We protect and defend our relationship with the disease by disconnecting with others and our Higher Power. The first gift many of us realize in OA is the group. "We discovered we were never meant to live alone." "As we opened our hearts to other OA members, we found acceptance, a sense of belonging and unity with other OA members that satisfied us in ways food never could."

OA literally saved my life and to stay on the path of recovery and increasing health I must stay connected in OA groups. When I first started in OA, I didn't have skills for relating to other people and their ideas in healthy ways. I started off seeing how my views and opinions were better and different from those of others. My high school debate team radar kicked in and I was silently building a case for my own approach of the best way to run a group. When I attended group conscience meetings, instead of listening to others with an open mind and praying for insights from my Higher Power on the subject.

Another resource I read about Tradition One quoted Bill W. the cofounder of AA. While speaking at AA's Third International Convention he said, "We are division proof because we can safely invite division. We don't, like this country once did, have to fight a civil war to stand united. We fight lots of civil wars, to be sure, but not to be united. What can we do? A fellow says, "I don't like my group." We say, "For heaven sakes, start another one." Bill went on, "Good friends, we have no pride of membership. We have no property to quarrel about. We have no authority to defend."

Thank you OA for leading me on a path where I place the needs of others before my selfish pursuits and in so doing come into balance with all of creation!

In love and service,
Liz D.

POWERLESSNESS

O Restless heart,
searching to fill the emptiness,
looking for comfort in the pain.
Seeking help wherever to be found.
Even in the fleeting, the moving and shifting,
the here-today-gone-tomorrow
of the temporary fix.

Food looks like a good one!

And it works—
until it doesn't.
It's only a matter of time
before it takes over everything,
once again.

Then, down on my knees,
I plead to see the face of truth:
that there's no end in sight to this failing
when trying to fix things on my own.

And then, comes holy surrender—
an acceptance of my powerlessness.
And a willingness to let go
the illusion of control
that was never mine to have.

From out of this bottom,
this desperate deep,
comes light, and hope
and a lifting up!
“But how?”, you ask!
I say, “I don't know!
Except, that it's not of me!”

Dianne M.

Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over food – that our lives had become unmanageable.

When I first came to OA in 2004, I was desperate, suicidal, obsessed with food and with trying to control my weight. I thought about food, eating, diets, and my body size all day, every day. Taking the first step back then was easy. It was obvious I had a problem and that it was out of control.

After attending meetings and working the Steps on and off for more than 15 years and experiencing extended periods of abstinence and a return to health, I started to rest on my laurels and forgot how insane I used to be when it comes to food. The more I let myself forget, the less diligent I became in my commitment to working my program and living in recovery. The less diligent I became, the more I slipped back into my old ways of thinking and behaving.

When the COVID lockdown happened in March 2020, I knew the pandemic would take me in one of two directions: I would either use it as an excuse for a full-blown relapse or I would use it as an opportunity to work my program and focus on strengthening my recovery. I decided I wanted to come out of the pandemic stronger and healthier than I was going into it.

I started by finding a sponsor who would take me through the Steps... again. We started at Step One. Unlike my previous experiences with Step One, where sponsors simply asked if I admitted I was powerless over food and that my life had become unmanageable, this sponsor asked me to do a "First Step inventory." She explained that the purpose of the inventory wasn't to ask *if* I was powerless over food, but to honestly reflect on *how* I was powerless over food.

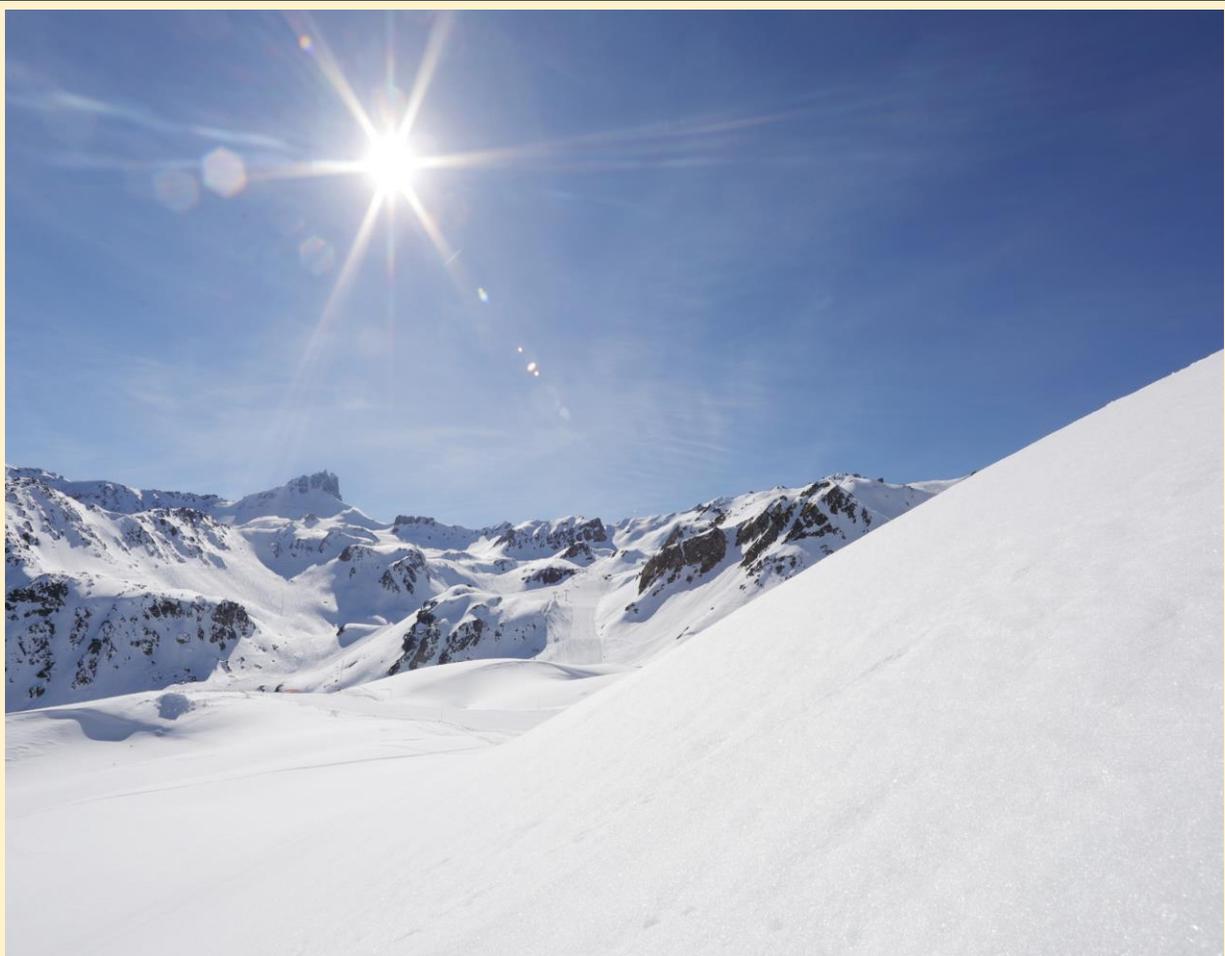
I started by listing all the destructive things I had done with food prior to starting the program all those years ago. Binging, purging, pills, diets, fasts, abusing laxatives and Ipecac, compulsive exercise, lying about eating, eating in secret, stealing food, going to multiple stores so clerks wouldn't know how much I was eating then binging and purging in the car, leaving my young children at home unattended to go get my "fix", eating from the garbage, throwing up blood, ruining my teeth, eroding my esophagus... the list goes on and on. Reflecting on those thoughts and behaviors from my pre-OA days, there was no doubt that before I joined the program, I was powerless over food and my life was unmanageable.

Then, I humbly looked at the ways I was still powerless over food. While less obvious, my ongoing powerlessness soon became clear. I avoided social situations that involved food. I resented people for eating foods that were problematic for me. I thought about food when anxious, tired, angry, and sad. I exercised to "earn" more food or to try to make up for food I had eaten. I felt a dopamine hit when walking past certain sections of the grocery store. Just the thought of secretly buying and consuming those foods

elicited a high. I avoided eating in front of people. I felt ashamed for being different and having a problem with food. The scale had the power to destroy how I felt on a given day or to justify eating because I could “get away with it”. The more I honestly reflected on my thinking and behaviors around food, the clearer it became that I was still in the grips of a compulsive disease. This first Step inventory process reminded me of my ongoing powerlessness and of the subtle and cunning ways my disease creeps back in. It helped me get honest about where I was in recovery, and it helped me see the correlation between getting lazy with my program and the obsessive thinking and shady behavior quietly slipping back in. It also reminded me of how bad “bottom” was and how bad it would get if I continued drifting away from the Steps, the tools, and my Higher Power.

The first Step got me in the doors, but I’ve learned the importance of periodically doing a first Step inventory. It is my way of checking in with my recovery and keeping tabs on my disease. I know now that it is no longer a question of if I’m powerless, but how am I powerless today?

- J. Golden Valley, MN



2022 OA Buffalo Retreat

“From Newcomer to Recovered”

April 8-10 2022

Location: Christ the King Retreat Center ♦ 621 First Avenue South Buffalo, MN

55313 Costs:

- **Shared rooms:** \$192.00 before March 15 and \$200 after March 15
- **Private rooms*:** \$212.00 before March 15 and \$220 after March 15
- **Program with meals and NO lodging:** \$100.00

**Private room availability is limited. No scholarships for private rooms.*

Includes: Friday: dinner and room, Saturday: three meals and room, Sunday: breakfast.

* \$3 surcharge per meal/per person, gluten free or vegetarian (5 meals is \$15)

Times: Check-In: Friday 5:00, dinner 6:00, program 7:00 ♦ Check-Out: Sunday 10:30 am

To register online: <http://overeaters.org/upcoming-oa-events/>

To mail-in registration:

a. Contact Sandy A at 763.228.3357 or oabuffaloretreat22@gmail.com for mailing address for mail in registrations.

b. Detach and complete mail-in form below. Include a check or money order for the full amount **PAYABLE TO UNITY INTERGROUP**

c. All reservations will be confirmed via email. If you want a confirmation via US mail, you must enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE).

Questions or concerns, please contact Sandy A.

Please note: All registrations must be paid in full. We do not accept partial payments. No credit card payments accepted for mail-in registration. All credit card payments must be online. At the Retreat, we will only accept cash or checks for literature, concessions, or raffle tickets. Refunds will only be issued in the event that the in person retreat is cancelled.

- Mail-In Registration Form

Full Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Nametag: (1st name and first initial of last name):

_____ Home meeting:

Room (circle): Private Shared Roommate request _____ Gender for

roommate assignments (circle): Male Female

* If you register for a shared room without a roommate request, a roommate will be assigned for you. * If you require a handicap room, please contact **Sandy A.** as there are a limited number.

Special Accommodations: (circle) Vision Hearing Mobility Other _____

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR NEEDS (e.g., room close to the elevators, dining hall, or main hall; quiet room for small groups; handicap accessible bathroom)

Service Opportunities: (circle all you are willing to do) Registration/check-in Small Group

Leader Timer for speakers Hear a 5th step Literature Wherever needed **Partial**

Scholarship: Send requests to Sandy A at oabuffaloretreat22@gmail.com

Dietary Restrictions and Special Foods: Refrigerators are available if you want to bring food. The menu will be emailed to all participants. * \$3 surcharge per meal/per person, gluten free or vegetarian

Cancelation Policy: Refunds will only be issued in the event that the in person retreat is cancelled.

I Have Peace

My name is Joni, and I am a compulsive overeater, more specifically, a refined sugar addict. I was listening to a podcast on sugar addiction and heard this quote from Johann Hari, “The opposite of addiction is not sobriety, it’s connection.” That was certainly true in my case. Somewhere along the way I learned that I had to care for myself, that others wouldn’t or couldn’t be there for me, that it was all up to me. This attitude got in the way of forming intimate relationships and the hole was filled with addictive substances. These gave me a nice chemical lift to smooth the feelings for about 15 seconds. Then I was in misery of the compulsion to eat more. The cycle continued for many years.

I joined OA but kept thinking I could moderate those addictive substances. For me, this was any kind of refined carbohydrate. I finally came to the realization (thank you Higher Power) that I had to follow a food plan that eliminated those foods. Because I also loved the feeling of being full, portion control became essential. I would have never believed when I walked through the OA doors that I would be following a food plan, weighing, and measuring my foods. But I am and I have peace.

But I knew from the Big Book’s teaching, that abstinence is just the start of recovery. “I had to find a new way of living, of acting on life rather than reacting to it.” This is where connection became important. I attended OA meetings, slowly speaking up at meetings, and offering to do service. I heard I had to enlarge my spiritual life, so I began to make phone calls, not just to program people but to my old friends who I had no longer stayed in touch with out of shame or isolation.

It worked. I am clean, sober, and more connected than I have ever been in my life. But I’m not perfect. My sponsor and 12 Step friends remind me to be on the lookout for isolation, self-control, and fear and to do a 10th Step, call someone, and then be of service to others.

Regarding

Relapse ...

Welcome to 'Regarding Relapse' – a monthly column on the topic of relapse. We will be sharing tools, thoughts on relapse, personal stories on recovery from relapse – and more! This month we will focus on a piece of OA literature as we return to:

Spotlight On...

Spotlight On *Breaking Out of Relapse* video found in Podcasts and Videos - Overeaters Anonymous (oa.org). This comprehensive video takes us from understanding the disease to tips on breaking out of relapse. Topics covered include:

- The disease concept and why we may relapse
- Getting honest about, and dealing with the food
- Ideas for using each of our nine Tools of Recovery
- More 'Ideas that Work'
- Info on slips and what to do about them

May I suggest:

- If you are in relapse or slipping, consider viewing this video.
- If you are sponsoring someone who is in relapse or slipping, consider assigning the video to your sponsee or viewing it together. You can pause the video at any time to discuss different points on the video.

AnonymoUS

Recovery from Relapse meeting information:

Thursdays 6pm Central – Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87100236034?pwd=d3ZsYThSTDViYm1JWlk0RWwhLWE9Kdz09>

Meeting ID: 871 0023 6034 Passcode: 93D9ie

Or call 312-626-6799 Same ID Passcode: 546650

For more info contact Annette 763-447-5688 email aprlovesoa@gmail.com

Fourth Annual Men's OA Retreat Mark your calendar!

Spring 2022, April 22th - April 24th (Friday night - Sunday noon)

Willard WI, Christine Center [Christine Center Website](#)

This retreat focuses on recovery for men dealing with compulsive eating. This is our fourth annual Men's Retreat. In the past, the retreat was a combination of fellowship, speakers, free time with a bonfire, hiking, meditation, and personal time. In addition to wildlife on property, trails, library, a bookstore, and guided meditation, this Center also has a wood burning sauna at our disposal. Additional information will be forthcoming.

Date for registration and payment by January 31st 2022.

To register, complete and submit registration form using this [registration link](#)

Payment has to be made by January 31st.

Scholarship information check with your local group or your OA Region.

Meals

We encourage men to bring and or cook their own meals. Hermitage Lodging does have a kitchenette with its lodging. Guest rooms have a central refrigerator, eating utensils and microwave available.

The Center does also offer meals for additional costs. Please contact the Center for information and arrangements if you decide to go in that direction.

Meeting Room

We have also reserved a meeting room for \$100.00. This cost will be shared by all participants at the start of the retreat. The amount will be determined by the number of participants.

Cancellations

Program Cancellation: Should this program be cancelled by the Center you will be notified immediately by email or phone. You may choose to request a full refund or a Center credit for a future stay.

Program Cancellation by Participant: If you are registered for a Center event and need to cancel your reservation, email your cancellation request to Sasha or John.

33 days or greater prior to the event: You may request a full refund or Center credit for a future stay.

32-8 days prior to the event: You will be issued a Center credit for your future use.

7 days or less: A \$50 cancellation fee will be kept with the remainder of your payment being transferred to a Center credit for your future use.

Please visit the [website](#) for the location and meals (if desired) that will be available for you to choose from.

Any question please contact:

Sasha 763-443-0393 (text or call)

John G 612-570-2181(text or call)

Please feel free to email this to other OA men that may be interested.

Upcoming Unity Intergroup Elections January 2022

We need you and you need us. Together we can reach out our hands to help those still suffering inside and outside the rooms of OA. Unity Intergroup can't do it without you.

How can you help? One way is to become a representative to the Intergroup from your meeting. Every OA meeting can have two representatives participate in Unity Intergroup. You can be one of them. You can be the voice of your meeting, you can vote on important issues, and you can provide information back to your meeting about the many projects that the Intergroup is doing.

Other fun opportunities for individuals and groups include creating a workshop, helping with Quick Steps, hosting retreats, and planning the MN State Convention. Our newsletter is also looking for individuals and groups to write articles for upcoming months. There are plenty of service opportunities and it's lots of fun working together to help others.

For those who are already a part of Intergroup, there are openings for Region 4 representatives and World Service delegates. Unity Intergroup has about 60 meetings listed as members, so we can have one delegate for every 10 meetings. We could have up to 6 delegates attend World Service, but currently we have only two. For anyone interested in becoming part of the Unity Intergroup Board, both the chair and co-chair positions will be open. One year of abstinence, attendance at three Intergroup meetings and an interest in making a difference make you eligible for these positions.

Please join us at our next Unity Intergroup meeting on Saturday, January 8 at 12:30 and find out more. Don't forget we have a speaker at every Intergroup meeting. Hope to see you!!

Lori K. Unity Intergroup Chair