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O.A. Region One

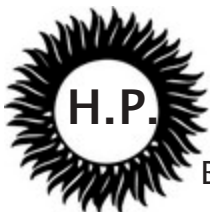
The Heartbeat of Recovery



•Together We Can• Fall 2007

<http://www.oaregion1.org/index.html>

Coming Events



'Recovery Over the Rainbow'

Bitterroot Valley OA groups are hosting the 11th Annual Fall Retreat
October 5-7, 2007

Located: Marcus Daly Hospital, 1200 Westwood Dr., Hamilton, MT

For info call Jacquie 406-777-7160 or lyonsden@montana.com



'Free To Be Me'

Region One Convention ~ October 12-14, 2007
Heathman Lodge ~ Vancouver, WA

Contact: Deborah R. 503-662-3075 or regiononereg@oregon-oa.org



1. Trust God
2. Clean House
3. Help Others

'Back to Basics'

Greater Seattle IG is hosting the Winter Retreat
February 1-3, 2008

Located: Camp Huston, Gold Bar, WA

For info call Alicia R. 425-485-8140 or aliciawr@comcast.net



Together in Recovery

"I put my hand in yours and together..."

October 27, 2007

Located: Covention Multi-Care Center, Covention, WA



Service is love in work clothes.



I want to thank all who have contributed to this newsletter. Please contact the editor if you have any questions or would like to have more newsletters sent to your group for some special event or Public Information activity. We are here to carry the message to those in the rooms and outside the rooms.

Quarterly Newsletter published by the Region One Assembly of Overeaters Anonymous. Editor is Judith B. – Mailing done by Jacquie L. of the Bitterroot Intergroup in MT. If your group or intergroup would like hard copies (paper) sent to them in a bulk mailing please contact the editor via mail or email or phone.

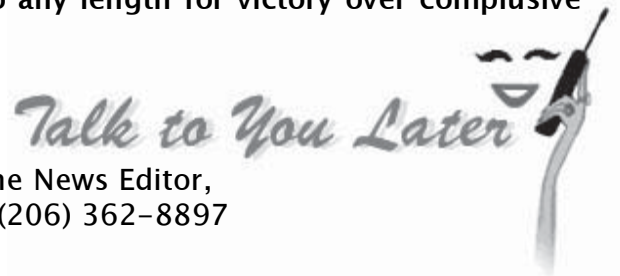
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The topic for the Winter Issue will be “Williness to go to any length for victory over compulsive overeating.”

Please send writings to editor by Dec. 20th, 2007.

Love, abstinence, hugs & prayers. Judith



Please send newsletters, articles and letters to: Region One News Editor,
15109 8th Avenue N.E., Shoreline, WA 98155-6919 USA (206) 362-8897
floweringbeads@mindspring.com

*****Please send information about your up and coming OA events.**

Donations to Region One can be sent to: Region One
PO Box 6588
Portland, OR 97228-6588

Here are downloadable OA speakers if you are interested!
Blessings, Regina

<http://www.oalaig.org/html/speakers.php>

<http://www.metrowestoa.org/audio.html>

<http://www.omahaoa.org/speakers.html>



A.S.A.P. = Always Say A Prayer

Step Seven...

I'm a grateful compulsive overeater. I've been blessed with imperfect abstinence for fourteen years and three months and have given away about 55 pounds, by the grace of God and the power of the twelve steps.

Recently I agreed take on another service position at the World Service Business Conference but I was already holding three other service positions above the group level, one at the group level, and attending college. I felt overwhelmed and highly incompetent. Don't misunderstand me; I believe doing service helps me to stay abstinent and connected to the Fellowship. But just like with overeating, this spring I was doing more than my fair share of service.

I did a mini-fourth step and gave it away to Goddess and my sponsor. I was entirely ready to let Goddess, as I understand Her, to remove all my character defects. My sponsor suggested I study step seven and rewrite the seventh step prayer from the book Alcoholics Anonymous. Here's what I've learned about step seven. After writing a list of my fears and studying step seven, I am discovering, with the help of my sponsor, that I believe I don't think I am good enough. It's comforting for me to read in the Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions of OA "...A poor self-image keeps us in bondage to self and thus makes it impossible for us to find true humility" (59). I see this theme cropping up repeatedly in my life.

What is humility? Our book says, "...Humility is simply an awareness of who we really are today and a willingness to become all that we can be" (60). I think this means I need to seek my Higher Power's will for me and be willing to work toward that. Humility also places equal ground with every other human being. I must admit my mistakes and errors in judgment so that I can move on.

After much writing and reading it to my sponsor, I saw that my fear of not being good enough was driving me to take on so much that I made my life insane. I was sabotaging myself. Finally I responsibly let go of three service positions.

I show that I'm willing by ASKING my Higher Power to remove my shortcomings. How does God know if I'm ready to change unless I ask Her to remove my shortcomings? By "asking," I'm showing Goddess I am willing. I am willing to live differently so I don't go back to the misery of compulsive overeating.

I am discovering my character defects temporarily take over again as I move ahead in my life. Our book says, "The existence of the struggle is not a sign that we lack humility...Real humility about our character defects carries with it acceptance" (61). Can I accept myself as I go revert back to avoidance? I now HUMBLY ask my Higher Power to remove all of my character defects again.

Integral to step seven is recognizing that I don't have the power to remove my own roadblocks. I must ask for a Power greater than myself to remove them. My Higher Power also gives me opportunities to live my life differently so I that I am not picking up my character defects again. I'm grateful this program has given me a whole new approach to food, a way of life, and a forgiving, compassionate Higher Power. I'm also grateful for all the members who give back to our amazing program. Thanks for letting me share. ~ Cynthia D. Eugene, OR

Ways and Means!!



"Region One's Ways and Means committee is happily looking forward to October's assembly and convention to show off the elegant pins, the snappy baseball caps, the visors made to frame all of our beautiful faces, and the quilt that everyone is vying to take home. The pins, visors and hats have been making their select appearances in many places over this summer. Beginning at World Service in Albuquerque, New Mexico, they have been brought to marathons, meetings and retreats all over the West. At very reasonable prices, the convention will be a great place to buy these as gifts for your sponsor and your sponsees, and of course, remember one for yourself! I've been wearing my visor at 12-step functions, as well as out in the sun, since the basic black goes with most of my colorful summer clothes, and "together we can" fits in most areas of my life. See you soon!

Greatfully,
Katia, Olympia, Washington
Chair, Ways and Means, Region 1"

3rd Step Prayer...

Dear God,

I stand before you with an open heart, to do thy will now and forever. Help me to truly see all of my blessings. Help me to be kind and loving to others. To be patient and understanding. Void of anger and resentment. To always remember I am a child of God and I am privileged to do his will for my life.....Amen

Melanie M., Mountlake Terrace, WA

Abstinence – How Important Is It?

Compulsive eaters spend a tremendous amount of time and energy defending their right to eat compulsively. I tell my sponsees that the fear that surfaces when they are faced with having to give up large portions, comfort foods, and unhealthy food-rituals is a natural part of the long road to spiritual recovery. Working through it is fundamental to their future success.

How can one be “living in recovery” while still actively eating? An overfed (or underfed) body produces a malnourished spirit. If we’re still eating, we are actively extinguishing the spiritual spark that we need to move beyond the food to long term abstinence?

I hear many people talk about doing their step work, but even as they do, a great many of them won’t structure their day so as to avoid putting themselves in harms way where food is concerned. A long time ago, I was told that “failing to plan is planning to fail.” Abstinence is hard enough without aiding and abetting the enemy.

Taking full responsibility for shopping, preparing and planning nourishing meals that took me to a healthy weight was the most empowering thing that I was able to do while I worked to identify and deal with the underlying causes of my compulsive eating.

Every time I achieve a “breakthrough”, I became aware of the internal conflict that was my disease, trying ever-so-desperately to get me to go back on my disciplines; to ignore my returning healthy instincts; to blur my judgment, and foster a return to eating.

If my food plan is so flexible as to have wide variances in portions, times between meals, and to be completely free from foods that I am “better off not eating”, I will hardly be able to distinguish a return to compulsive eating from a day where I “have to tighten up my food choices.”

I have a disease that wants me dead. And if it can’t accomplish that, it will settle for generating guilt, self-doubt and a loss of self esteem. It will be pleased to simply undermine my resolve, and reduce me to a diminished version of my best self. It will wait patiently, until the lessons that I learned when my physical recovery was strong have softened and morphed into the false sense of confidence that “I’m still way ahead of the game for being in OA, even if my food has become a little sloppy.”

Nothing is more painful to watch than a long timer who is years past their last period of extended abstinence, talking program-speak while consistently avoiding doing the very things that they would recommend to a newcomer. Such is the power of the disease to hone rationalization and self-delusion to an art form.

So telling sponsees not to worry so much about the food...that what they have is a spiritual malady...and only a spiritual solution will help them....is not doing them any favors. Achieving a healthy body weight (i.e. not being too fat or too thin) is good for OA’s credibility. It’s far from easy, but who said getting well was supposed to be easy?

Did you come into OA looking for spiritual recovery? When did optimizing our physical recovery become the enemy of spiritual recovery? Perhaps this is behind some of the discord in OA. Perhaps some of us are still defending out right to settle for less.

N.R. – Baltimore, MD



Thought to Consider

The Twelve Steps are but suggestions, as is pulling the rip cord on a parachute.

OA Retreats are a time of reflection, fellowship, spiritual renewal and a lot of HUMOR! I never know what I am going to get out of a retreat when I go to them. I am always hoping for a stronger connection with my HP and to strengthen my recovery. I am always grateful when I get humor. Humor strengthens my heart and makes life that much easier. I have heard that humor can cure a very sick person and give hope to the elderly. Humor makes my life worth living!

I usually go to a retreat with other members of the fellowship from my area. It is a time to get to know people better and acquire a bond with newcomers. It is also a time of fun and frolicking! I love to play games and tell childhood stories. A few years ago I went to a retreat on the shores of the Oregon coast. I went with seven other people from my area. We decided that we would also have a engagement party for one of the women in our group. We put little sayings in a box for her to read. They were about love and marriage. We cried and laughed through this experience. We are a pretty rowdy bunch and the party got out of hand and we started talking about nicknames we had as a child. Mine was Marty Tooter Pooper! That got a great laugh. We had a lot of other great nicknames and we laughed the rest of the night.

I felt renewed and refreshed when I woke up the next day. I took a walk on the beach with one of the women in our group. The retreat was a great success for me and one I will cherish for the rest of my life. I am going back to that retreat this March and I know I will enjoy it as much as I did the first time.

I have found so much humor in meetings and special events with people in the program. Our area has started to do a potluck on Saturdays which started in the fall of last year. We started by listening to tapes and we have progressed to games. I always laugh a lot at these gatherings and enjoy each one of them. This is what OA has done for my life. It has brought back wonderful humor in my every day. I encourage anyone to find humor in their meetings and other OA events. My favorite meetings are the ones where the people laugh a lot during the sharing and can understand that life is tough, but we can't let ourselves stay down for long. Laughter is the best medicine humankind has ever found to cure just about everything!

MR

“And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone – even food!” AA, p. 84

I have heard at meetings that surrender means “giving up to the winning side.” When I take step 1, I acknowledge my powerlessness over situations, people and food. I let go of my control, I put down my weapons of self-will, manipulation and judgment. I take step 2 and trust that a power greater Than myself can restore me to sanity. I have faith that when I lay down myself, God embraces me and welcomes me into (his) arms of love. I wave my white flag of surrender when I take step 3 by offering my life and my will to the God of my understanding. “God, come and get me. I am tired of fighting. I surrender.” I have now given up to the winning side. I am on neutral ground with the freedom to move forward.

Beth K. ~ Lake County IG, Spokane

My sponsee was having difficulty, and I suggested she write out God's purpose for her in her life, her work, her marriage, her recent relocation. It occurred to me that it would help me to do the same kind of writing for different areas of my own life. Funny how that works in recovery.

This is what I discovered.....

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR LIFE: Live in God's love. Focus on what I want rather than what I don't want. Open myself to adventures and new experiences because I am loved unconditionally no matter the outcome of new endeavors. Be present. Relax. Rest. Have fun. Play. Honor God. Honor myself. Honor others. LISTEN. Trust God. Accept God's invitations to live my life fully from the inside. Live with a quiet heart in gratitude and acceptance. Seek God, receive God, rely on God. Laugh. Connect deeply with God. Connect deeply with myself. Connect deeply with others. Ask more questions; make fewer statements. Seek support. Receive help graciously. Love unstintingly, especially myself, so I can pass it on. Be honest. Be joyful. Celebrate often. Be kind. Live intentionally. Cherish myself. Allow the flow.

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR PARENTING: Love unstintingly. Encourage, accept, have faith in
continue next page...

continued from page 5...

God, the process, and in my son's uniqueness. Remember that my son lives in God's love; that God has a plan for him. Fear not. Be kind. Be honest. Be present. Honor God, honor myself, honor my son. Be grateful. Seek support. Receive help graciously. Seek God, receive God, rely on God. Open myself to the adventure. Play. Have fun. Be joyful. Celebrate often. LISTEN. Ask more questions; make fewer statements. Relax—it's not guard duty. Help without enabling. Receive my son's gifts. Be generous. Allow the flow. Focus on what I want rather than what I don't want.

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR SPONSORING: Love unstintingly. Encourage, accept, have faith in God, the process, and in each sponsee's uniqueness. Remember that my sponsee lives in God's love; that God has a plan for her/him. Be kind. Be honest. Be present. Be generous. Seek God, receive God, rely on God. LISTEN. Ask more questions; make fewer statements. Connect deeply. Honor God, honor myself, honor each sponsee. Help without enabling. Play. Have fun. Be joyful. Celebrate often. Receive each sponsee's gifts. Seek support. Receive help graciously. Be grateful. Be accepting. Open myself to the adventure. Allow the flow. Focus on what I want rather than what I don't want.

Notice how alike these purposes are. God invites me, as myself, not pretending to know what I don't know nor to be someone I am not, to fulfill these purposes one day at a time. Who knew abstinent living would bestow the bountiful blessing of becoming the self God created me to be? My self—will sure doesn't take me there! Thank you, fellow recoverers, for revealing my story when you tell yours.

Pam C., Edmonds, WA

Region One USA Media Library

The Region One Media Library has tapes and CDs to loan by mail. There are also older tapes which are being purged and are available for free by request. To find out more, contact the Tape Librarian at druppert@clearspringlabs.com.
Deborah Ruppert
7301 NE Krono Road
Yamhill OR 97148
503-662-3075



Computer Services

Janet and Martha have been working this summer on updating the Region 1 website. We had a request from the Region 1 Board to change the graphic to match the diversity of our Fellowship. Janet is working with two Region 1 Board Officers and the draft has been sent to them for comments. The structure has changed on the website to make it easier to find information and the flow from one page to another. Janet is finalizing the Contact Database for the Region 1 Board and should have it in production by October. Martha is working with the Region 1 Board on setting up the tape library as downloadable MP3 files for the Fellowship. This project is in the design phase and more will be communicated in the next newsletter.

Please email information about your Upcoming Events to Martha oaregion1@yahoo.com for publication on the website. Or mail to:

Martha Reeves
3314 SE Navigation Ln #106
Port Orchard, WA 98366
or (360) 769-9114

Region One PI/PO Committee

PI/PO committee has been sending the display board hither & yon, often accompanied by some of the new refrigerator magnets created as PI event giveaways.

There is still a bit of money left in the PI grant fund, as a result of overages returned by grant recipients. I hope the funding will be there next year, also, as I think it made possible events that would not otherwise have happened.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the Region I Convention in October.

Respectfully submitted,
Penny S., PI/PO Committee Chair

**H.A.L.T. = Honestly, Actively,
Lovingly, Tolerant**

12th Step Within Column

RELASPE ~ My name is Donna. I am a grateful member of OA! My actual physical relapse began on Sugar Free food. I had 10 months of abstinence. I had been at my goal weight for about a month or two and on a maintenance food plan. I was cruising right along and life was good.

When I began the food plan, I jumped into step work and working a program. It was said to me that a food plan without the program (higher power, sponsor, service, step work) was just another diet. I cruised through steps 1-3. Got to 4 and began the work. At some point I stopped and did not even know it, until it was too late.

My mom was diagnosed with stage 4-breast cancer a few weeks before I was to move from Seattle (my hometown and hers) to Montana. She asked me to take good care of myself, because she wanted my help with walking through this. I remember walking the beach and thinking just how much my life was going to change. I also remember feeling very grateful I was abstinent, clear-headed and able to be there for my mom.

On a day when she had a surgery and needed me to be present, physically and mentally, it started out that way. On our way home we needed to get her some medicine. I had not been having cravings or conscience thoughts of junky food and as I walked past the "sugar free" section it called to me. I ended up buying 2 bags of those products and had them gone in less than 5 miles and then stopped to buy more.

On a day she needed me, I ended up in the bathroom finding out what sugar free products do in my system and she took better care of me than I did her. She laughed, but then and now I do not think it was funny.

Those two bags of sugar free items sent this compulsive overeater on a ride from (blank) for over 5 years. A ride that I hope others can be spared of. The mood swings, weight gains, shame, frustration, trying to hide, buying larger

clothes and on and on are painful to say the least.

I regained all of the weight and then some. Even worse, I regained all of the insanity of the disease. The disease progressed and it has been really hard to get and stay abstinent. That saying "It is easier to stay abstinent than get abstinent" is true. I have learned it the hard way. Today I know that before the physical relapse occurred I stopped working a program that saves lives.

Thankfully I never quit going to meetings. I was afraid that if I stopped attending OA, I would die from this disease. At OA I find hope and recovery.

Recently I was at an OA event and lots of the member's spoke of abstinence and the tools as gifts. Today I truly believe that the OA program, sponsorship, service work, phoning others, the 12 steps, my relationship with a higher power and definitely abstinence are gifts. I know that I only do this with all of the above, definitely not alone.

I enjoy the clarity, freedom and joy that eating well gives to me. I am a much better mom, wife, friend, sponsor/sponsee, and human being when I am not lost in the disease of overeating. I no longer have to suffer. I get to enjoy all the wonderful gifts of recovery, again. Freedom and joy are the better way to live.

What does reaching bottom mean to me?

My bottom is when I feel so bad physically, so powerless to stop eating, so unhappy, that I feel willing to do ANYTHING to make it stop. I came back to OA when I felt that way, and I felt this way last week, because, even going to meetings, I was not being abstinent, I didn't have a connection to my higher power, and I wasn't thinking about the program at all except at meetings. ...Susan H., Bremerton, WA

H.A.L.T. = Honestly, Actively, Lovingly, Tolerant

Sponsor-by-email



The sponsor by e-mail has been continuing with several changes. There is an opportunity to be a person who is willing to be there as a friend to another compulsive eater. You don't have to be a sponsor in the strict sense of the job, just a listening ear.

One of the suggestions for anyone who might try to do service is to let me know just specifically what he/she would be willing to do. There are requests from people who are already going to meetings, so the persons they might like to hear from are those who have had some experience in finding meetings and keeping coming back.

We have one man who has been answering all the male requests. It could be helpful to have another man available so there will be variety. I have been very thankful for all the persons answering these requests. We know that the best way to keep the program for ourselves is to give it away.

You may send your name and e-mail address to the Region One coordinator at writing_in_time@hotmail.com. I will let you know when a request comes and you can then choose to reply or not.

Thank you for the opportunity to be in service.
~ Barbara S.

Region One Canadian Media Library

The Canadian Media Library was recently shipped from Regina to Calgary. Once I return from holidays in October, I will start sorting through the inventory and be ready to receive requests to borrow tapes. In the meantime, thank you for your patience.



: Judy Aikenhead
436 Cedarpark Drive S.W.
Calgary, AB T2W 2J7
Phone: (403) 238-1113
e-mail: judy.aikenhead@shaw.ca
(please put OA in the subject line)

We Have Ceased Fighting.....

What a wonderful program promise. During the past 3-1/2 years in program I have moments where I have experienced that promise. Those times feel SO wonderful because I feel SO in sync with every person, place, and thing (including food) in my life. What I know is true for me is that those moments will come more often and be longer in length. The caveat is that I must stay in fit spiritual condition. What does that truly mean for me??? It means that I can't let up on my spiritual practices. Currently I do not attend any formal religion, but OA has led me back to the God of my childhood and through working the OA program of recovery I have developed spiritual practices. Things like prayer, quiet time reading OA literature, meditation guided or not. Sometimes just listening quietly to soothing music takes me to that place.... That place of no struggle just oneness with my Higher Power. Sometimes, for me, it's a spiritual practice to open my mail every day and put it away because procrastination is a big character defect of mine. Some might say opening the mail??? a spiritual practice??? Another example of spiritual practice for me is going to the gym and doing moderate exercise (I know H.P. wants me to be physically fit). When I am willing to pry my fingers off procrastination it is a spiritual practice. I can tell that it is because once again, I feel in the flow. The question for me to consider is why am I not always consistent with these practices?? Why do I let life get in the way so quickly that I lose that "flow" within my Life? It ultimately comes to me wanting to do things "the old seemingly comfortable" way instead of HP's way.... Like the Big Book says this spiritual way of life is not a theory. I have to live it if I want those promises. Fortunately in OA we have the Steps to work and sponsors to help us weed out those defects that keep us away from embracing consistent spiritual practices.

Suzan Bogert, R1 Secretary

Thought to Consider...

**The tongue must be heavy indeed,
because so few people can hold it.**

The Only Requirement For Membership

Many a member has said that if the requirements for membership to OA were more stringent than a “desire to stop eating”, they probably wouldn’t have felt qualified to be at a meeting.

Unfortunately, that unique requirement – the only requirement in our entire fellowship – is often used to avoid being “made” to do anything else in the program that makes them uncomfortable; like having a food plan, being accountable to a sponsor, working the steps, or reconciling that abstinence comes from continuous action, not just desire.

What is a desire?? A wish to obtain, like a child who wishes that she had a pony?

I desire to pay my bills, but if I’m not willing to earn enough money and then to make time to sit down and pay them, my desire is largely theoretical.

I desired a long-term stable relationship, but until I saw that my selfish behavior made it a virtual impossibility, I was destined for frustration and failure.

Desire is the beginning of a process, but desire alone will not accomplish very much in OA.

Desire assures that anyone who wants to can attend an OA meeting. I don’t believe it was intended to be the standard to which one aspires to attain abstinence, or to effectively fulfill our primary purpose, or to insure the continuing wellness of our beloved fellowship.

For six years, I slipped and slid. I’d get some abstinence, then become complacent and backslide. I’d “tighten my food up”, only to eventually renege on my new commitments over some temptation or another. I was alternately attracted to people with solid abstinence, or repelled by them as rigid perfectionists, singing the same old shrill song “I don’t eat no matter what”. They must have been cheating or lying, since NOBODY could possibly get and STAY abstinent.

Such was the state of my willingness to act upon my feeble “desire”.

Until I understood at a very deep personal level that I was different from people who ate what they wanted without hating themselves, my problem continued unabated. When I accepted the spiritual consequences of my eating, and the totality of my absorption in it, I found the willingness to convert desire into action, and began to make progress. Today, after 10+ years of continuous abstinence, I sing the praises of physical recovery and service as a formula for keeping a willing OA member moving forward in recovery.

Desire stopped being the answer to my problem once I realized that recovery was about taking suggestions, commitment, principles, bottom lines, and personal integrity.

OA became an international entity because people sublimated their egos, undertook tasks that forced them outside of their comfort zones, and endured extremely powerful emotional challenges to emerge as beautiful butterflies from the cocoon of compulsive eating.

So the next time someone debates the relative merits of undertaking a difficult action to attain or maintain abstinence, ask them whether they desire to just be a member of OA, or if they desire to be a living example of the best that this program has to offer.

Without physical recovery, their recovery, and OA’s credibility, will be the worse for it.

Neil R., Baltimore



T.R.U.S.T. = *Teaching Recovery Using Steps and Traditions*

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