

ALASKA ALBERTA
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KATCHEWAN*YUKON
BRITISH COLUMBIA
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O.A. Region One

The Heartbeat of Recovery



• Together We Can •

Winter 2007-8

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

Coming Events

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



take note!

Please send information about your up and coming OA events.

In October a Region One Assembly decision was made to reduce mailing costs for the Region One News. ***THIS WILL BE THE LAST HARD COPY THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE UNLESS YOU REQUEST A HARD COPY.*** If you would like a hard copy mailed to you, you will need to respond to the mailing chair, Jacquie Lyons at PO Box 562, Stevensville, MT 59870 or lyonsden@montana.com requesting a copy or copies be mailed to you by March 25th, 2008. You may also receive an email copy of the News by requesting it from Judith Bowman, our editor, at floweringbeads@mindspring.com, be sure to put Region One News in the subject line of the email. Be assured that your request for a hard copy by mail will be honored. (*There is still no cost for the News to you.*)



F E A R = Frantic Effort to Appear



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.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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The topic for the Spring Issue will be “Acceptance is the key.”
Please send writings to editor by April 15th, 2008.

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

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

Hi, my name is Donna. I am a grateful, abstaining member of OA. My OA group here in Havre, Montana recently put on a Public Information meeting on I.D.E.A. Day. I have been reflecting on that event this morning. I was thinking about what it did for my recovery in the program of OA. First of all, by reaching out for support and help, it connected me to other OA members in our state. Also, via phone conversations and email I met members of our Region One Board. What wonderful, compassionate, helpful, loving and supportive people we have in this fellowship. By working as a team and sharing that day with the other group members I feel closer to them. It is amazing what a group of people can do!

By being willing to open my home to traveling members, I got to spend more time with them and get to know them better. I also got to share them with my family and my family with them. What a blessing!

By being there that day, my individual program grew. I became more willing to work the program. Even though my food intake was all over the place it was part of a beginning to a bottom that I hope to never see and/or feel again. I got some answers through others on topics that I was struggling with. I got to learn and grow and be open-minded and on and on. I cannot even put into words the power of being part of this event is for me. I guess I will sum it up to say that today I feel truly grateful to be abstinent, have such an awesome HP running the show, a great sponsor and a fellowship of awesome human beings! All that from helping to put together a PI meeting!

P.R.I.D.E. = Personal Recovery Involves Deflating Ego

Willingness...

Willingness is something quietly cultivated through prayer and meditation. I could never command willingness. Willingness is a step of faith, believing that we will replace old behaviors with healthier ones, untruthful beliefs with beliefs that line up with our head and heart and that we will be healed in the process.

Recovery for me is the process of putting myself in the way of healing and letting the healing come in its own time, for I cannot command healing. I have to be willing to believe that I will be more whole even when the process feels like it is taking me apart. My broken, surrendered heart is more flexible than a rock solid one. I have to be willing to feel the pain and betrayal, the joy and peace to let the healing from those extremes of feeling to take place.

I have to be willing to weigh and measure when my food gets sloppy, returning to the things that worked for me if I've stopped doing them. I'm not regressing if I'm doing what supports my program, even if I did these same things years ago. Cynthia W. ~ Pierce County IG

Hi, I'm a compulsive overeater and undereater. I've been blessed with 14 years and 6 months of abstinence from refined sugar and I've given away about 55 pounds, by the grace of God and the power of the 12 steps. For this I am deeply grateful. In the book Alcoholics Anonymous it says "If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it ~ then you are ready to take certain steps" (pg. 58, 4th edition). "Willing to go to any lengths" meant to me four things:

1) Find a sponsor, work with that sponsor on a daily basis and do whatever that person suggests. If I knew how to lose that excess fat and keep it off I would not have needed OA. Dieting and excessive exercise don't help me lose weight and keep it off for along time. I believe a sponsor can help us get through difficult times abstinely in our recovery and point us toward the 12 steps and a sane food plan.

2) Take the 12 steps as that sponsor suggests. My sponsor told me to read certain passages from the 12 steps of OA and the 12 steps and 12 traditions of AA and read the Big Book. Then she suggested I write on questions related to the step I was on. I read these to her every 2-3 days and read this literature and wrote every day.

3) Make recovery and being abstinent the most important thing in my life. This means I plan my visits with family vacation and grocery shopping around what I need to do to be abstinent. I have a home OA group I attend every week and I go to one other meeting per week.

4) Be active in the program of OA. Part of compulsive overeating for me has been extreme isolation and fear of people. People who had what I wanted did service above the group level such as intergroup. Only a few years ago did I start getting involved in our intergroup. What an adventure it has been. I have learned I can be judgmental, opinionated and controlling. I am learning to let go of the character defects by working the steps and applying the 12 traditions to my service. Sometimes I make mistakes such as pushing away sponsees with my grandiosity and arrogance when I don't put my recovery first and the quality of my recovery regresses into self pity, grandiosity and fear. But you all have given me a loving, forgiving Goddess who says, "that's okay. Come back this way." Maybe having 5 service positions isn't the best thing for you. I've been blessed with a full life, have travelled to OA events in my own area as well as the conference in New Mexico. I also have better relationships with my loved ones and am able to walk through my fears by Goddess's grace to the other side. Thank you, OA for the life you have given me.

~ Anonymous in Oregon

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



Thought to Ponder . . .
Meetings: a check-up from the neck up.

Willing to go to ANY length?

The cultivation of willingness is an ongoing challenge in my program. Abstinence for me is a state of grace that arises out of willingness. It's not something I can achieve on my own. I am, over and over, humbled and led by my gentle loving higher power to the understanding that I cannot will myself abstinent.

For me, relinquishing my will must be a conscious act. In my unconsciousness, I am in the clutches of this dangerous illness. My only defense is surrender. I am being called to another point of letting go this month.

I have had a breakfast regimen that has worked really well for me for the last five years. It's simple, seems to have the right balance of foods for my body and I like it – and then a couple months ago, I started craving more than my allotted portion. Of course, at first I want to pretend it's still OK. Then I try changing it a bit – but note, I still REALLY don't want to let it go... After all, it's worked so well, it's natural, it's scary to try something new... First, I had to get honest with my sponsor about it (I hate that part because up until then I can pretend it's not a problem). I've heard it said that the underlying defect is sloth, being unwilling to make a new roadmap when the old one isn't working. I don't want to face that I might have to find a way to do it differently. It might be too uncomfortable, too hard, feel like deprivation.

Step One, honesty, is the only basis on which anything of value can be built. I have to own that I'm having this problem before I can even BEGIN to find an answer for it. Is there something in the ingredients that's causing the problem? What can I do as a substitute? Am I willing to change? That is the key. I have been willing to eliminate many foods from my life in order to abstain. I can argue with HP about the unfairness of this breakfast food no longer working, I can keep trying to pretend it's working, or I can become teachable and let go of my will. I can put aside my fears about trying new things; I can allow myself to be led wherever I need to be led.

Our OA Twelve and Twelve holds the most amazing promise in the first paragraph on page 23: "As we become aware of what our eating guidelines should be, we ask God for the willingness to live

within them each day. We ask and we receive, first the willingness, then the ability. *We can count on this without fail" WOW!*

I remember the first time I heard someone talk about putting a food that was calling her name down the garbage disposal. How "wasteful"! Now, having practiced it with leftovers others have left at my house, I find it's an incredibly empowering experience! Despite what I was taught as a child, loving myself enough to get rid of a problem food (trash cans aren't safe enough for this addict!) is comforting, calming, and brings on a feeling of being carried by my God – resting into arms that are already holding me.

Louise A., Portland, OR

Sponsor by email



During the Region One Convention, ten persons signed up to be potential sponsors. These persons were contacted by Megan of Bellingham and they have all agreed to be available. It was very helpful when Megan volunteered to get more people signed up.

There were five others who agreed to be an OA buddy and one request for a buddy that has been answered. Three persons asked to be sponsors as they had learned about this service by e-mail or through the newsletter, so this service is growing.

It is very rewarding to learn that people can find support through e-mail. There are also persons who would write by snail mail, if someone would prefer that. Contact the Sponsor service by e-mailing writing_in_time@hotmail.com.

I am grateful for the way OA works. Each contact is an opportunity to learn more in recovery. Remember service is slimming. ~ Barbara S.

Region One USA Media Library



The Region One Media Library has tapes and CDs to loan by mail. Contact the Tape Librarian at druppert@clearspringlabs.com.

Deborah Ruppert ~ 503-662-3075
7301 NE Krono Road
Yamhill OR 97148



Compostive Overeater...

I discovered the joys of worm composting when I attended a local waste management Worm Composting class. For \$30 bucks, I got a Rubbermaid container to house them, a pound of red worms (in a bag, thank god, since a pound of red wigglers consists of about 2000 worms), and some of the fixin's to keep their little colony happy. I am sure they weighed and measured the worms.

I had to supply food. You know, scraps. So called "leftovers."

And that meant...

I had to share my meals. *With worms*. H.P. has such a wicked sense of humor. I thought at first that scraping my husband's plate (*not* mine) into the bin was good enough. Neither of us subscribed to the "clean plate" approach, though as a compulsive overeater you can be sure it was never a problem cleaning *my* plate (unless it was with soap suds). I could feed them leftover veggies hibernating in the back of the refrigerator and furry with mold, coffee grounds and stale bread. They thrive on white flour and sugar, which I do not. Someone has to eat it... They eat just about anything, just like me (the rare exception being calamari, which is like eating fish-flavored rubber bands).

I'm not suggesting that we embrace worm composting as another tool. However, when I hear that sneering little voice in my head accusing me of wasting food, I have a positive alternative to eating it or throwing it away.

Between the dog, two cats and bin o' worms, we are down to one garbage can. Our animals get the meat scraps, the worms get the moldy bread and the rest. Nothing goes to waste. And if the worms can't eat it fast enough, there's always the compost heap in the back yard.

Try digging food out of one of *those!* Cindy W.

Alcoholism (Compulsive Overeating) is an obsession of the mind that condemns one to drink and an allergy of the body that condemns one to die.

William D. Silkworth (1873-1951)

Region One Offers 12 Step Within Help

About 15 years ago I finally walked into the doors of OA permanently. I had been in and out of the doors for a number of years before. I was approaching 300 lbs., had high blood pressure and high cholesterol. I needed to do something or I was going to die. I found a sponsor, found a food plan and started to seriously work the program including working on the steps thoroughly. With my effort, help from my sponsor and the major help and guidance from my Higher Power I was able to release 110 lbs. I was able to maintain my maintenance weight for 5 years. I sponsored, did service and spoke at marathons. Then some stressful life issues came up for me. I forgot all that I had learned, including the help and strength that my Higher Power could give me, and put most of my weight back on. Along with the weight gain came feelings of shame for blowing my abstinence. But my friend's in OA did not give up on me. I often got outreach calls, letting me know that they were thinking of me. Finally, I went to a 12 Steps Within Marathon and got back my enthusiasm for the program and have been able to get back to working on the steps and depending on my Higher Power. My abstinence which was shaky at first is doing great. One day at a time, things are getting better.

Does this sound familiar? Are these people in your intergroup that have had similar experiences? Are there people in your intergroup that have been trying for a long time and have not been able to maintain abstinence for any period of time? The 12 Steps Within Committee of Region One can help. We can provide resources to help you set up 12 Steps Within marathons and Relapse and Recovery meetings. We can provide literature you need. We can even try to find you a speaker if there is one locally. A phone bridge can be set up for Relapse and Recovery meetings for people who are in rural areas. We can help you with this. Contact Bruce M. of Seattle, WA at brucem2@q.com or brucem2@ix.netcom.com or Jenny G. of Vancouver, BC at sunshine00401@gmail.com

The main thing is keep coming back. I learned that I can't maintain any abstinence when I'm outside the program. Don't leave before the miracle happens.

Bruce M.

Region One PI/PO Column



Hi, my name is Cynthia W. and I'm a compulsive overeater, relapse survivor and your new Region One Public Information/Professional Outreach chair. Phew! That was a lot to say! And it's a lot to do, too, what with staying abstinent, emailing my food to my sponsor and sponsoring others. But service at the regional level will expand my OA horizons, and that will offer me substantial growth. Isn't that why we're in OA? And to think we joined to lose weight and leave...

So, here's what I know so far. Region One has funds for PI/PO events like health fairs and informational meetings with health professionals and the general public. The grants are on a first come first served basis. Louise A., Regional Chair, and Penny S., your former PI/PO chair, designed and developed refrigerator magnets as giveaways last year, so if you have an event planned, let me know at cyncha132@msn.com and I will gladly send you an assortment.

Emerald Empire IG in Eugene, Oregon, was granted \$1000 for PI activities in conjunction with the 2008 Region One Convention. If *your* intergroup wants to spread the word of their existence, offer to host the convention. Host it with neighboring intergroups and use that money to reach out to the still-suffering compulsive overeater, anorexic, and bulimic in your area.

World Service Office offers *matching grants* for PI/PO activities. There's money available for these things, people! Dust off that PI idea and get some funding for it! Combine it with a grant from Region One and you'll have one hell of a PI event!

I'm soliciting ideas for PI/PO events – got any? Email them to me and I'll offer them in the next column. I'm particularly interested in events that worked for you.

In service, Cynthia W.
~ Pierce County Intergroup, WA



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 Canadian Media Library

The Canadian Media Library will be open for business shortly. Watch the Region One website for the updated order form sometime in January (hopefully). Tapes and CDs from 2001 to 2006 are available for lending, 3 at a time, for 60 days. Region One pays the postage to your house. You pay the return postage.

The Region is reducing its tape inventory so if you reside in Canada and you, your group or your intergroup is interested in receiving a selection (grab bag) of old tapes, please let me know. The tapes are mostly from previous Region One conventions.



Judy Aikenhead
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(please put OA in the subject line)

Region One Assembly ~ October 10 - 12

First I want to thank the Intergroup for letting me represent them. The Region One Assembly was not only enjoyable, it strengthened my program. Before going to Vancouver I was struggling with my program, but being at the Convention gave me a lot of strength being around a group of abstaining overeaters. My program ever since has been strong.

The Assembly started out by intergroup reps reporting on what was going on in their intergroups. Like us, a lot of intergroups have a problem finding people to do service. We then discussed what the Region could do for us and what were the most important issues. By rating what was most important we were able to use this later to do the budget.

In the afternoon the Board members reported on their activities for the year. Also discussed were reports from the various committees on their activities. If any body is interested in any of these reports, let me know and I can provide them.

Later in the afternoon we broke up into committees. Considering that I was coming off a relapse I went to the Twelve Steps Within Committee. After a discussion about what we could do to reach out to the still suffering compulsive overeater, I was asked if I would like to chair the Committee. After giving it thought and an offer from Jenny G., from Vancouver, B. C to co-chair, I accepted. We discussed that there was \$200 in last year's budget that wasn't used and we should make sure that the money should be used to reach out to intergroups and let them know that the Region One Twelve Steps Within Committee was available as a resource. While I was at another meeting on Friday, Jenny was able to have \$1200 included in this year's budget for the Twelve Steps Within Committee. With that budget we will be able to reach out to intergroups with both material and other resources to reach out to those still suffering overeaters. Our goals at this time is to set up a phone bridge Relapse & Recovery meetings, submit articles to Region One Newsletter from committee members and provide grants to intergroups for materials (Welcome Back Packets, Twelve Step Within Books, Relapse and Recovery meeting guides, etc.).

There were two workshops during the Assembly.

The one on Thursday was on Rotation of Leadership. Unfortunately I was not able to attend. On Friday there was a workshop on Building Strong meetings. We all shared what had made meetings effective for us.

A good part of the meetings at Assembly were discussing and voting on bylaw and policies and procedures amendments and electing officers for the Board. The bylaw amendments were ruled out of order, since they were not sent to the assembly reps in time to be reviewed. According to the bylaws, they are to be submitted to reps 30 days before the Assembly. Bylaw amendments are decided on in odd number years, so they will have to be brought up again in 2009.

The following Policies and Procedures Amendments were passed:

Amendment #3: Changes the date that Assembly packets are sent to from 15 days to 30 days.
Amendment #4: This would combine four different mailings to one and use electronic mailing where possible.

The remaining business was electing board members. The following were elected:

Chairman: Louise A. from Portland, OR
Treasurer: Holly B. from Sammamish, WA
Candidate for Region One Trustee: Ev C. from Edmonton, Alberta.

Each year Region One provides for representatives to go to World Service that would not be able to go, because their intergroup would not be able to afford it. The representatives that will be going are: Beth K. from Lake Country IG

Kathy K. from Greater Colombia IG
Cynthia T. from Catch the Wave IG, Coos Bay, OR

Alternate rep.: Barbara S, Eagle Cap IG,
Baker City, OR

The last piece of business was working on the budget, using our priorities that we established on Thursday. Again I want to thank the Intergroup for the opportunity to represent our intergroup at the Region One Assembly.

Mac McIntosh ~ Greater Seattle IG

A B C = Acceptance, Belief, Change.



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