



4 Thought

Volume 8, Number 5

Winter 2011

Covering: Illinois [except the Chicagoland area], Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Manitoba, Northwest Ontario, and Nunavut Territory, Canada.

The mission of Region 4 is to make OA known throughout the Region so that anyone with the desire to stop eating compulsively may find an OA group, and provide support so that any OA member can have recovery from compulsive eating through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous.

What is Your Recovery Worth? by Region 4 Chair

Hi Region 4,

I walked into my first OA meeting alone and afraid. I had been defeated by food, my weight and my life. I was desperate and alone. But I found in OA there were people who WANTED to help me. They reached out their hands to hold mine and, for the first time, I found hope. I shared with them my sorrow and the pain lessened. I learned to trust the people in the rooms. There was an answer for my problem and I learned acceptance. Before long, I had reached out my hand to the newcomer and offered hope, my circle widened. I offered to lead a meeting, carry a key, drag the book bag and my service began.

I went to intergroup I learned that I was a part of a larger circle. I learned that a part of my recovery was to carry this message to others. We needed to bring hope to other members by larger gatherings and events. But just as important we needed to offer what we have to our fellow sufferers through public awareness letting them know OA is here. I volunteered to be on a committee and my circle widened. More hands to hold more friends to love. I recognized the need for individual to fill the roles of

leadership and HP said you have a responsibility. I became willing and I reached out my hands and the circle widened.

I discovered that I belonged to a region where members of other Intergroups joined together to carry this message of hope even further. They shared their experienced successes and failures on ways to support the members and groups as well as reaching out. More synergy and enthusiasm more recovery and my circle widened. I found myself lead by my Higher Power to step up into office roles, something I never thought I could do.

I opened my heart to my Higher Power's will and discovered I was a part of the world. People from other countries with other languages and customs suffered from this same disease and were reaching out their hands for the hope offered in OA. Joining hands with the world effort bringing recovery to all who seek it is a daunting concept but when I reach out I discovered people just like me and my circle now stretches around the globe.

I cannot express the joy found in giving back to OA in any words.

But I know that each of you is a part of that circle. One hand holding another. I welcome each of you to take the risk of widening your own circle, reach out through service, the more hands the lighter the load and the commitments to yourself, your abstinence and your recovery will increase with each connection you make. We need open hands and open hearts to reach those outside the doors and welcome them in.

I am told that service will lift me out of my own illness, lift me up when my thoughts are gray or when my heart is sorrowful. When I look at my recovery so far, I can tell you Service has never failed

Yours in Service,
Cyndy L., Region IV Chair

Special points of interest:

- Featured Tool
- Featured Intergroup
- Words from Region 4 Trustee
- 2012 R4 Convention



Slogan – Act as if...

When in the food, *Acting as if* for me was people pleasing, saying 'Yes' when I wanted to say no, looking chipper and cheerful when feeling bloated, tired and irritable. There was a lot of energy expended to keep up the façade and then I used it as an excuse to gorge, purge or starve.

Living an abstinent life, I've learned that *Acting as if* is a helpful slogan to guide me step outside the comfort of same old, same old. I use this to encourage assertiveness when asking someone to assist me or to stop doing something that is in conflict with my value

system. It is a wonderful way to practice saying 'no' and being gifted with the result of not doing something I didn't want to do and feeling the relief that I was true to myself. Then instead of reaching for the food to get energy, I realized I kept my energy by saying 'no'.



~Anonymous

Featured Intergroup: Greater Omaha

History: Greater Omaha was one of the original Intergroups when Region 4 was created in 1976. They were one of three to attend the first assembly that same year. They were hosts of the second assembly and have hosted at least 5 times since then. They have also hosted the Region 4 Convention twice and will again in July 2012.

Location:
Unity Church
3424 N. 90th Street
Omaha, Nebraska, at 6:15pm.
Intergroup meetings are open to all OA members.

When: Second Monday of the month (some exceptions apply)
Time Begin: 6:15 PM

Groups: 20 groups

Board: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer; plus general board members, who can vote on anything involving financial decisions (All OA members attending Intergroup can vote on all other matters/issues that are not financial related).



Greater Omaha Intergroup information can be found on

www.oaomaha.org

Mailing Address:

Greater Omaha Intergroup

P.O. Box 34117

Omaha, NE 68134

Answering Service: (402) 344-7925

Service Positions/Committees:

Annual Fall Retreat, Special Events, Website, PI/Answering Service, Twelve Step Within/Group Liaison, Literature & Lifeline, Ways & Means, Newsletter, Bylaws/Nominating, Designated Downloader/Meeting Lists, 2012 Region 4 Convention

Elections: Occurs every November. Officers have a 1 year term, which can be renewed one time. An officer can put in a maximum of 5 years serving on the

board after which they must step down from the board for at least one year to ensure rotation of service. General board member positions are 2 year terms, with a maximum service of 5 years before the mandatory one-year off for rotation of service.

Retreats:

Annual Fall Retreat: Oct 14—16, 2012

Events: Super Saturday—

- Post Retreat Super Saturday—allows attendees to share about their experiences
- Family Events—Bowling, night and movie night are loved and well attended

Interesting Facts

The recording of speakers have been well received and available on the website. The fall retreat speakers are also recorded and can be found on the website.

Beyond Intergroup:

Region IV Reps – Can send 2
WSO Delegates – Can send 2

Featured Tool: Power of the Telephone

Next to the plan of eating, this tool is the most powerful for me. Whenever I'm in the midst of turmoil, be it emotional of high anxiety, or deep fear, or hopeless despair, the out-loud spoken word to another person can immediately throw a circuit breaker switch of the turmoil, and allow me to

1. breathe again,
2. begin thought process of examining what the cause might be, still sharing as I talk it through with that other person. Of course, it's best to call someone I trust, as I'm seeking feed-back too.

Now, I've heard many times in meetings how hard it is for some folks to pick up the phone, for whatever reason,

and I often think of my early days when I too, didn't call anyone.

However, when coming home some nights from work, very tired, kids hungry, and nothing gotten out from the freezer that morning, this is the next best thing.

"Hello, Pizza Hut. I'll order two pizzas, one plain cheese, and other hamburger and mushroom."

"Okay, I'll be there in 15 minutes. Thanks."

That phone wasn't that heavy. BC



Region 4 - 2012 Spring Assembly

in beautiful Minnesota – by the Mall of America
(by the airport + free shuttle + pool)

Holiday Inn Hotel

(formerly known as Crowne Plaza)

2700 Pilot Knob Road, Eagan, MN 55121

Book online or call: 1 800 315 2621

When booking a room use "Unity Intergroup" as call in code



Host: Minneapolis Unity Intergroup

April 13 and 14, 2012

Call for Reservations by April 1, 2012

Room Rate: \$89.99 per night or \$94.99 per night with breakfast –

Note: the additional fee only covers 1 (one) breakfast per reserved room

Plan of Action and Pregnancy

Since coming into program over 4 years ago I have been taught that action is the key to unlocking my recovery. I have always been a very active person in many areas of my life - work, extracurricular activities, etc. I do very well in a structured environment and I like being involved in many different groups. With this pregnancy, however, all of this has changed. For the first time in my life I have been forced to slow down. I spent 14 weeks going to work, coming home, lying on the couch, going to bed, and then going back to work. Morning sickness stopped me in my tracks literally. My food plan went completely out the window. I was unable to get to meetings at times, I had to cancel on sponsees or miss their phone calls. All of my normal commitments, even walking the dog, fell to the wayside. This phase has finally passed but I am still unable to keep up with the things I used to do easily. I just don't have the energy or

the time. And when the baby comes everything will change again. So my plan of action has to focus on quality, not quantity for my recovery. I also accounted for other things besides recovery for my plan of action because I need to.

My Plan Of Action focuses on recovery, pregnancy and pre-natal care, self-care, and family.

Recovery

- Attend 2 meetings a week (by phone or in person) - 1 AA, 1OA
- Call sponsor several times a week
- Look for opportunities to be of service that don't involve long term or regular time commitments
- Pray Daily - talk to HP as much as I can throughout the day
- Do one recovery related activity daily no matter what
- Follow revised food plan
 - o Eat only when hungry
 - o Focus on nutritional needs (proteins/carbs/fruits/vegetables)
 - o Continue to increase water

intake

- o Write down food daily when having trouble
- o Eat vegetables daily!

Pregnancy & Pre-Natal Care

- Walk daily - min. 10 minutes
- Stretching/belly dance Daily
- Take pre-natal vitamins

Self-Care

- Get adequate sleep - take naps daily if possible
- Breathing/relaxation techniques
- Tell people no when I need to
- Don't take on any new commitments

Family

- Eat dinner with family every night (as possible)
- Offer backrubs/physical affection to kids/husband daily (where possible)
- Ask HP for help to practice kindness, love, tolerance, and acceptance.

~Joyce D., Peoria, IL

Unity Intergroup Super Saturday Presents...

"Abstinence – 247- Six Course menu of ideas"
Saturday, April 14, 2012

Get the scoop on:

What is abstinence? How do I go about getting and staying abstinent?

Can I travel, eat out and go to functions and be abstinent?

How do I deal with my past eating buddies, my family, friends and co-workers?

Unity Intergroup meeting will be from 11:00 – 12:30

Holiday Inn

2700 Pilot Knob Road
Eagan, MN 55121

Starts at 9AM – more details to follow

Contact Meg – 763.244.6098 or rellimgem@gmail.com

Suggested Donation: \$5 or more

What OA means to me...

(50 words or less)

No longer fighting with my husband, letting my kids run and enjoy their own lives, fitting in airplane seats, not worrying about breaking chairs, not being an emotional wreck and not carrying an extra 130 pounds around with me. And most of all—all the joy these changes have brought me.

~Anonymous



Message from the Trustee

Experiencing Abstinence

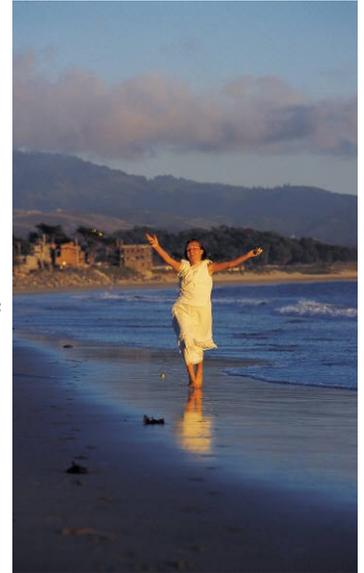
I have often heard the phrase in OA meetings “Nothing tastes as good as abstinence feels.” But what does that mean? So many of us, when we are struggling with abstinence, see it as deprivation. How on earth will we survive if we can’t eat compulsively to deal with life? What will take its place? How can we possibly go for the rest of our lives without eating our favorite binge foods? And will life even be worth living?

When I think along those lines, I am remembering the pleasure that I once got from eating my binge foods. But it hadn’t been like that for a long time by the time I joined OA. I usually started the day sick and hung over from the binge the night before. I then proceeded to eat several breakfasts to give me the strength to go to work – that is, if I didn’t call in sick because I felt so bad. On those days when I stayed home, I ate. Not that it made any difference, because if I went to work I ate too. I spent the day going to the vending machine and eating at my desk. I would hit several different drive-thrus on my lunch hour. And after work, the serious bingeing began. I didn’t quit until I was so sick, tired and despairing that I just couldn’t eat anymore. I still remember what it felt like when my skin, not just my clothes, was too tight. Often at the end of a night of bingeing, I would finish off with a little something to “settle my stomach”. I would toss and turn all night, unable to sleep, and drenched in



sweat. Then the next day I started all over again. Was this what I was afraid I’d miss by getting abstinent? No, because the mental obsession, the disease voice, always managed to convince me that eating was fun and pleasurable. Not the way I ate!

Now that I am abstinent, I have so many gifts. I am not always stuffed and in pain. I don’t obsess about what I just ate, how it will affect my weight, or what, when and how much I will eat next. When I get out my fall and winter clothes, I know that they will still fit. I get rid of clothes because I am tired of wearing them for so many years, not because they no longer fit. I have a peace that I could only get by abstaining from those foods that I am physically addicted to. Because I am committed to



continuous abstinence, I am not going through the continual cycle of craving and withdrawal, along with the pain that that entails. I no longer have a sense of despair and hopelessness. I am free of both the physical craving and the mental obsession. The promises on pages 83-85 of the Big Book have come true, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

But I didn’t know about all of these gifts of abstinence until I actually experienced them for myself. I couldn’t imagine that I would ever be able to abstain, let alone do so peacefully. I had to just trust what I was told by those who went before me – my sponsor and other recovering members of OA. I had just enough faith in what they told me to believe that life might, just might, be bearable without eating compulsively. Never could I believe, at that time, what I have come to experience now – the joy of living in recovery, on both good days and bad, one day at a time!

Yours in service,
Teresa K, Region IV Trustee

The tools are not a Band-Aid

The tools of the program are my links to working the steps and living the traditions. I remember one of my first sponsors saying, "If you're not working the steps, you're using OA as social club." Then, she started me on the steps right away. It sounds tough, but I wanted a solution, not a Band-Aid. Thanks to OA, HP, and the 12 Steps, I've found a solution, and I've been free from compulsive eating for over ten years!

The first tool I used was the phone. I called OA and asked for information. The woman talked with me that night, and I needed her help so much. I was sick from bingeing and purging, and desperate to hear her words. She told me to go buy the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book and to meet her that Friday night. I did as she said. I devoured the Big Book in those few days because I related to it so much. When I went to meet her, she brought me to my first meeting. Without knowing it, I had used two more of the tools (literature and meetings.)

On the way to the meeting, I was sharing how much trouble particular foods gave me. I couldn't believe it when I was told others had the same problem. I thought I was all alone, but I wasn't, not anymore.

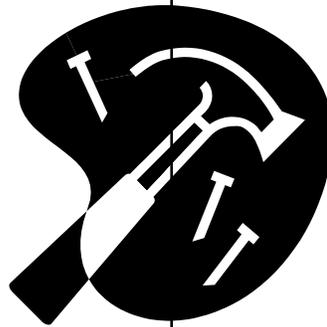
During my first few weeks of meetings, I found a sponsor who told me to read and write as I work the steps—daily. I

got in a routine of writing an HP letter everyday, which I still do, asking for help. I need help every single day.

I loved writing my secrets of my food history in Step One and sharing it with my sponsor. I couldn't believe she cared enough to listen. It felt really good. She told me to surrender my binge foods and eat three meals a day. I was crystal clear on most of my binge foods, since my pattern was to restrict, binge, and purge. For weeks, I thought I would die without them and felt like I was coming out of my skin, but HP and OA helped. The cravings finally passed. Occasionally, I want them for emotional reasons, but through calling others, praying, writing, meetings, working the steps with my sponsor and service, it passes.

After a while, I needed to do more to stay abstinent. I thought I would need to do less, but that wasn't my experience. That's when I started with service: sponsoring, group treasurer, etc. Eventually, I started serving above the group level, which deepened my connection to OA in an important way. I felt part of something greater than myself, something I really believed in. Plus, I made wonderful friendships. Through service, I've learned even more about anonymity. I realized it goes beyond respecting others' privacy. Putting principles above personalities is a spiritual tool that I am trying to cultivate in all areas of my life. And, thanks to OA, it's a life I value. That's the greatest gift of all.

~Lisa B. St. Louis, MO



Things I can do in Recovery that I couldn't do before:

- Sit in a regular seat in an amusement ride
- Have serenity
- Quit the choir in my mind
- Walk with pride in and love for my body and myself
- Have great friends who are trustworthy
- Think clearly

Daily Journal for Sale!!

Enjoy Region 4's Daily Journal.

A place to write down your food, your intent for the day. Step 10 never looked so easy... Go to www.oaregion4.org for ordering.



Some Reasons Why R4 Reps Love Service...

- It gets me out of self and into others; and it's fun!
- To pay back program and sponsor
- To keep OA alive for me and others
- To keep me in OA (coming back)
- To keep me abstinent
- Reinforces my program
- Brings in newcomers
- Ensures that I continue to be abstinent—when I am connected to fellows through doing service, I stay calmer and on my food plan
- I love to see people lose lots of weight (or gain some) and become a sane and happy person
- I meet and work with dedicated, enthusiastic

A Sense of Balance

I desire to become whole in person – body, spirit and soul. I am successful at this with small efforts repeated day in and day out.

Body – one of the most important amends I need to make is an amend to my body. I have abused it by overeating, under eating and binging. I have criticized it unmercifully, finding all sorts of faults – too heavy, too lumpy and too bumpy. As part of making amends, I have written a gratitude list which I wish to share with you:

I am grateful for my eyes that I am able to read wonderful literature and see God's beautiful canvas changing daily (did you get a chance to see the double rainbow today?) I am grateful for my ears that I hear birds, singing, trucks beeping, the dog panting and my son answering the Jeopardy questions.

I'm so glad I can hear music on the radio. I am grateful for my nose which warns me of dog doo on my shoe...a little too late. The best smell is that of my roses that are still blooming, I love burying my nose deep into the petals. I am grateful for my mouth and throat which enjoy tasting, talking and laughing. I am grateful for my hands which can write/type my thoughts out, and sew beautiful quilts. I am grateful for my arms that wrap my nieces and nephews in a loving hug. I am grateful for strong feet and powerful legs that power my bicycle so I can get across town to ride with a friend

and bring to many other interesting places. I am grateful for my bones which give me structure. I am grateful for my muscles which give me the power to move and do. I am grateful for my skin which holds me together. I am grateful for my hair which keeps my head warm and protects my mind. I am grateful for my heart which has pumped my blood loyally each and every day. I am grateful for strong lungs that have encouraged my son at his baseball games. I am grateful for my brain which governs every thought and action. I am grateful for my clear mind which receives inspiration and insights. I am grateful for my creativity. May I use it wisely. I am grateful for my memories. May I hold them lightly with love and understanding. I am grateful for my feelings: the tender ones and strong. I am grateful for warning feelings and painful feelings which teach me lessons. I am

grateful for happy and loving feelings which inspire me and make me glad I am here. I am grateful for the tears, the laughter and passion. I am grateful for being a woman. I feel blessed and humbled to have given birth to two

wonderful loving children. I am grateful for the antibodies which keep me healthy. I am grateful for all my cells, so small and amazing. (I saw body world- it is truly amazing how my body works) I am ever so grateful for this miraculous body which is the temple of my spirit. May I continue to care for with honor and respect.

Spirit – I am grateful to have a gentle, loving and caring spirit. I am grateful that I am willing to open my heart and truly listen to what my higher power God would so love me to hear and take action on to fortify my spirit. I am grateful for a loving church family, loving OA family and my loving family or origin. I am grateful for the many opportunities to enrich my spirit – such as OA events like Frontenac Retreat. I had a wonderful opportunity to be with my God this past weekend.

As I feed my body and spirit – my soul gets sated too.

~Sheri





Memorabilia

T-shirts with the Region 4 logo are available for sale at the convention. They are available in 6 colors: black, white, Vegas gold (light tan), lime green, red, and Carolina blue (medium blue). For T-shirt example, visit www.oaregion4.org website.

They sell for \$17.50 ea.

Sizes are small up to 5x.

Please indicate below what color and size you would like and don't forget to include the cost in your total when sending in convention fees.

Color (please check one):

Vegas gold _____ Lime green _____
Red _____ Carolina blue _____
Black _____ White _____

Size (please check one):

Small _____ 2x _____
Medium _____ 3x _____
Large _____ 4x _____
X-Large _____ 5x _____

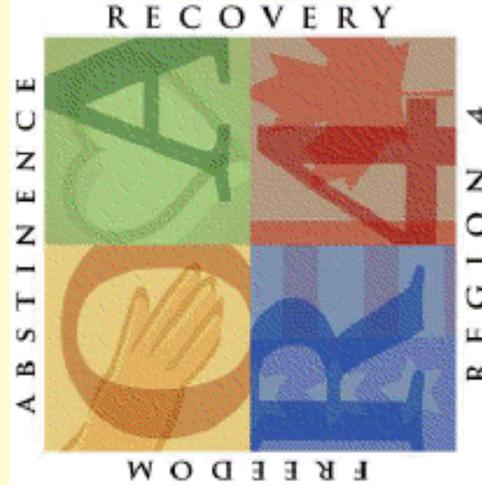
Convention Highlights

Workshops
Hospitality Room
Literature for Sale
Region Key Note Speakers
Lunch and Dinner Speakers
Saturday Night Entertainment
Fun and Fellowship

Please join us in this celebration of recovery at the Region 4 OA Convention in Omaha, NE. Attend workshops and hear speakers from Intergroups throughout our 8 state, 2 province and 1 territory region. Come share your experience, strength and hope with other OA members, while strengthening your own commitment to recovery! Whether you're new to the program or an old-timer, we invite you!



Overeaters Anonymous Region 4 Convention



**July 13, 14, 15,
2012**

**Regency Lodge
Omaha, Nebraska
www.regencylodge.com
1-402-397-8000**



Hotel Information

Regency Lodge
 909 South 107th Ave., Omaha, NE
 68114
www.regencylodge.com
 1-402-397-8000
reservations@regencylodge.com

Reservations can be made by calling the lodge or by email at reservations@regencylodge.com. All rooms are \$99.00 per night. Rooms sleep up to 4 with no additional charge. Each room comes with a fridge and microwave. Free continental breakfasts are available for paid guests of lodge. Regency Lodge also offers indoor/outdoor pools, a fitness center, and close proximity to several restaurants, a walking trail and groceries.

Reservations must be made by Friday, June 29, 2012. When reserving your room, refer to Overeaters Anonymous. If flying in, Omaha (OMA) is the nearest airport. Shuttle service is available to and from the convention through A&B Shuttle
 Phone: 402-403-3085
 Fax: 402-331-8408

To schedule, cancel or alter reservations, please call: 402-403-3085
E-mail: ShuttleOmaha@llyc.com
Web Address: www.OmahaShuttle.com

Please consider contributing to the "We Care" fund for donating extra to help other members.

Scheduled Meetings

Friday
 Registration and Literature will be in the mezzanine.
 Grand Opening 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm.
 OA Meeting 9:00 pm to 10:00 pm.

Saturday (day)
 Recovery meetings from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
 Have lunch on your own, at the time you choose.
 Dining will be available in the lodge or nearby.

Saturday (night)
 Dinner / Entertainment / Dance
 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm.

Sunday
 Recovery meetings from 8:00 am to 10:00 am.
 Closing at 10:00 am.
Complete program schedule and list of local restaurants will be included in registration packet.

Dinner Buffet* 7/1-4/12--\$35
 Proteins: Strip loin, Salmon Picatta (sauce on the side)
 Starches: wild rice pilaf, baked potato
 Vegetables: green bean almondine, seasonal blend, broccoli and cauliflower mix
 Fresh fruit
 *substitutions at chef's discretion

Registration

Sign up for service (please check at least one):

- speaker
- timer
- hugger
- hospitality
- registration
- Where needed

Name / badge name _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____
 E-mail _____

CONVENTION FEES (please circle):

Early Registration by June 29th (suggested donation) \$25
 At the Door or after June 29th (suggested donation) \$35
 Saturday Dinner \$35 T-Shirt \$17.50
 (\$4 shipping if not picking up)

Total enclosed: _____

Make checks to "Region 4 Convention"
 Send registration form and check or money order to:
 Marilyn Dudley
 5921 SW Fairfawn Rd
 Topeka, KS 66619
 Questions for registration call 785-862-8213

Overeaters Anonymous Region 4 Convention 2012

July 13-15 — Omaha, Nebraska

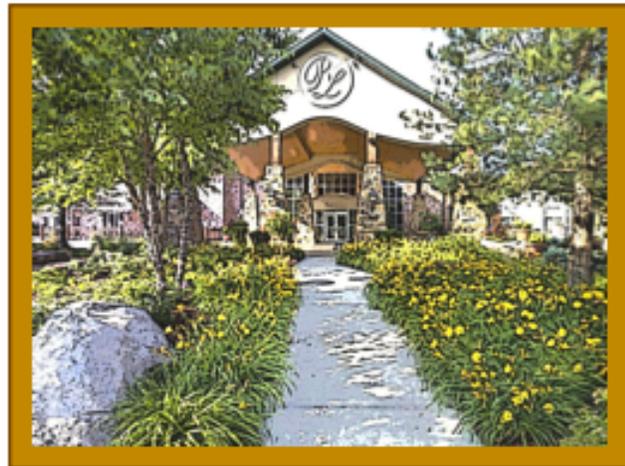
Save The Date!



Join us for this weekend of recovery at the Region 4 Overeaters Anonymous Convention in Omaha, Nebraska.

Attend workshops and hear speakers from other Intergroups throughout our region, which includes eight U.S. states, two Canadian provinces and one territory in Canada. Come and share your experience, strength, and hope with other OA members, and renew your own commitment to recovery.

Whether you're new to program or an old-timer, this is a great way to start or renew your commitment to recovery!



The Regency Lodge is a beautiful hotel in Omaha offering indoor & outdoor pools, a fitness center, walking trails, and close proximity to modern conveniences and attractions.

Convention Highlights

- **Workshops**
- **Hospitality room**
- **Literature for sale**
- **Region key note speakers**
- **Lunch and dinner speakers**
- **Saturday night entertainment**
- **Fun and fellowship**

*For more information, contact
Jen B. at jen.ann.baker@gmail.com*