



IV Thought

Volume 8, Number 2

Spring 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 IV 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.

Meeting Review, by Region IV Chair

Greetings Region IV,

I hope all of you have been enjoying the tiny break in the weather that's reminding us spring is just around the corner. I was looking out my window and saw a tree just waiting to burst forth in blossoms, although I'm certain it will get the deep freeze and all its energy will be wasted. I think we humans do that too. We get ahead of ourselves in our growth cycle and when we run into a problem that makes our recovery more difficult, we're disappointed. The worst reaction we can have is to believe that our Higher Power let us down in some way and relinquish our abstinence in favor of a brief moment of relief from whatever pressure we are feeling. I always have to remember that my plans and growth need to be in alignment with God's plan, not the other way around. That tree will survive the freeze and will put forth leaves in the spring even if it never blossoms. If we just keep working our program each day, we will also continue to benefit from our efforts and HP will bring us through the storm.

I've been trying to decide what I need to report on this quarter. Everything in my report in the last edition of IV Thought is still current. So rather than be redundant, if you

want to know what's happening in Region IV, just reread the winter edition.

Instead I'd like to discuss something that has happened in my area, which I suspect happens everywhere. We had several calls from potential members that when they tried to call the meeting contacts, no one returned their call. When they went to the meeting site, no one showed up, or the members were very late. Those potential members then contacted the Intergroup looking for guidance. Now the volunteers or Intergroup Officers have the task of trying to locate the contacts and find out if the meeting still exists, if the contact is still valid, or what happened. What a frustrating situation for everyone involved.

As a listed group, we members have certain responsibilities beyond our personal recovery. The service work is a part of our recovery. Becoming aware of the world around us, letting go of our self centeredness is a real sign of growth.

- If we have accepted the service position of carrying the key, then we have the responsibility of being to the meeting on time.
- If we are the contact person for the meeting and we are unable

to return phone calls, we need to relinquish that responsibility to another member until we are in a better place.

- If a meeting has dwindled to one or two members who attend inconsistently it may be time to determine if the meeting is still valid.

Remember our primary purpose is to carry the message and a meeting that is not properly cared for by its members does not fulfill that commitment.

- Reviewing the Strong Meeting Checklist and see if there are things you can do to improve your meeting which in turn will improve your recovery. You'll find it here: <http://www.oa.org/pdfs/strongmtgchecklist1.pdf>

Cyndy, Region IV Chair

Special points of interest:

- Featured Tool
- Featured Intergroup
- Exciting Events
- OA ABCs...



Slogan – One Day at a Time

My life, in the food, was a constant tug of war. I was either living far into the past or far into the future. Both created frustration and despair and I never really appreciated the present because I was too busy running away from it.



With a clear focus of ‘One Day at a Time’, I can get so much accomplished. I’m not wasting precious minutes, hours and days fretting over what was or what could be,

I’m actually putting action to my life, in the present. By leaning on my Higher Power and listening to what HP’s will is for me and acting on it, I can do things I never thought possible.

I’ve gotten out of unhealthy relationships, left dysfunctional jobs, pursued my dreams of being a creative artist, accepted the friendships of loving people, got my finances in order, released excess weight, got and stayed abstinent and generally feel happy every day. Cost? Living One Day at a Time.
Rachel S

Featured Intergroup:

History: Founded in 1993, this Intergroup continues to carry the message and provide support to the Greater Kansas City area.

Location:
Broadway United Methodist Church 106 W 74th St, Room 106
Kansas City, MO 64114

When: Third or Fourth Saturday of the month

Time: 10:30 AM

Groups: 28 (surrounding the Greater Kansas City Area)

Board: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer (one year term)

Service Positions/Committees:
Newsletter Editor, Public Information, Retreat, Nominating Committee, Super Saturday Special Committees created to handle the needs of the Intergroup

Elections: October



Meeting Place:

Broadway United Methodist Church

Greater Kansas City Intergroups

information can be found on
www.kansascityoa.org

Mailing Address: P.O. Box
2391 Shawnee Mission, KS 66201
Answering Machine: 913-383-5933

Current Outreach Involvement:

Hosting the
2011 Spring Assembly:
April 16, 2011
<http://oaregion4.org/?p=1729>

“Hatching Recovery: You Can’t be
a Good Egg all Your Life,
You Either Hatch or Go Bad”

Intergroup Reps: At least 1 and 1 alternative from each group

Retreats:

Fall - Sanctuary of Hope—
Oct 15-16, 2011

Events:

Fall Silent Auction
Clothing Exchange
Journaling/Creativity Session
Pumping up Your Service

Beyond Intergroup:

Region IV Reps – Can send up to 3
WSO Delegates – Can send up to 2

Note: If you are going to the Workshop, please bring empty egg cartons and/or plastic eggs.

Call 913.383.5933 for questions.

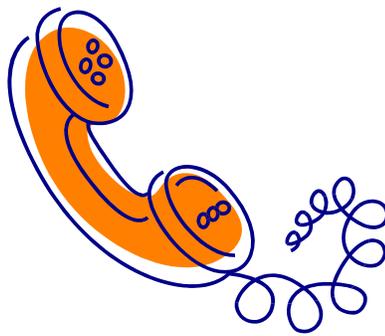
Featured Tool: Meetings



Meetings are my bloodline to staying connected with my OA community. I prefer face-to-face because of my extroversion, and to see my pals and buddies on a regular basis. Plus it is a visual showing that I'm working my program by maintaining my 80 pound weight release for over six years. This keeps me honest and displays physical recovery.

My home group is a centering point to start my week. I enjoy hearing the tools read aloud and what my fellows gain from using them. In our sharing, I get to listen to the step of the week and continue to learn how I can work to strengthen my program.

I remember having thoughts two years into the program that maybe I didn't need to go to as many meetings (At that time I was only going to one meeting a week). Fortunately this was replaced with another thought—*'Okay don't go and you can leave the program again, just like you did for 14 years—and wasn't life fun?'*



Check out www.aa.org for a meeting near you. Try a new meeting—face-to-face, phone or online.



I got in my car and drove to my meeting, and continue to go weekly as I've done for an additional four plus years.

I added Intergroup and Region meetings to my list along with visiting other meetings in my area. What a great way to build my OA community and stay abstinent.

I've checked out phone and online meetings. With 138 phone meetings, 167 online meetings and thousands of face-to-face meetings—there is a 24/7 meeting option available to us for recovery.

Anonymous

Share Your Insight

Share your insights! Check out your journaling and create an article from your experience, strength and hope.

Anything from 50 words to 500 will keep the message of recovery vibrant and alive!

Write about your favorite:

- Tool
- Step, Tradition or Concept
- Slogan
- What OA means to me (50 words or less)
- List of what you can now do that you are in recovery.
- How giving service keeps you abstinent
- Your own awesome idea

Please send your marvelous contributions to IVthought@oaregion4.org.

All writing is subject to editing.

Newsletter Deadlines

May 13

Aug 13

Nov 13

UNITY INTERGROUP(www.overeaters.org) Presents;

The 6th Annual Official OA Big Book Comes Alive Study Weekend

May 13th, 14th, 15th, 2011

North Hennepin Community College, Room CLA 144

7411 85th Avenue North, Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

Free Parking, ADA Compliant Building (<http://www.nhcc.edu/>)

Workshop Cost \$20 or \$25 (at the door)

Books/Materials/Supplies available for sale

- ❖ Our Canadian host and an OA member will lead this revealing and transforming study focusing on how the message in the Big Book applies and works as well for compulsive overeaters as it does for alcoholics.
- ❖ With fascinating insight into the history of the founders, the speaker offers his own unique perspective of how the Big Book powerfully supports OA recovery and abstinence.
- ❖ Our speaker also goes into detail on actively working all the 12 steps. The 4th-step inventory material available from www.oabigbook.info and used by many in OA will also be presented.
 - * Howard howardw@isd.net (952-930-1212) with questions.
 - * Scholarships available, no one will be turned away.
 - * Registration confirmed via email only
 - * Microwave available (no fridge)
 - * The event will be broadcast, please contact Howard.
 - * Participants limited to first 70.
 - * No partial day registrations
 - * **NOT** Hennepin Technical College - a different school

Workshop Hours

Friday Registration starting 6:00 p.m.

Friday Event 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Saturday Registration starting 8:30 a.m.

Saturday Event 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Sunday 9 a.m.-12:00 noon

\$20 Pre-registration deadline is May 9th

To register mail checks or money orders payable to Unity Intergroup and the form below to:

Ann I., P.O. Box 505, New Ulm, MN 56073, ann.ru.oo@gmail.com

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ City/State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Please contact me for service opportunities

What OA means to me...

(50 words or less)

OA gives me coherent living. I am able to better manage my life from my budget to my recordkeeping. I also have the energy and clarity to consistently purchase abstinent

food, prepare my meals and continue living an abstinent life—all with the help of my Higher Power.



Mary M

Region IV Spring Assembly

April 15—16, 2011

Host: The Greater Kansas City Area Intergroup

Hyatt Place Kansas City/Overland Park/
Convention Center

5001 West 110th Street
Overland Park, KS 66211
913.491.9002

Message from the Trustee

Greetings to Region IV! It's very exciting to have the IV Thought, our Region IV newsletter, in publication again! I've been thinking long and hard about the topic for this article. I have written articles about OA's four Strategic Goals: Strong Meetings, Professional/Public Awareness, Committed Service Bodies, and Financial Health. All are critical to OA's future. But the one thing that underlies all of these is abstinent OA members. Abstinent OA members comprise strong meetings, and welcome and sponsor newcomers. They fill service positions at the group level and beyond. They are the ones who make OA known to the public and professionals through their outreach work and positive example. And they are the ones who support OA both financially and with their service, because of their gratitude for the recovery they have found, and to ensure that all those who still suffer will find OA and a solution to the disease of compulsive eating. Abstinent members are both necessary to reach all of our goals, and the result of them.

Originally, Abstinent Members was the 5th goal proposed for our Strategic Plan. The Board of Trustees and the Region Chairs broke out into small groups to define each goal and to come up with 1-, 3- and 5-year goals. We got stuck on abstinent members – not because we didn't support the idea, but because we couldn't distinguish differences in the goals. At every time point, our goal was always to have every OA member become and remain abstinent.

So the question then becomes – how do we achieve and maintain abstinence? The answer is and has always been to work the OA Twelve Step program of recovery. The resultant spiritual awakening gives us the power to abstain from compulsive eating. Debate has long raged about what comes first – getting abstinent or working the Steps? Some people claim that one must be abstinent in order to work the Steps, others that they became abstinent through working the Steps.

I believe both are true – the 2 cannot be separated. I know that I tried to work the Steps for 14 months before I got abstinent. While I certainly think that trying to work the Steps while still eating compulsively was better than NOT trying to work the Steps and eating compulsively, neither was it effective. I did not achieve abstinence and recovery until I put down the food – that is when I finally worked Steps 1-3. On July 19, 1990 I honestly admitted that I was a compulsive eater, that on my own I was powerless over

certain foods and eating behavior, and that my life was unmanageable. I believed that the OA Twelve Step program could restore me to sanity, and I made a decision to turn my will, my life, and MY FOOD over to that power. That had always been the missing piece – I was unwilling to take the action to put down the food. I confused wanting to stop eating compulsively with being willing to do so. True willingness is translated into action – anything less is a lie and a fantasy.

Putting down the food is critical, but only a beginning. If it isn't followed by rigorously working the Twelve Steps of OA – all of them, in order, one day at a time, for the rest of my life – I am certain to return to compulsive eating – to relapse. I often hear people say that relapse is part of recovery, and I could not disagree more. Relapse and recovery are mutually exclusive – relapse has no place in recovery, and yet it is inevitable if I don't work the Steps and achieve that spiritual awakening.

One final point: OA's Preamble states "Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer. I don't agree with the first part of that statement. I believe our primary purpose should be to RECOVER from compulsive overeating. Abstinence places the emphasis on the symptom of the problem: the food. Recovery places our focus on the spiritual awakening gained as the result of working the OA Twelve Step program of recovery, and implies changes on all three levels: physical, emotional and spiritual. If OA is to survive, let alone grow, we must demonstrate recovery in our lives and our rooms. Without it, we will have no credibility with the public and professionals, and we offer no hope to the newcomer. The still suffering compulsive eater will die, both in and out of the rooms, because no one has carried the message to them. We will have failed in our primary purpose. I, for one, find that unacceptable, and I know I am not alone - all of the people who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body and who carry that message share that commitment.



May we all recover from compulsive eating and carry THAT message to those who still suffer, today and always!

Yours in service,
Teresa Kopel—Region IV Trustee

Free to be Me

Through the H.O.W. format with its guides, suggestions and ways, I will leave behind old feelings, perceptions, and fears. I choose today to walk through life with focus and clarity of vision and thought. Today I will have freedom to live as my God intended, to be of service and to extend the hand to all those who share my compulsion... Just for today I will walk with you in recovery.

I read today's "Voices in Recovery" before any alarms went off. I woke up, so happy to see the sun shining through my window...I thought WOW what a beautiful day! The best part was that I awake every day before 6 am to commit my food for the day, so I can have the freedom to move forward. Sometimes when I share my thoughts or writings it keeps my committee at bay. Actually I don't have time, to keep it going. This extra time granted me more enjoyment.

A couple of weeks ago at an assembly I thought or understood a slogan I had not seen before ... 'B.I. N. G. E. – Believing I'm not good enough'. Just for today I

thought, I am good enough. I used that slogan when it was announced in my "aqua zuma" class that we were going to learn to belly dance. This concept of going "free" seems foreign yet I had an amazing good time and look forward to practicing it every week.

Upon arrival at home, I was a little sore after I relaxed a bit, but no worse for the activity of belly dancing. I stick around as I recover from

compulsive overeating O.D.A.T. Life-style changes demand that I ask HP to help me with my food. I ask for guidance as I surrender my old beliefs and thoughts --the landscape where once my feelings and thoughts were so apart of my food and working. I do this for the present 24 hours. Today I will work OA H.O.W.

KC B



"OA's FUTURE - OUR RESPONSIBILITY"

Saturday April 30, 2011
8:30 am - 5:00 pm

Emmanuel Episcopal Church
717 Quincy Street
Rapid City, SD

SPEAKERS

Out of Town Guest Speaker
with years of abstinence, recovery and service experience!

EVENTS

Friday April 29 - OA Meeting at 5:00pm SAME LOCATION

➔ Speakers

➔ Workshops

➔ Q & A Session

CONTACTS

Jan H. 605-574-2296
gratefulufa@wildblue.net

Stacey D. 605-431-1502
imadarling67@hotmail.com



When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of OA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.

Presented by the Hills and Plains Intergroup
PO Box 3295
Rapid City, SD 57709

Overeaters Anonymous

2011 Spring Retreat



Location: Christ the King Retreat Center
621 First Avenue South
Buffalo, MN 55302

Dates: April 1st - 3rd, 2011

Times: **Check-In:** 6 to 7pm on Friday
Program: 7:30pm on Friday
Check-out: 2pm Sunday

Cost: \$160 by March 11th; \$175 after
Includes: Two nights lodging, 3 meals on Saturday,
2 meals on Sunday

Scholarships are available.

Deadline for Registration: March 18, 2011

The ABCs of OA

I have been in and out of OA for 26 years, mostly in. I have been back to OA for a little over a year after a 12 year length of abstinence and a 3 year period of relapse. I have been abstinent from sugar for over a year and abstinent from flour and wheat for about 2 months. When I decided to go through the alphabet with OA, it was my intention to choose one word per letter. I haven't succeeded in that, and know that I have left many many wonderful descriptive words out.

A is for—Abstinence which is not a restriction, but freedom from food obsession. My abstinence is 3 meals and 1 snack per day, weighed and measured at home, and with no sugar, wheat, flour, and only certain fats. Anonymity which helped me get to OA. I didn't want anyone to know I was fat --I only told my closest friends.

B is for—Binging which, for me, is spiritual suicide. The day after a binge I wake up full of disgust, depression and despair. Balance, which is something I recognize every time I swing past it.

C is for—The words 'came to believe' which, for me, are the most relaxing three words in the world.

Cowboy wisdom

- 1) If you have to eat crow, eat it while it's warm. Once it's cold it's a lot harder to choke down.
- 2) If you fall off your horse, get right back on. Sometimes, after going off my food plan, I have thought that 'tomorrow I'm going to get abstinent and be abstinent for the rest of my life, so this is my last chance to eat this, and that, and those other things.' That thinking makes no more sense than getting a speeding ticket in the morning and then deciding not to follow any traffic laws for the rest of the day.

D is for—Disease. I believe that a lot of 'food' we eat is not really food at all, but chemicals that are manufactured to be addictive-- engineered so that they have just the right taste, texture, and aroma.

E is for—Exercise. When I hear that a new tool, Plan of Action, had been added, I hoped it would be exercise.

Along with working the 12 steps, using the tools, and abstinence, exercise benefits us physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

F is for—Food—one of my favorite things! My husband has clothes and shoes that don't belong to me. He also has food that doesn't belong to me. Frustration means I've taken control. Food Plan. When I was struggling to get off sugar, and later flour and wheat, I would want to use a new food plan after a binge. But I don't need a new food pan—I need to stick to the one I already had.

G is for—God, which leads me to giving up control, which leads to being grateful.

H is for—Humility. Without it, recovery is impossible. Happiness, which is not found in the refrigerator. Hunger is not bad. It's normal to be hungry before a meal.

(Continued on page 8)

I is for—Inventory: keeping our side of the street clean.

J is for—Just for today. We get to learn how to live in the present moment.

K is for—Keep coming back. I'm glad I did.

L is for—Literature. I was listening to a convention tape where the speaker had lost 180#! Literature can inspire us by telling us that we are not alone, and that others have gone before us. Less food, more energy

M is for—Meditation. I lay on my back with my legs propped up 90 degrees against the wall. I keep my meditation simple, just saying 'in, out' as I slow down my breathing. When I want to get fancy I say 'God's will in, my will out.' I have done this enough so that, wherever I am, I can feel serenity by slowing down my breathing. Maintaining . I could always lose weight but, because I thought the purpose of being thin was so that I could eat anything I wanted, I could never keep the weight off. Only in OA have I ever been able maintain weight loss. I measure my food, not my body.

N is for—The fact that I will never be a normal eater.

O is for—Obsession. I don't eat personal binge foods because, when I do, it is like being driven by knifepoint to get and eat more food. One day at a time.

P is for—Prayer. We are instructed to pray that we will know and do God's will. Progression not perfection. I weigh my food when I'm eating at home and it's not unusual for me to weigh my meat, cut off a small amount to get it to the exact right weight, and then eat the piece I've just cut off. Planning. I cook in large quantities. I'll brown hamburger, make chicken and meatloaf, then freeze it on cookie sheets and then put into freezer bags. When I need to eat RIGHT NOW, I've got abstinent food ready.

Q is for—Quality not quantity. We had company on Super Bowl Sunday and I was serving pizza, which I don't eat. I thought I'd just grab something quick to eat but then decided no, I needed to make something for myself that I loved. There's no reason to be a martyr when abstinent food can be delicious.

R is for—Relapse I don't regret my relapse because I've learned from it. And even if I hadn't gotten abstinent again, I would be so much better off for having worked the 12 steps for as long as I have. A resolution is a misguided attempt to be in control.

S is for—Spiritual awakening. Spiritual food is needed for spiritual hunger. Serenity is knowing and accepting that God is in charge. Satisfaction is not found in eating more food

T is for—The three fold nature of the disease—PMS --physical, mental, spiritual. If you don't believe its three fold, you should see me the day after a binge when I am lethargic, emotionally fragile, and spiritually deaden. Traditions. The Steps are so we don't kill ourselves. The Traditions are so we don't kill each other.

U is for—Understanding. When I said at a meeting that 'most people eat until they're full, but that I eat until I'm disgusted', people looked me in the eye and nodded in agreement. I didn't have to explain it to them, they knew exactly what I was talking about.

V is for—This Valentine poem,
by Jack Prelutsky

*I bought a box of chocolate hearts, a present
for my mother.
they looked so good I tasted one, and then I
tried another.*

*They both were so delicious that I ate another
four,
and then another couple, and then half a dozen
more.*

*I couldn't seem to stop myself, I nibbled on and
on,
before I knew what happened all the chocolate
hearts were gone.*

*I felt a little guilty, I was stuffed down to my
socks,*

*I ate my mother's valentine...I hope she likes
the box.*

W is for—WE admitted. This program is not meant to be worked alone. Sometimes I have to remind myself that weight loss is not my sole purpose in life. To worry is to insult God.

X is for—Ximinies, the street on which I live. We moved 5 times in the 26 years I was in OA and every time we moved, I lost my abstinence. Thrown it away may be more accurate. I was in a new house and life was going to be perfect now.

Y is for—You! Without you there is no phone

list, no meetings, no sharing our stories. Together we can do what we could never do alone

Z is for—the Zinkens. If I ever meet a Zinken, I will need to make amends because, as a child, I called them the stinking Zinkens.

By MJ



We're on the
web—oaregion4.org

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

- Make clean and clear amends by fully taking responsibility for the harm I caused others
- Go to bed when I'm tired and get up refreshed and free from food remorse
- Wear the same clothes from year to year
- Make it up the stairs without clutching the railing so hard, fearing I would pull it away from the wall
- No longer take anti-acids
- Smile more