IV Thought

Volume 8, Number 3 **Summer 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.

What is Your Recovery Worth? by Region IV Chair

Happy spring! I'm so grateful the worst of the cold gloomy winter is past. I had a really bad case of cabin fever or the winter blues this year. I'm happy to report I maintained my food abstinence even though my serenity was shaken. I followed my daily routine; doing my tenth step, planning my meals, making outreach calls, going to meetings, working with others. I share this because I think it's important for us to remember that even when times are tough we have a program to follow that keeps us from going back to the food. The food promises relief from the pain, but will not fix anything. If I had eaten off my food plan I would just have had another problem on my hands. I'm grateful today that I have 11 years of abstinence and have achieved the spiritual recovery this program offers, because turning it over each morning and taking the next right action carried me through the rough spot and I'm back to my normal optimistic self. Yeah H.P. and Yeah Program and thanks to all my fellow members who listened to me whine for three weeks.

A part of my responsibilities as Region Chair is to participate beyond the region level to ensure our fellowship is experiencing growth and a healthy balance. I share my experience, strength and hope with others who want to offer support for our members and achieve our primary purpose of carrying the message, both in and out of the meeting rooms. The goal is always recovery from compulsive eating. To accomplish that goal the Board of Trustees has established a strategic plan with measurable goals, assigned tasks and status reports. I know it sounds like work, but it's really very simple. I thought I would provide a brief explanation of the Strategic Plan, with the hope that your local Intergroups can find ways to use it also.

The person on the bicycle is an abstinent member. Without abstinence none of the other work will be accomplished because our membership will dwindle and no new members will be attracted to the program. Without new members, with whom will we share the miracle of recovery? Ask yourself, "Am I doing my best to participate fully in this program, or am I just doing enough to easy my anxiety?" If you truly want what this program offers there is a solution, but it requires action on your part that may take you out of your comfort zone. I urge you to try one new suggestion you hear from your sponsor or another abstinent member instead of thinking you know what's best. HP speaks through people; we just have to be humble enough to listen.

The next concern is Strong Meetings. What makes a meeting strong? Meetings filled with abstinent members; all service positions filled; active rotation of service; the meeting is growing; newcomers stay and become abstinent; sufficient number of sponsors; operates in the spirit of all 12 Traditions. That's a tall order and difficult to achieve if your meeting is small and only one or two members are committed to supporting the meeting. Ask yourself, "Why don't I volunteer to give at least some service to my meeting? "Carrying the key, or literature, setting up the meeting room, these are the beginning steps of service. If you've been doing them for years, but nothing more, consider taking on more. If you are the person who

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Special points of interest:

- Featured Tool
- Featured Intergroup
- Welcome to our New Logo
- Gifts that Cannot be Missed

Slogan — Keep Coming Back!

What do we 'Keep Coming Back' to? My first thought is—meetings. I can keep coming back if I'm slipping, relapsing or maintaining my abstinence. This keeps me in touch with fellow addicts. But this slogan really expands to all areas of my program.

I need to return to my focus on the steps, each and every day. When I'm struggling, do I recite the third or seventh step prayer? Am I reading and writing? Have I been diligent in decreasing the names on my ninth step list? Am I continuing to replace the food with phone calls to my fellows and sponsor? Am I diligent in my daily tenth step inventory, so I lessen the load for a future fourth and fifth step?

Coming back is about coming home. Being with those I care about and who care about me. It is about familiarity and grounding after being away. After I regain my footing, I'm able to reach out to the still suffering compulsive eater, by providing experience, strength and hope. By doing this, I show by example that by coming back—the program works, when I work it.

~Dave

Featured Intergroup: Sunflower Intergroup

History: One of 3 Intergroups in Kansas

- First registered with WSO—July 9, 1982.
- First Annual Conference held on Oct 17, 1982 at St. Francis Hospital.
- Hosted Region Assemblies: 1984 (Topeka), 1988 (Manhattan), and 1998 (Topeka).
- Hosted 2010 Region IV Convention in Topeka.

Location:
St. Francis Hospital
1700 SW 7th Street, Mtg Rm 8
Topeka, MO 66606

When: Third Saturday of odd numbered months
Time: 10:15 AM (after 9AM Mtg)

Groups: 9—In addition there are meetings at the Rescue Mission and Topeka Correctional Facility.

Board: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer , Region Rep, World Service Delegate (two year term).

Sunflower Intergroup information can be found on http://sunflowerintergroupoa.org
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 67181, Topeka, KS 66667
Answering Machine: 785.357.8774

oa@sunflowerintergroupao.org

Chair and Secretary are elected in even numbered years, Vice Chair and Treasurer elected in odd numbered years, with no more than 2 consecutive terms.

After an interval of one year they are again eligible for election. If they are a group rep at the time of election, they must resign that position and the group will elect a new IG rep.

Service Positions/Committees:
Newsletter Editor, Web Coordinator, Retreat,
Elections: January

Intergroup Reps: At least one and one alternate from each group

Retreats:
Annual Summer Retreat
Winter Retreat

Events:

- Annual KS State Convention—September—held conventions since 1989. It is held with Greater Kansas City and Mid-Continent IGs.
- IDEA Day
- PI Meeting
- Diabetes Expo—"Walk for Obesity"
- 18 Week Step Study meetings

Beyond Intergroup:
Region IV Reps – Can send one (Have had 3 members serve in Region IV Board)
WSO Delegates – Can send one

Featured Tool: Action Plan—Approved by WSBC

Exciting news! The latest tool has been added to our tool box and will be printed in the updated "Tools of Recovery' pamphlet. The approved definition is as follows.

"An action plan is the process of identifying and implementing attainable actions, both daily and long-term, that are necessary to support our individual abstinence and emotional, spiritual and physical recovery. While the plan is ours, tailored to our own recovery process, most of us find it important to work with a sponsor, fellow OA member and/or appropriate professional to help us create it. This tool, like our plan of eating, may vary widely among members and may need to be adjusted as we progress in our recovery.

For example, a newcomer's action plan might focus on planning, shopping for and preparing food. Some members may need a regular fitness routine to improve strength and health, while others may need to set exercise limits in order to attain more balance. Some of us may need an action plan that includes time for meditation and relaxation or provides strategies for balancing work, personal interactions with family and friends, and our program. Others may need help to organize their homes; deal with their finances; and address medical, dental or mental health issues.

Along with working the Steps on a daily basis, an action plan may incorporate use of the other OA tools to bring structure, balance and manageability into our lives. As we use this tool, we find that we develop a feeling of serenity and continue to grow emotionally and spiritually while we make measurable progress one day at a time."

Check out www.oa.org for all of the tools.

www.oa.org

Region 4 has a new logo and slogan!

ABSTINENCE
FREEDOM
RECOVERY
REGION 4

Region 4 Freedom, Abstinence and Recovery

Congratulations Marcia B! Thank you to all of you who provided your creativity. This logo was chosen due to the design of the heart and hand of OA and that our Region is part of the United States and Canada.

Daily Journal for Sale!!

Look for our Logo on our newly created and designed Daily Journal.

A place to write down your food, your intent for the day, and Step 10 never looked so easy...

Go to www.oaregion4.org and order yours today.

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

Aug 13

Nov 13

February 13

Live Well—Be Well—One Day at a Time

At the Villa Maria Retreat Center

Frontenac Retreat • September 16–18, 2011

Come join us for a recovery weekend! Registration begins at 6 p.m. on Friday and we will close with lunch on Sunday. Throughout the weekend, speakers will share their experience, strength and hope and we will share in small groups. Personal time will be available for reflection and fellowship throughout the weekend.

Registration Information **New *lower* rates!** ***Space Is Limited—Register Early!***

Registration Received	Shared Room	Private Room *(Limited Number)*
Before August 16, 2011	$132.	$148.
After August 16, 2011	$142.	$158.

The registration fee includes two nights' lodging, three meals on Saturday and two meals on Sunday.

Due to our commitment to the retreat center, there will be no refunds. Please find your own replacement. Final registration **deadline is August 31, 2011,** as the retreat center needs a final count by September 2nd.

Scholarships
We have a limited number of partial scholarships available. For information, contact Betty C. at (763) 535-3939 or e-mail her at: books1216@msn.com.

The Retreat Center
Villa Maria Retreat Center, 29847 County 2 Blvd., Frontenac, MN 55026 (www.villamariaretreats.org)

- **Sleeping rooms are not air conditioned,** but fans are provided.
- **Handicap accessible (ramp & elevator)**—refrigerator & microwaves available; labyrinth and walking trails.
- **Menu, Map & Schedule—**Include your e-mail address (or a self-addressed stamped envelope) for a copy of the menu, map and weekend schedule.
- **Directions**—Villa Maria is near Frontenac in southeast Minnesota. From the Twin Cities, take **Hwy 61 South** to Red Wing. In Red Wing, stay on Hwy 61 South and go 12 miles to Frontenac. In Frontenac, stay on Hwy 61 South and go 1.3 miles. Take a **left (north) on County Road 2** and go 1 mile. The retreat center is right after the bridge overlooking the marsh.

Questions or Special Needs: **Carolyn T. (763) 557-9355** **cctorp@gmail.com**

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PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE RETREAT CENTER DIRECTLY

Frontenac Retreat - Registration Form

Name: _____

Name Tag should read: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Home Meeting: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone: _____

Other Phone (optional): _____

❑ Male ❑ Female

❑ I am new to OA ❑ This is my first retreat

Have you previously been to this retreat center?
❑ Yes ❑ No

Would you be interested in a tour of the center?
❑ Yes ❑ No

Would you like your name, phone and e-mail included on the contact list distributed at the retreat? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Preference: ❑ Private room ❑ Shared room

Roommate: _____
(If you don't list one, one will be assigned.)

I am willing to:
❑ Be a speaker ❑ Lead a small group
❑ Hear a 5th Step ❑ Be a sponsor
❑ Do service at retreat

I would like to donate the following item(s) for the auction _____

_____

Make check payable to OA Retreat Fund.
Send check and registration form to:
Deb S., 5608 Woodland Rd.,
Minnetonka, MN 55345

What OA means to me...

(50 words or less)

I am not so lonely. That many people felt as I felt, did the excessive eating binges, acted like I acted before and after a binge.

Today I have the choice to follow those "trailblazers" who shared experience, strength, and hope and weren't afraid of being totally honest; who believed abstinence is just as important to us as sobriety is to an alcoholic; and especially for a God of my understanding who is deeply concerned and very proud of me.

His Will is best.

Bev C

Region IV Fall Assembly

September 30—October 1, 2011

Host: St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup

Wingate by Wyndam St. Louis Riverport
13615 Riverport Drive
Maryland Heights, MO
314.209.0001
Call for reservations by September 15

Message from the Trustee

Greetings to Region IV! I have just recently returned from WSBC 2011 – my 10th consecutive Conference. Two weeks before that I attended my 27th consecutive Region Assembly. Lest any of you think I don't believe in rotation of service, the reason I went so many years was because I was doing service – first as Region Rep and WSBC delegate from my local Intergroup, then on the Region Board as Secretary and then Chair, and finally my current position as Region IV Trustee. In both cases, as soon as I heard about Region Assembly and WSBC, I knew I wanted to go someday. I also believed I would never have a chance – with Assembly, my IG already had a Rep, who I thought would be "Rep For Life". But I moved, got active with my new IG, and our Region Rep was elected to serve as Region Vice Chair, which left a vacancy. When it came to WSBC, I knew my little IG could never afford to send anyone. But we applied for funding assistance from Region and passed the basket twice at our meetings – the second time to collect funds to send a delegate. By the time WSBC arrived, we didn't need the assistance we'd been awarded – we'd collected enough funds to be self-supporting.

Why did I want to go so badly? There were so many reasons. First, this wonderful program allowed me to find the gift of abstinence and a life "beyond my wildest dreams". I love this program passionately, and I wanted to carry the message of recovery and give back to the program that saved my life. I met wonderful people with long-term abstinence and recovery who were not only active in service beyond the group level, they were enthusiastic about it! They made it sound exciting, as indeed it is. When there wasn't a lot of long-term recovery in my area, it inspired me when I heard their stories. They said that service played an important role in their recovery, and I wanted what they had. Going to OA business meetings wasn't dry and boring – it recharged my batteries and made me even more excited about carrying the message to those who still suffer from this deadly disease. For those who live where there aren't many meetings, it was heaven to be around so many recovering people. OA meetings are held 4 times a day – early morning, lunchtime, dinnertime, and at night – not to mention the "meeting" in the heated outdoor hot tub!

The delegates at WSBC serve as the collective group conscience of all of OA. I have met delegates there from all over the world: Mexico, Poland, England, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, Israel, Spain, Germany, Iceland, Costa Rica, Brazil, and of course the US – all working together to help reach compulsive eaters everywhere. It's an incredibly powerful experience to see and understand that OA is truly an international fellowship that extends far beyond the little basement rooms where my local meetings are held.

At WSBC 2011, we accomplished so many wonderful things to help carry the message. We passed a new definition of abstinence that includes a statement about working towards a healthy body weight – so that we will not only have the health to serve this program, but we will truly be able to attract others who share our disease. We approved several new pieces of literature: A Common Solution shows the many diverse facets of our fellowship and recovery; The Tools of Recovery includes a definition of our newest tool, action plan. (Action plan has become one of my favorite tools. Before OA I lived in a world of fantasy, dreams, illusions. When I came to OA, turned my will, life and food over to the Twelve Step program of Overeaters Anonymous, I found abstinence and recovery, but it took – and still takes - definite actions on my part.)

I sometimes feel that Region Assembly and WSBC are the best-kept secrets in all of OA, despite our continuous efforts to let people know about them. Over the last 10 years, only 19-39% of our Intergroups in Region IV have sent delegates to WSBC – usually only 5 of our Intergroups. If finances are tight, both the World Service Office and Region IV have money budgeted to help send delegates to WSBC, and Region can help fund reps to attend Assembly. Each year we beg Intergroups to apply. Yet those who do go to these events find them life changing. I always ask new delegates what they think of WSBC, and with few exceptions they are amazed by how wonderful it all is. I always tell them that they now have a quandary – they want to go back and tell everyone how wonderful the experience was, and if they succeed in sharing their enthusiasm, people will be fighting them for the chance to go!

I am issuing a challenge to Region IV. This year only one Region had fewer delegates than we did – in fact, Region IX, that covers Europe, Africa, and part of Asia, sent more delegates than we did, even though they had to travel greater distances and it was quite costly to fly people to Albuquerque. I would like to see at least half of our Intergroups send a delegate to WSBC 2012. If anyone who reads this meets the qualifications of 1 year of abstinence and has done 2 years of service beyond the group level, step up and offer to serve as delegate. If your Intergroup doesn't have the funds to send you, apply for funding assistance from Region and the World Service Office. You owe it to yourself, your Intergroup, and OA to have this experience and then carry the message to others.

Yours in service,

Teresa K, Region IV Trustee

There Is A Solution...

CONNECT TO RECOVERY

November 4, 5, 6, 2011

Overeaters Anonymous

MINNESOTA STATE CONVENTION

Our 38th Year!

Immerse yourself in a weekend of experience, strength, and hope:

- National Keynote Speakers
- Workshops on Steps, Newcomers, Sponsors, Relapse, Body Image and more.
- Entertainment, Abstinent Meals, Fellowship

START PLANNING NOW!

- Build a car pool (free parking at the hotel)
- Find roommates (up to 4 in a room — less than $25pp)*
- Recruit a newcomer
- Save $10 per week (that's less than eating out 1x week!) and you're covered!
  (Based on 4 people sharing 800 mile RT by car, hotel room, all convention meals, registration and meals to and from Minneapolis-St. Paul)

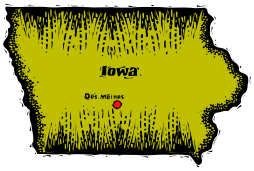
* Crowne Plaza Hotel (free shuttle from the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport)
3 Appletree Square • Bloomington, MN 55425 800-593-5447

FOR **MORE INFO/REGISTRATION FORMS**: www.overeaters.org
OR send email to pegmitch16@gmail.com OR call Peg M. 612-280-6119

State of Iowa OA Convention 2011

Ready… Set… Action!

September 16 -18, 2011



Stoney Creek Inn and Conference Center
5291 Stoney Creek Court
Johnston, IA 50131
515.334.9000
www.stoneycreekinn.com

Gifts that Cannot Be Missed

I was given the opportunity and honor of representing Region IV as a delegate this year at 2011 WSBC. My role was to provide a voice for all the groups in our region who are not yet affiliated with an Intergroup. This is just one of many gifts that keep on giving in my program of recovery. To be one of over 200 delegates to make decisions for the fellowship as a whole is an awesome experience that one must NOT miss!

I first had the pleasure of having over 8 hours of traveling time with other fellow COE's from Unity IG and to discuss our ideas, experiences and have fellowship as we flew across the country. It gave us the opportunity to share and work on how we can better serve our own IG and region. Then we had the full week of workshops, forums, OA meetings, fellowship and business meetings to continue to learn how to carry the message of OA recovery within and outside these rooms.

I personally was blessed as this was my 5th WSBC and my OA family continues to expand yearly as I attend these amazing conferences. I never in my wildest dreams would have ever guessed that people from all over the world would share the same compulsion as me and would become closer to me than my own biological family. (Where else can you show your true emotions and feel totally safe?) They have all been in my shoes in one way or another and they speak my language. And that is a language of Unity! We are given the chance to share our experience, strength and hope within the fellowship and share how we spread the message of recovery in our areas. We take the time to come up with new and innovative ways to get this important message out there to the still suffering COE. How can you not want to be a part of this? It IS beyond your wildest dreams and it is SO MUCH fun. It is a lot of work, but what else can you be passionate about if it isn't something in which you base your whole life on…the gift of abstinence. This gift is amazing. We CANNOT keep what we have unless we are willing to do the footwork. So why not do footwork where you can not only have fun, and meet new people, but see how this fellowship can support those of us who share this compulsion? As the OA pledge says, "For this I am responsible."

So join me in spreading that contagious gift of abstinence and get yourself into yet another awesome level of service!!

Yours in Service,

Michele M. Region IV Vice Chair

(Continued from page 1)

"holds the meeting together" by filling all the leadership roles, consider stepping aside and asking others to share the load. Take the risk that the meeting is as important to others as it is to you. Review our Strong Meeting Checklist which was created as a guide to help members determine if they are providing a healthy environment for recovery.

How do we bring in new members? Through Public and Professional Awareness. An ad in our local events calendar is a good start, but participating in a local health fair, mailing literature to doctors and clergy are other ways of getting the word out. OA is not a secret society. People must know we exist in order to find the help they need. Ask yourself, "Is there something I can do to help my Intergroup get the word out about OA?" Visit the oa.org website and check out all the great ideas others have already used to increase awareness in their areas. The Board of Trustees has made huge inroads on getting Overeaters Anonymous a recognizable name in the media, but making people aware in your local area is still your best hope for continued recovery. A meeting of one is not much of a meeting.

Committed Service Bodies is next. This addresses the activities beyond the group level. The idea is for groups to support one another and join together to do larger projects, such as retreats and conventions to help bring additional recovery opportunities to the area. Our first level is the Intergroup. Ask yourself, "When was the last time I participated in service outside of attending an event?" Intergroups require commitment from the members who attend. Those members usually represent their home group who benefits from what the Intergroup provides. Committees to do Outreach and Public Information are formed from the members of the Intergroup. Newsletters and Web sites are forms of service the Intergroup offers. We have 19 Intergroups in Region IV and I know they all work hard to offer events and support in their areas. It's hard to maintain enthusiasm if you are one of only a few members taking on all the tasks. Ask yourself, "Do I have the willingness to serve, or do I think it's someone else's job to take care of me?" Without participation, Intergroups fold and meetings are left isolated.

Region is here to support our Intergroups. Region Reps are needed to come to the assemblies and tell us what the Intergroups and groups need from us. We have committees to plan a convention, manage outreach, provide a newsletter and web support. We want to serve the members in the area in whatever way needed to bring more support for recovery. If you have ideas on ways to help, consider being a Region Rep for your Intergroup. Ask yourself "Is there more I can be doing to support this fellowship that's given me the freedom from food obsession?" There's always a need for more hands to make the tasks easier for all.

The World Service Business Conference is where decisions are made on how we, the members, want the organization to support us. We support the service by sending members from our area to the Conference to represent what we need. In turn those members give service at that level by working on one of the nine committees throughout the following year. When you consider that the number of delegates attending the conference is less than 200 each year, it shows the level of commitment these members have to working the service portion of their program. That commitment is also reflected in their individual recovery. They get it that to give back just benefits them more.

The final concern is financial health. We have to face the fact that to do the work of the organization we need to be self supporting through our own contributions. That means putting what we can in the basket at meetings. But beyond that it means taking an interest in how that money is used. Every penny in the basket is to be used to support carrying the message of recovery. First we take care of our meeting expenses; rent and literature, then we support our service bodies, Intergroup (60%), Region (10%) and World Service (30%) to enable them to carry on the services they provide to our fellowship as a whole. Ask yourself, "Am I contributing what I can to support my meeting?" and then, "Am I paying attention to how that money is being used?" Both of the answers will ensure our fellowship is fully self supporting and able to continue performing our primary purpose.

One last question, "If you were in the ocean and fell out of a boat and could not swim what would you be willing to do for the person who rescued you?" My answer would be "anything I can" and that's what I'm willing to give to the program that saved my life. How about you?

Yours in service,

Cyndy L.
Region IV Chair

We are on the web—www.oaregion4.org

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

- Go White Water Rafting in Costa Rica
- Run up a tab at J Jill
- Cross my legs comfortably under the table
- Taking up only <u>one</u> seat at the stadium!
- Snap my jeans
- Wear denim not polyester stretch
- Look in a mirror and smile at who I see
- Go down a playground slide with my granddaughter
- <u>Enjoy</u> a meal with my family
- Run on the treadmill at 3 mph for 20 minutes