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Volume 14, Issue 4—Winter 2016

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 to provide support so that any OA member can have recovery from compulsive eating through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous.

WORDS FROM OUR NEW CHAIR

Hello Region 4!

I would like to introduce myself to you. My name is Annette, I am a grateful, abstinent compulsive eater and your newly elected region chair. As I write this, I am days away from retirement. When I first made the decision to retire a year ago, I had envisioned something entirely different than how things turned out. I gave my notice at that time and pictured myself serenely walking out the door on my last day with all the loose ends tied up. I dreamed about all this free time I was going to have and some of the new service things I would now be able to do. The reality of the situation is that since they have been unable to hire my replacement, I am currently training by boss to do the things I do, leaving me very little time to work on clearing things out. Gratefully, serenity has not completely eluded me because I have my program and my HP to help me with that.

But the other thing that has changed is the timing of my increased service. I was asked to consider running for region chair. After I picked my jaw up from the floor, I said I would consider it because I trusted the person who suggested it and knew that she was in a position to know what was needed. After some prayer, journaling, time, and discussions with others' whose opinions I trust, I ultimately made the decision to do so. While the timing is not quite what I had in mind, when I follow HP's guidance to the best of my ability, I just never know where that is going to take me! I am still extremely excited to dig into what I call 'my new region gig.' One of the first orders of business will be to reach out to the chairs of all our intergroups. I want to get to know all of you and to find out what is going on with your groups and intergroup, to see what you might need, and to see what wonderful gifts you all bring to the table. I hope to do this by the end of the year. So, if you see a phone number with a '763' area code, it is probably me!



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I was elected at the Region 4 Fall Assembly that was held in Winnipeg, Canada. I so enjoyed all the energy for recovery that I witnessed at the event. I feel like I was looking at it with fresh eyes, knowing that I would be running for chair. It was amazing. Assembly is where we conduct the business of the region. They are held twice a year in the spring and the fall and they move from IG to IG. This year we voted on a variety of housekeeping motions. We also elected or reelected our 5 coordinators, 3 committee chairs, the secretary and the chair. We also reaffirmed Cyndy L as our Region 4 Trustee. (Cyndy will be officially voted in at the World Service Business Conference next May.) We said goodbye to many of our reps as well as our outgoing secretary (Wanda) and our outgoing chair (Meg). We are all very grateful for the dedicated service they provided. I am honored to be following in the footsteps of my predecessor who did an amazing job – in my humble opinion.



As chair, I am automatically a part of the convention committee and I can tell you that we are all very excited to embark on the planning of this bi-annual event. The next Region 4 Convention will be held in St. Louis, MO, in the summer of 2018. We have already chosen a theme, but I will save that for another time. We'll be sure to let you know the dates once we have them locked in!

I send a big thank you to Meg, Wanda, and the reps who have served the region so well and are now moving on. And I extend an invitation to consider coming to region as well. Even if this is not the right time for you to serve, I ask that you stay open to where your HP may lead you. Perhaps one day our paths will cross!

-Annette, Region 4 Chair

And From Our Region 4 Trustee:

Hey R4,

Where did 2016 go? For me it was filled with OA meetings, service and gratitude. Since my last report I have attended the WS Convention in Boston and enjoyed hearing about recovery from a large variety of members. My biggest take away is how many ways people have found to work their program. We are all different in our needs and in our methods, but we share a common solution. We all desire to be free of the bonds of compulsive eating and we want others to be free as well, so we carry our message to the very best of our ability. Sometimes we get so excited about what worked for us that we forget that everyone is guided by their Higher Power and that they may hear our experience, strength and hope, but our answer is not their answer. They may need more time or more trust and they can take that time and work on their faith. We who have received the gift of abstinence must continue to be open, loving and give what we can to continue to keep our recovery strong. HP is in charge of all the other results. For those of us who are still searching for our answer, just remember to be open to what others share. If we cling to the methods that are not working for us, then we stay trapped in the disease and the food. I remember being stuck in relapse and having to try something different to increase my spiritual program to find the solution to my food. I wish this for each of you.

I want to thank everyone who contributed so generously to the R4 Gimme 5 campaign. The money you contributed will help R4 continue to support your Intergroups through financing region reps and WSBC

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delegates. Attendance at the Region Assemblies and WSBC is a part of carrying the message. The reps and delegates are exposed to other members from around the region and around the world and learn of various ways the message is being carried beyond the local level. Again, if we only do what we've always done, we always get what we've always got. For OA to grow and thrive we need to be connected to OA as a whole. One to one we carry the message of recovery, but united together we support one another and the fellowship in ways that benefit all.

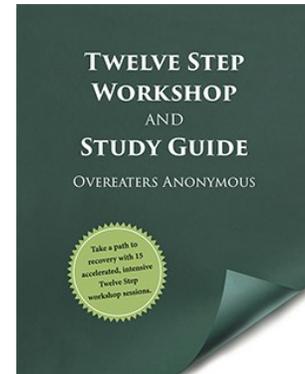
A few items of interest from WSO –

The Twelve Traditions Pocket Guide is now available at the OA Bookstore. This is a quick reference to all of the Traditions. It is intended to remind us of what to watch for in our meetings or our service work to keep us within the principles of the Traditions.



Twelve Traditions Pocket Guide

"Why are the Twelve Traditions so important to us? In general, the Twelve Steps guide the individual to recovery and the Twelve Traditions ensure the well-being of the groups. Although the Traditions were developed to prevent group problems, individual members can also practice the principles of the Twelve Traditions in personal relationships. The Steps and Traditions have been hammered out by hard experience. We find them vital to the growth and life of OA."
— The Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous, p. 1



The Twelve Step Workshop and Study Guide is available in the bookstore and in eBook format through the various carriers. The study guide offers a 15-week course through the steps, which helps members better understand how to work through each step.

With the change of the policy on social media I've been receiving questions on what can be done on Facebook and other such sites and stay within the Traditions. Anonymity is the first concern. Any such communication needs to be about OA, not about an individual. If you are posting on your personal site, do not mention your membership in OA. If you create a page to attract members to OA, it should be a business page where no names or faces are used. [Guidelines for Anonymity in the Digital World](#) offers a reminder on how important our anonymity is and why we practice this important tool. It is available on the Guidelines and documents page of the website for download.

Have you all started working on the revision of your Intergroup bylaws? The definition of a group was changed. The section that set specific requirements for Virtual Groups was removed. Now all groups share the same requirements. This change impacts all Intergroup bylaws as well. A letter was sent from WSO that explained what needs to be updated to keep your bylaws from being in conflict with those of OA Inc., Subpart B. Please ask your Intergroup Chair to begin this process.

If you are not already signed up to receive the news bulletins from WSO, go to oa.org and sign up. It's such an easy way to stay informed of all the exciting things happening to support the members of OA. Check out the What's New page while you're there.

Since this is the final 2016 edition of 4 Thought, I'd like to wish all of you a happy holiday season and wish that each of you receive the blessing of abstinence which will continue through the year 2017.

In Service,

- Cyndy L., Region 4 Trustee



Insight from Intergroup:

News from the St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup

Our approximately 50 groups are spread over a wide geographic area covering much of southern Illinois and then moving west through the St. Louis metropolitan area and into mid-Missouri. It's a vibrant time with much activity in our Intergroup.

Here are some highlights:
A convention chair and registrar have just been elected and a committee is being formed to plan an Intergroup Convention for April 7-9, 2017. There also may be a fall retreat.

We have posted a ten question survey on our Intergroup website so that we can learn more about why there is a shortage of sponsors and service volunteers in our Intergroup. Once the results are in, we can then plan special events on abstinence or sponsorship or better understanding the Seventh Tradition (which is about more than money after all) – whatever addresses

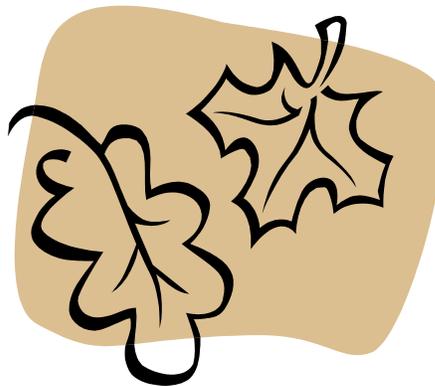
the barriers that we see more clearly through the survey results.

We have late night public service announcements playing on a local television network. Since there are quite a few night eaters out there, we hope this carries the message to some who need to find us.

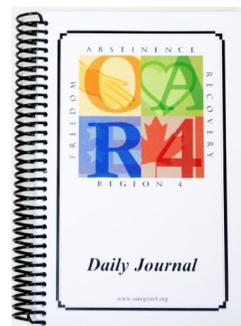
A team of Intergroup volunteers have an ambitious goal of visiting all of our home groups over the next three months. We will share a brief handout about what the

Intergroup does and service roles that are available. We will offer our testimony to the ways our recovery has been supported through Intergroup, thank Intergroup reps for their service, and invite groups that do not currently have a representative to hold a group conscience and send someone to help connect their meeting to the Intergroup.

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Region 4 Daily Journals—Available For Purchase!



Enjoy Region 4's
Daily Journal

A place to write down your...

- Food
- Intent for the day
- Gratitudes
- Step 10 never looked so easy...

Ease of Use

- They are lightweight and great for travel
 - All of your writing can be in one location
 - Lays flat when opened
 - Coil binding keeps pages intact
 - Affordable—@\$12 —includes postage
- Go to www.oaregion4.org to order.

When was the last time you checked out your meeting information at oa.org? Please make sure it is current and if not, have your group secretary make the updates.

HAPPY, JOYOUS, FREE

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We continue to promote the Gimme 5 collection. We want to do our part to support Region 4!

We are hosting a workshop on Sponsorship on November 20. We also have declared 2017 “The Year of Service Education,” so quite a bit more special programming will be offered in coming months.

We are excited to be hosts for the 2018 Region 4 convention. We hope you’ll come visit us then for “Show Me Recovery.”

-Chair, St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup



OA Phone Meeting:

Midwest Step and Tradition Study

Using the OA “12x12” Book

Get connected with other OA’s from the Midwest and around the world! All are welcome to join us! Great way to start or end your week!

- Sunday evenings
- 7 PM – 8 PM US Central Standard Time
- Phone Number: 641-715-0865
- Access code: 290492#



Contact Name & Phone Number: Bob 763-229-6196 CST
Meeting # 55338. See oa.org “Find a Meeting” feature for more info.

Input from Promises of Eastern Iowa

Many things have contributed to a more lasting abstinence and weight loss in recent years of the program. I believe one of them is persistence. I came to my first meeting in October, 1984 after a loving confrontation with my family. During the first few meetings I could see that OA was the place for me. Persistence has kept me attending through those years, even when I was discouraged.

One early challenge was the programs' declaration that I must rely on a higher power. I was an agnostic and read "The Chapter to the Agnostic" in the AA "big book" with considerable interest. But it said that a willingness to "leave the door open" for a higher power was enough. I first "acted as if" and then came to believe in a higher power that I can now rely on each day. Persistence triumphed.

I had a long struggle learning to "turn over" my recovery to my higher power. I went through unsuccessful periods when my weight rose. Long periods desiring abstinence, separated periods of success. Yet I persisted toward recovery by attending several meetings a week, doing service to help the meetings to stay open, working with sponsors, and slowly but surely my understanding of the program grew. The successes of others gave me hope for myself. I used to ask my higher power to give me strength to control my recovery. I see that this was just another way I was trying to control my disease. Now I believe that prayer and "letting go" is the way to turn over my recovery.

Through it all I worked the 12 steps and attempted to apply them in my life. I know more often now what the right thing is for me to do. I have learned to face fear through the lessons in the steps. Persistence brought me a greater than 100 pound weight loss. At this writing I celebrate 1 year and 3 month abstinence. My sponsor taught me to continue acknowledging the months of abstinence. I gratefully remember the abstinence that builds to another month of recovery. This is not my first year of abstinence. I've had 2 years twice before and one year each during two other stretches. I am a fallible person who cherishes the abstinence I have experienced.

I offer one last suggestion: stay around until the miracle happens. It has happened for me and I hope you will keep coming back. *-by Irvin*

Together We Get Better!

The opinions expressed here do not necessarily represent R4 or OA as a whole.

**Do You Have Something You'd Like To Share With Your Fellow OAs?
Please Submit Articles or Information About Your Local OA Events!**

**4 Thought is a Quarterly Newsletter That Comes Out in
March, June, September, and December.**

Our Calendar

January-OA's 57th birthday

February-Newsletter articles due to 4thought@oaregion4.org

February 25-OA Unity Day

April 21-22- Region 4 Spring Assembly,
Spring Hill Suites by Marriott Airport, Wichita, Kansas

Please submit your events for publication in the March 2017 issue.

Please contact the R4 Chair (chair@oaregion4.org) or consult the web calendar to determine schedule conflicts and to register your events.

Thank you!


I put my hand in yours because I care.


Reflections on How the Traditions Were Realized During the 2016 R4 Convention

One of the biggest highlights of last June's R4 Convention was how much it enabled our Fellowship to practice our Traditions. If you are like me, clarity about the Traditions is a work in progress. Here is a fun way to practice seeing the Traditions in real action and seeing others work their program. Match the description to a Tradition. Thank you to everyone who made the Traditions so apparent (answers on another page).

Bonus Sponsorship Suggestion: Consider doing this with your sponsor/sponsee:

Traditions in Real Action	Match	Tradition # and 12 Traditions Quotes**
Twenty-three speaker volunteers from one Canadian Province and six U.S. states	1. ____	<i>"All of these efforts are paid for by us, OA members who make donations... We pass the "seventh-tradition" basket, and most of us are glad to contribute..."</i> [p. 162.] 7 Self-supporting
Over 88 members of the 144 participants answered the call to do a volunteer/helping role during the convention (61+%).	2. ____	<i>"Being a part of the group is essential to recovery from our disease of isolation. It means supporting and being supported by our fellow OA members and sharing openly the joys and challenges of our lives."</i> [p. 205] 12 Anonymity
The Convention Committee and sub-committees did their footwork and when the convention began, we let it unroll according to our HP's will. The outcome was beyond our wildest dreams - according to evaluations!	3. ____	<i>"We find ourselves listening intently to people whose last names we don't know... We've learned that they just may say something that will be key to our recovery... last names simply aren't important to us here... In OA we're all on equal footing—reduced to helplessness by our compulsive eating and freed to recovery by this miraculous program" [pp. 200-201] "Over the years our Fellowship has learned how important it is to emphasize these life-saving principles rather than personalities when planning conventions and other special events."</i> [p. 203-204] 12 Anonymity
We followed the WSBC policy: refrain from publishing the names or titles of speakers at OA functions in all materials (flyers, newsletters, etc.). R4 published no names of speakers in publicity or agenda.	4. ____	<i>"Our groups come together so we can share recovery through the twelve steps and the twelve traditions with fellow compulsive overeaters."</i> [p. 145] 5 Primary Purpose/Carry the Message
There was plenty of evidence that the convention was one way to make this a We program...from speakers and pitches of all the sessions and the many conversations in between.	5. ____	<i>"However, unity isn't always easy to maintain. OA members come from diverse backgrounds, and in meetings we sometimes encounter people very different from us in their approaches to recovery."</i> [p. 110] <i>"This does not mean that all OA members must agree on every issue regarding the operation of the Fellowship."</i> [p. 111] 1 Unity
This is why we do evaluations and pay attention to what members say. It helps us strengthen recovery at future events.	6. ____	<i>"All we have to do is the footwork, and we can trust the outcome to our loving Higher Power who provides us with all the resources we need."</i> [p. 124] 2 One Ultimate Authority/Trusted Servants
There was much generosity in the 7th tradition contributions (\$767), silent auction basket donations (filled 7 tables!) and the purchases (\$1844) in the silent auction.	7. ____	<i>"Paradoxically, being fully self-supporting means we are now free to ask for help when we need help in doing OA service..."</i> [p. 167] 7 Self-supporting

Submitted by Julie C, Central Iowa IG Representative and 2016 R4 Convention Chair

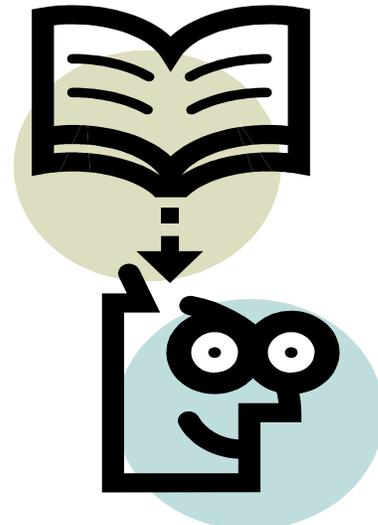
** From *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* © 1990...2012 by Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Overeaters Anonymous, Inc.

Far Flung and Sticking Together Red River Valley Intergroup Makes Do!

I was recently talking with an OA member in Minneapolis and found myself describing the geographics of Red River Valley Intergroup. We are about 500 miles East to West and probably 200 miles north to south. We are fewer than 20 groups. Many of our groups are quite small. At Region 4 Assembly, I learned that someone “just” 100 miles from me had not learned of our recent annual intergroup convention, so missed it. What a wake-up call to me! We had neglected to get it published and the member’s name had fallen off our emailing list. What to do, what to do? My local group has since reached out to the distant member and now has included her via telephone in our weekly meetings. Technology presents many challenges to society. It’s also a great tool. With our small numbers in central North Dakota, having someone call in to our meeting often increases attendance by 33-50%! We’ve also planned an impromptu trip to visit that group and have a special meeting on I.D.E.A. (International Day of Experiencing Abstinence) this Saturday, November 19th!

Another way we’ve utilized cellular access is to create a telephone meeting several times per week to do “aftercare reading” following a Big Book study our group did last year. For about 15 minutes each scheduled day, we read a pre-determined snippet from the Big Book about each of the Twelve Steps. One benefit we find is that , after reading these same passages so often together, they become implanted in our minds so they are accessible by memory when we need them throughout the day! How wonderful when I can’t decide on something and the calming words from the bottom of page 86 just pop into consciousness! Another benefit is that we hear each other’s caring voices and feel that connection at the end of a busy day.

-Teri, RRVIG Chair



Key to “**Reflections on How the Traditions Were Realized During the 2016 R4 Convention**” on page 8: 1d; 2g; 3f; 4c; 5b; 6e; 7a