



4 Thought

Volume 15, Issue 2—Summer 2017

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.

TELE-CONNECTING

I look at the different ways we stay connected in OA and find a large list. We have face to face meetings, to me the most important way to stay connected. We have telephone meetings, we have online meetings, we email, we text, we Skype, we have Facebook. The list is growing everyday. In China they use a form of texting to hold meetings. I would like to examine phone meetings or phone communication. I believe it is important that we look at ways where the telephone use can be expanded to help people stay informed and connected.

There are three uses of the telephone I would like to mention:

1. The OA phone meeting
2. a call in number to a face to face meeting
3. and use of the telephone above the group level.

The telephone meeting has been around for a long time. Although, I really feel OA is based on face to face meetings, there are people that cannot get to them. A person might be too far away or might be physically unable to travel to a face to face meeting. Their schedule might not allow a face to face meeting. In any case, they are becoming more popular as a primary meeting source. Many, like me, use phone meetings to supplement my face to face meetings. I can go to a couple of meetings a week!

I am not sure about the rest of the region or country, but there is a trend to allow people to call into a face to face meeting. I helped start a call in number for a face to face meeting several years ago and there is an average of about 10 people that call in every week. I know of a couple of other meetings in the Minneapolis area that are doing the same. My wife and I would call into our home meeting when we were out of town and it was great to be able to stay in touch with the home group even when on vacation. It also is a way for meetings to expand their attendance and get different people to participate.

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The last phone connection I want to talk about is using the phone to keep groups connected with their Intergroups and Region. I can only speak of my experience and feel I am blessed with an Intergroup that allows people to call into the monthly meeting. It allows me to participate in our Intergroup and be aware of all the activities in the area. I currently am the Bylaws person for the Intergroup and have no problem taking care of that responsibly even if I am out of the Minneapolis area. Not all positions can be done remotely, but if they can the telephone connection is great.

The reason I wanted to write this article is because the R4 Outreach committee, of which I am the R4 Board Liaison, is interested in helping intergroups use the teleconferencing tool as a way to allow the outlying groups to participate and stay connected. I feel it is important to see and hear different ideas from our whole fellowship to help us keep the 12 steps and traditions fresh and exciting.

If your group already uses the telephone and has ideas for how to promote its use in meetings, please send me an email. More importantly, if your group is interested in setting up a tele-conferencing line for your group to allow people to call in, send me an email. My experience is groups like to be contacted by fellow OA'ers and there is a definite need for more contacts between the groups.

-Bob S. Vice Chair R4

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Using the OA "12x12" Book

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Contact Name & Phone Number: Bob 763-229-6196 CST

Meeting # 55338. See oa.org "Find a Meeting" feature for more info.

- Sunday evenings
- 7 PM – 8 PM US Central Standard Time
- Phone Number: 605-562-3130
- Access code: 290492#



And from Our Chair:

May 22, 2017

Hello All You Awesome Region 4 People!

I have been taking a much-needed breather for the last couple weeks – in part because I came down with a bad cold right after returning from World Service Business conference. But my breather needs to be brief as I begin the process of finding a new place to live, paring way down, packing, and moving the end of July. The need to move comes as a result of retirement and a smaller income. I have been grieving the imagined lack of comforts until my HP gave me a new way of looking at it – an adventure into the next phase of my life and the understanding that God has managed to take care of me pretty well thus far in life so why would I expect otherwise.

The biggest event for me was our Region 4 Assembly - April 21-22 in Wichita, KS, hosted by Mid Continent Intergroup. I was very pleased with how it turned out. We had 27 attendees including the members of the board representing 13 of our 17 intergroups! I was delighted that 7 of the attendees were men and hope to continue the trend of a strong male presence at all levels of service! I witnessed an amazing amount of energy for recovery and service and feel very good about the direction in which we are headed. This was my first assembly as chair, and while there are always opportunities for improvement (such as being sure the Serenity Prayer is right at the beginning of the meeting – if not, it will be missed), overall, I was satisfied.

We voted on a variety of motions and were treated, however inadvertently, to some lessons on parliamentary procedure. We voted initially on a change to the standing rules regarding use of electronic equipment which now allows for its use in meeting – only for Region 4 business purposes. 4 items were initially placed on a consent agenda to be voted on at one time, but one was removed per request from a rep – all that is needed to remove it. Both the consent agenda and the removed item were approved. Then we voted on 2 new motions which came out of Ways and Means. We will be debuting 2 new items at our fall assembly in October - jewelry and collapsible measuring cups. I know that many of us are looking forward to getting those cups!

We were fortunate to be able to spend time with our hosting intergroup twice – once on Friday evening where we shared dinner and listened to a speaker, and once on Saturday afternoon for our workshop ‘Growing OA Unity’ which is the worldwide OA focus for 2017.

Our next assembly is October 6-7 in Valley City North Dakota (thank you Red River Valley Intergroup) and the spring one in April 2018 is being sponsored by Greater Omaha IG. We are looking for an intergroup to host the Fall 2018 assembly and all those going forward.

We have now secured a hotel for our 2018 convention and the dates are set – mark it on your calendars – June 22-24, 2018 in St. Louis MO. A ‘Save the Date’ flyer will be available soon, which I will forward to IG chairs, Region Reps and WSBC delegates once I receive it. Our St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup is very excited to be hosting this event, and I know that I am certainly looking forward to it.

I returned home from assembly on Sunday, April 23 and flew to WSBC the following Sunday April 30. All I can say is thank goodness I am retired. I don't think I could have done it otherwise. I have been to conference on two other occasions, but this was my first time as chair. I must say that I enjoyed viewing it through this new lens. My committee meetings (Region Chairs Committee) started earlier than when I was a delegate, but I found them to be quite interesting and enjoyable. I am happy to report that I now have a whole new group of friends including my most delightful roommate who is also a region chair.

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Wednesday morning, we hosted the Forum which also was interesting to see as a chair. It was delightful to observe how engaged the delegates were in what was going on. The theme, 'Amazing Recovery – Passport to Unity' was well received as people learned to 'identify – not compare'. We are currently looking into doing podcasts of the speakers as well as making it into a workshop available for others to use.

The only thing I missed being chair was more time to interact with our Region 4 delegates since I really couldn't connect with them until Thursday when the business sessions began. Region 4 was represented by 14 delegates (from 9 intergroups) including 5 men (woo hoo!), our trustee and myself. I am proud to say that Region 4 was represented by 53% of our intergroups – the 2nd highest number of all the regions worldwide - proof positive that 'Region 4 Rocks!!!' I would like to personally invite each and every one of you to be a part of our 'Rockin Region 4' - when the time is right for you. Service has been and continues to be the biggest blessing in my life. It grows me up in more ways than I can count and brings me joy 'beyond my wildest dreams.' Please consider giving yourself this gift.

I also invite you to contact me at chair@oaregion4.org with any questions, comments or ideas for our region.

I send all of Region 4 my blessings for a wonderful next 3 months!

-Annette P-R
Region 4 Chair

Region 4 Trustee Report

Hey R4,

Well I've been home from WSBC for three weeks and I'm still pumped. So much happened during that week, I'm not sure what to share first, but I will say that in spite of the level of stress, excitement and fatigue, I remained abstinent and in touch with my HP throughout the week. I know for a fact that the connection with HP was strong because a couple of times words came out of my mouth that I would have never expected. The OA meetings at WSBC are amazing. Members from around the globe sharing their recovery is just soul filling. Ask anyone who's ever been and those meetings usually will be the first thing they mention.

The Board of Trustee's (BOT) meetings took place on Monday and Tuesday and if you are interested in what transpired there, you can go to the groups/service bodies > world service > board of trustees page on oa.org. There is a section called Board Meeting Highlights which is updated each quarter so that everyone can find out what transpired at the BOT meetings. If you have any questions on what you find there, just contact me and I'll be happy to explain.

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The Conference opened on Wednesday with the lovely forum mentioned in Annette's report. Later that day the Conference Committees worked on establishing their goals and projects for the upcoming year. I was the Bylaws Trustee co-chair again this year and the committee worked to complete a couple of projects they had been working on since last May. They are hoping to send them forward for BOT approval very soon and then they will begin reviewing the Bylaws and Policy Manuals for any recommended changes for next year.

Beginning Thursday, the Business Meetings opened and after the review of motions and reports, the introduction of the Trustee nominations took place. I was so pleased to be considered for a second term as Region 4 Trustee. I enjoyed sharing some of my excitement about giving service to OA and my personal experience. Then came the ten minutes of questions, which I must have answered satisfactorily, as I was selected the following day to serve for another three years. That means you'll be seeing me at all the Region Assemblies and events for those same three years. Thanks to all of you for your support and service as well. One of the General Service Trustee (GST) candidates was also from R4, and Lawrie C. will be serving on the Executive Committee (EC) for the next two years. I think it will be interesting for two of the BOT members to be from the same region.

There was a lot of business accomplished at the conference, but I'm only going to mention a couple of items that I think you will find interesting. The proposed revision of *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* was approved for the Conference Seal of Approval with very substantial unanimity. You can expect to see the new edition in the OA bookstore after the first of the year. The changes to the book were met with enthusiasm and excitement. I hope you will all find the updates useful in your own recovery.

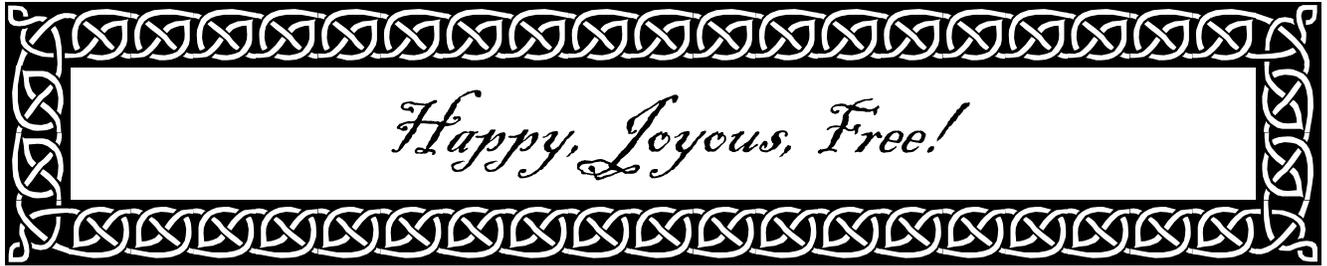
A Translation Fund was established for the purpose of allowing OA members to contribute directly to the support of translating OA material into other languages. Imagine trying to recover when you cannot read our books or pamphlets, or even the messages sent out from WSO to let you know what's happening in OA. It is hoped that the additional financial support will allow for more than volunteer translations of the material, because it is a long and arduous process and many times members only have so much they can give. Imagine doing all your own recovery work and then being asked to translate everything so another person can understand it as well. Who among us has that much time or desire to do this level of work? There are many who still are willing to try, but the burden is heavy and members generosity may help get more done.

If you are interested in any other specific motions and how they fared, check out the Wrap-Up report on the Members > Events > World Service Business Conference page under Frequently Used Documents. The 2017 Ask-It Basket responses will also be posted there very soon.

Well that's enough for now. Again, thank you for allowing me to do this service for R4.

To paraphrase my new favorite quote – I was looking for joy in my life, and then I was told to do service, and then I realized that service is joy. In service,

-Cyndy



Out of Isolation

Before coming into this program my life was characterized by isolation. I would go to work, smile, take interest in people's lives (or at least pretend to) and as long as I was in a controlled environment, I could be ok; I could play the game of appearing to be happy, together, social. At the end of the week, I came home to an empty apartment and a couple of days to spend time with my BFF: Food. I would go to the organic section of the grocery store and buy food for several days that would be consumed in one day. My phone was turned off, the blinds were closed, and I would binge to the point of extreme discomfort, which brought about shame that just isolated me more.

Because I had structured my life to be tethered to food and monitoring my weight, I was paralyzed when it came to being vulnerable. I didn't know myself. I was terrified of being "found out" or rejected so I turned to the one thing I knew would not let me down.

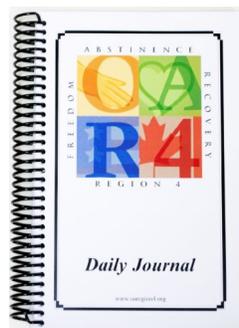
I finally hit bottom in 2004 after having a profound spiritual experience that helped me realize I was shutting myself off from the life my God intended for me. Not knowing of anything else, I tried OA.

It was terrifying to attend that meeting, but then I heard my story in the pages of the OA 12&12; I heard what sounded like my own journal entries. The honest shares blew me away and I wept. That was the day I began to come out of isolation because I began to share my food struggles with others who did not reject me for the insane things I had done with food.

These days, I can usually enjoy being alone, seeing it as time for self-care or to spend with my Higher Power; however, I much prefer to be with people. When I start drifting away from people usually due to self-pity, I make a program call or turn my attention to someone I can be of service to. This is a miracle that I can only attribute to this program that has brought me out of isolation into a fellowship that reflects the "sunlight of the spirit".

-Amanda G.
Overland Park, Kansas

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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.

Greetings from Hills & Plains of South Dakota Intergroup

It has been exciting for us to reach out to the other meetings that are held in South Dakota. We have united with Sioux Falls and Huron. This came about because Rapid City's meetings are now only on Wednesday. We meet at 5:30pm at the Alano Club. So being united as a state, in one intergroup, is a positive; we are a large state and this helps all of us not to feel isolated.

We have ordered OA flyers and an audio cd to help us reach out to others. We also looked into an electronic billboard ad. We have decided to run this for two weeks. Sioux Falls is utilizing public broadcasting. These are services that run free for nonprofits. We will also check with tv and radio to see what they will provide for time to advertise for nonprofits. We also run a notice in the Rapid City Journal of the day, time and a contact number for our meeting.

We are struggling as a small group, but now feel hopeful that our efforts to reach out to others will be a boost for us all to be willing to carry the message.

We have also made changes in our meeting guidelines, especially for sharing, keeping it on topic and having a spiritual timekeeper. We have also felt it's important to start on time and ending in an hour to ensure the focus is on recovery. We have made it very clear that we are available before and after the meeting to be of service for the new-comer or questions.

Even though we are small, we will send a representative and a delegate to Region 4 business meetings and to World Service Business Conference.

Sincerely, Gay R., Intergroup Chair for Hills and Plains of South Dakota Intergroup

Our Calendar

September 9-Kansas Day Super Saturday, location not available at printing

October 6-7-Region 4 Fall Assembly, Valley City, North Dakota

August 13-Newsletter articles due to 4thought@oaregion4.org

Please submit your events for publication in the **September 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!

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.
Please Send Submissions To: 4thought@oaregion4.org

The End of Isolation

When I isolate, I am avoiding living. Living is hard. It means being present and participating in my life. Escaping into food seems so much easier, so much more comfortable. But that is a lie. When I isolate, I am missing so much; friends, family, experience and engagement. I am separated from reality and not living life.

Why would I want to do that? Because I don't have any sense of self worth, I feel shame and guilt about my life and I'm living in fear. Living in fear keeps me focused on my self. My ego likes that because the ego always wants the self to be the center of attention. And when it's the center of attention, there is no room for anyone else. I can isolate in a room full of people if I am solely focused on me. If I isolate, I don't have to face my fears. But the isolation leads to compulsive eating and that feeds the shame and the cycle continues.

It doesn't have to be this way. There is a solution. The 12 Step program of Overeaters Anonymous gives me a chance to move out of the isolation. This is a We program. We work it together. We have tools; Telephone, Meetings and Sponsorship that take us out of our own heads and put us in touch with other addicts like ourselves who have chosen to recover one day at a time. Our tool of Reading puts us in touch with the wisdom of those who have gone before. The tool of Service gets us away from destructive thinking and puts us in direct contact with people working to make recovery possible for others.

When I find that I haven't made a call to someone in program or talked to my sponsor in a couple of days, that is a red flag that I am starting to isolate. My first thought is to take action to fix it. But I must first stop and accept the fact that, as an addict, I have a tendency to isolate. By accepting who I am without recrimination, I am freed to take action to correct the problem. After asking my higher power to clarify my thinking and to take charge of my intentions, I can relax in the full knowledge that I will be shown what is the next right thing to do. It is not up to me to fix myself. It is up to me to get out of the way and let HP do the fixing.

Isolation keeps me away from the people and places where I can hear the truth. If I'm not in contact with those people or in those places when I'm ready to hear the truth, I'll miss it. For today, I choose to live in close contact with my OA family.

Thank you.

-John C.