



4 Thought

Volume 14, Issue 3—Fall 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.

IT TAKES A REGION...

Farewell! This is my last newsletter in my role as Region 4 Chair. I have bittersweet feelings as I write this. In all, this has been a most precious gift. Being of service to Region 4 as the Chair from 2012 to 2016 has taught me many things. When I was elected, I was filled with eager hope and excitement to push up my sleeves and dig into the treasure hunt I was asked to navigate. I met more fellows, traveled around the country and world and continued to increase my collection of lifetime friends.

I've watched myself grow as a trusted servant. I learned to accept more humility whether I was seeking it or not. I invited more gratitude into my life on a grander scale. I practiced with more intent the fine art of delegation and stepped it up a notch when needed and relaxed when appropriate. In short, I practiced these principles the best way I knew how at the time, knowing that room for improvement is an ongoing given.

Thank you Region 4 Intergroups! To those of you who welcomed me into your community with kindness, grace and loving patience – I am grateful. As we journeyed together I shared some information, but you gave me so much more. Thank you Region 4 Board and Trustees – you helped me continue to stretch and grow and flourish in my own personal recovery.



Some of the big learnings I've had over the last four years were intensifying my understanding and use of the tools, which in turn brought a deeper commitment to my step work. I'll continue to journal, pray, meditate and rely on my sponsor and recovery community for guidance.

It's a welcome relief knowing that I didn't do everything I planned to, perfectly or super timely – I did what I did when I did it. The joy is learning to let go of my perception of persnickety perfectionism when it serves no purpose.

(Continued on page 2)

It was a great honor to serve with the reps and delegates. Thank you to all who helped prepare for R4 workshops and conventions!! I gained new perspectives from small towns and large cities. We discussed things that worked and what changes to implement to continue our energetic enthusiasm that carried recovery across the Great Plains.

I didn't do this alone. I had tremendous help. Back when I was in the food, I felt alone, angry and trapped. I felt that I was responsible for just about everything – if there was a problem I was to not only craft a solution, but implement a perfect solution right away. INSANITY.

My main walk-away is I'm not meant to live my life alone and with no help. I am expected and encouraged to reach out to my Higher Power in the form of people, prayer and energy. When I don't, I relive that trapped feeling, which gets more uncomfortable as I recover. It's a bit of a jolt to get me back on track.



As I rotate off as Chair, I rotate back into a different perspective of my recovery and look for other ways in which I will continue to share this miracle with those around me. For this I am blessed.

- Meg M., Region 4 Chair

A Few Words From The Region 4 Trustee

Hey Region 4,

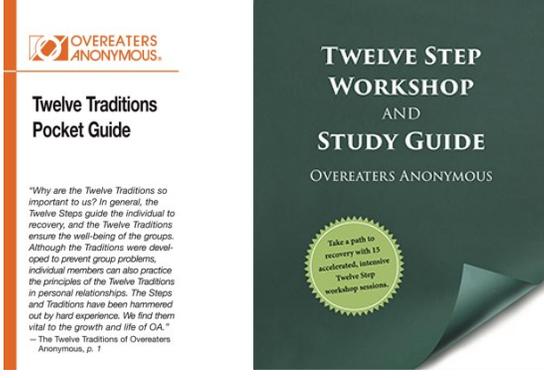
Once again my Higher Power has surprised me with a new direction in my recovery. I, who have nothing but disdain for physical activity (exercise), have joined a gym. It began with some concern about my getting older and having less stamina. I thought I'd take a simple yoga class, but it had to be close to my house so I could get there easily. Through a chance comment from a member at one of my meetings I was given directions to a location within 10 minutes of my front door. Then I got a few free lessons from a trainer as a part of the package I signed up for. Guess HP had a plan because I've been going for over a month and very much enjoy the work I'm doing. My body feels better, and I am improving with each lesson. There was a brief moment of concern on the day I left the session absolutely starving, but I called my sponsor and we came up with a plan on how to handle this change in what my body needs on those days. It's not about weight; it's about fitness. It is funny all the gymnastics my brain has been doing. I think it could win a gold medal for creative thinking. Oh well, I will never be cured of the disease, just the daily reprieve from the obsession, for which I am most grateful. Wondering what the next thing HP has planned for me might be.

(Continued on page 3)

I want to give a shout out to all of you who participated in anyway at the R4 Convention in June. I had a wonderful time and it was beneficial to Region 4 in both recovery and financially. Thank each of you for the service.

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.
- *The Twelve Step Workshop and Study Guide* will be available at the World Service Convention and in the bookstore in September. The study guide offers a 15-week course through the steps, which will help members better understand a method of working 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 to 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. Please contact me directly if you have other questions on this.
- 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 about all of the exciting things happening to support the members of OA.
- You are welcome to attend the 2016 workshop "Service and My Recovery" on the second Sunday of each month that begins at 2 p.m. Central time. All you have to do is dial in and listen. The phone number is 641-715-3818 and the Pin Code is 925619#.
- Our *Lifeline* magazine has a new back cover with a place to put your local Intergroup information. This will allow you to use the copies as a form of public information.



In Service,

- Cyndy L., Region 4 Trustee



MEMBERS FROM UNITY INTERGROUP IN MINNESOTA SHARE ON VARIOUS TOPICS

Tending My Garden

I did not come into OA to find a belief in a Power greater than myself. That journey today is my “new frontier.”

The changes I see in myself and in others could not have occurred without our “digging in the garden,” and rooting out the “weeds” that held us captive. Without the emphasis on establishing a relationship with that Power, I would have continued to be the self-absorbed, self-focused, ego-driven individual I was before beginning this journey. Every day would have continued to be

another day of disappointment in myself, another day of frustration, another day of depression, another day of shame.

Our change begins with a seed of hope planted when we come into the rooms. We observe others changing; we see evidence that recovery is possible. Whether we’ve struggled with the disease for over half a century (like me) or for much shorter periods, we who see what this



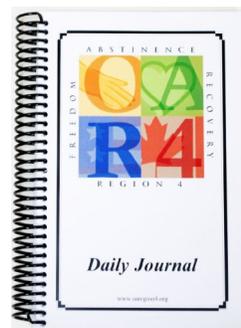
program can do for us in all facets of our lives know that we could not have achieved this state of peace on our own. We need no more proof.

So today I start my day reading, writing, and meditating. My calls start early, so I rise early to carve out time for this. Guided by my Region 4 Journal, I write down and report to my sponsor those things for which I am grateful, my daily inventory (was I selfish, dishonest, afraid, did I keep anything to myself, etc.), my prayers for others still suffering, and “Grant me freedom from _____ and

replace it with _____” using the “Self-will” vs “God’s-will” chart at the end of the journal. Inviting a God of my understanding into my day follows, either with guidance from CDs or just sitting quietly. My days **always** go better as a result of these practices.

- Kay H., Unity IG

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.

Tradition One: Unity

Tradition One tells me that my personal recovery depends on OA unity. Why is unity important? The answer is simple: my PERSONAL recovery DEPENDS on it!!!

Before OA, I was in the depths of my disease. I was overweight, depressed, isolated, suicidal, physically uncomfortable, suffering from sleep apnea, and completely closed off emotionally. I could see no way out. I had already tried dieting, without any long-term success. I hated exercise. And I had absolutely no doubt about the uselessness of potions, pills, and fads. I was at the end of my rope. I had been eating my way into oblivion for 10 years when I recommended OA to a family member. I told her that it was the only place I had ever found a solution ---- and as the words came out of my mouth, I realized that I was talking to myself.

I came back into the rooms of OA later that week. I had been in relapse for 10 years and was desperately ready for something different. It is now three years later, and I am abstinent, in recovery, at a normal body weight, able to move comfortably, more in touch with my own emotions, and better able to show up in my relationships.

That is my PERSONAL recovery..... and that recovery DEPENDS on OA unity.

So what does that mean for me?

I practice the tradition of unity when I don't attempt to impose my plan of eating on others. My plan of eating is personal, prescribed for me by a professional (registered dietician). It takes into account my personal eating triggers and behaviors. I have no business prescribing food plans to other addicts. I can only share my experience, strength, and hope, encouraging my fellows to be open, honest, and willing to surrender their plan of eating to someone other than themselves.



I practice the tradition of unity when I attend meetings other than my home meeting. I regularly attend two traditional step and tradition meetings per week. One hour formats - one with small group sharing and one with large group sharing. However, when I need a back-up meeting, I often go to OA HOW meetings, phone meetings, or Big Book meetings. I don't see these meeting formats as distinct or separate programs. They are simply formats which have worked for others and from which I also can derive recovery and spiritual growth.

I practice the tradition of unity when I allow others to form their own concept of a Higher Power. The Big Book is clear: to experience freedom from our disease, we need to learn to depend on and surrender to a Higher Power. But it's also clear about this: we have the freedom to define that Higher Power in whatever manner we choose. Steps Three and Eleven both specifically state that we are allowed to connect with God, as we understand God. The Big Book tells me that the "Realm of the Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive ..." (BB of AA, Third Edition, p 46).

OA unity is important to me. Why? Because my personal recovery is important to me. In fact, my personal recovery is the single most important thing in my life today. It makes all other parts of my life possible. I am willing to surrender my own ego-driven goals, agendas, and "bright ideas" to something greater than myself. As a compulsive overeater and sugar addict in recovery, the sustained unity of the OA program is my responsibility. And it is also my gift --- because my PERSONAL recovery DEPENDS on it!

- Anonymous, Unity IG

Willingness and Lists

I am a list maker and I'm great at it.

I have different lists for different things. And I **love** the satisfaction of crossing off things I have accomplished. However there were always those undone things which I would continue to allow to go to the bottom of my lists, and sometimes onto the next list, because the first one had nothing left I "wanted" or was "willing" to do. (Similar to my 8th step).

The 8th step says, "Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became **willing** to make amends to them all."

Years ago my sponsor had encouraged me to take the people from my 4th step whom I had harmed and put them into 3 columns. The people I was "willing to make amends to", "maybe willing to make amends," and "not willing". It was tough work deciding, but the harder work came in step 9. However, **willingness** is the KEY to my recovery. I was told in one of my very first meetings that if I had faith the size of a mustard seed, I could do anything. I was given a pin and enclosed was a mustard seed. They knew the courage it took to come to a meeting, and they saw the willingness I had. In turn they gave me hope.

I have had an enormous amount of willingness over the last 15 years that I never knew I had, all because others have walked the path before me.

However, I found myself stuck in this place over the last 3 weeks. I went on my vacation with my family. I had a list of recovery things and a few other things I wanted to do in this beautiful and relaxing place by a lake. However having unstructured time, as wonderful as it can be, is also one of my BIGGEST life hurdles. It's a love/ hate relationship. I love not "having" to do anything if I don't feel like it, but I am a routine person. I hate how much my disease knows me and very subtly rears its ugly head. That can throw me off course on its own. My head told me I wanted to, by my heart wasn't into it. So I

didn't do them. And then life happened. I had an accident where I fell and broke a rib and got a severe concussion with vertigo.

Having more unstructured time, the inability to do things, and having to rely on others, the more and more isolation sets in. This disease is relentless even when we are hurt.

Two of the items on this list was to write an article for the newsletter our group is sponsoring it this month and to call my sponsor when she returned from vacation. Well guess what? The disease began to take over. I did the "non-recovery" things on my list, but I was losing more and more of myself to the disease.

I got to the point where I finally remembered to seek my Higher Power who I choose to call God. God gave me the willingness to be willing to surrender. I have prayed that many times in the past, and although I temporarily forgot it, it has saved me once again.

Within a few days, I got the willingness to call my sponsor. I knew it would be hard, but necessary. I did not like what she suggested. I wasn't so sure I was willing to do what was being asked of me, which was to make some "lists" which became my plan of action. By the end of the call, more of my willingness returned and I surrendered to the suggestions she made.

I am so grateful for still having that mustard seed of hope. The willingness came, and God is guiding me. Because I am now aware of this again, I am responsible, with the help of my Higher Power and this fellowship. The only way I can keep what I have is if I continue to diligently work my program. Every. Single. Day. I do not have the chance at staying in recovery and keeping my abstinence if I am not willing to do the footwork. For today I am willing.

- Michele M., Owatonna, MN



Insight from Intergroup



My name is Chris, and I am the vice-chair for Greater Omaha Intergroup. I had bariatric surgery two years ago, and, as part of my continuing care, return to my surgeon for follow up appointments every six months. The surgical program director has taken notice of my success and often comes in to talk with me. At the most recent visit she asked me what my “secret” was. I make no secret of the fact that, for me, the tools and support of Overeaters Anonymous is what made it possible for me to even get surgery in the first place, much less have any success post-op.

She asked specifically about strategies I developed to handle what she called “head hunger.” I explained that OA helps me handle that sort of thing. Surgery is a tool for my body, medically speaking, but it is up to me to deal with the underlying issues. OA helps teach me skills to deal with these issues: how to change my relationship with food, myself, and the community around me. The support from the OA fellowship is, I believe, invaluable to my continued success.

After hearing me talk for a bit, the coordinator asked for some more information about OA, and if I could help to get her in touch with members or groups who might be interested in talking with some of her program’s patients. I smiled and explained that I was the vice-chair for the local intergroup and could arrange for some of the things she wanted.

I spoke to two classes of pre-op patients and introduced them to some of the concepts of OA, focusing on topics such as the support they would

receive from the wider fellowship. I told them they weren’t alone, and that the program was there for them if they ever chose to use it.

Our Intergroup is excited to further develop and strengthen this relationship with the surgical program, and we were encouraged by the program’s willingness to listen to what we had to say. We provided them with copies of the *OA 12 and 12, Overeaters Anonymous* (the “Brown Book”), and a number of pamphlets. As interested as the professionals in the surgical program were, I was most pleased by the excitement within our fellowship. Many members indicated their interest in participating in any way they could. We are pleased to find an opportunity to reach out to our

community and carry the message to those who might be receptive and may otherwise not be aware of our fellowship.

We at the Omaha Intergroup have struggled from time to time to find ways in which to promote public awareness, and it was nice to have this opportunity drop into our lap, so to speak. Creativity can also be vital in encouraging participation from members. Public awareness is a critical aspect of service, and one that often, unfortunately, is undervalued.

- Chris, Vice-Chair Greater Omaha Intergroup Chair



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

CALLING ALL REGION 4 REPS: 2016 FALL ASSEMBLY

Friday, October 14 at 7:00pm through Saturday, October 15 at 5:00pm.

Hosted by Heart of Canada Intergroup in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Details on Region 4 website: http://oaregion4.org/?page_id=3207

The following motions will be voted on at the Fall Assembly:

- Update treasurer's duties to include making hotel reservations for R4 officers for R4 conventions
- Add language in the R4 Manual to require a subaccount containing \$1000 seed money for the R4 Convention, which reflects current R4 practice.
- Update the Ways & Means/Finance committee duties to clarify coordination of duties, reflect current practice, and to use gender neutral language
- Update the manual to allow Assemblies to be held on different weeks of October or April if holidays or other events affect the normal schedule.
- Multiple motions to update requirements and duties for the following R4 Convention service positions to reflect current practice:
 - Convention Chair
 - Hotel Liaison
 - Volunteer Coordinator
 - Publicity
 - Registration
 - Hospitality
 - Program
 - Literature
 - Decoration & Signs
 - Entertainment

Proposed 2017 Region 4 Budget which will be voted
on at the Fall Assembly:

Region 4 Overeaters Anonymous	
Profit & Loss Budget Overview	
January through December 2017	
<u>Jan - Dec 17</u>	
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Bank Income	
Cash Rewards	400.00
Total Bank Income	400.00
Committee Income	
Ways and Means/Finance	
Bookmarks	92.00
Journals	4,200.00
Phone Caddies	1,260.00
Total Ways and Means/Finance	5,552.00
Total Committee Income	5,552.00
Donations	
7th Tradition	400.00
Anonymous Donation	1,000.00
Group Contributions	11,000.00
Total Donations	12,400.00
Total Income	18,352.00
Gross Profit	18,352.00
Expense	
Bank Fees	
Check order	40.00
Exchange Rate	40.00
Paypal Charges	300.00
Total Bank Fees	380.00
Committee Expenses	
Ways and Means/Finance	
Journals	3,550.00
Serenity knots	0.00
Ways and Means/Finance - Other	0.00
Total Ways and Means/Finance	3,550.00
Total Committee Expenses	3,550.00

Region 4 Overeaters Anonymous
Profit & Loss Budget Overview
 January through December 2017

	Jan - Dec 17
Contributions	
Annual WSO Contribution	1,000.00
WSO Delegate Funding Donation	250.00
Contributions - Other	0.00
Total Contributions	1,250.00
Credit Card Fee	
Bank Fees	24.00
Total Credit Card Fee	24.00
Insurance	540.00
Intergroup Support	
Literature Support Funding	200.00
Public Information Funding	200.00
Representative Funding	2,800.00
Speaker Support Funding	200.00
WSBC Delegate Funding	2,000.00
Total Intergroup Support	5,400.00
Office Supplies	
Computer	100.00
Copies	25.00
Postage	25.00
Total Office Supplies	150.00
Officers Supplies	
Copies	50.00
Literature	60.00
Mailing	25.00
Supplies	50.00
Total Officers Supplies	185.00
Post Office Box Rental	128.00
Reconciliation Discrepancies	15.00
Travel	
Assembly Venue Expenses	500.00
Assembly/Board Mtgs	3,000.00
Officers R4 Convention Expenses	300.00
Reg Chair/RCC/Trustee Mtg	0.00
Reg Chair/WSBC	1,800.00
Trustee Nominee/WSBC	0.00

Region 4 Overeaters Anonymous
Profit & Loss Budget Overview
January through December 2017

	Jan - Dec 17
Workshop Forums	500.00
WSO Convention	0.00
Total Travel	6,100.00
Total Expense	17,722.00
Net Ordinary Income	630.00
Net Income	630.00

OA Winnipeg Fall Conference 2016



READY FOR TRANSFORMATION

Are you only interested or are you committed to OA?

Friday, October 14 & Saturday, October 15

at

Canad Inns Polo Park

1405 St. Matthews Ave. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 0K5

Ph. 204-775-8791 Toll Free: 1-888-332-2623

For a discount rate book using Group Code 304399
for \$105/night (regular \$117) on standard rooms.

Friday, Oct. 14 - Registration opens at 6pm. Keynote speaker and workshop 7-9pm.

Saturday, Oct. 15 - Registration opens at 8:30am. Speakers/workshops 9am - 5pm.

Literature, inspirational crafted items & silent auction tables will be set up both days.

Please note: Only water will be provided in the conference room.

If you are able to give service at the conference (set up, at tables, etc.) please sign up www.signupgenius.com where you can type in lyhorton@mymts.net to get to the section titled: **Winnipeg Fall OA Conference**

.....Please tear off here.....

Winnipeg OA Fall Conference 2016 Registration

Please print clearly below. All information will be kept confidential and is for registration purposes only.

First & Last Name _____ Email _____

Special Needs (Physical disabilities, special seating, language barriers, etc.) _____

Please check or circle the appropriate sections below:

Cash Cheque (payable to OA Intergroup)

\$20 Friday ONLY \$30 Saturday ONLY \$40 ALL WEEKEND Guest Pass 7th Tradition

Indicate here if financial assistance is needed to register _____

I am able to drive others. I need a ride.

I am able to billet _____ person/people on ___ Fri. ___ Sat. I would like to be billeted on ___ Fri. ___ Sat.

**Please hand registration portion of this sheet along with cheque/cash to your Intergroup Rep
or send to Linda Boaz**

1007 - 115 Niakwa Rd, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2M 5A8

Five to Stay Alive!



Help us reach our goal of \$7,000!

By I.D.E.A. Day—November 19, 2016

(pst, you don't have to wait until then)

For one day, can you forgo your specialty drink, trinket, office supply or magazine and contribute to Region 4?

Can you celebrate by giving Region 4—\$5 (or more) in celebration of not having to use that money to binge, or have co-pays for frequent doctor visits, or freedom from laxatives or buying just one more diet book or program?

Your Contribution helps our Region 4 Intergroups' ability to send reps and delegates to World and Region Conferences.

In 2016, Region 4 provided funds totaling over \$8,200 to some of our 38 eligible region reps and 26 world delegates.

It's easy... go to www.oargegion4.org and click "7th tradition donation and type in your amount and click [Add to Cart](#) and Checkout! *Thank you for your donation!*

Or Mailing Address:

Region 4, Attn: Gimme 5,

PO Box 1609, St. Peters, MO 63376-1609

