



4 Thought

Volume 10, Issue 1—Spring 2013

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.

Connected in Recovery

Since this is my second time in OA, I've evaluated what is different this time around. I look at all of the people I've met, the friends I've accumulated and realize I'm rich! I even feel a bit worldly. I talk to and email people from numerous states and worldwide and not blink an eye or feel intimidated or smug. I think it's just... cool. My first experience in OA in the mid-1980s didn't have the Internet, nor were cell phones available to the average consumer. There were no websites to check out the latest info from the Intergroup, Region and World offices. While advanced technology created an incredible rush, it's an external change, a useful tool that makes gathering information so much easier. But this was not the reason I left. As I review my withdrawal from the program, I see how I had initially pulled away emotionally and spiritually, with the physical departure the final hurrah. It had to do with my lack of connections with recovering people and the program.

I look at 'connecting' as a three-fold commitment. What does it take me in sweat equity to make this happen? I am fortunate in living in a large metropolitan area. There are lot of group meetings, numerous workshops

and Intergroup meetings to attend, which I did and do. I've given a physical commitment to my physical recovery. In talking with others I learned about food plans, what works and what doesn't. I know how to make great abstinent choices when traveling and to add a little more variety to my food plan. What did I physically do to be present in OA? I went to my weekly home meeting, then helped out at conventions, spoke at workshops and helped plan retreats. My Higher Power asked me to do more. I became involved with Intergroup, stepped into Region and participated in the World Service Business Conferences (WSBC). I also extended myself by going to 70 different meetings in a year's time. Being that meeting's newcomer was a humbling and gratifying experience. In short, I connected by showing up.

The emotional connection I experience with my OA pals is that I can jump into the middle of the story and get to the core, gather some ideas or inspiration and get those things in return. Going to my Intergroup meetings offered me the opportunity to learn about different groups and formats such as Big Book, Step and Tradition and the HOW concept. Seeing tradition four in

motion, each group is autonomous, is so freeing. I heard numerous stories of such great strength and sorrow, felt buoyed by the courage it took many to walk into the doors and share their truth. My emotional commitment includes being a sponsor and having a sponsor. I hear passionate stories of what it's like to work a program of recovery and also bare my soul to step out of my isolation and twisted thinking to become saner and even happy. I learned and continue to learn that I don't have to live life on my own; I'm encouraged to ask for help or to even share a success. It is far more wonderful to share my sadness or elation than stuff myself with junk food. Feelings became a part of my life's repertoire, not something I hid from or blasted others with my anger and resentments. In short, I learned emotional serenity is gained by connecting with my feelings not cushioned by food.

My spiritual practice continues to grow as I hear others talk about what they do to find or connect with their Higher Power.

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Region 4 Workshops

I thought I would write something up on how we have benefited from Region 4 Workshops at our Intergroup level.

More Intergroup election and group representative slots filled.

More interest in doing outreach.

More energy for service and attention to building leadership capacity.

These are three benefits our intergroup area has experienced over the months since Central Iowa asked Region 4 to come do a workshop last fall. We were in need of a booster shot as our filling of service positions, group representation and seventh tradition donations had been at a minimum the last few years. It was like the national economic downturn of the last few years was reflected in our fellowship, too. After talking with a Region 4 Board member, we were able to jointly design a workshop that was tailored to our needs and their offerings. The "***We Practice These Principles In All Our Affairs***" workshop provided us much needed perspective on the role of the Intergroup and how we could do things differently within our fellowship. A number of ideas the Board member offered up were implemented over the next several months and a new energy is evident in our intergroup area.

Do consider asking Region 4 for assistance if your Intergroup fellowship is needed some energy and change. That is the purpose of the regional level of Overeaters Anonymous – and Central Iowa benefited from their carrying out two of OA regional structure's purposes:

1. Offer assistance and support to all groups and Intergroups within the Region through recovery events, newsletters, meeting support, speakers, and more; and
2. Strengthen our recovery through shared ideas and relationships.

Thank you Region 4! Our Intergroup is excited about hosting the Regional Assembly this spring in Des Moines Iowa - our home territory. See you there!

-Julie C, Central Iowa Intergroup Chair.

Connected in Recovery (Cont.)

The balance of peace I receive at my weekly meeting shows how reliant I am on fortifying my soul with my OA community.

The familiar flow of the format each week brings a new gift of awareness to my thoughts, prayers and meditation. One of my OA friends turned me on to asking for a spiritual sponsor.

I found one myself and focused on my meditation practice. I began with 3 minutes a day and now spend 15 – 20 sitting with silence or soft music. I look forward to it, even if my mind is rac-

ing and I spend that time redirecting my thoughts and breathing to a calmer place. Centeredness exists along with peace and serenity on a more frequent basis. In short, connecting with my Higher Power through my fellow friends, prayer and meditation keep my sane and abstinent.

With a collection of abstinent days, many program friends, working the steps, participating in meetings and workshops; my connections have enhanced my life three-fold in over eight years of abstaining from compulsive eating and significant weight loss.

Using the tools of telephone, whether it's a meeting or hook-up call, having an action plan to use when life throws a curve ball, reading, writing, anonymity, service and following my food plan: one strong thread is my connection with my Higher Power and OA community. Happiness guides my life and as long as I continue to reach out and join others in this journey, I will continue to live a wonderful life in recovery.

- Meg
Region 4 Chair

Why Being a Region Rep is Awesome

- ◆ Meet new fellows and reunite with familiar fellows from eight states and part of Canada
- ◆ Get the latest info from World
- ◆ Each Assembly is in a different city and state, so you get to travel. This April we are going to Johnston, IA. We are still looking for a hosting group for Oct 2013—maybe we'll come to you!
- ◆ Region 4 has funding to assist your reps in their travel
- ◆ Get to participate in fun and interesting service: Outreach, Convention, Ways & Means, Newsletter, Website, Planning...
- ◆ Expand your OA community
- ◆ You may find a sponsor or sponsee at Assembly
- ◆ Fabulous Region Convention on the even years
- ◆ Learn about other events in our Region—You can visit or offer to speak or do service

SPRING ASSEMBLY 2013

The Iowa Intergroups present

SPRING SUPER SATURDAY

April 6th, 2013

9 AM to 4:00 PM
Stoney Creek Inn, Johnston, IA

"THIS ADVENTURE CALLED LIFE"
(B.B. 5th Ed. Pg.288)



"Welcome Everyone Into Recovery" (Promises of Eastern Iowa Intergroup)

"Abstinence vs. Food Plan" (Central Iowa Intergroup)

"Service" (Quad Cities Intergroup)

"Acceptance" (Northeast Iowa Intergroup)

SHARE YOUR WARES TABLES AVAILABLE

Donation basket will be passed.

Lunch on your own, or Brown Bag. Small kitchenette available.

PLEASE JOIN US, BRING YOUR RECOVERY, and a FRIEND

Stoney Creek Inn
5291 Stoney Creek Dr.
Johnston, IA 50131
800-659-2220

<http://www.stoneycreekinn.com/>

Room (includes microwave and fridge) \$92

Mention Overeaters Anonymous when checking in

Contact: Bev C. 608-943-6016 or Jeanne M. 515-278-5627

St Louis OA Convention

Happy Anniversary!

The first St. Louis area OA meeting took place in 1973...

Let's gather to celebrate

40 Years of
FREEDOM!

Hotel Information

Holiday Inn at Six Flags

4901 Six Flags Road • Eureka, MO 63025

636.938.6661

Rooms \$82 per night + tax

(Double or single • Poolside \$92 per night)

About reservations:

1. Mention Overeaters Anonymous to ensure getting the above special rate
2. Reserve by Feb. 15, 2013 to guarantee room availability
3. If you're sharing a room, select one person to make the reservations; be sure to give the hotel your roommate's name so he or she can check in before you arrive, if necessary

- * The hotel is fully accessible with ramps & elevators.
- * ADA accessible/compliant sleeping rooms are available.
- * Call the hotel if you need refrigeration for medication, etc.
- * More hotel information, including amenities, available at:

www.hisixflags.com

Schedule of Events

(Subject to change)

Friday, Mar. 15

- 5:30 p.m. Registration begins
- 6:00 p.m. Early-bird meeting
- 7:00 p.m. Grand Opening – Keynote Speaker
Entertainment
- 9:00 p.m. Meeting

Saturday, Mar. 16

- 7:00 a.m. Morning meditation
- 8:00 a.m. Registration
- 8:00 a.m. Meetings begin
- 11:30 -1:00 Lunch break
- 1:00 p.m. Meetings resume
- 6:00 p.m. Banquet (Preregistration required)
- 7:00 p.m. Keynote Speaker (Open to all)
- 8:00 p.m. Entertainment
Dance & Karaoke
- 9:00 p.m. Open meeting

Sunday, Mar. 17

- 7:30 a.m. Morning meditation
- 8:30 a.m. Meetings begin
- 9:45 - 11 a.m. Keynote Speaker & Closing

Oasis* will be available all day Saturday

*Water, coffee and tea only

Convention Prices

Please complete registration form on reverse

Friday-Sunday Meetings

\$30 in advance \$ _____

(Will be \$35 at the door)

Saturday Night Banquet

See menu on reverse • Preregistration required

\$35 (Inc. tax & gratuity) \$ _____

\$35 Banquet guest \$ _____

(Guest name: _____)

Raffle Tickets

_____ @ \$10 ea. \$ _____

6 tickets for \$50 \$ _____

WE CARE FUND Donation \$ _____

Thank you!!!

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Service Opportunities

Volunteers are needed in the following areas!

Please mark areas of interest and availability:

___ Oasis ___ Where needed ___ Hugger

___ Auction ___ Registration ___ Literature

___ Speaker (Abstinence required)

Availability: ___ Fri. p.m.

___ Sat. a.m. ___ Sat. p.m. ___ Sun. a.m.

The Gift of Abstinence

Abstinence has been on my mind a lot lately. Not that that's new – I have committed to abstinence every day since July 19, 1990. I call my sponsor just about daily and start by stating my commitment to abstinence for another day. I do the same thing when I share in an OA meeting. But because we are celebrating the Year of Abstinence Awareness in 2013, I have been thinking about it even more than usual.

I had a conversation recently with another trustee who had just led a retreat. She related a conversation with an OA member who stated that she just didn't want to give up the food. I understand that feeling, because I felt the same way before I got abstinent. But as my friend told the other OA member, the food was robbing me of my life – and long before it would actually kill me.

I remember a time when abstinence seemed absolutely unattainable. Furthermore, I wasn't at all sure that I wanted to get abstinent, because I was unwilling to turn my will and my life – and especially, my food – over to a Higher Power. The reality was that I had a lot of experience turning everything over, but it was to the disease of compulsive eating, which wanted to kill me, rather than to the care of a loving Higher Power. What I really wanted was to keep eating compulsively but not be fat, which was impossible considering the way I ate. What's sad is that I was willing to settle for so little – as long as I could keep my binge foods, I was "happy". The problem was that I wasn't – I was miserable. I was also obese, ashamed, despairing, lonely, isolated, and angry. And no matter how much I ate, I could never get enough.

Today I am so grateful for the gift – GIFTS - of abstinence. I have a wonderful, full, satisfying life. I am maintaining a 68 ½ pound weight loss and a normal, healthy body weight. I have a closet full of clothes, all in the same size, because I have worn that size for over 22 years. I am emotionally balanced and spiritually centered. I have a relationship with a loving Higher Power that helps me deal with all of the things in life that I used to eat over. I am blessed...

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The Gift of Abstinence

...with a wonderful husband and a wealth of friends, both in and out of the Program. I don't hate myself, and can look at myself in the mirror and others in the eye without flinching. I don't wake up in the morning regretting what happened yesterday and dreading what might happen today.

This gift of abstinence is available to every single OA member. Every day of my life I have awakened abstinent from compulsive eating. But for a long time, I promptly threw that gift

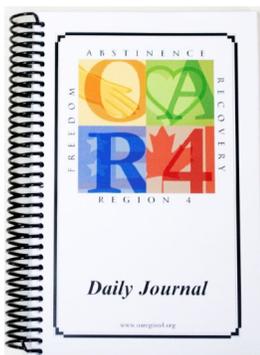
away when I began eating compulsively. I got abstinent on July 19, 1990, and every day since I have chosen to keep that beautiful gift and all that comes with it. I have done that by abstaining from eating compulsively no matter what, and by working OA's Twelve Steps to deal with life. In return I have received a life beyond my wildest dreams.

My first sponsor said that when she got abstinent, she worried that she would be miserable without those foods that she

had to give up. Someone suggested that she ask her Higher Power to replace those things with something better. Her experience, and mine, and every abstinent member that I have ever known, proves that the gifts of abstinence are infinitely better than anything we have given up – and it only keeps getting better. Today, I refuse to settle for anything less than all that abstinence and recovery have to offer.

-Teresa
Region 4 Trustee

Region 4 Daily Journal—For Sale



Daily Journal for Sale!!

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

Get one for...

- Yourself
- Your sponsor
- Your sponsee
- A fellow member

Go to www.oaregion4.org for ordering.

Recovering Compulsive Overeater

What a difference 17 months makes! For the first time in my life, I was able to walk into a candy store today to buy a Valentine's Day gift for my husband and not eat any of the samples on the counter. And not buy myself any candy. And most importantly, I walked out of the store and thanked my HP for the strength to resist the candy monsters.

It's been 17 months since I joined OA and for the first time in 40 years, I have hope that my "see-sawing" weight has been stopped. I can't even count how many times I've gained 30 pounds, lost the weight, re-gained the 30 pounds, lost it, etc., etc.

So what caused the change? Thanks to OA, I discovered that I'm a compulsive overeater. And that I should eat only 3 times a day with nothing in between meals. What a huge change as I used to eat all the time. With the guidance I received from many different diet programs I tried through the years, I never ate enough at a meal and 2-3 hours later I would be starving. So I would snack till the next meal. And I would snack when I was happy, sad, bored, stressed, anxious, tired, and as a reaction to any emotion I felt.

I'm so grateful now for the guidance I've received from OA that is directly addressing my CE problem. Never before in my life has my weight been stable for more than a year. I use the tools—calling my sponsor, attending meetings, reading, journaling, following my food plan, working the steps, giving service, and following my action plan. Another new

development for me is the growth of my spirituality. With my Higher Power's help, I work my program one day at a time.

Every morning, when I wake up, I start my day with prayers and first thank my HP for my abstinence and my progress towards recovery and serenity.

Thank you, OA, for changing my life and for giving me hope that I will be able to sustain my abstinence, one day at a time.

Regards,
Alice W., Peoria, IL



Overeaters Anonymous
Buffalo Spring Retreat 2013
 April 5, 6 & 7



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

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

Cost: \$178 by March 11th; \$198 after
 Partial Scholarships are available-
 contact Kim for details.

Includes: Two nights lodging,
 3 meals on Saturday, 2 meals on Sunday

Deadline for Registration: March 25th
 Online registration at
www.overeaters.org
 Contact Kim H
 Phone: 651-202-9995
bufreg@gmail.com

The Promises: Gifts of the Program

Your reservation will be confirmed via email, unless you enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for confirmation by US mail. Make check or money order payable to: **Unity Intergroup**
 Mail registration form and check to:

Buffalo Registration
 PO BOX 1011
 Elk River, MN 55330



 FULL NAME : _____ NAMETAG TO READ: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

HOME MEETING : _____

MALE () FEMALE () ROOMMATE: _____

If you do not sign up with a roommate, one will be assigned to you.

SPECIAL NEEDS?: _____

() Mobility needs (Do you need a room close to meeting room and small group – if so please check)

If you need a handicap room or would like a single room, please contact Kim. There are only 6 available so act fast.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES: Circle all you are willing to do:

Registration/Check In Timer for speakers Lead a small group Hear a 5th step Donate Bingo Prize Whatever needed

() Make a Donation to support Scholarship fund for this retreat

Please include any extra amount with payment and indicate scholarship support in memo. Thank you.