

# APRIL 2020 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER



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March 20, 2020

## Dear OA Members,

I'm reaching out to you today on behalf of our Intergroup's Service Board/Board of Trustees. We all are facing a challenge due to the spread of this life-threatening coronavirus. Most, if not all, of our face-to-face meeting places have been closed, and the majority of us are in the high-risk age group. Social distancing, limited group gathering size, and self "isolation" for high-risk people have been advised, and in some areas mandated by our government officials and health experts. We urge all in our OA community to keep in touch with each other through personal phone calls, texts and emails, new and/or existing phone meetings, Facebook or Internet meetings.

If you're wondering how to set up a phone meeting, you can get a teleconference phone number and pass code at [www.freeconferencecall.com](http://www.freeconferencecall.com). The host, meeting leader, calls this number at a predetermined day and time. Members then call the number and will be prompted to introduce themselves, and then the meeting can proceed using your meeting's format. It's very easy. Typical readings such as the Preamble and Our Invitation to You are available for free download at [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org). Or you can join an existing phone meeting; see our Where and When Wed, 6:00 pm or there are national phone meeting numbers available at [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org). Speaking for myself, communication with other OAs is vital to my recovery. Please forward this information to any meeting friends that you can reach by email or share the main points with anyone with whom you are keeping in contact in other ways.

Your Board of Trustees met via conference call on March 18. We addressed many new challenges facing our Intergroup and I'd like to summarize them for you. First information about our communication chain:

1. **Communication Newsletter:** We are now blessed by a Newsletter Chairperson, Liz P. She has published this April Newsletter which will be available on our Webpage - [www.stlouisoa.org](http://www.stlouisoa.org) and will be emailed to all Intergroup Reps. In person, print distribution is not possible for April and perhaps May as well. There is no April IG meeting, and mailing Newsletter packets to group contacts would result in one person having one or more Newsletters with no way to distribute them. Please continue to send Liz your recovery stories for future Newsletters – [www.newsletter@stlouisoa.org](mailto:www.newsletter@stlouisoa.org).
2. **Communication Where & When and Webpage:** Elizabeth C. will put a banner on the Webpage Where & When advising members/potential members to call the contact person for each meeting about the status of that meeting. We ask that meetings/groups not overwhelm our Webmaster, Colleen, with requests to make postings for each meeting/group.
3. **Communication with Your Meeting Members:** Reps please take a look at your meeting contact person listed on the Where and When, verify that this information is correct, and send any corrections/changes to [www.info@stlouisoa.org](mailto:www.info@stlouisoa.org). Again, we ask that each IG Rep pass on information in a way that suits you. For example, chain telephone call, email, text, etc.

Next, we'd like to give you information about our Intergroup Office at 9907 Gravois, Suite E, St. Louis, MO 63123. We have reviewed all the guidelines and legal mandates from the St. Louis County Executive and the Director of the St. Louis Department of Public Health, and we are suspending all recovery meetings at the office, effective March 18, 2020, and until further notice. Similarly, we will not be open for occasional meetings or committee meetings of any kind. Our office volunteers have been told not to report for their shifts. Our bookkeeper, Sue, will continue to pick up mail and perform her duties, taking all precautions for her personal safety. For now, literature orders will not be filled. We have contacted each meeting that meets at the office by phone to tell them about this action and will have a notice posted on the door. We know that connectedness is a foundation of recovery, and we have not made this decision lightly. We thank you for understanding.

Lastly, we'd like to update you about our financial outlook. We carefully reviewed our revenue streams and expenses and hopefully decreases in each will offset each other.

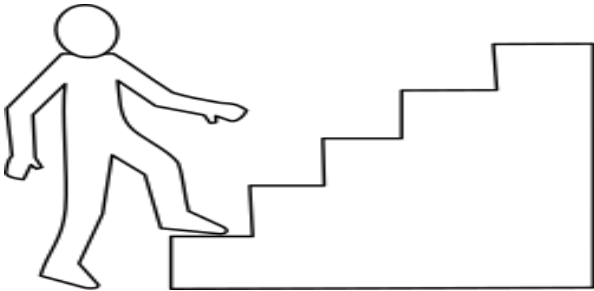
1. As you are probably aware, our 2020 Spring Convention Committee voted to cancel this recovery event due to the coronavirus. It is usually a large fundraiser for our us and they estimated a net profit of almost \$4,000 for our Intergroup. Unfortunately, this actual profit will be at most \$1,700. Other sources of revenue are also expected to

be somewhat reduced, such as group donations, Super Saturday events, group rent and IG 7<sup>th</sup> tradition. On the other side of the equation several expenses will be reduced: travel expenses for Region 4 Spring Assembly which has been cancelled, and travel expenses for the April WSO Business meeting. We are optimistic that our current balance in our checking account will be enough to pay our bills in the near future. P.S. Electronic copies of our budget and monthly financials are available upon request for any member by emailing our Treasurer at [treasurer@stlouisoa.org](mailto:treasurer@stlouisoa.org).

2. Also, we have decided to delay purchase of a billboard to carry the message, until things return to normal and people are free to travel our highways (and see our billboard). Our PI committee will not be attending the Nutritionist State Convention in Columbia, MO on April 17, but Melanie has let them know we are open to continuing our relationship for future events.
3. We ask, since most/all groups will not be holding face-to-face meetings, for the short term future, that you personally consider continuing your personal 7<sup>th</sup> tradition contribution to our Intergroup by check mailed to St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous, 9907 Gravois, Suite E, St. Louis, MO 63123. You can also make a donation on our Webpage [www.stlouisoa.org](http://www.stlouisoa.org). Or, you may consider starting an "OA Piggy Bank" and put that in the 7<sup>th</sup> tradition basket when our meetings resume.

We urge you to take care of your health and your recovery. Each of you is a gift to our fellowship and a valued member.

With gratitude for today and in service,  
~Dianne S., Chairperson St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup



## The One Step that I Must Do With Perfection

I have been in the rooms of OA for about 14 years with periods of recovery, relapse, and now recovery. One lesson that I was taught was that in order to stay in recovery, I must take Step One with perfection – I admit that I am powerless over food and my life has become unmanageable. This was puzzling and problematic because I was also reminded that my program is one of “spiritual progress not perfection.” Yes, this is true that in working my program, it is about my spiritual progress. I would also add that as it relates to Step One, I must concede in my innermost self that I am a compulsive overeater. If I cannot, the rest of the program eventually falls apart on me and I find myself on this constant roller coaster.

Though I would verbally recite Step One, my actions would not reflect these words. I recall buying my binge foods under the guise of purchasing the items for the family. I would be in the food before I left the parking lot! I would attend events in which the food served was challenging for me, but I went

anyway, believing that I would be strong enough to resist.

Eventually, the food thoughts would be so overwhelming that I would give in with a sincere lie that I would eat just a little. The craving would be activated, and I would leave the event to get even more food – of course with the goal of putting the food down once I finished that serving. I just might string together a couple of days of abstinence, but more often than not, I would be back into the food. Not being neutral with the food, I would go into dangerous food places and situations, but figuring that I would be ok. My food behavior and actions ran counter to the true essence of Step One, admitting that I am powerless over food and operating in that manner. I knew I had a problem but acted contrary as if I was not a compulsive overeater.

Mentally, I would not concede Step One, since my belief was that I could pick up the food and just as easily release it on some future magical day. When I would put down the food for any considerable length of time, my mind would eventually inform me that it was ok to pick up. “Normal” individuals can decide that they can eat and then stop when they desire. As a compulsive overeater, I do not have that option, as much as I have tried. I found that until I really took Step One which also meant that my food behaviors had to align with Step One, I was not really making any progress in my recovery.

Now 26 months abstinent and separated from my binge foods, my program is strong, but not perfect. I still grapple with my character defects, but for today, one thing I know for sure is that I am a compulsive overeater and my mind and actions align with that fact.

~ Dwyane S. Compulsive Overeater



## Maintaining Abstinence and Weight Loss is a Good Start

It took a health scare with the threat of going on medication, in combination with OA, to help me finally lose the ten pounds I had been gaining and losing for 40 years. Wearing a size eight, I assumed I would be on easy street or that was my fantasy. I assumed the weight loss would be the end; however, it was just the beginning. On the heels of weight loss the real work started! Suddenly I was faced with a series of unresolved issues I needed to work through that the excess weight helped me avoid.

Without the extra fat and XXL baggy clothes to hide behind I found, despite being married and older, that I was still an attractive, sexual, sensual woman. While I didn't catch the eyes of 20-year-olds, I did attract the attention of older men. This time rather than being scared to death and running to the food I appreciated the experience, kept it in perspective, and did not feel the need to dump my husband of 29 years and run off with someone new.

Dressing for success I had the option of wearing a variety of fitted clothing and had fears of women and/or coworkers disliking me, or feeling threatened by me, or shunning or gossiping about me behind my back because that's what I had done to others I was envious of. All these irrational thoughts kept me fat for years. In reality I experienced none of this with few even noticing much less commenting on my weight loss – which led to resentment! As I assimilated into the world of normal body weight, people's references to my weight loss faded with few having any idea of my transformation. This left me with the need to find a deeper foundation than accolades from others to sustain my weight loss. I started letting go of old bitterness, hurts, anger and resentments from the past ~ especially with old boyfriends and childhood issues. As a result a new freedom and new happiness was ushered in.

Today I am able to walk confidently into a room nicely dressed and if I am afforded attention, I savor it. I enjoy a greater peace within my own skin, and I don't fall into depression when a younger more attractive woman appears on the scene. Weight loss is the beginning not the end goal of the journey.

~ OA Member, Missouri

## Your Group Number # Matters

Starting this month, the Where and When will show only one column for group number, where it used to show two columns. The column remaining has a 5-digit number.

**THE BOTTOM LINE: This should matter to you if your group wants to continue getting credit for contributions to our Intergroup.**

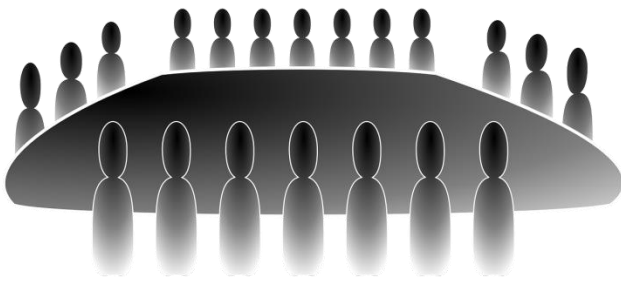
**Here's why:** Every OA group has a 5-digit World Service Office (WSO) number used by the accounting software on all levels – Intergroup, Region and World. For instance, my Sunday morning meeting at St. Mary's hospital in Richmond Heights is group 06234. There is also a local number that reflects each group's local history. Group 06234 has the local number SL025, which shows that it is the 25<sup>th</sup> group ever started in this area. (For historical reasons, these numbers will be kept internally, and continue to be assigned for new groups.)

Sometimes World Service and Region 4 receive contributions listed only as SL025. In the past they used to put a lot of effort into trying to research what group number that really meant. They stopped doing that some time ago. Now, donations without the 5-digit WSO group number are lumped together as anonymous contributions.

Our Intergroup has now made the same decision. It takes our bookkeeper far too long to look up the real number for donations that come in with only the local number (or with something even more confusing like "The Tuesday meeting"). So we will now treat those donations as anonymous contributions. To get credit for your group's donations, have your treasurer use the 5-digit WSO number.

~ Elizabeth C, Operations Administrator.

**ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY April 20th.** Please send your submissions to the OA TODAY Editorial Staff at newsletter@stlouisoa.org or mail to OA, 9907 Gravois, Suite E, St. Louis, MO 63123. Personal stories express the experience, strength, and hope of individual members and not of OA as a whole. Other OA groups and service boards may reprint articles from this newsletter without requesting permission.



## Intergroup Information

### UPCOMING INTERGROUP MEETING

The next Intergroup meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, May 17, 2020** at 1:30 – 3:00 at Missouri Baptist Medical Center, Main Tower, auditorium rooms section. **Please send a representative from your group to this monthly meeting.**

**The remaining 2020 Intergroup meeting dates** are June 14, July 12, September 13, October 11, and November 8. Some Intergroup meetings may be preceded by a Board of Trustee meeting. These will be announced by email when scheduled. There are no meetings scheduled during April, August, or December. To participate by teleconference call 712-451-1080 access code 762802.

### Upcoming 2020 Events

- September 11-13, Fall Retreat, Kings House, Belleville, Illinois
- August 20-22, World Service Convention, Orlando, Florida
- October 3, Super Saturday, Drury Inn Airport, St. Louis

### A Super Saturday/Sunday in 2020?

Please confer with your group about hosting a Super Saturday/Sunday for next year. Four months are still open. To set a date or obtain info on how to host one, contact Christina D, 314-954-1944.

- June Open
- July Open
- August Open
- November Open



## We Will Always Be in This Together

~ Christina D., Intergroup Vice-Chair

What a wonder that we addicts cherish "Just for Today." The world is full of change and, for all but especially us, full of fear and uncertainty. So, we are called to stay humble, be sure to work our program and stay in concert with our HP and our community!

For today, many of us are finding different paths--meetings by teleconference, hybrids, and the like. The events we were excited about last month must now be postponed indefinitely. We must prayerfully release our expectations--take good care and good counsel and live today. While there are no plans today to have events, we will look forward to the time it is the next right step to gather together again!

Remembering what seems long past gatherings for recovery, and ending on a wonderful note, Unity Day, conducted around the world on February 29th, was a big boost to our recovery! We had a great turnout to participate in our panel discussion of the disparate ways in which we experience our program and how those parts contribute to the Unity of our OA community. The focus this year was on: aspects of our age when we entered program; how we came to and maintain our abstinence; and how we identified and incorporated our connection to HP. After each of the three panelists spoke there was an open share then the next session. We broke at 11:30 to pray in circle, mindful that OA groups from around the world were connecting at their 11:30 to pray for our mission and our recovery!

### It is worthwhile to hear the comments on the event:

"The deep honesty, along with humor, spoke right to my heart."

"Terrific spiritual energy-fabulous shares-just what I needed today."

"I love the various perspectives and ways of doing our program--yet we are entirely supportive of one another."

"I love the diverse sharing and honesty our fellows give. There is always something to hear and to take away and add to my program."

"Wonderful boost to my abstinence"

"Loved the fellowship and unity experienced at this uplifting event."

"How wonderful that such different paths bring us here--and save our lives!"

"Unity as topic reinforcing that I am not alone in this disease and in recovery."

"I realize more and more how honesty is so important. Honesty impacts everything I do for recovery--physically, emotionally, spiritually. It is not easy but so important."

"As a returning OA member, this was outstanding on every aspect. I am excited to become an active OA member again and this event has spurred me on."