

JULY 2019 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

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The office is open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

WHEN I REALIZED IT'S MORE THAN A JUST A FOOD PLAN

My food plan came together when I recognized it was not just about what I chew. When I first came into program, I, like many, confronted the challenge of “what to eat.” Initially it was important that I bring my food, bundled into three separate meals, nothing in between. I guesstimated what I ate, not worrying about losing weight in this first step, and divided all of it into 3 meals.

I was absolutely astonished to find I was roaringly hungry at the end of day one—and it got worse from there! So, lesson number one became clear - I have no idea what I eat and cannot be in charge of that! Step One was unwittingly confirmed.

As I continued to work the Steps, the Tools, and my food plan, the next important lesson became clear - I am meant to use this plan as the tool it is. It is a way in which I may find: my humility, a way to practice submitting, to be honest in my day and my habits, and to say out loud to another that, essentially, I am accountable for what I do. After a life full of secrecy, of pretense, of rationalizing and of isolating, this was a practice that was new, fresh and ultimately rewarding. It was, and occasionally is today, simple and difficult. It was never about understanding—or misunderstanding—what food is ‘good’ for me. It was about creating a world in which eating was a shameful and wonderful thing and all rewards and punishments flowed in and through it. Shame for failure in restricting, exhilaration for a decadent morsel, fear of my future and of ‘getting caught’, consolation in sadness or disappointment, anger in feeling judged and anger in my judgement - these were my reasons to eat.

Nutrition was hardly a blip on my daily radar. But nutritious food is something I get now. It may not have been primary goal in the beginning, but I learned it. For me, the devising of a nutritious plan and finding help and advice were not difficult. Understanding the plan proved to be doable. Shedding all the shameful and wonderful rewards and punishments were the barrier!

Today I use the nutritious plan I devised. That is my work. I use it with humility. I call upon others to help in my accountability. I reach for sharing to better understand myself. I pray for willingness to submit and for release of rationalizing. I focus on today. I meditate to create space for my Higher Power to be heard. I work the Steps with a clearer mind because of my abstinence, fueled by my food plan. I sponsor so that I may learn with and from those who entrust me with their journey.

*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty back together again.*

(Author's note: I would like to tell you how Humpty Dumpty can be like some compulsive eaters.)

Humpty Dumpty had been told not to get on that wall. It was slippery and dangerous. “No one can tell me what to do. I will keep climbing that wall; I will not stop. I'm in control; I feel like Superman.”

Alice used to be in OA. She left because she didn't want to be told what to do. “I will keep eating the way I want. I don't want or need help. I am in control; I feel like Superwoman.”

Precariously balancing on the top of the wall, Humpty Dumpty said, “The wall is not slippery.” People called to him and offered help to get off the wall. “I don't need help, I'm fine.” Humpty Dumpty was in denial and incapable of being honest.

Alice was caught in the never-ending cycle of compulsive food addiction. “I'm fine,” is what she told concerned family and friends. Any fears she had, she denied or kept to herself. The more she ate and binged, the more she isolated herself. Day after day, month after month... “I don't need help, I'm fine. I can stop anytime I want.” *(Continued on page 3.)*

There is no food in
the refrigerator
that can fix me.
Food addiction is
a disease about
feelings.



If the Food is Calling, Make the Call

If you're having a HALT (hungry, angry/anxious, lonely, and tired) moment, make the call. Here's the number of a longtime, dedicated OA member:

Suzy D. - 314-434-1380

I have a sponsor to guide my work and foster my honesty. I give service, so I may be immersed in my community that nurtures me. My food plan was the beginning and fundamentally supports me. All of my program supports my food plan. — C.D.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 6/9/2019 INTERGROUP MEETING & REPORTS

- Two people attended the IG by teleconference.
- The following items were discussed as a part of follow up from Inventory Event held in April:
 - A conference call to discuss the survey with IG and inventory facilitator, Lawrie C.
 - The question was raised at to whether we want to make a 24-hour line available. Presently, we have no idea if we miss calls because people hang up. Suggested ideas included having an answering line that would cover 24/7 (if Office is not staffed), have a simple call forward system, or get a voice over IP number (not requiring a land line) that anyone can access.
 - The question was raised whether the funds used to maintain the OA office could be better spent toward more community outreach and promotion. It was also noted that very few intergroups in the U.S. have offices. Other members liked having a central location that can be used for meetings and storage. One member said our archival items could be given to a university for safekeeping.
 - The inventory survey will help us decide the kind of convention we need/want in 2020.
- A name change for our intergroup that would be more inclusive and less St. Louis focused was suggested and discussed. Some favored a name change, while others felt our present name – St. Louis Area Bi-State is descriptive and easy to find and questioned whether anyone feels alienated by this name. Another idea was a legal device called obtaining a DBA (Doing Business As). It is easier and cheaper than changing everything
- 264 visited piregion4/stlouisoa website in April, 225 in June, and 216 in June.
- April literature sales totaled \$179.90.
- Our Office Expenses are in line with last year. In 2019 we are at \$2,839.20 versus \$2,728.64 in 2018. Our We Care Fund has in \$1,460.07 and paid out \$953.72 at the 2019 Convention. Thank you for your generosity.
- The retreat committee and the Membership Survey Planning Committee met during the work group portion of the meeting.

INTERGROUP MEETING INFORMATION

Our next Intergroup meeting is **Sunday, September 8, 2019** from 1:30 – 3:00 at Missouri Baptist Medical Center, building D, auditorium rooms section. The remaining 2019 Intergroup meeting dates are **October 13, and November 10.**

Some IG meetings may be preceded by Board of Trustee meeting and will be announced a head of time. There are no meetings in April, August, or December.

To join by Teleconference call: (712) 451-1080, then dial access code 762802. If you have questions, call IG chair J-MO at 314-775-3261.

WHETHER TO KEEP ST. LOUIS BI-STATE OA OFFICE TO BE DISCUSSED

At the Intergroup Inventory Event in April, one of the controversial issues we identified was our differing opinions on whether maintaining a physical office space is the best use of our time and financial resources as relates to carrying the message to compulsive eaters. The Board of Trustees has now formed a committee to study this issue and bring a recommendation forward for discussion at our November business conference.

Members of the committee are J-MO, Dwyane, Carol H, Mike, and Carlina A. The process will include reading the report issued by the Ad Hoc Committee in March, studying survey results that are being gathered during the summer months, interviewing the current Office Administrator, and hearing members who have well-formed thoughts on whether to either keep or close the office.

If you would like to offer thoughts on why our Intergroup should maintain the office on Gravois or close it, please email your statement of 150 words or less to chair@stlouisoa.org by August 15. If you are willing to be interviewed by the committee, please include your email and preferred phone number with your statement. An equal number of members on each side of the issue will be invited to speak with the committee in early autumn, and all emailed comments will be read by the committee.

----- JUNE 15 BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The following items were discussed as a part of follow up from Inventory Event held in April:

The Board of Trustees spent much of the meeting finalizing the post-inventory survey that will be conducted within our Intergroup (IG) fellowship. Your home meeting will be visited soon by someone from a service team who will gather your thoughts on what is working and what can be improved when it comes to carrying the message inside and outside our membership. Questions will address IG issues such as service, sponsorship, outreach, finances, Regional, and the OA office. The meetings will be given a 'what comes next' so people will know how the survey results will be used and how they can be involved in this process.

Public Information (PI)

PI was approved to be a workgroup committee for September IG meeting. Melanie T., PI chair, plans to collect interesting 'tidbits' of recovery information and email to those who sign on to receive information. Other PI ideas include Facebook and Twitter development, targeted podcasts, youth recruitment, and flyer distribution to health professional and businesses. A recruitment flyer has been developed and will be submitted for approval. The PI committee currently has 5 members but would welcome more members.



Featured Meeting of the Month

Thursdays, 5 p.m.

Grace Episcopal Church

10th St Entrance, 2nd floor

1000 N. Main Street / Rolla, MO 65401

This varied format group is located in Rolla, halfway between St Louis and Springfield on I-44. It focuses on different literature each week.

“This is my most important meeting of this week. I like the variety of literature that is highlighted each week, but it’s the love, acceptance, and accountability that draw me like a big hub!” - M.

“I have been coming to the Rolla OA meeting since 2012. We are recovering and we are committed to the Twelve Steps and Traditions as our path to freedom. We are grateful to have one another to share our experience, strength and hope. Wherever two or more are gathered...” - J.

“In this room I find comfort, security, honesty and hope. I came to this OA meeting room in Rolla in 2011, not knowing what I would find. I had no knowledge of Twelve Steps, abstinence, or fellowship. Here I found all of that with friends who understood my dilemma. We are a small and compassionate group, but growing. We welcome all who come with open arms and minds.” - C

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“I love the Rolla Thursday Night Meeting. From the first day I came into the room, I was welcomed. I have been in and out of the room several times and was always welcomed back. It is wonderful having others who can relate to my difficulty with food and who can share their experience, strength, and hope. We have members at all levels of recovery. We learn and grow from each other.”

(HUMPTY – Continued from page 1)

Then tragedy happened. Humpty slipped, lost his balance, and tumbled all the way down to the rocks. He was completely shattered, splattered all over the rocks. There was much confusion and concern. Yet, all the king’s men, doctors, specialists, and magicians couldn’t put Humpty back together again.

Then tragedy happened – Alice hit rock bottom. She hated herself and her body. She could not stop eating and binging. All the doctors, diets, pills, bulimia, exercising... Nothing worked. “I am at the end. There is nothing left for me. I feel completely worthless and like a failure. I am ready to give up. What’s the use?”

Then the doorbell rang. It was her former sponsor stopping by to see how she was doing. She missed seeing her friend at meetings. In her desperation, Alice decided to be honest. Alice hugged her friend, started to cry, and said her eating and life were out of control. Her old sponsor listened carefully. She then said, “I know how you feel. I have felt that way also and still do on occasion. We have an addiction. It’s an illness that stays with us. It is not here today and gone tomorrow. It is always with us. But what I also know is that OA works and is a “we” program. We cannot beat this on our own. There is one who has all power, and that one is God. The age of miracles is not over. There is hope. It is not too late.”

So together they went to an OA meeting. Alice was afraid of rejection, of being criticized, of others being aloof. But instead, she was welcomed and hugged. Overwhelmed with acceptance and love, she was so glad she returned. Alice went back to meetings, stayed in touch with her sponsor, and worked the steps.

Unlike Humpty Dumpty, whose life ended when he fell and shattered, her life was restored. She has wholeness of body, mind, and spirit. All she had to do was be honest, ask for help, and work the program for a life that is now beyond her wildest dreams.

- St. Louis OA Member

	<p>Remember your sponsor on Sponsorship Day, which is the weekend of August 17 -18.</p>
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AD HOC AND SELF INVENTORY REPORTS ARE AVAILABLE ON-LINE A report of a self-inventory on 4/19/2019 by the St. Louis Area Intergroup (IG) can be accessed by going to the oaregion4.org website / Intergroup / Business Documents and Forms. The Executive Summary of the IG Ad Hoc Ways & Means Report and the Ad Hoc Ways & Means Committee Report are also available under the Business Documents and Forms tab. If you have questions, please contact IG chair J-MO at 314-775-3261.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS ARE DUE JULY 25
Please send your submissions to the OA TODAY 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.

UPCOMING EVENTS –

Super Saturdays & Sundays

August 11, Sunday – The theme is abstinence and will be held from 2 – 5 p.m. at the PNC Bank Building, 333 South Kirkwood Rd., Suite 305, Kirkwood, MO 63122. This is being hosted by the Abstinence First/Newcomer Sunday 4 p.m. meeting. The suggested donation is \$6, but never stay away from a recovery event for financial reasons. Please contact Marilyn F. with questions at 314-401-2552.

September 14, Saturday – Webster Groves Christian Church, 1320 W. Lockwood, St. Louis, MO 63122. Registration starts at 9 a.m. and the program is from 9:30 – 12:30. It is hosted by the Saturday morning 10 a.m. Step Study Group.

November 2019 – IDEA Day/International Day Experiencing Abstinence - Intergroup

December 2019 – Sunday St. Mary's Group

January 2020 – Saturday Morning Reaching Out

Other Events –

October 11-13, 2019 – Annual Fall Retreat

The theme for our retreat is H.O.P.E, Hang On, Peace Exists, and is October 11-13, at the LaSalle Retreat Center in Glencoe, Missouri. The 180-acre center sits up on a hill with views that are sure to be spectacular this fall when the colors come in.

A smaller, more intimate gathering than our convention, our retreat will be a wonderful place to lean into the friendship and fellowship we all love about OA. We will have good, healthy meals, time for meditation and reflection, and our traditional Saturday night bonfire.

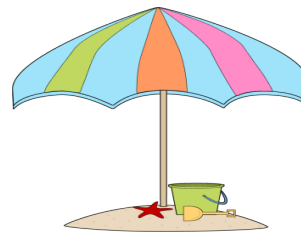
This retreat will center on developing tools within the program to help process, rather than react to, complex emotions. We'll talk about being okay with being uncomfortable, identifying emotions, what to do with painful memories, and how to create our own path to be our best, recovering self!

The weekend will be filled with suggestions and guidelines on using the Tools, Steps and principles of our OA 12-Steps. The process of PAUSE, THINK, and then CHOOSE will show us how to make choices on how to act when we are embroiled in any emotional situation is one of the most challenging changes we make as we grow through the Steps. On Sunday, we'll wrap it all up and talk about how we use food to deal with our emotions, and how there is a much better way.

As always, give what you can but never let finances keep you from recovery. Contact Brigid W. at brigid.welch@gmail.com or (812) 599-9042 with any questions about the retreat, registration, and We Care Fund.

MONDAY OFFICE VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Please consider joining. This commitment is only three hours a month, the work is very easy, and it's a good way to carry the message. For information, please call 314-638-6070 or email info@stlouisoa.org.



JUNE 8 SUPER SATURDAY FOCUSED ON THE STEPS AND SUMMER

Kites, sand buckets, flip flops, and bubble bottles decorated the June 8 Super Saturday held at the Ferguson Church of the Nazarene in Ferguson, MO. Hosted by the New Day group that meets on Thursdays at 10 AM, over 25 people attended the all-day event. Each Step was covered as several speakers spoke on how the Steps have impacted their lives. Participants also wrote a Dear John letter to their addictions and enjoyed each other's company during an on-site salad bar lunch. There was also a raffle of several donated items.

"As always, you put on a great Super Saturday," I like the summer theme, and "I love the salad bar," were some of the compliments shared during the day.

IS YOUR GROUP MEETING OVER LABOR DAY WEEKEND?

The Labor Day weekend is coming up. ***If your meeting is making a change for this holiday or any other reason, please contact the office at 314-638-6070.***

NEWLETTER EDITOR VACANCY

Our newsletter editor will be ending her service in September after two years. This is a very important service position that supports recovery for our entire Intergroup. Do you have the skills and interest to take this on? The outgoing editor would be happy to train you or a team of people for this impactful service. Her email is newsletter@stlouisoa.org.

IMPORTANT NOTICE – ST. LOUIS BI- STATE HAS A NEW EMAIL ADDRESS

Our new email address is info@stlouisoa.org. The previous address, bistateoa1@prodigy.net, stopped working on June 6. If you emailed to that address any time after June 6, we did not get your email. Would you please resend your information or questions to the new address or else call the office at 314-638-6070. If you have any questions, please text or call Elizabeth C. at 314-304-1444.