

NOVEMBER 2018 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.

WEIGHT LOSS OR HEALING? – THAT IS THE QUESTION

Once in a meeting, I wanted to say, “Why do you all say the reason you’re there is to lose weight?” It scares me to hear that from people in program. Do they not get that OA is **not** about weight loss, but about living clean and healthy with their eating? They’re more focused on the weight they want to lose or think they can lose, by working the program. It scares me, because I don’t want those thoughts creeping into my thinking.

Yes, weight loss is a wonderful by-product, but I don’t want weight to be my focus. Healing needs to be my focus... especially healing of the old wounds. When I let wounds go uncared for they get infected over time. What was once a small scratch develops puss and nastiness. If left unchecked, this can take that infection to the heart. It could kill me.

I use food to distract me from those wounds. When I’m ‘high’ on food I don’t see those wounds anymore.....until I come off the ‘high’. Then I don’t want to see the wounds again, so I get ‘high’ by eating. Healing will only come when I look and care for all the wounds. Abstinence allows me to see clearly and identify the location of the wounds. The Twelve Steps and our Higher Power allows me to care for each and every one.

Some may just need to be cleaned, like a scratch. Deeper wounds take a lot more time and care to clean out. Sometimes the wounds are so bad, I need professional help. Just as a broken bone needs to be reset or a deeply infected area has to be removed, experts are needed to treat those wounds. It’s okay to ask for help. I’m not always able to do it by myself.

Sure, cleaning wounds can hurt and it is scary and painful. But it is so much better when it is cleaned out and heals. I can move again with much less pain. I’ll carry scars and I have to adjust my thinking to handle a new way of walking, talking, moving, living, which includes being able to just sit quietly. But I can do it without food being stuffed in my body to compensate and cover the wounds.

I have healed and have lost weight along the way - that’s awesome! But the weight loss isn’t the goal. The goal is healing, sane living, happiness, joy, freedom from old pains and infections.

Even now, I still struggle - Do I really want that healing? What am I willing to give up having it? What will it take for me to do it? I get so overwhelmed when I think of all the work and care it will take. I have to stop and breathe. I take it to my Higher Power in prayer. I ask God to help me stay clean and sane so that together we can work on finding all the wounds and caring for each one.

As the writer of *Plugging the Dam* (Abstinence book, P. 32, chapter 2, 2nd edition) said, “Food doesn’t help the pain – it buries it. To recover, I must feel all of my feelings; to do that, I must be abstinent.” Abstinence, the Twelve Steps, loving friends in the program, and most of all my Higher Power, help me to see the wounds, clean them out, feel the pain, and then feel the joy of recovery. Living Happy, Joyous and Free is my goal. I wish that goal for you, too!

- A St. Louis OA Member

RELAPSE: SYMPTOM VS. SHAME

I have experienced relapse as part of my journey in OA. In the beginning, I felt a lot of shame regarding my relapse. I didn’t want to call people back because of that shame. It kept me away from meetings and the program for years.

After I returned to OA, I finally understood what I had never truly understood before – that what I have as a compulsive overeater is a disease—physical, mental, and spiritual. I am a sick person trying to get well, not a bad person trying to be good. It might seem like semantics, but it makes a difference in how I respond. I began to see that my relapse had been a symptom of the disease. There was no reason to feel shame. If I had a disease like cancer, I wouldn’t feel shame for experiencing a recurrence of symptoms. I would simply and urgently seek treatment for the disease.

So when, about three years into my abstinence, I had a moment when the symptom of compulsive overeating asserted itself back into my life, I responded differently. The lapse did not become a relapse. It happened only once. I immediately sought treatment for my disease. I got honest with my sponsor. We looked at what I had eaten and added a food to my abstinence list that I had not realized before was a trigger. I poured myself back into program, and my recovery continued from that point until now.

It is certainly not necessary for a person to experience a relapse from the disease of compulsive overeating. But if it happens, as it did for me, I have found shame will not lead to recovery. There is no shame in being sick. Seeing a lapse or relapse as a symptom or symptoms of my disease and responding with honesty and surrender to the healing of my Higher Power will lead me back to the program of OA and recovery.
– Marie W.

Struggling with the food? Don’t be alone; use the phone.

If you want to make an OA call, but don’t know whom to call, here’s the number of a local OA member: **Marie W. at 217-416-1648**

Also - our OA office (314-638-6070) can provide a list of OA members who would be glad to talk to you.



INTERGROUP MEETING INFO

Our next Intergroup meeting is **Sunday, January 13, 2019** at 1:30 at Missouri Baptist Hospital in the auditorium room area. Please send a representative from your group to this important monthly meeting

There are no meetings in April, August, or December.

SEPT. 9, 2018 INTERGROUP MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- The monthly financial report and minutes were distributed, but could not be approved due to a lack of a quorum, as our chair and treasurer were not able to attend.
- Several people have volunteered to be carpool drivers for the Super Saturday being held in Effingham, IL, on November 10.
- The preparation for the October 26-28 retreat is going well. Many people offered to provide scholarships to those needing assistance to attend the retreat.
- The request by Bob L. that Intergroup do a formal inventory of itself was on the agenda, but tabled until the next meeting due to the lack of a quorum.
- The 2019 convention is scheduled for March 29-31 in St. Louis at Sheraton Westport Plaza and will be chaired by Dianne S. and Elizabeth C, per approval at the November meeting. Those interested in volunteering, please call 314-238-4052 or email dianneastang@yahoo.com.
- The Sept. 29 Traditions workshop was attended by 22 people and netted \$58.25.
- The ad hoc committee continues to meet and discuss finances, alternative methods for offering service, outreach, member/meeting survey, and research of other IG groups. The goal is to have recommendations for IG consideration at the Feb. 2019 meeting.
- November is gratitude month. Intergroup representatives are encouraged to talk to their groups about passing the basket an extra time or two for the benefit of Intergroup. An email will be sent out to all those on the Intergroup email list concerning this.

Attention: All Meeting Treasurers

Do you send money from your group to Intergroup, Region or World OA (WSO)? If so, please note three things:

1) **Only use the 5-digit WSO number** on every check you send into World Service, Region, and St. Louis Intergroup, including every cash envelope you leave at our St. Louis office. Any contribution without a valid WSO number is just entered as an individual contribution instead of a group one.

2) **There is a new address for World Service.** Please send your World Service contributions to P.O. Box **44727**, Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4727.

3) **Each level – World Service, Region 4, and Intergroup - has its own contribution form.** To get these forms, go to stlouisoa.org, Intergroup, Business Documents & Forms, and then Contribution Form. This download has the forms for our intergroup, which also gives instructions for downloading and filling in the forms for Region 4 and WSO.

If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth C. at 314-304-1444. Thanks!

If at first you don't succeed, then maybe skydiving isn't for you.

Steven Wright

Region 4 Annual Fall Assembly Report

Elizabeth C and J-MO traveled to Rapid City, SD, on October 12 and 13 to represent the St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup (IG) at the Fall Assembly of Region 4. We thank you for financially supporting our travel to the assembly through your donations to IG. Here are the highlights of our work there:

- We got to know each other on Friday night and shared some of what is working best in our intergroups. An idea that I heard there that I really liked was an "Each One Reach One" program on the 12th of each month (to get us to practice Step 12). We would urge those in our meetings to make at least one outreach call on the 12th to a person they have not seen at a meeting in a while.
- We elected a new secretary and passed an annual budget.
- We updated bylaws and policies and procedures – mostly to make our written documents match current practices. The most controversial of the motions debated was one having to do with how to prioritize funds spent on travel of officers to present workshops. I think Elizabeth and I voted in an opposite way on that one, but we both agreed that frank and prayerful conversation will always be necessary by the R4 officers when an Intergroup requests that an officer come to present a workshop and cannot afford to cover the travel. Clearly such a situation is one where we have to make sure we put principles above personalities.
- Elizabeth C was a speaker on Saturday morning, and a one-hour workshop on "rocks" that have been removed in our recovery journeys was shared. We heard 10 minute talks by three speakers and worked in small groups.
- We participated in committee work, with Elizabeth working with the Convention Committee, while I chaired Outreach. Elizabeth reports that her committee got started on planning the 2020 Region 4 Convention which will be in Omaha. Our St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup will lead the planning for the entertainment portion of that convention. The Outreach Committee came away with a plan to reach out to each Intergroup related to whether they currently have a Public Information/Outreach Committee of some type and to urge each Intergroup to do so. An outreach plan is so essential to our "carrying the message" to still suffering compulsive eaters, both within and outside the fellowship.

Please know that we can have up to three additional representatives serve as Region 4 (R4) representatives. We are allowed to request travel assistance from R4 if the cost becomes more than our IG can bear. Six months of abstinence and a willingness to carry out the duties of the position are required, and I welcome your questions if you are interested in serving.

- J-MO 314-775-3261

ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY NOVEMBER 25, 2018.

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.



Featured Meeting of the Month

Eureka Newcomers Meeting Tuesday, 7 p.m. at St Francis Church 602 Rockwood Arbor Drive Eureka, MO 63025

Our little meeting is growing! It started about four years ago and has survived two major floods, three locations and groups, small and large. Our permanent home is now in a newly constructed church right by Six Flags, which is wheel chair accessible.

We welcome everyone. Anyone working towards abstinence is able to lead the meeting. If there is a newcomer, we gift them a copy of the first 164 pages of the Big Book and a coin with the Serenity Prayer. We read the Doctors Opinion and focus on the physical aspect of addiction. If there is no newcomer, we read from the Big Book and share our experience, strength and hope with the disease of compulsive overeating.

Our meeting recently sponsored our first Super Sunday, along with the Monday night Webster Groves 7 p.m. newcomers meeting. Over twenty fellows attended, and walked on the road of recovery together. It was special!

The contact person for this meeting is Jennifer L., 314-229-2118.

UPDATE ON DONATIONS TO THE LOGAN CORRECTIONAL CENTER

A package of OA materials was sent in early November to assist an OA meeting being started by inmates at the Logan Correctional Center in Lincoln, IL. There is still a need for four more Voices of Recovery books and two For Today daily readers. If you want to donate, please contact J-MO 314-775-3261.

Many thanks to those of you who donated to this worthy cause.

YOUR MEETING CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE DURING NOVEMBER GRATITUDE MONTH

This is a reminder that this is Gratitude Month. This is a time when members of OA meetings are asked to make donations to the St. Louis Intergroup. Many groups do this by passing the basket an extra time during meetings during the month of November. Please discuss this important fund drive at your meeting. It may seem the few dollars raised does not make that much of a difference. However, it really does help supplement our budget and strengthens our ability to help those suffering from compulsive food behaviors.

If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth C. at 314-304-1444.

The Falling Into Fellowship Retreat

Beautiful fall weather, golden and bright red trees and a gentle rippling pond were our companions at the Sojourn Retreat Center in Dittmer, MO on October 26-28. Thirty-eight participants gathered, eight of whom joined us for the day Saturday, to become teachable and reachable with the caring wisdom and guidance of our out of town speaker Vicki W., who offered incredible service with her talks and working with us through the OA traditions, principles and concepts as they apply to us.

The workshops, icebreakers, meditation, yoga, meetings, bonfire ceremonies, and prayer completed our time in Dittmer. This was, once again, a healing space, a safe haven, a renewing community spirit, and a joy! It is with grace and gratitude that we move back into our world, offering to others that which we need for ourselves.

Here are some comments and lessons that were a part of the retreat:

- *My personality and characteristics may be a strange shape, but that is exactly the shape of the piece HP was looking for to complete the jig-saw puzzle of the world.*
- *Compulsive eating is reaching for something outside to fix something inside.*
- *Coming to retreat is defying the darkness.*
- *Forgiveness does not excuse. It just releases.*
- *Wanting to eat compulsively is a spiritual smoke alarm.*
- *If you have a sponsor that you don't call, you don't have a sponsor. You have a telephone number.*
- *Don't ask yourself what you'll get out of it by going to the meeting. Ask what you will bring to it.*
- *Do the right thing **now**. It may be hard, but still it won't ever be this easy again. The longer you wait, the harder it gets.*
- *Step 6: To get ready to let go of something, you have to let go of the payoff you get from it.*
- *Step 11: I am not failing at "conscious contact" if I hardly ever feel the presence of HP. Conscious contact is not a feeling! It is the awareness of the fact that HP is there.*



Do we have to keep doing these 12 steps over and over again?

UPCOMING EVENTS –

Super Saturdays & Sundays –

December 1/Saturday – Holiday Booster hosted by the Sunday morning St. Mary's Group. Registration at 9 a.m., Program is from 9:30 to 12:30 at the Maplewood Baptist Church 2806 Marshall Ave, Maplewood, MO 63143. For more information, contact Carol H. at 314-961-7253.

March 29-31, 2019 – St. Louis Intergroup Convention, Sheraton Westport Plaza, St. Louis, MO

IMPORTANT!

NOW'S THE TIME FOR YOUR GROUP TO RESERVE A DATE FOR A SUPER SATURDAY/SUNDAY FOR 2019

Please confer with your group about hosting a Super Saturday for next year. To set a date and obtain information on how to host a weekend event, please contact Susan T. at stowns@sbcglobal.net/314-775-3261.

JANUARY - Still Open – *There is a great need for recovery after holidays. Let us know if your group can do this event in January.*

FEBRUARY – Reserved

MARCH – Open

APRIL – Open

MAY – Open

JUNE – Open

JULY – Open

AUGUST 11 – PNC Bank, Kirkwood, MO

SEPTEMBER – Open

OCTOBER – Open

NOVEMBER – Open

DECEMBER - Open

BIG BOOK QUIZ

ANSWER FROM LAST MONTH – If we have to find a power by which we can live, what did this power have to be? - A power greater than ourselves that we could live with. (Page 45)

BIG BOOK QUIZ QUESTION FOR NEXT MONTH:

What is the root of our problems?

The answer to this question is on page 62.

THERE'S A NEW MEETING IN

CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO ON THURSDAYS

We are happy to announce there is a new meeting in Cape Girardeau, MO! This Big Book/Newcomers meeting is held on Thursdays at 7 p.m. at Christ Episcopal Church, 101 Fountain, 63701. For more information, contact Christine M. at 636-299-6864 or camaguerils@semo.edu. (WSO#56489/SL444)

ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DAY MEETING TO BE HELD THURSDAY, NOV. 22

Focus on Gratitude will be the focus of this 9 a.m. Thanksgiving meeting held by the Clayton Early Bird Group at Samuel UCC, 320 North Forsyth, Clayton, MO 63105. Please enter through the glass doors from the parking lot. Take the elevator down to the Ziercher meeting room. This is a wheelchair accessible venue.

For more information, contact Eileen at 314-570-9333.

OCTOBER 13 SUPER SATURDAY HAD SUCCESSFUL 'ASK-IT-BASKET' PANEL

The Webster Groves Christian Church Saturday morning Step Work meeting hosted a Super Saturday on October 13th. It was a good day for fellowship and about 35 attended the event from 9-12pm.

The Ask-It-Basket Panel was a real hit with attendees commenting:

- Answering questions that people wrote and put in a box was the best idea ever. Good questions, good answers. We should have this at more Super Saturdays.

- The panel was wonderful. The "Ask-it Basket" panel was a great exercise and covered a variety of different subjects.

- I really liked the panel speakers and the basket questions. It was great to get different perspectives on the same questions. A great approach for speakers.

Other general comments from the HARVESTING RECOVERY Super Saturday:

- Harvesting Recovery was a great topic as recovery is planting a seed and having the faith God will help it grow.

- I am so glad I got to come today! I have been reminded that connections with our Fellows (my family of choice) are everything.

- Wonderful variety of speakers! The panel was outstanding!

- This was a great opportunity. I have so much to think about, read about and write about. Thanks for the service the committee provided to make it happen.

- I am so happy since I got to OA and now am in touch with all my senses.

- Weight loss at different speeds per person – my speed will not be the same as someone else.

A big thank you to everyone who attended! Together Recovery is Possible!

**It's okay to be a glow stick.
Sometimes we have to break
before we shine.**