

# SEPTEMBER 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.

## How Writing Helps My Recovery Program

Writing is one of my favorite tools in program. It has been something I've turned to for over 38 years; here is why and how it has a positive impact on my growth:

1. I am more honest and thoughtful when I put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard). The telephone is not my go-to tool when I communicate with friends in program. I find myself reverting to people-pleasing defects while on the phone. Although in-person communication is still important for me as I change and grow, writing gives me a chance to slow down, think, and connect honestly.
2. In the last several years, I have regularly shared my writing with sponsors. I have worked the steps with them through reading and writing exercises, using different formats. Step 4 work is a "fact-finding and fact-facing" step, and writing puts a boundary around character defects and assets. This helps with any overwhelming sense of a Step 4 being "too much."
3. Writing provides a documented history of recovery. Although I like to live in today and experience the present moment, sometimes I page back and re-read past writings. I can see and affirm my growth in letting go, acceptance, and HP's presence in my life. I love it when I read something I've written and think, "Wow, that's recovery." Other times, I re-read sections about struggles and realize, "Yep, I'm dealing with this again."

All the tools in the OA toolbox have helped me recover from the deadly disease of compulsive eating because they have propelled me into the steps. Writing happens to come easily for me; however, I didn't share my writing with sponsors early in recovery. An OA old timer once said, "Connection is the opposite of addiction." As I connect with others through writing, I am grateful for this tool that helps me be real and honest. - Anonymous

### Is the Food Calling to You?

If you want to make an OA call, but don't know whom to call, you can call the OA member who wrote the "The Nature of our Disease" article on this page: **Lev (314) 996-9325**

Also - our OA office (314-638-6070) can provide a list of OA members to you who are happy to receive telephone calls.

**WANTED - DRIVERS AND CARPOOL RIDERS FOR NOV. 10 EFFINGHAM SUPER SATURDAY - For details, see page 4.**



Whatever  
your problem is,  
the answer  
is not in  
the fridge.

## The Nature of the Disease

*(Editor's Note - This is partial text of a talk given by a local OA member at the April 2018 Spring Fling. For many of us in attendance, this description of food addiction and how it can be overcome was powerful and compelling.)*

It was a late night after work in the fall of 2012, and through a mutual friend's contact I found myself on the phone with an OA member. At that point, I had never been to a meeting and only had vaguely heard about OA. But as she spoke, I identified with her story, and in my quaking voice, I admitted powerlessness over this cunning and baffling disease for the first time.

For me, food was the way that I could numb my suffering. Why I was suffering? I wasn't sure, but I knew that it was an unshakable, chronic emotional pain that hung around like a low-grade fever afflicting my life. For so many years I had normalized that emotion, so I didn't know what life felt like without it—except for when I binged. Later, I would understand that my feeling was, to put it coarsely, self-hate. That may seem too harsh a term, but upon reflection, it pretty much sums it up.

Before Step 1, I needed to hit a bottom, and for me, that meant that I began to have a desire (willingness) to stop feeling the way I was feeling—even if that meant looking at my relationship with food, which at the time was my most prized source of relief. To even entertain the idea of taking away my only tried-and-true coping mechanism (in a sense, my best friend) that I had been using since I was 4 years old, meant that I was truly desperate.

Luckily, for addicts like myself, desperation is a very useful thing. My sponsor revealed to me that the root of the reasons for my overeating was my self-loathing: feeling a deep sense of worthlessness, like I was an excuse for a human being, devoid *(This article is continued on page 2.)*

## INTERGROUP MEETING INFO

Our next Intergroup meeting is **Sunday, October 14 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 was no Intergroup meeting in August. The last Intergroup meeting for the year will be **November 11**. There are no meetings in April, August, or December.

## OPEN SERVICE POSITIONS

**Office Administrator** (one year of abstinence)

**World Service Delegate** (4 positions open; one year of abstinence)

**Region Representatives** (1 position open; six months of abstinence)

**IG Office Volunteer Coordinator** (Six months of abstinence)

**Public Information Chair** (Six months of abstinence)

**Retreat Chair** (Six months of abstinence)

For descriptions of each position and to apply, please go to <http://oaregion4.org> and click on the tabs: Intergroup / Business Documents & Forms / Policy & Procedure Manual, and scroll to the bottom of the page. If you have questions, please call IG Chair J-MO at 314-775-3261.

## MEETING RESOURCES

“Amazing Recovery: Passport to Unity” Workshop - Enliven your next meeting or event and experience the unity we all depend on for continued recovery. Participants in this interactive two-hour workshop become OA travelers on a journey of sharing and reflection activities designed to find commonalities in others’ different experiences. Workshop materials include a leader’s guide, a slideshow presentation, and printable passports and stickers; find them at [oa.org/documents](http://oa.org/documents) under “Workshops and Skits.”

Add Fun and Fellowship to Your Group - Since fellowship keeps us in the rooms and connects us, a Twelfth Step Within subcommittee surveyed OA members worldwide to explore barriers to fun and fellowship. The result is a PDF download full of helpful information and suggestions. Look for the Fun and Fellowship link at [oa.org/documents](http://oa.org/documents) under “Twelfth Step Within.”

### For more OA recovery, check out:

- 1) OA World Service Organization quarterly newsletter can be found at [oa.org](http://oa.org) and clicking on the WHAT’S NEW tab
- 2) 4 Thought, our Region 4 Journal of Recovery quarterly newsletter and be found at [oaregion4.org/](http://oaregion4.org/) and clicking on the NEWSLETTER – 4 THOUGHT tab



*(The Nature of Our Disease/continued from page 1)*

of value, unloved and unlovable, existing without merit, less than human, a second-class citizen— constantly feeling “less-than.” It all boiled down to one word: shame.

*... “I don’t think that it would be an understatement to say that it was a toxic garbage fire that consumed everything” ...*

Shame is an ugly and corroding fundamental belief from which to build a self-identity. It was an internalized value that had to be smashed, pulverized into dust, ripped out of my computer hardware as if it were a corrupting chip with a virus. I don’t think that it would be an understatement to say that it was a toxic garbage fire that consumed everything. These core beliefs had to be eradicated, because they were at the root of my addiction. These diseased portions had to be cut out and replaced with something better. I needed a deep renovation, a psychic change, or a spiritual experience, and then tap into that nourishing, healing source of energy. However, that source required internal re-engineering. I needed a new perspective on life and a new set of core beliefs about myself. The solution was to have a lot of energy that was not accessible through a wall of active intoxication. And so Step 1 was not about seeking God or a spiritual experience; it was about undergoing physical withdrawal from a chemical dependence to a drug. - Lev

*The entire text is available at [oaregion4.org](http://oaregion4.org) under the newsletter tab. The talk can be heard at [stlouisoa.org](http://stlouisoa.org) under the Podcasts tab. A copy of this talk can be mailed to you by contacting the office at 314-638-6070 or emailing [newsletter@stlouisoa.org](mailto:newsletter@stlouisoa.org).*

## COULD YOU SEND LITERATURE TO ASSIST THE NEW OA MEETING BEING STARTED AT THE LOGAN CORRECTIONAL CENTER?

As Region Trustee, I received a request for a new meeting that wanted to start in our Intergroup area. It was from someone who is incarcerated, so the meeting is in need of someone who can provide books for the meeting.

It will not be listed as an OA meeting on the WSO site, since it is not possible for everyone to attend the meeting. But I do believe it is a worthy project.

I suspect it will be a small meeting so 6 Newcomer packets and a few copies of the OA 12 & 12 and possibly the Big Book would be most welcome, I’m sure.

If you decide to provide this material, please mail it to:

Logan Correctional Center

PO Box 1000

Lincoln, IL 62656

Attn: Chaplain Counselor O’Bryan



## Featured Meeting of the Month

**Monday, Wednesday, & Friday  
7am at Samuel UCC Church  
320 N Forsyth  
Clayton MO 63105**

We offer a meeting you can catch before you begin your busy day. We meet in the basement of Samuel UCC Church, which you may also enter through a door on the front entrance of the church. There is handicapped accessible entrance from parking lot.

On Mondays, we read and share on the OA 12/12 or AA 12/12.

On Wednesdays, we read the Big Book or the OA Brown Book.

On Fridays, the program changes each week:

- 1st week - 12/12
- 2nd week - Big Book
- 3rd week - Speaker
- 4th week - Read For Today & Voices of Recovery and write for ten minutes - then share.
- 5th week - Leaders Choice!

We end promptly at 7:55 so everyone gets to work on time. For more information, contact Eileen at 314-570-9333.

### **Falling Into Fellowship: Retreat 2018**

Plans are being finalized for workshops, meetings, as we work under the guidance of our keynote speaker who will fly in to be with us on our journey! Sign up now so we can reserve space. This promises to be a back to basics, wonderful learning and fulfilling experience. Online registration for our October 26-28 retreat is up and running. Just click on RETREAT on the home page, which will take you to the link. You can also register by regular mail using the form that is in the retreat brochure. Of special note, please recall we have We Care, so all of you who wish to attend, may do so without concern for the barrier of cost.

If you are interested and able to provide the funding for retreat scholarships, your help is needed! Please make a pledge to the Sponsorship for Donors program, which makes retreat scholarships possible and is funded by OA members who pledge donations. As requests are made, donors will be called upon to donate, as needed. These gifts will remain anonymous. It's a great way to enable another to come, while remaining anonymous, and targeting a real need!

For more information, contact Christina D. at 314-954-1944.

Comments from the Aug. 12 Super Sunday -  
"Keep it Simple-Physical, Emotional, Spiritual"  
Sponsored by the Abstinence First-Newcomers  
Meeting at PNC Bank in Kirkwood, MO

- *Great format for a meeting about the 3-legged stool. I enjoyed all the speakers and got many insights from them.*
- *The speakers were so clear about their experience, strength, and hope. So many of us were able to relate and get their hope.*
- *I got the identity of being a member of a loving, caring community. Oh, and yes, I'm an addict too.*
- *So many life-giving shares and speakers of recovery! This is the best way to put "super" into my life - one day at a time.*
- *I loved the speakers who shared their experience, strength and hope. We had lots of time for sharing and the chance to query the speakers. I learned a lot. CM*
- *Wonderful mixture of hope and healing for the community offering beehives of hope and understanding for present and future friendships. JD*
- *Great format. Great speakers! Nice for me to have it on a Sunday, because I work on Saturdays. I'm leaving with energy, hope, faith - a jump start for my program. Thank you! EC*
- *I found the topics very helpful in my program. I liked the format with two speakers and then question/share time. Entertaining speakers with important information shared/presented. MF*
- *It was good to be in a place of recovery. I like the fact that the speakers were diverse. People in for a long time and practical newcomers. People who lost lots of weight and people whose weight was mostly between their ears.*
- *I like having the time to hear more of each one's story.*
- *Speakers were very honest and open. I appreciate how they told us that they also struggled, but they found OA coping strategies. This was great!*
- *I thought the speakers were great and showed how the program works - not just talk the talk, but walk the walk - and followed the directions from the Big Book.*
- *Great speakers on great topics. Glad I came.*
- *This was my first OA Super Sunday (or Saturday). I benefited greatly from all the topics the speakers shared on a wonderful day. BH*
- *What if = FEAR Even if = FAITH*

### **OA VIRTUAL REGION BECOMES REALITY**

A new Virtual Region was approved at the World Service Business Conference earlier this year. Soon our virtual meetings will have the same opportunities that face-to-face meetings have. OA virtual groups are growing, with more than five hundred meetings and nine virtual intergroups as of May 2018. WSBC delegates passed an amendment that allows virtual groups to actively participate with a voice and a vote in national and language service board assemblies. After years of work, I am so excited for our new Virtual Region to be fully realized in 2019!

- Dora P. 3



## UPCOMING EVENTS –

### Super Saturdays & Sundays –

**September 16/Sunday** – The *Broad Highway of Recovery* is the theme of the Super Sunday that will be held at St. Francis Episcopal Church, 602 Rockwood Arbor Drive, Eureka, MO 63025. It is being planned by Tuesday Newcomer meeting in Eureka. Registration is at 1:30 and the program is scheduled from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Questions? Call Jennifer L. at 314-229-2118.

**October 13/Saturday** – Registration starts at 9 a.m., with a 9:30-12:30 program. The theme is *Harvesting Recovery*, will be held at the Webster Groves Christian Church, 1320 W. Lockwood Ave, St Louis, MO 63122. You can park in the rear and this is handicapped accessible. Hosted by the Webster Groves Saturday morning Step Study group. For more information, contact Ellen at 314-603-3712 or Carol H. at 961-7253.

**November 10/Saturday** – The Thursday Effingham group will be hosting this all day event. If you are interested in carpooling to this event, please call JMO at 314-775-3261. (More details in future newsletters.)

**December 1/Saturday** – Holiday Booster hosted by Sunday St. Mary's Group from 8:30 to 1:00 at the Maplewood Baptist Church 2806 Marshall Ave, Maplewood, MO 63143. For more information, contact Ellen W. at 314-603-3712.

### Other Events -

**Saturday, September 29** – Traditions Workshop will be held from 1-4:30 pm at the Webster Groves Christian Church, 1320 West Lockwood Ave, 63122. For more information, see the article on this page.

**October 26-28, 2018** - OA Fall Retreat Sojourn Retreat Center in Dittmer, MO. See page 3 for more information.

### WOULD YOUR GROUP HOST A SUPER SATURDAY/SUNDAY IN 2019?

Please confer with your group about hosting a Super Saturday for next year. All months are open at this time. To set a date and obtain information on how to host a weekend event, please contact Susan T. at 314-283-0204.

### QUESTION ABOUT NEWSLETTER POSTAGE

You may notice that postage is now being written on the newsletter bill. Our newsletter volunteer decided to write the postage costs on each bill for the education of the group, just in case the group wanted to make more of an effort to pick up the newsletters or maybe increase their contribution. Intergroup has been paying for the postage to send newsletters to each OA group and will continue to do so.

**BIG BOOK QUIZ QUESTION:** What is the main problem of the still suffering addict, be it alcoholism or compulsive over or undereating? **CLUE:** Look at page 45. (The answer will be in the next newsletter.)



## TRADITIONS OVERVIEW - DONE IN AN AFTERNOON ON SEPT. 29

People want to know more about the traditions, but who has time for an in-depth study? That's why Intergroup is giving this quick overview, all 12 traditions in just one afternoon.

Come for fun and learning, and to support this kind of event. Using short videos, real life examples and fun interactions, we'll hit the highlights of the traditions and see how we use them in OA and in everyday life.

Join us on Saturday, September 29, from 1-4:30 pm at the Webster Groves Christian Church in the first floor Chapel. The address is 1320 West Lockwood Ave, 63122. Go east on Lockwood between Sappington and Berry, and the church will be on the right, surrounded by a golf course. It's fully accessible. There is no cost, but we will "pass the hat" to help pay for workshop expenses.

For more information, contact Elizabeth at [elizabethoaSTL@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethoaSTL@gmail.com), or text or call 314-304-1444.

## WANTED - DRIVERS AND CARPOOL RIDERS FOR NOV. 10 EFFINGHAM SUPER SATURDAY

The Effingham meeting will be hosting an all day November 10 Super Saturday in Effingham, Illinois. Since this is about a 90 minute drive, carpools are being organized. The folks from the Effingham group have always made it to events in St. Louis. Let's show our support by going to their Super Saturday. If you can drive or would like to be in a carpool, please contact [newsletter@stlouisoa.org](mailto:newsletter@stlouisoa.org) or call JMO at 314-775-3261 .

### OA RECOVERY OUTSIDE BI-STATE AREA

**September 21** Clive, Iowa USA: "State of Iowa Convention: Twelve Freedoms of Recovery" hosted by Central Iowa Intergroup and Northwest Iowa Intergroup  
**September 21** Fort Michell, Alabama USA: "Stories of Recovery - 23rd annual Weekend Retreat" hosted by the Roswell, Georgia OA Group  
**September 21** - Oceanside, California USA: "175th Serenity Retreat Weekend" hosted by the San Diego County Intergroup

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

Please send your submissions to the OA TODAY Editorial Staff at [newsletter@stlouisoa.org](mailto: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.