

March 2021 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of OA
P.O. Box 28882, St. Louis, MO 63123
info@stlouisoa.org, www.stlouisoa.org
Phone: 314-638-6070



STEP THREE

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.



The more we become willing to depend upon a Higher Power, the more independent we actually are. Therefore dependence....is really a means of gaining true independence of the spirit. p36 AA 12 & 12

I had always thought my insistence on independence of thought and action was to protect myself. I was able to protect it so well that, with a raging eating disorder, I found myself isolated, miserably protecting my secrets, and pretending I was just fine. I walked into the rooms of OA and found a host of others who had done similarly. And for the first time, I decided isolation was not protection and my version of independence was not freedom!

Still, giving myself over to a Higher Power, with trust and faith, seemed a far stretch. What a relief to find the word willing. I could have a willingness to do so then and see where that led me. What I could not

imagine—a leap of faith—I could essentially allow to happen. Willingness was the word that gave me hope.

I know I have to do the work. Five years in, I understand that the simple but hard work of using the tools, sharing my program with sponsors, sponsees, and in service, and working the steps is a daily task. I understand I wake each day an addict, in need of a fix—and that fix is the faith, trust and willingness to allow hp in. And the work I do each day creates the space for hp. And hp is that force which allows me to strive for and maintain my abstinence. And in humility, with abstinence, I find recovery.

All of this from a moment when I discovered a word, willingness, could open a door. And the door, once opened, would widen in welcome or, if closed, be opened again. And in this there was hope. And joy.

These pandemic times have tested all of this. As change and dangers intrude into my life, I find I first think of the old protections. Today I use willingness to help. I am willing for the time I now spend away from others to be filled with my work. I am not isolated even if I am alone. Today, I am willing to share my journey with others, learning new means (some of which feel very foreign) to be in my community. Who even knew zoom was a thing? Today I find new ways to connect and serve, filling enough of my day to ensure my mind is calm. Today I allow hp to take care of my tomorrow. I am willing to do work today.

Christina D.



**Am I Holy?
Yes, I am.**

This drawing captures my secret inner self. How I don't feel or think I am enough. I am missing pieces. I do not feel whole.

Art & Caption by Ann B., STL-MO



SHARE THE GOOD NEWS: OA CHANGES LIVES!

As I reflect on the experience of what it was like to experience 90 consecutive days of detoxing my body from those foods which had caused me to lose my health and my serenity, I am reminded of another experience I had that also was challenging.

How Did I Feel When I Got 90 Days of Detox?

I decided to hike the Grand Canyon so the first thing I did was to prepare by packing the bare necessities in my backpack with food, water, and a sleeping bag. When I reached the South Rim of the Canyon, I was full of hope and optimism and excited about the unknown adventures which lay ahead of me.

Then I took that first step, followed by many more steps until I reached the bottom of the Canyon. Along the way I saw orchids, condors, the many layers of time preserved

as I descended down the Bright Angel Trail into the unknown. I saw things that I had never seen before nor had even hoped to see. I thought thoughts and felt feelings that I had never thought nor felt before. I grew in confidence and courage with each step, telling myself that I could do it as long as I took one step at a time. Yes, I had blisters and lost a couple of toenails along the way, but it was such a trip.

As I slept on the Canyon floor and stared up at the stars, I realized that I was making a memory that would carry me far. I hiked out of the Canyon the same way I hiked in, one step at a time, one second, minute, hour at a time. When I reached the South Rim, five days after I started this adventure, I felt so empowered and with new confidence that I could do anything I decided to do with the help of a Higher Power and with taking one step at a time.

Now I have set out on a new journey toward recovery and I am able to draw on those old experiences and incorporate them into my OA recovery program. I may have blisters or lose toenails along the way, but that is part of the journey. I cherish all the parts of my journey as those were all the parts which were necessary to make up the whole.

The day I achieved my 90 days of detox felt like I had reached the top of the South Rim of the Canyon: ready to go on to other South Rims and new adventures still awaiting me.

Anonymous





TRADITION THREE

The only requirement for OA membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.



I'm grateful today that I was not presented, at my very first OA meeting, with a questionnaire that probed the sincerity of my desire to stop overeating. I came here with only one intent; to lose weight without having to change anything - not my eating behavior and certainly not any other aspect of my life. I clearly didn't see the nexus. I thought you would simply show me a magical way to lose weight.

As I sat there at my first meeting and listened to abstinent people share how they used the tools of the program, comprehending "Step talk" was outside of any realm of possibility that day. My desperation of only a few hours previous slowly changed to resistance to every single suggestion I heard.

But they invited me to come back anyways. My sincerity – or lack thereof – was never questioned. I'm alive and well today – physically, emotionally and spiritually – as a result of this unconditional welcome.

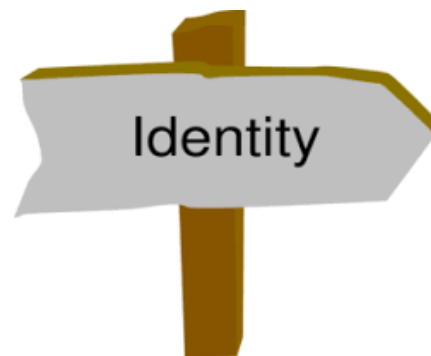
A.A.'s **The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions** memorializes the principle of self-determination: "You are an A.A. member if you say so. You can declare yourself in; nobody can keep you out" and "you're an A.A. member the minute you declare yourself." O.A.'s **12&12** further makes clear that it is not a requirement to have had a common experience with overeating. We are a fellowship of many different stripes and experiences, and Tradition Three reminds us that its purpose is "to ensure that the road will always be accessible to all who wish to travel it."

It is also made clear that continued membership is not contingent on working the steps in any particular fashion or utilizing any particular food plan. Neither are special focus groups – men-only, women-only, LGBT, bulimics, etc. – meant to be exclusionary. While they are designed to provide a haven of identity for some, attendance is still open to all compulsive eaters.

I'm not the same person that I was the day I attended my first O.A. meeting. Thank God that the door was held open for me.

Bob L.

Note: *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* of Alcoholics Anonymous are also [approved literature](#) for use within OA.



WE COME TO OA FROM MANY PATHS

An OA return story:

My incredibly wise Higher Power knew that I needed a different approach than most to truly embrace Overeaters Anonymous. I first entered OA over thirty years ago, after beginning recovery in another Twelve Step program. Despite getting a wonderful sponsor, I declared myself cured because I lost weight and felt better about myself. I quit both programs and went on my merry way. Eventually life came crashing down, and I entered recovery in yet another Twelve Step program. My desperation was a gift, and after a false start, I began to take my need for recovery more seriously. I worked the Steps a couple of times and finally completed making my amends. I felt so clean! I then decided to get my physical space in better order as well. I cleaned out some drawers and came across my old OA books. Even though I was compulsively overeating again and seventy pounds overweight, I decided that I did not need them anymore. I put the books in a pile by my chair as a reminder to give them away.

A few days later, I sat in that same chair to do my daily Tenth Step. In the midst of it, when I happened to glance at that pile of books, I sensed a clear message from my Higher Power to return to OA. My interior chatter was cleared by finally making my amends, so I was able to both hear and listen to this invitation. My openness to it was a gift of sincerely trying to do an honest Tenth Step inventory. I got up out of my chair, looked up the next OA meeting, and had just exactly enough time to get there. As further confirmation that this message was indeed from my Higher Power, my sponsor from over thirty years ago was sitting there at that meeting, and I cried as she lovingly welcomed me home!

Anonymous



**how recovery
really works**

Many of us wear “two-hats”:

I was about ten years sober in a different 12 Step Program when a friend of mine started attending OA. You hear about the alcoholic who hooks up with the bartender or the drug addict hooking up with the drug dealer. Well, I was the overeater who married the chef - literally. Food became a common denominator in our early marriage though I did not recognize this until OA.

Those years in a 12 Step program for people addicted to alcohol, despite my regular attendance, I continued vain attempts to manage a weight issue that plagued me since childhood. (I ate before I drank and drugged.) I was successful with most of the diet plans, hitting the goal weight. What I wasn't successful at was keeping the weight off. I'd get the certificate, the lifetime membership, then sit in worry of the return of the weight - and it always did. So, when my friend started going to OA, I got curious. She took me to my first meetings.

Continued on page 5

Two-hats, continued from page 4

I have been a member of OA now for several years. I would like to report that, as soon as I started attending meetings, I lost the weight and have lived in slim bliss since.

Unfortunately for many years, again despite consistent meeting attendance, I failed to work the OA steps. By that I mean, I had done all that in my other program, after all, so I used OA as another diet and calories club, focusing on weight loss not spiritual growth or the steps. That is until I got a wakeup call. It takes what it takes!

A couple years ago I was diagnosed with borderline high cholesterol. I started reading about the side effects of the medications used to manage this condition and decided I would try diet and exercise first. The results were amazing when I actually worked the steps and took the suggestions of the program! Now to the best of my ability (I don't walk on water yet!), I work the first three every steps each morning, do a nightly inventory, send out step 10's when necessary, attend meetings, and am eating healthier. My eating isn't dieting and restricting, just eating better food choices. I also work out on a regular basis (which helps my depression and anxiety), and I drink a lot of water.

The result of these efforts has been a healthier body weight, and the cholesterol has lowered. I am not the size '0' that I occasionally read about in my OA daily meditation book, but I am healthy. I think at age 63, I am in better shape than I was in my 40's or even 50's. Is my food perfect (perfection)? Heavens, no. Is it better than what it was (progress)? Heavens, yes! Thank you, OA!

Liz P

Have You Been “Slippin’ & Slidin’”? This New Group May Be for You!

A new **Recovery from Relapse** group is forming and starts to meet on Tuesday, March 2, 2021. It will gather each Tuesday from 6-7 p.m. afterward until participants have worked through [the resource](#) available at OA.org called “**Been Slipping and Sliding: A Reading and Writing Tool.**”

To join the meeting, use this Zoom link, meeting ID, and passcode:
<https://zoom.us/j/97966930474?pwd=VVJYTG1yL2xvRGs5N3JvUFg4ZVhmdz09>

Meeting ID: 979 6693 0474
Passcode: 912826

For more information, contact our Public Information Officer at 314-226-8686 by text or at piofficer@stlouisoa.org by email.



Zooming into Recovery: Spring Convention Is May 15!!!

The St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of Overeaters Anonymous will hold its annual Spring Convention on Saturday, May 15, 2021. The theme is **Zooming into Recovery.**

This year's line-up features three keynote speakers, all from outside our region. The day will also include two break-out rooms, one a step study format, the other focusing on topics of interest. Each of the break-out rooms will feature six speakers and allow ample time for sharing.

Advance registration is required; the fee is \$25. We Care funds are available for any member who needs assistance with all or part of the fee. ***Please don't stay away from this special event for financial reasons.***

The deadline for registration is midnight, Thursday, May 13. Members may register and pay [online](#) or register by [mail](#).

Intergroup (IG) News: Chair's Column

Dear Fellow OAs,

****SAVE THE DATE**: OUR ANNUAL CONVENTION IS **SATURDAY MAY 15th** - THIS WILL BE A ZOOM EVENT SO WE EXPECT LOTS OF VISITORS FROM ACROSS NORTH AMERICA AND PERHAPS EVEN THE WORLD!!! REGISTRATION FLYERS HAVE BEEN EMAILED TO IG REPS FOR DISTRIBUTION**

FALL RETREAT: We need **feedback from meetings by our March 14th IG meeting** about whether this event should be in-person or Zoom. We have a tentative reservation at Mercy Conference and Retreat Center in West St. Louis County for September 17-19, 2021. We will need to release this reservation if we do not want to make a monetary commitment of \$800.

Virtual meetings can be quite successful. The Virtual Region (this region was added a few years ago) held a Virtual Convention the weekend of Feb 20-21. **1,983 OAs registered from 37 countries!!!**

Meetings, we need your help! Please add a line to your meeting format. When you have newcomers, please ask how they learned about OA. Jot down their answer(s) and let me or Melanie T, our Public Information Officer know (chair@stlouisoa.org or piofficer@stlouisoa.org). This will help us direct our public outreach efforts. Thanks for your help.

COME ONE, COME ALL to our March 14 Intergroup meeting! We will be working on a Strategic Plan and setting goals and brainstorming actions to accomplish these goals. Have you ever thought "Gee, I wish our Intergroup or my meeting would do X, Y

or Z?" Come share your ideas! The more the merrier!

Hint: Our primary Strategic Plan can be found in Tradition 5!

Several of our St. Louis Bi-State OAs attended an **Intergroup Renewal Workshop** on Feb 6, hosted by **Region 4**. It was a long day, but worth every minute. We'll be sharing our key takeaways from this workshop as a jumping off point at the March 14 Intergroup Meeting. Here's how to join:

Zoom meeting ID - 940 5580 8391
Password – Serenity
Phone 312-626-6799
Passcode - 75183374

Elizabeth C our Operations Administrator has requested that each meeting consider if they would like her team to update meeting information on the OA.org website. This task is usually handled by each meeting, but many of the meetings' entries are not current. Since Elizabeth already handles changes to our local **Where and When**, she would be willing to provide this additional service if enough groups agree. (This will be an all or none type of service since providing it or not providing it on a meeting-by-meeting basis would be much more complicated). **Please have a group conscience and request that your IG rep bring your group decision to our March 14 IG meeting.**

Summary of the February meeting: Our Intergroup met on February 14 and reviewed and voted on motions presented to World Service for discussion at the April 2021 World Service Business Conference. Our terrific WSO Delegates, Cyndy L, Christina D and Pat M had prepared consent agendas which streamlined this process. We thank them!

*With Gratitude,
Dianne S., St. Louis Bi-State Chairperson*

RECOVERY HUMOR

Q: Why aren't people in recovery good dancers?

A: They lose interest after twelve steps.



Ba-dum-Tsss!

The Wacky World of OA Service

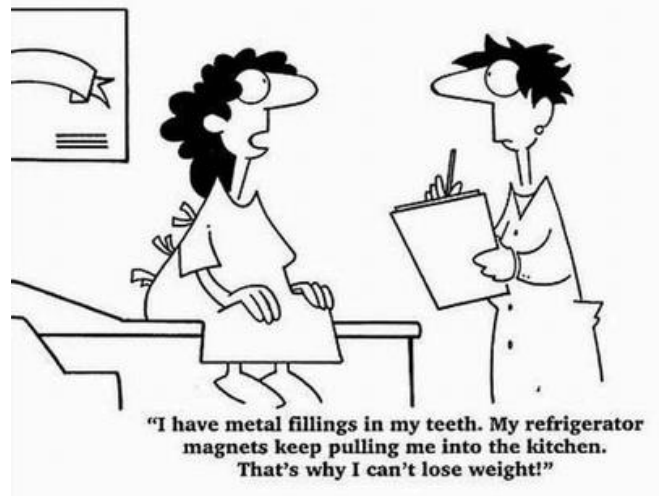
Jim is told by his sponsor that he needs to participate more in service work. So, he applies for the position of treasurer. They hold a group conscience and ask him "What is nine multiplied by four?" He thinks quickly and says "Thirty-three." After the interview, he realizes his mistake. He's surprised when they inform him that he got the job, despite there being four other candidates.

"But I got the wrong answer," he protests.

"Yeah, we know," came the reply. "But you were closest."



True confessions: I was addicted to soap once. Now I'm clean.



"I have metal fillings in my teeth. My refrigerator magnets keep pulling me into the kitchen. That's why I can't lose weight!"



ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWS-LETTER ARE DUE BY MARCH 20, 2021.

Please send your submissions to the OA TODAY editor and Newsletter Team at newsletter@stlouisoa.org or mail to St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup, PO Box 28882, St. Louis, MO 63123-0082. 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.

STL/Bi-State IG Annual Convention

zooming into recovery

Saturday
May 15,
2021



9 am - 5:30 pm
Virtual on Zoom

Three Keynote Speakers

Two Break-out Rooms: Special Topics plus Step Study Featuring
Six Speakers Each & Sharing During Each Session

ADVANCE REGISTRATION
REQUIRED

\$25 registration

Register online at:

stlouisoa.org

▪ **Registration deadline: Midnight Thur. May 13**

▪ Meeting number, password and final information will be emailed during the week before the event

▪ No refunds will be available

General Questions? Call Debbie K. 636-634-6201 or email: info@stlouisoa.org

To register by check, complete and mail this form to:

Marina Fruth,
14644 N. Court #6, Effingham, IL 62401
(make check payable to St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup)

Please never stay away from an OA event for financial reasons.

We Care Funds are available to help with all or part of fee. To arrange for anonymous assistance, please call **Marina F. 815-343-6412**

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Email: _____ Telephone: _____

In US: City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Outside US: Country _____ City/Province _____

ENCLOSED Registration: \$ _____ We Care Donation: \$ _____ TOTAL Enclosed \$ _____