

# April 2021 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

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## STEP FOUR

**Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**

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Over time in program, I've written and given away a number of fourth step inventories. My first was answering 170 questions – a format that was circulating in the Chicago area at that time. It was exhaustive (and exhausting!), but it allowed me to start cleaning up an awful lot of wreckage from my past. I've also used the Big Book format and the directness of that process is something I very much appreciate, being a person who can easily complicate things.

About five years ago, I worked through the "Twelve Step Workshop and Study Guide" with a small group of fellows and it's a format I'd recommend to anyone. The Step 4 process in this workshop is detailed and was

so helpful to me. One part of it asked me to identify my "Old Beliefs", to write about what happens when I act from them and then to write an affirmation about my new understanding and belief.

An example of an "Old Belief": If I try hard enough, I can control what others think of me.

When I operate out of this belief I can get into a whole range of people-pleasing behaviors. I must wear the right thing, dare not express my true thoughts, go along with the prevailing group opinion.

The new truth I seek to live comes from **For Today** (p.105) "To be myself is to say what I mean, make decisions without fear, and give up pleasing people just to gain approval."

This approach was so valuable for me. I'm grateful to OA for all the different ways I can continue to work the Steps and learn through taking inventory.

Anonymous

## Word *of the* Month

# cour·age

*n.* 1. the quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face difficulty, danger, fear, pain, etc. with self-possession, confidence, and resolution 2. bravery

❧ ————— ❧

## TRADITION FOUR

**Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.**

❧ ————— ❧

The principle of tradition 4 is autonomy: *the state or condition of having independence or freedom, or of being autonomous; the right of self-government.*

I had to look up the word autonomy to make certain I knew what it meant. It sounds foreboding or complicated and is not a word I hear every day.

The simplest explanation is that my group can make its own decisions on where we meet, what time and for how long, how the room is arranged, what format we follow, do we have a special focus, and do we have any requirements for filling service positions. All of these things are decided by the group conscience. When a member wants to change any of these, they bring it to the next group conscience meeting. and the group decides what to keep or what to change.

Why is there a tradition for something so simple? Well, the second part of the sentence is where things get interesting. As a member of Overeaters Anonymous I have a responsibility to ensure my group is representing OA as a whole.

*Does our group always consider the welfare of all of OA in making group conscience decisions? In voting how to spend our group's money? In planning OA group activities? In the way we operate our meetings?*

I remember many years ago, getting a phone call from a member at a new meeting. They

wanted to know if it was okay to exercise during their meeting. I explained Tradition 4 and that exercise, while very admirable, is not a part of our message and should not be a part of the meeting format. The members of the meeting are free to get together after the meeting for some activity, just not during the meeting. I know if there had been exercise at my first OA meeting it would have been my last. I wasn't looking for another way to do what I had already tried over and over. I'm grateful my first meeting was focused on recovering using the steps and traditions.

What I have to realize is that any outside issue practiced within a meeting dilutes the message of OA and takes away from our purpose, which is to practice the twelve steps and twelve traditions. Sharing how I use them in my life is what I focus on at my meetings. Practicing the principles of the steps and traditions keeps me on track in my decision to support OA in the best possible way, keeping my own needs and desires in check for the good of the whole.

Anonymous



### ***Region 4 Service Opportunity***

Susan W, the Region 4 convention committee chair, is soliciting artwork/designs to illustrate the convention theme for the Region 4 Convention that is happening in 2022: ***Celebrating Community - 2gether We Get Better!*** Send your design/art as a .JPG file to [susanwolz@cox.net](mailto:susanwolz@cox.net). The **deadline is April 2, 2021.**



## Waiting to Breathe: One Day at a Time During a Pandemic

We sat in our vehicle at 6:30 in the evening, waiting in line to receive our second COVID-19 vaccination. It was a massive operation. Asking, I learned that 250 people were working all that day at the task. I felt deepest gratitude and noted the kindness of the three people starting a conversation with my husband as they prepared to vaccinate him.

I watched the needle plunge quickly into his arm and felt my eyes fill and emotion clench my chest. With his health issues, our whole family had been concerned and done what could be done to keep him from being infected. Seeing him get that shot was the greatest relief. I was next.

As we drove home, I felt a strange release, like I'd been holding my breath. For a year! The next day I noticed a little fear needling me. We'd been sheltering the best we could for so long. How would it feel to make plans? Could I trust that it was safe? I knew we would still be following safe guidelines, but I felt so unsure. I thought of my elder sister in another state that I'd not seen for way too long. Really, could I make plans to go see her? I felt a little more release, that inner exhale of caught up yearlong breath.

Not uncommon for me, I didn't quite get all this until I shared it with my sponsor the next day, talking it out. I also spoke gratefully of my precious gift of imperfect but steady rhythm of abstinence throughout the past

three years, after a very painful relapse. How would I have gotten through this past year if I'd been in relapse still? Working my program has kept me, as a friend says, in the middle of the Lifeboat, sane and useful.

I often do not realize the depth of good in my program work, the daily practices: use of tools, meetings, principles and the blessed fellowship. They call it Recovery, and it seeps into one's being, like a stream in the desert. This past year has had a lot of desert in it for all of us. Thankfully, the "water" of program sustains and helps us move through desert times, with a good measure of serenity intact.

I've chosen to trust in my Higher Power and just keeping with that motto of doing the next right thing. Usually I can manage that, just "for today", one day at a time. In my heart, I hear my old friend say, "turn it over, MJ, turn it over"... and keep working them steps.

We've gone through this hard year together, in our "we" program, not perfectly but with perseverance. In good times and in hard times, it works when we work it, and ... truly, we're worth it.

I'm not waiting to breathe anymore, no more fear of stepping out and making safe plans. A travel date is set to visit my sister.

This all cooked down to my being very grateful. I've learned that fear can't stand gratitude.

In it with you, for the long haul,

MJ





### Feeding My Hungry Heart

Drawing the images I see in my head is one of my ways of expressing and sharing my feelings. Once I see them on paper it is easier for me to identify and put words to feeling. This also helps me analyze my thoughts and find deeper meanings into my behaviors.

In essence this is my tool of writing.

Ann B. STL-MO

### Slogan Spotlight: Let Go and Let God

When I first came into the rooms of OA, I was very well-practiced at “hanging on.” Principally, I had learned how to hang on to worry, resentment, anger, and fear. Without realizing it, these things were eating away at my spiritual soul. I chose to keep coming back and stay open to the suggestions that I heard from recovering compulsive eaters.

Eventually I learned that hanging on to my worry, resentment, anger, and fear was contributing to my sick behaviors and attitude. The initial thought of letting go filled

me with trepidation. I wondered what life would be like if most of my thoughts and actions were different. Additionally, if I was going to let go of all the things that were making me spiritually ill, who was going to pick them up and take care of them? When I listened to recovering compulsive eaters in the rooms, they reminded me that God would.

The concept of God also presented a challenge for me at the beginning of my time in the rooms of recovery. During my early days in OA, I did not have a concept of a Higher Power that functioned in my life the way I needed It to. Luckily, I was honest about my struggles and then listened to other recovering compulsive eaters share their experience. Eventually I blended different characteristics of what I needed in a Higher Power and gave *It* a name that I felt comfortable with.

Occasionally, the disease’s skepticism fills me when I think of letting God take away my more dangerous spiritual ills. However, now I have the good fortune of remembering what it was like before I walked into the rooms of OA. I was suicidal. Today I can choose to let God help me with all my difficulties, and today my HP will relieve me of whatever I am willing to let go of. Thank God for letting go of worry, resentment, anger, and fear. Thank God I hang on to OA.

Anonymous





## Intergroup (IG) News: Chair's Column

**\*\*SAVE THE DATES:** Sunday April 25<sup>th</sup>  
3:00-5:00 pm – **Recovery During COVID**  
hosted by Sunday Abstinence First Meeting;  
and Saturday May 15<sup>th</sup> – 9:00am-5:00pm **St. Louis Bi-State Annual Convention** hosted by Saturday Webster Groves Step Study\*\*

At our March Intergroup meeting, the group conscience was to have a Virtual Retreat. Many were still uncertain about an in-person event and reluctant to commit to an \$800 non-refundable fee. So, we're moving forward with a virtual event, which was very successful last Fall. ***Of course, we need a chairperson or co-chairs to step up and get this event going. How about you and a few of your best OA friends?***

We were joined by two visitors from the Region 4 Service Team: Meg M. our Region 4 Trustee at WSO, and Mary C., our Region 4 Chairperson. They are visiting Intergroup Meetings throughout Region 4 (eight Midwestern states, two Canadian provinces, and one Canadian territory) to introduce themselves to everyone and get to know what each of the sixteen Intergroups are doing. Their primary message is that Region 4 is a resource for all the Intergroups and members.

For our Workshop, we had an interesting and lively discussion about how meetings might transition back to in-person, face to face formats and how meetings might still keep some of the new benefits found in telephone and zoom formats. Of course, decisions are up to each meeting/group, but the purpose of the discussion was to provide ideas and points for consideration. Ideas included:

- Holding meetings at public libraries or other facilities that have zoom

compatible technology available in their meeting rooms.

- Considering the pros and cons of holding hybrid meetings (members meet face to face but have some members call or zoom in) at pre-COVID locations. Can members attending virtually hear and see and be seen and heard by all? Does the meeting location have Wi-Fi? Do members have cell plans that can handle data usage, etc.
- Can hybrid and or zoom meetings stay in the St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup or do they need to move to the Virtual Region? Meg M. shared that any type of meeting may choose which Intergroup and Region they wish to be part of.
- We all miss "seeing" each other and sharing hugs. We want to have face-to-face meetings soon!
- We don't want to give up benefits of virtual meetings; i.e., no travel in bad weather or traffic, ability to attend for those with physical challenges, ability to "come home" to meetings for members who have moved, attend virtual meetings with dear friends, etc.
- And, should we go back to our previous face-to-face meetings and start additional telephone and/or zoom meetings?

There is no Intergroup Meeting in April. See everyone on May 16. We will be brainstorming about how Intergroup can be more helpful to meetings and members. Remember all of us are Intergroup – everyone is welcome to attend.

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

## More Than 50 OA's Attend Feb. 28 Unity Day

After New Year's, I bought a desktop computer. Previously, my computer was my smartphone. In Zoom meetings, a smartphone shows you *four* people per screen. The computer was intimidating, and it sat in one room while I zoomed elsewhere. But HP had another idea.

One January morning in Group Conscience, our Intergroup (IG) rep mentioned the upcoming annual worldwide Unity Day, and a motion was accepted that the MWF Early Bird Meeting would host this event. It was a BIG PRODUCTION. IG had brainstormed, and we had a rough agenda of themes, a date of Feb. 28th, and an 11:30 a.m. wave of Unity shared around the world. This event celebrates how our individualized diversity allows us to better support each other in recovery at all levels. As a gay skinny nervous person, who's worked the steps in different cities and centuries, I get "Diversity."

The ball started rolling. We needed volunteers to solicit and coordinate nine speakers on the topics of Diversity of the Disease, Principles in the Program, and HP and Spirituality, as well as an IG Speaker who reminded us that Diversity strengthens service, too. We needed an Emcee, timers, a flyer, a newsletter blurb, a technical troubleshooter and a host to help people like me get into the meeting. Members volunteered for tasks, shared ideas and offered to help each other. I learned to download Zoom, and accidentally triggered a Zoom Bombing drill!!! We were getting *prepared!*

We needed just one more speaker, and I volunteered to make calls. The beauty in that job for me, was that I only needed the experience I had. Over many meetings and years, we've all heard many good

speakers. I didn't need computer skills; I just needed the fellowship skills I've been learning in OA. My speaker search led to a contact who led to a contact who found the speaker, and along the way I discovered a mutual friend from 35 years ago! Funny how HP works in us.

The event has come and gone. Everyone agreed it was a huge success with well over 50 people of all descriptions, including some from states like Iowa and Massachusetts. The Zoom backgrounds were even diverse - from the Golden Gate Bridge to Sunny Palm Beaches. People enjoyed all ten speakers and used the breaks between panels to catch up with old friends, ask questions, sneak away for a stretch or just enjoy the scene of so many faces!

Me? Even on the Big Screen, *to see you all I STILL had to scroll Left and Right!* That's Unity in Diversity!

Andrea



### Know Someone Who Needs OA Support Through Postal Service Contact?

Good News! We have a volunteer who is going to be providing printed newsletters and **Where and When's** to anyone in program who is without a computer, or may be isolated due to the lack of face-to-face meetings during this pandemic.

If you know of anyone who has been missing from your meetings, or that you know is not tech savvy and hasn't been Zooming or conference calling into meetings, please let us know at [piofficer@stlouisoa.org](mailto:piofficer@stlouisoa.org). We will add them to the list, and they will be mailed newsletters and meeting lists each month.

This is important Outreach work. We are so thankful for our volunteer.

## Service Opportunity: We Need IG Convention Speakers

The May 15 Convention, “**Zooming into Recovery**”, will have two workshop tracks, **Special Topics** and **Step Study**. Volunteers to speak are invited to contact Jane F at [janegettig@yahoo.com](mailto:janegettig@yahoo.com) or call Della at 314-580-4881. The group conscience was that speakers need 60 days of abstinence to qualify.



### WHEN SALLY MET PADDIE: A RECOVERY STORY

It's Friday night and OA member Sally just received a phone call that her son is in jail again. He is blaming everyone else and is demanding she bail him out. Sally is weary, feels like a failure, and doesn't know what to do. She wants to eat, watch TV, and escape.

Paddie (**Progressive and Deadly Disease**) is thrilled at the opportunity to get out of the hall and in Sally's head. "Eat – it will make you forget and feel better. You are all alone. Don't bother anyone with a phone call. Just give in. You're a loser."



Sally prays – "God - I can't do this; You can; please help me." She leaves the house and makes a phone call. "I am so upset and I want to eat. I don't know why. It never really makes anything better."

OA Friend on the Phone: "Sally, I am so glad you called. What's going on?"

**Recovery** – The quiet, calm voice of recovery - "You are not alone. There

are people right now who want to be with you in love, acceptance, and courage. Remember your food plan. Nothing is more important than your abstinence. Nothing.



### HEARD AROUND THE MEETINGS: A LITTLE OA HUMOR

I have an allergy to that stuff - whenever I eat it, I break out in fat. (It is the best way I've ever found to respond to "one can't hurt you".)

~ ~ ~

I was always the black sheep. Then I started going to meetings and found the rest of my herd.

~ ~ ~

A **Big Book** (or **OA 12 & 12**) that is falling apart is generally owned by someone who isn't.

#### ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY APRIL 20, 2021.

Please send your submissions to the **OA TODAY** editor and Newsletter Team at [newsletter@stlouisoa.org](mailto: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



# Recovery During COVID-19: *Physically Distant But Socially Connected*

**SUNDAY, APRIL 25, 2021 · 3PM – 5PM**

The suggested donation is \$6, but give what you can when you can. Don't let lack of funds stop you from coming.

### **Join the Zoom Meeting**

Visit <https://bit.ly/3aoiYuC> or use the Meeting ID: 711 8462 9168 and Passcode: 094928.

Questions? Contact Dianne at 314-238-4052.



*Sponsored by the Abstinence First/Newcomer Meeting*



Overeaters Anonymous • St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup

# 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](http://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](mailto: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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_