

JANUARY 2023 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 ONE

We admitted we were powerless over food — that our lives had become unmanageable.



Ten years, an empty bank account, and hundreds of pounds of excess weight. That's what it took for me to walk through the doors of my first OA meeting. Dressed in my best clothes, makeup on and hair brushed, I took my first step into recovery. (I didn't want them to know I was a mess.)

It had been 10 years since I received a note from a past elementary school teacher that said "I struggle with food too; I know where we can get help. Here's my number." I wasn't ready then, but I was ready on January 3rd of 2003.

It's been 20 years. 20 years since I took Step One. I admitted I was powerless over food and my life had become unmanageable.

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Do You Have Problems with Food? OA May Be Right for You

Wondering what Overeaters Anonymous (OA) is? We are a community of people who support each other in order to recover from compulsive eating and food behaviors. We welcome everyone who feels they have a problem with food. [Read the full OA Preamble.](#)

The first meeting of Overeaters Anonymous was held in Hollywood, California, USA on January 19, 1960. [Rozanne S.](#) attended a Gamblers Anonymous meeting two years earlier to help a friend and realized the format of the Twelve Steps meeting might hold an answer to her own addictive behavior as it related to food. Her vision of how this simple program could bring recovery to all those who suffered from compulsive overeating resulted in the worldwide organization that exists today.

There are OA groups in over 75 countries meeting in person, via telephone and through the internet each week. OA's 60-year history has shown that it is possible to recover from the disease of compulsive eating. We invite you to join us to find the freedom that many of our members have discovered over the years.

Find a list of meetings in the St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup [HERE](#).



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I'm going to give it to you straight. It ain't all pink clouds and rainbows. Sometimes it's hailstorms and hurricanes. And most of the time it's "everyday weather" – a little bit of sun, a little bit of clouds, and a slight breeze.

During the past 20 years, I have had large weight losses and periods of super clean abstinence, but I've also had long periods of relapse - not because the program doesn't work but because I didn't work it. I'm an addict. I have a tendency to see life as all or nothing. In recovery, there's balance. A way to live life in between all and nothing.

Today, again after 20 years. I admit that I am "powerless". Let me carry the message the way my elementary school teacher tried to carry it to me:

My name is LaNae. I struggle with food too. I know where we can get help. Here's my number (618) 420-8586.

Here's to another 20 years. One day at a time!

LaNae S.

Spiritual Principle of Step 1: Honesty



TRADITION ONE

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon OA unity.



There are a few things that come to mind with Tradition 1 for me. Obviously, Unity is first, followed closely by moving from the Isolation of this disease to being a member of a Fellowship. Tradition One also reinforces the concepts of Humility and Service.

When I first came to the rooms, I was alone and lonely, and that was on purpose. If I wanted to use, and I did, then alone was the way I was going to do it. I didn't want caring people to notice me and try to help. I wanted the food, when I wanted it, and damn the consequences – all the consequences were mine, right?

What I've learned is that no matter how much I isolate, my actions still affect others. Some of the hardest things I have had to process is acknowledging how much I hurt my family when I was in an active addiction. I was not mindful of a budget – financial hurt. I was not present for my kids or husband – emotional neglect. I was physically incapable of taking care of myself – and forced others to care for me. The list goes on and on.

For these items, I choose a living amends, although I have made traditional amends as well. I choose to be mindful and open with money matters and stick to a budget. I am abstinent and can be fully present in family situations, connecting with those who mean the most to me. I have lost more than half my body weight and can now do things for myself like tie my shoes, carry a laundry basket, grocery shop.

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I can go out places and no special accommodations need to be made. Again, the list goes on and on.

I learned how to be a productive member of a community in the rooms, practicing group conscience, telling my story, listening to others tell their story and supporting them. Then I took those skills and moved them into my life – no longer isolated, but fully engaging in life. And it is magnificent!

Let's chat about Humility, one of the persistently misunderstood principles and how Tradition One supports its practice. The first inkling some of us get of this new skill is in taking part in group conscience. All members of the fellowship have a say. Some may agree with us; some may have another view, but everyone has a say. We listen, we talk, and we decide as a group. What a concept! In the end, a majority opinion emerges and then we put aside any differences and work for the good of the group.



For me, this was truly the first look at what an actual functioning family could look like. If we cannot work together with respect for our differences, then the fellowship would cease to function, and then where would we be? Without this program!

Therefore, Humility, as practiced in the fellowship promotes Unity as it teaches us that all voices count, but in the end, one course of

action is chosen. To keep the program healthy, we all get on board. I don't know about y'all, but I would not be where I am today without this 12-Step program. Unity keeps it alive.

Finally, Tradition One also reinforces the need for Service. As we learn to be members of a Fellowship, we learn about giving and receiving. The first part of the journey to Service is learning to accept help from others. We learn to trust. We learn to ask for help. We learn that we do not have to go it alone. And most importantly, we learn that there are people who will be there for us. I never believed anyone had my back, I was a perpetual victim (the worst most persecuted person ever! Or so my disease told me).

Now asking for what I need is a skill I use on a daily basis, and it connects me with others in a way that my stubborn independence never did. The offshoot of being helped, is the desire to be helpful, and this is where the real magic happens. When you WANT to reach out to others, when you WANT to tell your story so that others in isolation can see themselves clearly, then you have reached a truly awesome level of Sobriety. Service grounds me in the program every day, connects me to the Fellowship, and brings us all together. We are unified in our fight against our common enemy – Addiction.

Melanie T
St Louis



Together We Get Better in 2023: Now Is the Time to Plan Events

Don't you love to have local recovery events here in the wider St. Louis Bi-State area? We are used to calling them "Super Saturdays," but they can be on Saturday, Sunday, or even a weekday evening.

These events are usually created (hosted) by a group working together. Might your home meeting be interested? It can be a great service project that promotes recovery in your meeting and in the wider Intergroup! Many groups have experience with this and can help answer questions about the process.

Here are some beginning thoughts, and you may find more guidance on our Intergroup website [HERE](#) (the Super Saturday Guidelines) or on the [World OA website](#).

The hosting group makes decisions like whether to offer the event in person or on Zoom. The hosts choose the date taking into consideration other scheduled OA events. Please consult the Vice Chair before you set the date to avoid conflicts with an event scheduled by another group.

In 2023 the Vice Chair is Elizabeth C, at this email address: vicechair@stlouisoa.org. Later, when you have a flyer made, it goes to the Vice Chair for approval and for distribution to the web, newsletter, World OA Event Calendar, etc.

Some months have designated OA themes or anniversaries, and a group choosing one of those months may wish to coordinate their recovery event around those themes: They are:

- January - **OA Birthday** (since 1960) – third weekend in January
- February - **Unity Day** - the last Saturday in February in even years and the last

Sunday in February in odd years at 11:30 a.m. [local time around the world]

- August – **Sponsorship Day** – 3rd weekend in August
- November - **IDEA Day** - 3rd weekend in November (International Day Experiencing Abstinence)
- December - **Holiday Booster** and also **Twelfth Step Within Day** (12/12)

Don't forget that the Intergroup has a Zoom account available for this kind of event, and technical assistance is also available. Recovery events are one way we live out the OA Responsibility Pledge: ***Always to extend the hand and heart of OA to all who share my compulsion; for this I am responsible.***

2023 INTERGROUP (IG) MEETINGS

Meeting Dates

January 8
February 12
March 12
April – no meeting
May 7
June 11
July 9
August – no meeting
September 10
October 8
November 12
December – no meeting

Meeting Information

The meeting time is 1:30-3:00 pm, central time. All meetings are on Zoom.

The Zoom meeting ID is **940 5580 8391** and the password is **Serenity**. To dial in by phone, call **312-626-6799**. The meeting ID is **940 5580 8391** and the password is **75183374**.

Visitors are welcome!

Both items from the IG Board of Trustees

Some Thoughts on New Year's Resolutions from OA Members

To make New Year's resolutions or not to make New Year's resolutions; that is the question. Here is a conversation I had with myself and the disease, back in the early 1980s, before I accepted the gift of abstinence from my Higher Power:

Setting: December 31; 11:50 pm; The kitchen

"I feel disgusting. I hate myself. I have to unbutton my pant's waistband, because my stomach is bloated. I've just binged on leftover Christmas treats."

(I'm in that familiar pit of despair when my drug is not making me feel better—the first thirty seconds of eating it made me swoon, but now it's making me feel sick, in body and in my head.)

... "OK, that is it! That is the last time! Never again! Look, it's not midnight yet. Wouldn't it be great to have January 1 as my abstinence birthday? So easy to remember. I'm smart, I can figure this out, I can do it this time."

Setting: Twenty minutes later, January 1; 12:10 a.m.; The kitchen

"Well, that didn't work. I failed again." *(I've eaten the leftover dessert from the party and am bewildered.)* "Maybe January 2 can be my new abstinence date."

Doing the opposite, or "taking contrary action", has been a life-changing program suggestion for me. As a newcomer struggling to string 30-days of abstinence together, I obsessively focused on that number, rather than seeking sanity through the steps, particularly steps 1, 2 and 3. I have been abstinent since 1987, and that December day when I turned to a Higher Power for direction in my life, including my

relationship with food, was an example of "doing the opposite." I had always turned to myself—my ideas on what, when and how much to eat. I knew binging was insane, but what I thought was a sane plan of eating was not HP's food plan.

I continue to try "taking contrary action" when I find myself stuck in my own head and stuck in a pattern of behavior that is unhealthy. Sometimes that means setting an intention for the New Year, but mostly it means turning over my will and life for ALL 365 days of the year.

Anonymous



When I make New Year's Resolutions, my first one to remember is ODAT (One Day at a Time). It's a way to stay on track. Actually, it's the only one I've made for years.

When I imagine 365 DAYS stretching out endlessly, I get discouraged and give up before I begin! Instead, I believe in asking for divine guidance, help, whatever it's called... **DAILY**. HP (Higher Power) can help me handle physical and emotional challenges I'm not expecting or prepared for...

Anonymous

Editor's Note: New Year's resolutions are an outside issue, and OA has no opinion on this matter. The Newsletter Team offers this article to illustrate how our members can keep the focus on recovery, whether they make resolutions or not.





Perhaps It's Time to Resign From the "Traditions Police"

The writer of this essay was for too long a time a member of a secret underground group within OA known to some of us as The Traditions Police. It was our job, we felt, to enforce the Traditions exactly as we interpreted them - or as we felt OA interpreted them.

We did not hesitate to say exactly what a particular Tradition meant and how it was to be applied and, most importantly, when it was breached or violated or broken. Sometimes we were more gentle than other times; sometimes we just seethed internally; sometimes we spoke up nicely; and sometimes we were downright forceful in our meetings.

We forgot the real message of the Traditions, the humble spirituality of anonymity, the sense that we are no better and no worse than anyone else, that we could be wrong, that other people could be right, that working together we may come up with ideas that no individual might have come up with.

This is the beauty of the Traditions. They represent the combined experience of AA's and OA's history, with suggestions for OA groups to ponder and resolve, always in the context of recovered OA members working together, through consensus, to achieve a group conscience as to how best to carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer.

There is no one correct interpretation or application of any Tradition. The best we can do is to use the model of group conscience to come to a consensus about the application of a particular Tradition to a particular situation with a particular group.

When we are concerned about something that is happening in a meeting, the question is not "Is this a violation of Tradition Ten?" The real question to be asked is "Will this help or hinder the message that our group has to carry?" That is the important question. Everything else is putting form over substance, fear over faith, resentment over acceptance.

We can easily forget that fostering recovery of individuals in a meeting is a far more significant action to be taken than worrying about whether individuals in a meeting do one thing or another. The meeting should constantly ask itself: ***Is this meeting fulfilling its primary purpose of carrying the message of recovery through the Twelve Steps to those who still suffer?***

If the answer to that question is a firm or even a qualified "no," then what can be done to change that? This is a question that individual members and the group must ask themselves.

We are addicts, and we have certainly observed that there can be all kinds of ways that an OA meeting can get distracted from its primary purpose. If this is happening in our meeting, members of the meeting must find a way to prevent that distraction, of course.

But maybe, just maybe, the real problem is not something that is distracting the meeting from its primary purpose, but rather the problem is that ***the meeting is simply not focusing on its primary purpose.***

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Concentrating on the purpose of our meetings requires a clear understanding of compulsive eating addictions and that meetings are about a desire to recover from compulsive eating. The primary purpose of a meeting is not to combat loneliness or find a comfortable place to be accepted or become more spiritual or even to find a diet or a support group. People should come to a meeting because they have a compulsive eating addiction and are searching for recovery from it.

At the heart of our Traditions, then, is this sense that we are part of a group of people who have a common way out and join in harmony. We seek or have found recovery from our compulsive eating addiction and want to help each other help others. We are no better and no worse than anyone else.

We have found a purpose in life. Our dark past, our history of a difficult life, can be transformed into a way of giving others hope. After all, if we can do it, so can someone else. Our purpose is to be useful in life, and Overeaters Anonymous provides us with the means by which we can be instantly useful.

Anonymous, a long-time member of OA



Insulate with Recovery To Prevent Isolation

For as long as I can remember I have never been fond of the month of January. Growing up and living half my life in Northern Iowa, the dreary days were filled with wind, snow, and clouds. From my childhood into my 50's, I ate my way through the winter blues.

I know I'm an introvert and tend to do activities by myself, but how did I get so deep into isolation? Since I can recall being a

compulsive overeater as early as the age of three or four, I spent many decades honing my skills. I ate to numb any and all feelings until I was sick, miserable, and full of hatred for myself. The shame and guilt cycle went round and round. I would tell myself I would get help this time, only to continue the same deadly course. I did not want to be around others. I judged myself harshly enough. I couldn't imagine anyone else doing a better job. So, when I had to be with others, I made myself the butt of jokes so I didn't have to wonder what others would do to hurt me. *(Do unto yourself before others can do unto you.)*

When I was in my two-year relapse many months ago, I kept attending virtual meetings, but I stopped connecting with my HP. I was dishonest to my sponsors about my food. I stopped my daily readings and journaling. I had forgotten what I had learned in the Steps. I forgot because I stopped connecting with my HP and others, especially others in recovery.

I got sick and tired of being sick and tired and came out of my relapse and self-imposed isolation. When I started working the OA recovery program, the Tools became important to me. I reconnected to my HP and took direction. I attend six virtual meetings a week. I pray morning and night, and often throughout the day with a simple "help me". I pray for God's will, not mine. I committed to my sponsor I would make two outreach calls/texts daily. I was sure this commitment was going to do me in! Who knew that would be my favorite thing to do each day!

I've discovered I really want to be connected to others. I read literature such as the **OA 12 & 12**, meditation books, the **Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous**, and other books in which members of OA share their experience, strength, and hope. I journal to connect with my HP and do a short meditation time.

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It's a process and I'm sticking around for those promises. I share nightly with a small gratitude circle of women. I talk to my sponsor weekly and text in between the calls. I share with my sponsor the food I eat daily. Some days the food has gone haywire, but I keep coming back because I feel safe here. This is where I'm learning about me, taking care of me with healthier foods and exercise, having love and compassion for myself. I'm learning to let go. It's baby steps for me, but I'm committed. I try to do service, but I have a lot of room for improvement. I desire to carry the message to another suffering compulsive overeater, and I began that by joining the OA newsletter team.

I'm grateful to suit up today, to insulate myself with the OA recovery program. It keeps me far and away from isolation. I'm no longer alone. I have the love and support of others in the fellowship to help me.

Sue S.



January 8 – 1:30 p.m. – Intergroup meeting**

February 12 – Intergroup meeting**

March 12 – Intergroup meeting**

March 18, 2023 - 9:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. - 50th Anniversary Celebration - Maryland Heights Community Center, 2300 McKelvey Road 63043 (see info on pages 9 & 10)

October 27-29, 2023 – Fall Retreat - Toddhall Retreat Center, Columbia, IL

****Note:** Each Intergroup Meeting is 1:30-3 p.m. via Zoom. **The meeting number is 940 5580 8391. The password is: Serenity.** It's also possible to join by telephone: Dial-in: 312-626-6799, meeting ID 940 5580 8391, and password 75183374. Those in elected service positions and Intergroup Representatives are expected to attend. All other fellows are welcome.

For more **events** happening throughout the worldwide Fellowship, click [HERE](#).

ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY JANUARY 20, 2022. 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.

Maryanne S. held the first OA meeting in the St. Louis Bi-State area in 1973!

50 Years!

We're Celebrating Together

SATURDAY MARCH 18, 2023

9:30 am to 9:30 pm

Maryland Heights Community Ctr.
2300 McKelvey Road 63043
Handicap accessible

Together we get better!



**OVEREATERS
ANONYMOUS**
St. Louis Bi-State Area
Intergroup

WHY YOU'LL LOVE IT:

- Face to Face Fellowship
- Reunite with Good Friends
- Out of Town Speaker
- Full Day Recovery Program
- Literature Sales
- Abstinent Lunch & Dinner Included
- Evening Dance
- Optional Hugs & Hand Holding

The Details!

ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Full package including two meals* **\$60**

Everything but the meals **\$35**

**Catered buffet lunch: Variety of salads; proteins, dressing and starch served separately; coffee, tea, water*

**Catered buffet dinner: Two protein choices, plenty of vegetables, salad, fruit, starch; coffee, tea, water*

Choose One of Three Ways to Register



1 ONLINE: Register and pay at: stlouisoa.org

2 By CHECK: Send completed registration form and check to:

Marina Fruth, 14644 N. Court #6, Effingham, IL 62401

(make check payable to St. Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup)

3 With SUPPORT: Please call to make arrangements

We really want you come so we can celebrate this anniversary together! If the cost of the event doesn't work for you, please allow us to make this obstacle go away.

The We Care Fund will anonymously pick up all or part of the fee.

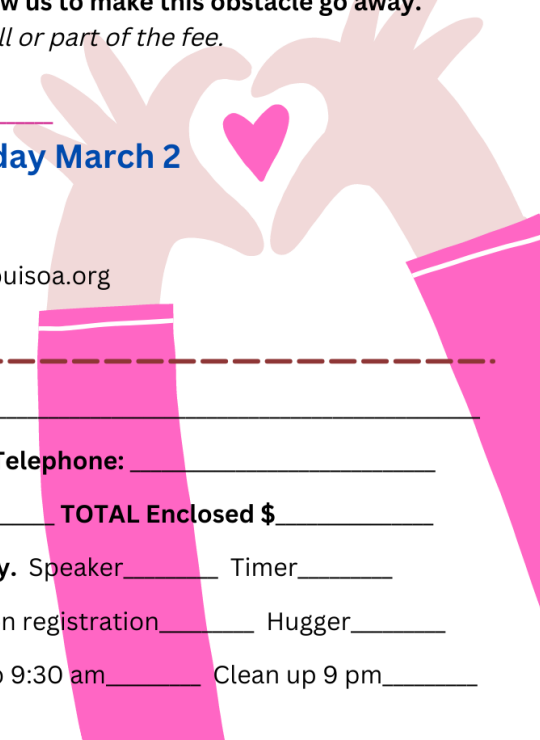
Contact Marina F. 815-343-6412

Registration deadline: Midnight Thursday March 2

No refunds will be available

General Questions?

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



First name: _____ Last name: _____

Email: _____ Telephone: _____

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

WILLING TO GIVE SERVICE? Please check all that apply. Speaker _____ Timer _____

Hospitality _____ A.M. registration _____ Afternoon registration _____ Hugger _____

Literature sales _____ Where needed _____ Set-up 9:30 am _____ Clean up 9 pm _____