

November 2023 OA TODAY NEWSLETTER

St. Louis Bi-State Intergroup of OA
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STEP ELEVEN

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Our 12 Step founders, “having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps. . .” (Step 12), wrote the steps in the past tense to show what they did to recover from addiction. This helps us know that we too, as a result of these steps, could have a spiritual awakening to free us from our addiction.

I was in the 12 Step program for decades using great tools, ideas, practices, slogans, literature, meetings, fellowship before I realized that the program was essentially spiritual. Freedom from addiction came from working these steps:

- admitting our powerlessness and unmanageability;
- coming to believe in a greater Power to restore us;
- deciding to turn our will and lives over to the God of our understanding;
- making a thorough and searching moral inventory of ourselves;
- admitting this to God, ourselves, and another;
- readying and asking God to remove our character defects;

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Sugar-Addiction, Bulimia, Anorexia Can Start Early; Teen Shares Story

As we head into the “High Holy Days” of compulsive overeating, dangerous food behaviors of young people in our families may come to our attention. Voices of young OA members can be especially helpful in reaching these young addicts.

The [OA website](#) contains several **Lifeline** stories that can help. One dated January 16, 2020, details the story of a teen named Kaitlin.

Kaitlin’s sugar addiction started in middle school after her parents’ divorce caused a number of stresses in her life. She later discovered bulimia and started overexercising, using laxatives, and vomiting.

Her bingeing and purging got her dad’s attention, and he sent her to an eating disorder specialist. In the course of her treatment, Kaitlin learned about Overeaters Anonymous, eventually joined, and started finding recovery and a new life she once thought impossible.

You can find a 24 minute podcast/interview with Kaitlin on the OA.org website by going to [THIS LINK](#).

Note: Overeaters Anonymous recommends all minor children who wish to attend OA meetings be accompanied by a parent or guardian. This may be a requirement for virtual meetings.



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- admitting and amending past and daily wrongs; and
- finally in Step 11, through prayer and meditation, seeking to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowing God's will for us and having the power to carry that out.

The words believe, greater Power, God (four times), pronouns for God (four times,) moral, amends, and spiritual thread these steps, the spiritual way freeing us from addiction.

Deciding to turn our will and lives over to the God of our understanding in Step 3 becomes deeper by Step 11, We now PRAY and MEDITATE to consciously connect with the God of our understanding, PRAYING ONLY FOR KNOWING GOD'S WILL (to replace our will) AND THE POWER TO CARRY THAT OUT. We can pray by talking and listening to God.

I use a dialogue journal where I write what is on my heart and mind and then write God's response to me, the most loving response I can imagine. When I don't know what to do, when I'm indecisive, our OA daily readers suggest we PRAY about it and then RELAX, or PRAY and repeat THY WILL BE DONE. We also have the Serenity Prayer.

Our OA literature says that our INTUITION is a direct line with God. We do not know what is best for ourselves or others, so the best prayer is for GUIDANCE. Ralph Waldo Emerson writes about LOWLY LISTENING for God's guidance, and I have found his wisdom helpful.

Step 11 introduces MEDITATION for improved contact to the God of our understanding. 11th Step centering prayer/meditation groups use the meditation focus—the intention to CONSENT TO GOD'S PRESENCE AND ACTION WITHIN and to choose a SACRED WORD as the SYMBOL of this intention. Sitting

in silence, eyes closed, doing and saying nothing, just being and letting God come be with us, gently saying the sacred word when thoughts, feelings, images, etc. intrude, so we can continue to connect with our God.

We in the 12 Step program are on a spiritual path to recovery from addiction. Knowing that "taking my life into my own hands means I must let go of God's hand" (OA's **Seeking the Spiritual Path**, p. 29), may we live the 12 Steps. That in a nutshell means: LET GO AND LET GOD.

Charlene C.



TRADITION ELEVEN

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television and other public media of communication.



My earliest memories are of me playing in front of the mirror. The game I played consisted of me pretending to be famous and answering questions from an invisible interviewer. I remember what a blast it was, mimicking TV commercials, award ceremonies, and entertainment shows. Twenty years later, I found myself in a public relations and marketing career, getting paid to promote, persuade, and motivate.

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Discovering Tradition Eleven (and frankly, all the Steps and Traditions) was like encountering a foreign language. No promotion? No celebrity endorsements? No film at eleven? I initially rationalized Tradition Eleven's anonymity Principle this way: We in OA have a disease that we should be ashamed of. Keep it secret.

As I continue to bring my sick body and mind to meetings, however, I also heard such concepts as "we are as sick as our secrets." I figured it was important to share honestly at meetings, but nowhere else. OA meetings were islands of safety and respite, like the island of Molokai was for those with leprosy.

Higher Power has given me many opportunities to understand Tradition Eleven in the spirit that it was written. In recovery, we in OA are not ashamed of our illness. We want to carry the message to those who still suffer. The vehicles we have chosen to carry this message, however, are not promotion based. They are attraction based. But what does this mean? In both my career and my childhood fantasies, to attract always meant to promote aggressively and competitively.

Today, I understand that promotion of OA with spokespersons or advertising rollouts would harm individual members and the recovery community. Our "advertising" has a different look and feel: It is in the quiet of a newcomer's abstinence that I feel hope. It is in the humility of a relapsing long-timer that I experience gratitude. It is in the perseverance of members who are in pain that I know recovery. It is in giving anonymous service that I feel rewarded. I am deeply moved and attracted by these authentic experiences.

Though I still love makeover shows that transform individuals in thirty minutes, I don't trust them as real. I do trust Overeaters Anonymous because I have learned over the years that humility is the best public relations

policy, and carrying the message can be done over time, with love rather than ego leading the way.

— Edited and reprinted from **OA Today** newsletter, November 2005



I am writing this letter out of a deep love of OA and my hopes for its role in recovery of my and all of our lives. I've been thinking about the current board of our Intergroup (IG). It has two open positions, chair and secretary. Filling these turns out to be quite a problem.

I am concerned that people might look at the recent boards, their performance, and see that our IG works well together and on behalf of the mission. This may lead to being lulled into an attitude of "They got this." But, as I wrote above, filling two our Board roles is turning out to be quite a problem.

It is true that all the board members in the nine years I have been with our Intergroup have been hardworking, excellent skilled people. They have often filled in wherever and whenever needed. They have truly gone the extra mile.

When I served for my terms plus extra on the board, I was happy to do service and it made a real difference in my recovery! I did then and do now approach tasks and work and teams—and goals, differently. ***(continued on page 4)***

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I've found that the 12 Steps are not about outcomes; they are about the process. I have never had a problem with work outcomes but I certainly had life problems. Working in service, careful to keep to the OA principles, helped me reframe and reform my work practices. I am grateful.

That being said, the above and beyond, taking on roles that are open or are not covered—that is a common work theme. But it is not a recovery theme! Sure, doing extra roles feels great. I get points for being a martyr, points for working overly hard, points for comparing my work habits to others. In other words, all the practices of my disorder flood back to welcome me when I practice working in my “old” way.

But there's a different way to get the work done if we “practice these principles in all our affairs.” We take turns, stay within our service roles, cede control to others when tasks are not our job, find consensus, and support others as they take on the roles we held and do them differently. Service allows us to try on some very good life practices, and this is important.

We have two Board of Trustees positions for which nominees are needed. It's not fair to ask a board member to overstay or overstep. It isn't good for their recovery, and it isn't good for the health of our Intergroup.

Service can be uncomfortable. It can ask us to reach at things that we have not done. That can leave us open to learn the lessons and the recovery skills that service will give. Service is also the key to OA's continuity for the sake of the recovery or each one of us.

Please consider service. Please consider it soon.

Christina D.



November Invites Us to Practice An Attitude of Gratitude

Things can change in an instant. Life is like that sometimes.

My morning starts with prayer to get guidance from my Higher Power (HP) and to start my day on right footing. Sometimes my mind goes off kilter and I start looking at my day or week by feeling sorry for myself because it feels too busy, too overwhelming. My pity party can go full swing in a matter of seconds. I want ME time to do what I deem is necessary and warranted. The WE program of putting my hand in yours, and what can I do for another can quickly go by the wayside.

The past couple of weeks I've had to make an extra effort to use the tools of the program to have an attitude of gratitude. I hurt my knee when we were on our mini-vacation. Then the day after returning home I tested positive for COVID-19. That took me two weeks of recovery time. My son, in the Navy, was preparing to deploy with his division. He was hurting and called to tell me that one of the sailors, who was friends with everyone, had just died in a motorcycle accident. This young man was halfway thru a treatment program for addiction, and he was feeling good about the life he was living.

Life brings us love, laughter, sadness, anger, confusion, excitement, exasperation, and a multitude of other feelings. How I choose to handle my feelings can drastically affect my abstinence. My feelings must be felt, but I'm grateful they are not my reality today. I'm grateful I can reach out for help to guide me through each day.

Some of my gratitudes include:
*I'm grateful I have a HP who loves me beyond my wildest imagination and teaches me to be loving, kind, respectful to myself and others.

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Gratitude Month

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*I'm grateful I can pray to my HP for guidance and share everything with my HP.

*I'm grateful my HP gives me everything I need for each day and I can be honest, open-minded, and willing.

*I'm grateful my HP uses others to speak to me, to teach me, to guide me.

*I'm grateful that my HP is with me, loving me, encouraging me, even during lapses when I'm trying to control and being willful rather than willing.

*I'm grateful for a program of recovery and I can reach out to other OA members for help, especially my sponsor.

*I'm grateful that on days I have big feelings I have my HP who is going to place someone, or something, such as OA literature in my life to help me thru my day.

*I'm grateful to do this program one day at a time.

*I am grateful I have a set of tools that is like a security blanket to me. Every tool is helpful and gives me hope. They make life easier.

*I am grateful I can love others and they can feel it in my words and actions.

*I am grateful I can type this article on my phone and hit the send button so it goes directly to the OA newsletter editor.

I have many more gratitudes. Many of my daily gratitudes are the simple things that just make life enjoyable.

What are you grateful for?

Sue S.

November is our Gratitude Month, when groups take up a special additional collection for Intergroup. We used to pass the basket twice at November meetings, for instance.

Three questions about this.

1. Why are we grateful for Intergroup?
2. Why does Intergroup need this extra donation? How will they (we!) use it?
3. How do we tell Intergroup that this is a Gratitude Month donation?

Let's take the first question first. What's the use of Intergroup anyway?

- a. It's how each independent meeting group is connected directly to World OA. An Intergroup sends delegates to the annual meeting of OA as a whole, where they learn about the big picture of OA and vote on issues. **That vote is how each group tells all of OA what to do.**

When I first came to OA, my one weekly meeting was all of OA to me. I never asked where the books and pamphlets came from. It turns out they are written, revised, and edited by OA members and then they have to pass a vote by our delegates before they can go to press.

- b. Back home, our Intergroup provides many services for the OA groups in Eastern Missouri and much of Southern Illinois. At my weekly meeting I had never asked myself who put our name out there so I could find that meeting in the first place. In those days that was mainly a phone number and address in the Yellow Pages, flyers on bulletin boards around town, and notices in community newspapers. These days the same thing happens in modern ways. But who put our name out there so people could find us? Intergroup.

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Who provided a list of local meetings? Intergroup. Who encouraged and supported area-wide recovery events like conventions and Super Saturdays? Intergroup. And lots more.

Then let's look at the second question. Why does Intergroup need this money?

Well, our regular sources of income, mainly donations and conventions, pay our basic running expenses. For public outreach, we need extra money over that amount. The more we have, the more outreach we can do. Some years we have more and we can do more. Our name on highway billboards. Our name on the backs of busses. Our name in social media. Our name popping up when people search Google for information related to OA. Our name on booths at community events and at gatherings of health professionals. In any year that we have the money, we can do this kind of outreach. Right now, our donation income is down and it looks as if we won't have a convention. Money may be too tight to do much outreach. The November gratitude donations may help with that.

Third, how do we tell Intergroup that this is a gratitude donation?

If you are online on our website stlouisoa.org, November Gratitude is in the dropdown list of Donation Types. If you send a check (to St Louis Bi-State Area Intergroup, PO Box 28882, St. Louis MO 63123), just write Gratitude Month along with your group number on the check. It's that simple.

Elizabeth C, Intergroup Vice-Chair
Marina F, Intergroup Treasurer



Intergroup Reps Hear From Regions with Which We Might Align

I attended the September Region 4 Assembly as a guest. Presently Region 4 is moving toward formally disbanding in September 2024. We heard very helpful presentations by four Regions at the September Assembly. I came away feeling our Intergroup will be very welcomed by all the Regions.

The task going forward is for all the members of our OA community to spend some time learning about our choices. I encourage everyone to visit the webpages of Regions 1, 3, 5, and 6, attend virtual recovery events, and visit meetings. Get prepared to make your choice known at your meeting's group conscience and to your Intergroup Representative.

More than ten Region 4 Intergroups were represented at the Friday evening Ice Breaker. We enjoyed seeing old friends and making new ones and getting an overview of the Region 4 transition process.

Saturday from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. was business as usual, approving minutes and reports, etc. and region presentations. The afternoon was devoted to decision to have a Convention, elections and other business matters.

Key transition tasks for Intergroups were presented:

- Webpage hosting by R4 will be available through next Summer. Region is happy to help IGs switching to a new Host service. Luckily our St. Louis Bi-State IG has a consultant on retainer who can be contracted to provide this service.
- R4 and WSO staff will assist with email change of region documentation to WSO and our selected Region.
- Intergroups will need to do a "meeting audit", that is make sure each

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group/meeting’s information is correct on the Where and When (meeting list) and their listing at oa.org.

- Make sure Bylaws are current.
- All IGs should be moved to new regions by 8/1/2024.

At 10 a.m., four Regions – Regions 1, 3, 5, and 6 - made presentations about their geography, assemblies and conventions, and core services. I can make information from these presentations available to you if you are interested.

With Gratitude for Service,
Dianne S. Intergroup Chairperson
chair@stlouisoa.org



Zoom “Bombers” Try New Tactics; Stay Alert, Report Problems

It has come to our attention, that “intruders/bombers” may be attempting a new approach. One of our Meeting Contact volunteers has received two text contacts on her personal phone that are suspicious.

The two suspicious persons texted the same strange questions, for example: “I would like to know more about overeaters”. When referred to oa.org, asked “Are you available to talk now”. In first case, the person wanted to know if our volunteer could talk in privacy and then texted a zoom contact id and password. The first text did not initially arouse suspicion, but when questioned about talking in private, our volunteer became concerned, and when our volunteer received Zoom info from the suspicious person, they terminated this text. Having experience, in the second case our volunteer repeated suggestion to visit the website and terminated the text.

What makes these text contacts suspicious? No questions were asked about the meeting for which our volunteer is the contact person. A non-specific text inquiry rather than a phone call can be out of the ordinary. Questions about personal info and unsolicited Zooms are red flags.

Please be aware to handle text intruders/bombers, if you receive any suspicious texts terminate the text and block that number. Refer to your phone for instructions on how to block a text. Please let any member of your Intergroup Board of Trustees know if you encounter any suspicious contacts.

Dianne S.



November 12 – 1:30 p.m. - Intergroup meeting**

November 23 - Gratitude Meeting (see p. 9), other meetings info - see page 8

December 2 – Holiday Booster (see p. 10)

****Note:** Each Intergroup Meeting is 1:30-3 p.m. via Zoom. **The meeting number is 940 5580 8391. The password is: Serenity.** Dial-in: 312-626-6799, meeting ID 940 5580 8391, and password 75183374.

ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE DUE BY NOVEMBER 20, 2023. 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.

Will My OA Meeting Be Open on Thanksgiving Day???
Get the Scoop Below – And Also See November 23 Gratitude Flyer



We have four meetings that WILL be held on Thanksgiving, all of them virtual. (CST)

- 7:00 a.m.** Zoom, ID **641 012 022**, pw **084147**, “Any Lengths Big Book Study” 53332
- 9:00 a.m.** Zoom, ID **538 040 418**, pw **002478**, Special “Gratitude” by the Early Bird groups
- 6:30 p.m.** Zoom, ID **823 2569 0186**, pw **110682** “Eureka Thursday” 56711
- 7:00 p.m.** Phone, dial **605-562-8401**, access code **9649048#** “Recovery Book Worms” 45964

** Note: To dial in to the Zoom meetings by phone, call 312-626-6799. Use the same meeting ID and password.*



We have three meetings that will NOT be held on Thanksgiving. (CST)

- 10:00 a.m.** in person, St. Peter’s Church, **Ferguson** MO, group 21534
- 5:00 p.m.** hybrid in person and phone, **Rolla** MO, group 51315
- 6:00 p.m.** in person, Heart of the Apostles, **Herculaneum** MO, group 56420



Overeaters Anonymous
Thanksgiving Day
gratitude meeting

Hosted by the St. Louis Early Birds.

NOVEMBER 23, 2023

Time: 9:00 - 10:00 am (CST)
Contact: Eileen 314-570-3500

Zoom ID: 538 040 418

Password: 002478

7th Tradition: \$5 suggested
donation to <https://stlouisoa.org/>

*No one should stay away
for financial reasons.

Who Is Steering Your Recovery Sled?

Overeaters Anonymous - *Holiday Booster*



Hosted by: *Sunday Evening Relapse & Recovery group*

Date: *Saturday, Dec. 2, 2023*

Time: *1:00 - 4:00 pm (registration starts at 12:30pm)*

Location: *Gethsemane Lutheran Church - lower level
****3600 Hampton Ave. St. Louis, MO 63109 (at Pernod) - Enter
through glass doors from parking lot (Ramp and elevator accessible).
Additional parking at church across side street.*****

Contact person: *Jennifer N. cell # (618) 960-8668*

Suggested Donation: *\$6 (please never stay away for financial reasons)*

Come and enjoy:

- *Great speakers *Fellowship with friends**
- *Sharing time *Experience, Strength, and HOPE**