

Together We Can



A Publication of the Overeaters Anonymous Metro DC Intergroup

February 2014

SEXUALITY AND THE OA PROGRAM

Roughly a year and a half ago, I heard someone “qualify” for her very first time. She started with the phrase: “I can’t talk about my compulsive eating history without talking about my sexuality too.” For the speaker, and the other members gathered around the table of this Overeaters Anonymous meeting, both the immediate and the after-effects have been profound. Occasionally, some of us in the room that night had heard qualifications in which people spoke about their personal history of sexual abuse; but on this night, 4 out of the 6 attendees shared pieces of their own sexual abuse histories.

Unfortunately, sexual abuse is all too common for many of us in the program. It is often at the crux of continued overeating. We pack on the weight and keep others physically away from us. Others, like me, have shielded ourselves from intimacy through our verbal and non-verbal behavior. And the notion of trusting anybody and anything, much less ourselves, can make having a spiritual connection nearly impossible.

There is no shame, and we are not victims. The moment you walked into these OA rooms, you declared yourself brave.

From that meeting 18 months ago, the idea of a sexuality and compulsive eating workshop has fomented, and has finally been created.

Come join other OA members sharing their experience, strength and hope - and how they got there, Saturday evening, March 8. A post-able flyer is on the last page of this newsletter.

Sealani

STUCK

Some animal is stuck in my kitchen fan!
Making ongoing scratching noises
What the heck is that?

Sounds like he or she is desperately
trying to get out

How long will it be
Assuming it is stuck
Assuming it wants out

It may go until it is too tired
Or dead
Not before

Out of desperation

Because that is the only thing it knows
to do

Sort of like a compulsion

It HAS to do it
It HAS to do it
It HAS to do it

No brain involved
But a desperate attempt
To relieve the pain
The suffering
The chains of whatever has it bound

Sort of like the animal
That will

When caught in a metal trap
Chew its own leg off to survive

Desperation
Only one way out
Thank God for learning about other
options!

(PS the little bird got out with help!)

Katrina

**FIVE PLUS FIVE =
A BETTER OA PROGRAM**

I am grateful for the opportunities I have had to learn and grow through workshops at various OA conventions and retreats – and in turn – am writing here to share two sets of key words that can help us along the way.

Prevention of relapse: Here are 5 words (4 of which I learned a few years ago at a Tidewater Retreat in Virginia Beach, VA) to include regularly in one's action plan to help prevent relapse:
Structure, Support, Self-Care, Spirituality, and Service.

Recovery: And here are 5 words (learned at the 2012 Region 7 Convention) that, when acted on, can strengthen our recovery from the disease of compulsive overeating: **Practice, Prayer, Perseverance, Patience, and Progress.**

As an exercise you might want to expand on each. Here are some examples to get you (us) started: structure – have a daily plan of action; support – keep in touch with OA friends; self-care – participate in a retreat or workshop; spirituality – meditate; service – make a regular commitment; practice – use something you've learned in OA; prayer – make a request for help; perseverance – do a program action despite its difficulty; patience – tolerate delay; progress – keep moving forward toward a destination.

Linda S.

**OUR SECOND ANNUAL
POSTER PLASTER CONTEST
2013 RESULTS:**

The DC Metro Intergroup and its Outreach Committee are so excited to share with you the results of the 2013 OA Poster Plaster contest.

As the reports of posters plastered came in to us over the past several months, it was so inspiring to see the enthusiasm that our fellowship brought to this

service for the still suffering compulsive overeaters. There were pictures that came in with one or more of the "tear-offs" already removed and some places that reported that all of them had been removed! JUST AWESOME!

So, following are our 2013 results and awards:

3rd place: 20 Posters
Tues. 7pm Hillandale HOW Meeting
5 Newcomer Packets

2nd place: 23 Posters
Fri. 7pm College Park Meeting
10 Newcomer Packets

1st place: 24 posters
Wed. 7am Bethesda Big Book Meeting
15 Newcomer Packets

....a very close race!

Seven additional meetings reported posting posters to us!

Thank you all for your service - for sharing information about the challenge, taking posters to your meetings, posting them and encouraging each other. In gratitude for your Outreach in Action!
DC Metro IG Outreach

HOLY CROSS MEETINGS PARKING:

The Sunday 9:30 a.m. meeting at Holy Cross Hospital has historically been the largest meeting in the Metro DC area. Since parking fees have now been instituted for the main parking lot, we have noticed a drop in meeting attendance. We wonder if this may be directly related to the issue of parking fees. Until a decision is reached as to how our meetings may respond to this challenge, we suggest that you park for free on the street or in the Valet parking spots. (FYI - there are no "Valets" on Sundays, so those parking spots are available on a first-come/first-served basis.)

LITERATURE: HANDY TOOLS TO BOOST YOUR PROGRAM

Reading literature on a daily basis is part of my morning routine and has been one of my favorite tools since I first came into OA in 1988. I'm a longtime subscriber to *Lifeline* magazine and often read a few pages before going to bed at night to focus my mind on program as I nod off to sleep. *Lifeline* also gives me a flavor of OA's diversity with stories by members from all over the country, throughout the world, and of varied backgrounds. At other times I have found reading from *Seeking the Spiritual Path* and *Abstinence* uplifting boosts. And when I returned to OA after several years away I found the extra experience, strength and hope I needed in the pages of *A New Beginning: Stories of Recovery from Relapse*.

In my early days of program I found two short pamphlets particularly helpful in beginning to string together small amounts of fragile abstinence: "A Commitment to Abstinence" and "Before You Take That First Compulsive Bite, Remember..." These pamphlets are packed with simple, concrete suggestions for becoming abstinent and maintaining that abstinence in the many and varied circumstances we all encounter every day. I made it part of my program practice to read these pamphlets every day until I internalized the messages and replaced bad habits with good habits to support my recovery. It was difficult at first but the daily reminder to make a commitment reinforced my desire to change and encouraged me to follow through. Sometimes I just had to "act as if" I was willing and motivated to make changes. After a while, just seeing the titles reinforced the concepts for me.

I love our literature and am amazed over and over how something I know I've read before becomes fresh and new all over and gives me helpful insight for whatever I'm facing that week, day or moment.

It helps to keep literature easily accessible and in view at home and to carry wallet cards in my purse. These have come in handy a number of times when members did not have access to the meeting room or group literature and we had improvised meetings in someone's car or we sat outside the building. Who would want to inform a newcomer in such circumstances that the meeting is cancelled when it took so much courage for them just to show up the first time? Consider "Pocket Reference for OA Members" part of your portable OA survival kit and "be prepared" for the unexpected!

I have held literature positions in different meetings over the years and am currently the Literature Coordinator for Intergroup. In this role I sell literature at Intergroup events and maintain a limited supply of frequently purchased books and pamphlets, such as Region 7 journals, Newcomer Packets, 12&12's, workbooks, Big Books, and more.

I bring a rolling suitcase with a broad assortment of items to the monthly Intergroup meetings, usually held the second Sunday from 12:30-2:30 at Holy Cross Hospital in the Physicians Dining Rooms 1&2, next to the cafeteria. You can make purchases at this time, shortly before or after Intergroup.

Or contact me directly at 240-328-4619 or monicathuber@gmail.com to make other arrangements for purchase and pickup.

Monica H.

FOOD A FALSE HIGHER POWER

At a meeting that I attended recently I had an "ah-ha" moment in which I was reviewing something I discussed with other members of our fellowship. These other members kept telling me repeatedly that OA must be the highest priority in my life in order for me to succeed in my recovery. Making my program #1 priority has been near to impossible for me to wrap my head

around. That sounded almost cultish or somehow out of balance. I should come first, or my family, my religion or my country but NOT my OA program, although I could concede that to gain recovery OA had to be near the top of my list.

The revelation I had today was that to this point, whether I like to admit it or not, of all things FOOD had been my #1 priority. Now if that is not insanity, I don't know what is. Somehow at some point this happened. Perhaps it began "In the beginning." It is interesting to note, and please believe me that I am not preaching Judaism, Christianity or any other religion, I just think that it is interesting that in the Judeo-Christian bible the very first rule G-d made was about FOOD. G-d said to Adam and Eve, "Don't eat from the tree of Knowledge." Adam and Eve made the decision to disregard this one simple rule. Perhaps that's where all out of control desire/addiction began.

In any event, in every human being's personal history, food/eating is the primary means of relating that we have as we begin to interact with the world from the time we are born. Perhaps people with a food addiction are stuck on food being the center of our lives because in some way we never got past food being the currency of our existence in early infancy. We needed food to live and that was within reason, but somehow that morphed into living to eat.

Then came the misconception that food has the power to "cure" all ills. Food is the solution to all problems. Truth to tell, that amounts to worshiping FOOD - a kind of idolatry. Instead of appreciating that I am primarily a spiritual being whose job it is to make my Higher Power more manifest in the world (i.e., do service), I got sidetracked by making food the be all and end all. Now, how insane is that?

At this point I am willing to see food for what it became in my life—the occupier of position #1. I have learned from OA meetings, and from processing this program with fellow overeaters, that I can only recover if I put my Higher Power in the position where He/She belongs, position #1. Then I am in position #2 as a being created in the image of my HP - a primarily spiritual being. I think that this is the only way I can attain sanity. Eating like a human being rather than like an animal means eating to live and NOT living to eat.

Only if I am Higher Power centered rather than FOOD or SELF centered will this be possible, at least for me.

Nancy G.

**COMPASSIONATE, AWAKE, WHOLE:
INCURABLE AND PROUD!**

Not all darkness is bad. Not all shadowy places are scary. Not all secrets are shameful. Not all pain is evil.

~ Rob Brezsney

A while back I wrote this on Facebook: an excerpt from a conversation I had about recovery and shame and the stark separation we make erroneously between those in recovery and those who seemingly don't need to be in recovery from anything. It was an attempt to soften the harshness and ignite some compassion within those of us who draw a distinct 'better than/worse than' line between (in our case) Foodies and Normies and then pick up that line and use it to whip ourselves within AND whip ourselves into shape with.

"On Addiction:

Everyone 'uses' something. In the same way a tree 'uses' the stuff it grows in to discover its growth pattern to the sky.

Some destroy their lives for a while until they learn how not to and instead acquire more of a taste for vulnerability, change and movement.

Then 'using' becomes true intimacy with choosing, assimilating, empirical living and gracious dying. Eyes wide open.

'Using' becomes life sustaining and ends up being a quest for answers and an intimate relationship with Life.

Unhealed Addiction is very expensive.

Healed Addiction could be called Desire, or Motivation, or Joy, or even Love."

What I didn't understand when I came into recovery was that I could never be cured. I heard it many times over but I never got it. Then one day I realized that I could never be cured from Life and living in it and this was what the program was really offering me: the knowledge that there is no end point where I put down my books and my community and get on with something else less spiritual. This path to serenity and freedom in this particular form as a 12 step program, like all paths to serenity and freedom in every other form, is a forever one.

According to religious text, Saint Paul was hit by a blinding light on the road to Damascus and from then on began to follow *his* path of simultaneous darkness and illumination into all the answers he had been searching for in all the wrong places. I awoke to my skewed relationship with food and nourishment of every sort and got a 12 step program. Same-same.

After enough years to gain perspective and clarity and a base from which it is hard to dislodge me permanently even during the most turbulent holiday season, I practice recovery with awake-ness and wholeness as my guides. I am never fully awake for very long, I have shining moments that I love when eating is easy and then, because I am human and always on the lookout for shortcuts to enlightenment, instead of tracking wholeness I make this 'easy' as my new goal, set a course for consistent perfection and then sail out as far as

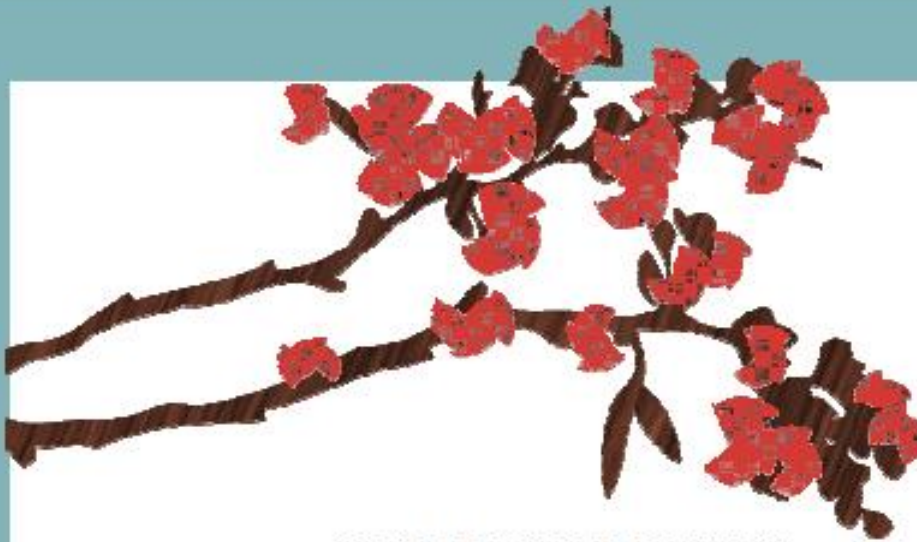
these new winds will take me – which is not very far. What I have forgotten again is that eating was easy because life and my relationship with it at that time, was easy, I was at ease with it and in it. There is no place where this is so all of the time. Some call it Grace.

What keeps me on my base and helps me track wholeness once more is that I know what I have done and I know that I will do it again and I am under no illusion that I will 'get with the program' for good and be able to leave all the unsavory mistake making parts of myself behind. (Except, of course, when I *am* under the illusion that I can and will!) What this softness, compassion and inclusion offers is a place for all of me and all of the many aspects of me that will show up looking for the fast track to liberation, so none of me gets left out in the cold - and if there is one thing that is sure to trigger a food frenzy it's feeling like I have been exiled and left out in the cold. It also brings me back into the realm of humanity where the drive for a fulfilled spiritual existence is paramount no matter what it appears as on the surface. It makes me no different than anyone else and it shifts the focus from food as shameful escape chute to food, and my relationship with it, as a mirror into my Self and my relationship with Life. This I can live with, one day at a time.

Sarah R.

**DIRECTIONS TO:
UNITY DAY ANNAPOLIS
(see flyer p. 6)**

Calvary United Methodist Church – Take U.S. Route 50 to Exit 24 – “Rowe Blvd.” Stay in right lane on exit ramp. This forms its own lane on Rowe Blvd. Continue through two signals, *and then take the next right turn. Turn left into church drive. Follow around to parking on the right.



OA ANNAPOLIS IG PRESENTS
2014 UNITY DAY
JOIN US IN FELLOWSHIP TO CELEBRATE UNITY IN RECOVERY

FEBRUARY 22, 2014
9 AM TO 4 PM
CALVARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
301 ROWE BLVD ANNAPOLIS MD 21041

Here is our schedule:

Guided Meditation 9AM for those who wish to join us early

Registration 9:30 am
10 am Opening Speaker
11 am First Session

Noon- Brown Bag Lunch

1:15 Second Session
2pm Open Sharing
2:30 Unity Circle
3pm Closing Speaker

WE ARE HAVING A CLOTHING SWAP! BRING YOUR CLOTHES TO SHARE!

Water, Coffee and Tea will be available

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: MARIA B @ 301.275.7093 OR BOBBI 443.694.0292



IN MEMORIAM

Rozanne S., Founder. Overeaters Anonymous
1929—2014

"I put my hand in yours, and together we can do what we could never do alone. No longer is there a sense of hopelessness, no longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady willpower. We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams."

— The OA Promise, by Rozanne S.

"A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step."
(For Today, p. 311)

With one step into a 1958 Gamblers Anonymous meeting, Rozanne S., the founder of Overeaters Anonymous, set foot on her worldwide journey to bring help and hope to thousands of people struggling with compulsive eating. Rozanne's journey has come to an end. The Board of Trustees and the World Service Office of Overeaters Anonymous pay tribute to the woman whose energy, vision, determination and compassion gave birth to OA in 1960. With the help of many others, hand in hand, she nurtured OA for 54 years.

Rozanne was born in 1929 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin USA, to parents who valued education and hard work. They instilled those values in Rozanne. When she was 12, the family moved to Chicago. Already she felt insecure about her weight and herself. At 18 and a junior at the University of Chicago, she thought being thin was the way to boys and happiness; she dieted from 142 pounds (64 kg) to 118 pounds (54 kg). A better fit, she thought, for her 5 foot 2 inch (157 cm) height. The boys came, and her grades plummeted. She left the university, enrolled in business school and regained the weight she had lost. A year later, she returned to the university and earned her degree.

She began work as a producer's secretary, first in summer stock and then in New York City. She returned to Chicago two years later and became a fashion copywriter for a department store. Her love of writing flourished. Seeking warmer climes, she moved to Los Angeles and reveled in her job as assistant advertising manager for a chain of department stores. Despite her success, low self-esteem plagued her, and she continued to suffer from compulsive overeating.

January 1955 opened the door to love, and by the end of the year, she and Marvin S. married. The births of daughters Debbie and Julie followed. (Marvin passed away in November 1999.)

In November 1958, she saw a television program profiling a new Twelve-Step program, Gamblers Anonymous. She and Marvin took a friend-in-need to a meeting, not realizing it was she who would find salvation. She thought, "I'm just like that . . . Their compulsion is with gambling and mine is with food, but now I know I'm not alone anymore!" (*Overeaters Anonymous*, Second Edition, p. 11). She realized she wasn't "wicked or sinful." She had a disease, and it had a name: compulsive overeating.

However, no groups existed for compulsive overeaters. A year later, in desperation she returned to another Gamblers Anonymous meeting where the founder encouraged her to pursue her idea of starting a Twelve-Step program for compulsive overeaters. On January 19, 1960, Rozanne and two friends convened the first meeting of Overeaters Anonymous. (For more of Rozanne's personal story of recovery, see "Keep Coming Back: Rozanne's Story," *Overeaters Anonymous*, Second Edition, p. 7.)



Rozanne became OA's visionary, always searching for new ways to reach out and carry the recovery message. She abandoned her initial attempts to rewrite the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions for compulsive overeaters, relying instead on the universality of the original Steps and Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Early on she recognized the media's value in carrying the message. She coaxed the producers of a syndicated television show to feature OA. On November 1, 1960, seven OA members appeared on the show; it produced a significant jump in OA membership. With meetings in her home, endless hours dealing with correspondence and counseling and cajoling on the phone, papers piled high in her dining room, and hours spent on financials, Rozanne's life, with Marvin's support, became OA. But "together we can," and with increasing membership and helping hands, together she and OA members grew the organization.

Rozanne brought significant change to OA's diversity, its outreach and its recovery program. She suggested OA hold its first Conference in August 1962. In 1961, OA had voted to ban men. Rozanne disagreed. With the Conference Committee's approval, she invited A.G., a male Texan and co-founder of Gluttons Anonymous, to attend. Gluttons Anonymous merged with OA at the Conference, and thus began the welcome of men into OA.

The announcement of the upcoming Conference appeared in the first *OA Bulletin*, written by Rozanne and precursor to OA's *Lifeline* magazine. She thought of the name *Lifeline* when imagining a lifeboat next to a huge ocean liner at sea.

A first Board of Trustees (BOT) emerged from the first Conference, and members also voted to hold an annual May Conference. The OA Convention grew out of a day of sharing experience, strength and hope at the first Conference.

In 1979, after Rozanne expressed concern for helping international OA members, the first Conference International Committee became a reality with Rozanne as chair. She also served on the BOT and as National Secretary.

Rozanne wrote many literature pieces for OA, including the original *To the Newcomer* pamphlet (1966) to orient newcomers; *I Put My Hand in Yours* (1968) to give information on how to start and strengthen groups; and *Beyond Our Wildest Dreams* (1996) to share OA's history. A DVD interview titled *Reflections: A Visit with OA's Founder* and a CD compilation of speeches *And Now a Word From Our Founder . . . Five WSBC Speeches* brought Rozanne's insights and hope to members at large.

Rozanne's compassion for and understanding of the emotional, physical and spiritual challenges faced by compulsive eaters have touched people worldwide. She leaves an enduring legacy that will continue to inspire and heal those who still suffer.

Members who wish to honor Rozanne's memory with a contribution can go to 50447.thankyou4caring.org. Select Rozanne S. Memorial in the Designation drop down menu.

You may also call the WSO, 505-891-2664,

or send contributions by mail to

Overeaters Anonymous

World Service Office

P.O. Box 44020

Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4020

Join fellow Overeaters Anonymous members for an evening program ...

Sexuality, Compulsive Eating & Recovery

Sessions

**Saturday Evening
March 8, 2014
7:30pm - 9:00pm**



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

4512 College Avenue
College Park, MD 20740
Rectors' Lounge

For more information call

Monica 240-328-4619
Sealani 240-353-2352

Speakers

Breakout Sessions

Literature

WELL, SHUT MY MOUTH!

You eat too much, you're fat, no one wants you

- ♦ Sexuality
- ♦ Body image
- ♦ Compulsive eating

TABOO

But all too common, let's talk about it

- ♦ Childhood sexual abuse
- ♦ Escaping into food
- ♦ The processes of recovery

LOVING YOURSELF TODAY

Finding peace

- ♦ Your sexuality
- ♦ Your food
- ♦ Your body

DIRECTIONS TO ST. ANDREW'S

St. Andrew's is located near the campus at the University of Maryland. Traveling south on Route 1, turn left onto College Avenue.

Enter the church thru the side entrance, accessible from the parking lots on Yale or Princeton Avenues.

Also accessible by Metro via Green Line, College Park. Please call Metro 202-637-7000, for complete details.