



# Together We Can

Winter 2017

[newsletter@oa-dcmetro.org](mailto:newsletter@oa-dcmetro.org)

## Fall Assembly Report

This year the Fall Assembly was held near Ellicott City at the beautiful Turf Valley Resort and Conference Center. The location was chosen to honor guests from other regions, Presidents from other regions around the country and the world. They were seated as guests during business meetings, and each shared their stories during mealtimes and after-hour gatherings. I was inspired to hear their shares. It was a rare treat to meet so many people dedicated to service share their experience, strength and hope.

Most of the business conducted was very similar to that of other Assemblies I have attended in the past. The most notable difference was elections. Some officers who have served our Region as gifted leaders and servants rotated out of their positions. Others shifted from their present positions to fill the vacancies. Some faces from the assembly will sit at the front table at future meetings.

Each person running for office was given a few minutes to tell the delegates why he or she felt qualified for the position

sought; questions from the delegates followed. Then a vote was taken. I learned that there are folks that I have looked up to as invincible leaders, who deal with struggles daily and do not feel like the superheroes I imagined them to be. Yet, they are willing to give back to the program that they unanimously credit with saving their lives and teaching them to live in a place of serenity.

Personally, I am grateful to the outgoing officers for their selfless dedication to Region 7. They have spent countless hours making this unorganized organization run smoothly. They did the work in anonymity and with love. I believe the new officers will follow that same work model and wish them every success in their endeavors.

I was dismayed to learn that some areas of our Region have decreased to the point that there are no longer face-to-face meetings and fellows rely on phone meetings and online gatherings. I am not sure what circumstances led to this situation, but many of our incoming

Region 7 leaders emphasized that “Unity” will be a top priority in every act of service they render. Clearly, Step Twelve will be an emphasis for the upcoming months.

I served on the Convention Committee. Our time was spent finalizing plans for the November Convention at Rehoboth Beach and making plans for next year’s convention that may be held at the same location. More will be revealed about the 2017 Convention after the Spring Assembly.

I enjoyed my time at the Fall Assembly and encourage everyone to consider volunteering if you are able to do so. Attend the monthly Intergroup meetings as a representative or as a visitor to learn about how the organization functions locally and, if you choose to investigate, opportunities on a regional level will likely come your way. There are opportunities for service at all levels. Every act of service is necessary for our fellowship to function. For this, I am grateful!

—*Respectfully Submitted by Karen N.*



## Freaking Twisted Roots

I grew a green thumb when I built my dream home in Idaho. I suddenly enjoyed mowing the lawn; I couldn't buy enough bulbs. Manicured shrubs lined the walk. Every room in the house showcased beautiful plants I had nurtured.

I left it all behind when I moved. All that crossed the continent with me to my new home was a mason jar filled with water and some pothos plant clippings. Some of the clippings had variegated leaves, but the majority had leaves of solid green.

My East Coast home was built in 1971. It was completely landscaped and the yardwork was taken care of by the homeowner association. I missed my big beautiful houseplants, but did not replace them in the new residence. The mason jar sat in the kitchen window while I got settled in my new location. I enjoyed watching the roots sprout and lengthen and intertwine. New leaves were growing on the clippings. Like an iceberg, two-thirds of the mass was below the waterline. Eventually I bought potting soil and a new container for the clippings that were now merged into one plant, and it was as transplanted as it was.

The plant thrived on neglect. It survived my three-week vacation without water. It didn't seem to care about direct sunlight or dark corner locations. It looked perky and cheerful in all kinds of weather. It was a survivor, like me.

One day I came home to see a

barely recognizable bedraggled plant. I didn't know how much I loved that plant until I saw it on the verge of extinction. Nothing was standing; the stems were draped over the container like seasick passengers retching into the ocean. The leaves looked drained and dehydrated. A houseguest, a self-proclaimed expert on plants, had taken my little survivor out of the pot and untangled the roots then repotted what wasn't killed in the process. She said it would be a healthier plant in a couple of

weeks when it revived.

Recovery was painful for little plant. The surviving stems were long with only one or two leaves at the end and they grew at odd angles. They had to be propped up; there was no support from other branches to aid in reaching for light. Two years later the plant recovered to the point of looking healthy, if not vibrant. I watched it daily in the kitchen window until new leaves finally started growing.

My life paralleled the plant in

### HP Rocks!

Today, I woke up depressed, angry, sad, full of self-pity over stuff during the holidays I had no control.

I dialed into a phone meeting and within 5 minutes, my attitude changed. I felt happy and grateful to be alive. The feelings just went poof and left. I hardly ever share, but decided to share where I was. It was very healing.

My day was upbeat and I was abstinent.

Tonight my mood changed again. I was lonely, had nothing really to do, I was tired and it

was too early to go to bed. The food was calling. So I did the next right thing: asked HP to help me through these feelings. I started doing the dishes and straightening up my apartment. Then, I called my 8-year-old grandson who helped me work through an error message on my computer.

This was quite the 24 hours: lots of emotions, ups and downs and I did not have to eat over it!

—Peggy R.

many ways during that two years. Like my plant, root shock going from water to soil, or in my case, West to East, encouraged personal growth. I doubt I would have heard about OA in Idaho; in Maryland I am blessed to have meetings available every day of the week.

As an adoptee, I always wondered about my birth mother and fantasized about what it would be like to reunite with her. DNA testing revealed that my mother was still living and I had two sisters. It didn't play out like a made-for-TV movie with a joyous reunion. My mother wanted no contact and my sisters have not acknowledged me. I was as devastated as the mutilated plant. I discovered that many of my deepest emotions were the result of separation anxiety formed the moment the umbilical cord was severed and my mother was no longer a part of my life. Fear of rejection is deeper in adoptees separated at birth from their mothers. It affected my life and my ability to build relationships in ways I am only beginning to recognize.

Like my plant, my emotional roots were deep and unseen. Letting go of my idyllic beliefs about "family" formed in my childhood was similar to the roots being forcibly separated. Part of me died, painfully. The part that was left had to sink healthier roots and overcome obstacles in order to survive. Twelve steps helped me examine my unseen emotional roots



and deal with the damage wreaked by the shards of my shattered childhood fantasies of joyous reunion crashing in on the lonely world I inhabited on the East Coast. Tools, especially, reading and writing, gave me the help I needed to re-establish myself in soil bereft of my childhood fantasies of someday being part of what I believed would be a perfect family.

Deep resentments I've carried since birth governed crucial decisions throughout my life. Those resentments were beneath the surface, hidden from everyone, including me. They have poisoned many relationships throughout my life, and I began to realize that they were also poisoning me. My OA family supported me when I couldn't stand alone and they accepted me without judgment. OA fellows saw my pain and offered me solace in the form of phone calls, listening to my shares, and

hugs. Lots of hugs.

Part of my action plan was seeking professional counseling to learn how to identify and express newly discovered emotions that stemmed from those tangled roots being ripped and mangled. Until now I haven't had a voice to express my feelings. It's time for me to accept them and navigate through them. "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

I learned that I don't have to choose between my green leaves or the variegated leaves; they are both part of my story. I accept that some of my roots are biological and other roots are from my adoptive line. Additional roots include my daughter, whom I adopted as a 7-year-old, who knew her biological parents and siblings; and later, her firstborn son who (cont.)



# Newcomer corner

## Reflections and observations from our most important members

### **Together We Can: When did you attend your first meeting?**

*SP: September 2016 so I'm still a newbie.*

### **How did you feel at your first meeting? Were you welcomed?**

*At the first meeting I felt included and I was welcomed. At the meeting I usually go to, there are many people there who have been members for years which I like since I feel I can learn from their experiences.*

### **Is this the first time you've joined OA?**

*Yes, this is the first time I've joined. Last week a member said what was suggested to her was to take something from the meeting and try to apply it to your life. That is what I am trying to do. I just need to do what I need to do to be healthy by being abstinent. I am not totally sure if the program is right for me, but I am sticking with it and see if it's a right choice. I'm open minded and this is a progressive journey for me.*

### **How did you find out about OA?**

*A friend of mine told me about a different but similar group. I could not find any information on the other group but I did find information about OA. The meeting place and time worked for me so I decided to check out the meeting.*

### **What did you think OA would do for you, if anything?**

*I thought that OA would guide me and I would learn a new pattern of healthy eating and weight management. I have the same story as many. I have been*

*on different programs but still have not reached my goal weight. From time to time I overeat certain foods and get into cycles of unhealthy eating. When I was younger I was able to abstain from certain foods that I knew were trigger foods. I need to get my abstinence back. So answering this question, really answers the question above; this is the right program for me, since OA is about abstinence. I just realized it now.*

### **What made you want to come back?**

*As we say, if you keep coming back it works and if you work the program it works, I'm worth it.*

### **Is there anything confusing about the program or the meetings?**

*The whole intergroup "thing" is confusing to me. I am sure the longer I remain in the program I will figure that out.*

*Editor's note: Intergroup is a clearinghouse through which groups and members can communicate quickly and efficiently for the purpose of OA business. Intergroup operates a 24-hour answering service, maintains a local meeting list, publishes a monthly newsletter, disseminates information to the public, keeps the World Service Office informed of meeting changes, and arranges marathons and retreats.*

### **Is there anything you wished had been different when you first joined?**

*What I wish was different was that I had a sponsor. I am having a difficult time finding one since many members already have a full load of sponsees. I received newcomer calls and texts which were great, supportive, and helpful. Being new, I'd like to have someone to check in with, to have more support in place.*

### **Has your life changed for the better since you've been in OA? How?**

*My life has changed for the better since I've been in OA. I feel more in control, more empowered and consciously make healthier food choices. I can concentrate on the things that really need my attention and not feel distracted by food. I get to deal and handle real issues and life...whether I like it or not but that goes back to feeling more in control and empowered. It's a win-win situation.*

*(‘Twisted’, cont.) was placed in an open adoption. I have all three legs of the adoption triangle; I am adopted, I adopted, and I was responsible for a baby being placed for adoption. I consider all families affected by those adoptions as part of my extended family. That is a LOT of adoptive lines tied to my bloodline and all are intertwined and tangled.*

*At this time, I know nothing about my paternal bloodline. My higher power assures me that He is my Father. How I arrived at the home He chose for me was according to His design. As for my biological father, more may be revealed. I came into the light and started growing my new leaves. My family tree has some freaking twisted roots, but they are my roots, and it is my story. —Karen N.*

## DC OA Intergroup

[www.oa-dcmetro.org](http://www.oa-dcmetro.org)

202.854.8462

answeringservice@oa-dcmetro.org

Newsletter submissions:

newsletter@oa-dcmetro.org

Quote of the month: **"The only person you should strive to be better than is the person you were yesterday"** ~Unknown

Get more inspiration from *Lifeline*, OA's international magazine, an indispensable "meeting-on-the-go." *Lifeline* is available both as a print magazine and as an online magazine. (Subscribe [here](#))

# Intergroup News

**CALL FOR SERVICE:** The following intergroup positions are open:

♦ *Vice Chair, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Inreach Chair, Events Chair*

### Meetings needing support:

**Sunday, 11am**—SPIRITUALITY & STEPS, Holy Cross Hospital, Silver Spring

**Wednesday, 12:30pm**—St. Luke Lutheran Church, Silver Spring

*All meetings welcome and give a voice to any person who has the desire to stop eating compulsively*

### Upcoming events:

**March 17-19, 2017:** Region 7 Assembly, Wyomissing, PA

**April 21-23, 2017:** Cast A Wide Net Retreat, Virginia Beach, VA

**May 5-7, 2017:** My Family, My Program: Diamond State IG, Ocean City, MD

**Next intergroup meeting: Sunday, March 12, 2017 from 12:30-2:30pm**

**Holy Cross Hospital 1500 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, 20910**

## New meeting!

• **Discussion: EVERYBODY WELCOME**

• **Thursdays, 6:30 PM**

• **Christian Tabernacle Church, 2029 11th St NW, (corner of V St.)**

• **Shaw/U Street/14th Street Corridor Area**

• **Admin Office. (#54852)**

• **Contact: Shannon 504-710-7516**

## CryptOAGram

In this phrase, one letter is substituted for another. Use double letters and the length and formation of words as hints.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

N F B H Y Q U U Z U H Y B B C B Y I F B Y B

X K P I Q N B Y Z N

Answer to last CryptOAGram: ALL I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MY HIGHER POWER IS THAT IT'S NOT ME!