

MAY/JUNE 2010 NEWSLETTER

HELLO FROM THE NEW NEWSLETTER EDITOR

When I came into program in 2003, I was mad. I was only 23 years old and wanted to be out with my peers, not stuck in meetings every night! But today I know that I needed to be in the rooms early so that God could save me from years more of pain. (This is also why I am very concerned with reaching out to young people!)

I was given the gift of abstinence January 1, 2005, and am maintaining a 50 pound weight loss by the grace of God. I have worked all 12 steps and use the tools. But when I moved to DC in March, 2009, I knew I had to do something extra to keep my recovery. Service seemed like the best way to do that.

I committed to a home group and spoke a few times. Eventually, I became the IG Rep for my home meeting. In all honesty, I didn't want to serve, but I knew I had to do something new to maintain my abstinence amidst so much change. (Most months I don't feel like going to the IG meeting, but when I arrive I am so glad I'm there. IG is really exciting, and full of people with long-term abstinence. I feel like I grow just being in the room!)

I want to stay abstinent and happy, so when I heard that we needed a newsletter editor, I volunteered. It gives me great pleasure to serve the fellowship. I ask for your support and patience as I practice "progress, not perfection" and "easy does it" in this position. (This is particularly important now because I am getting married in June and must actively seek balance one day at a time.) Check out the submission guidelines on the last page, and send me your articles!—ELISABETH E.

BY THE GRACE OF HIGHER POWER

OA saves my life on a daily basis. I am currently navigating the craziest time ever – in the midst of all of my standing obligations, new ones have continuously popped up to the point where it is like I am trying to run up-stairs on an escalator that is speeding down. It used to be times like this where I would resent program because it was just one more thing that I had to do, fitting in a meeting or answering a phone call. Yet now I find myself clinging to it because it is truly the one constant source of sanity in my chaotic world.

A few days ago I was in my car, freaking out. On top of everything going on in my life, I was having minor surgery. Not only was it a surgery that sounded like it was going to be incredibly painful, but its recovery required me to be on a liquid diet for two weeks. I had already taken responsibility for my food by seeing my nutritionist and mapping out a plan, but I definitely was not looking forward to it. The anticipation in my car that morning – compounded by the fact that I had not slept the night before – left me feeling incredibly fragile. I craved a hug, I wanted to cry, I needed something or someone to take care of me.

And somehow, program started to do just that. I found myself saying all of our prayers. I started to count all the blessings I had received through program. I reminisced about the happiness I discovered in my recovery. I said a gratitude list out loud that lasted for 20 minutes! Then my phone rang twice with program friends who talked me through. By the time I arrived to my destination, I was happier and lighter than I had been in months. I know it was my higher power reaching out.

Continuing to work my program has kept my life manageable. It gives me perspective on a constant basis. It teaches me that when I am stuck, simply do the next right thing. It tells me that I cannot accomplish everything RIGHT NOW which is fine, because life is about bringing the best I can offer to the table. Finally, program assures me that no matter what happens, as long as I keep my heart and mind open and my body abstinent, I am operating within God's plan. That means everything is going to be okay.—ANONYMOUS

Tradition Three: The only requirement for OA membership is the desire to stop eating compulsively.

I'm one of the people who finally found complete acceptance here within the OA rooms. The discovery was amazing--to feel safe and not judged was a cool breeze in my life. It remains one of the primary reasons I keep coming back. Slowly, I'm working on the 12 steps. It doesn't seem easy for me, and I do a lot of backsliding, but I'm

much better at not beating myself up about the backsliding because no one else beats me up for it either.

I do better with a sponsor and am between sponsors right now, but I've found out that it's true--I can't do this on my own. I need God's help, and I need the fellowship of these meetings and the mentorship of a sponsor.

I have also discovered that I really believe in this process and this organization, so I talk to others about it and explain what our Friday night step/writing meetings are and how they work. I know writing isn't for everyone, but it works for me. The introspection is a spotlight for me.

I do truly believe that this disease can be conquered because I've seen those who have done it. I've spoken with them. I've listened to them share what they've written and what they feel. But, I also truly believe that I will need help every step of the way. So I keep coming back to the Friday night meeting in College Park. Thanks for letting me share.—FRANK.

This was written during the Friday night Step/Writing meeting at St. John's Episcopal Church in College Park, Md. The meeting begins at 7 p.m., normally in the church parlor at the top of the outside staircase. Writers, readers, sharers and listeners are always welcome! Call 301-395-3568 for more information.

EXPERIENCING THE REGION 7 ASSEMBLY

So...my 6th time at R7 - - not quite 6 in a row - there were a couple breaks - but the hotel is familiar, the ways to and from are too - and so are a lot of the faces. Ah, the more familiar faces, the more hugs I can give and get! It's a joy to see people back, still abstinent - to recall some of the names right away - - (albeit not always the same folks as those who happen to remember my name!) And what a wonder to be a little early arriving and have time for an afternoon walk on the beach itself - - a little challenging at first because of having to find a new way down to the beach due to the closing off of the nearby boardwalk for reconstruction - - and a little embarrassment at having to be reminded by a local dog-walker not to walk on the plants on the fragile dunes on the way down to the shells and wet sand. Ah, now to enjoy the sights and sounds of the waves lapping the shore, touching something primal within us. An OA meeting before bedtime finished off a really good day.

Then off to business starting early Saturday morning. (Some OAers even got up earlier for a regular OA meeting!) Do I really want to participate in the getting-to-know you warm-up game - - hey, I recognize that one of the phrases to be identified is from a particular step (or tradition)...and soon enough with everybody helping each other, each of our sheets is full of identified program quotations. Listening to the explanations for newbies (ID'd by green dots on their name tags) and reveling in the way the OA inverted pyramid puts group meetings at the top-- ▼ - - and the executive committee of the World Service trustees at the bottom. And how about that R7 publication we all have just been handed - "Intergroup Insights".

Now off to committee meetings - learning that the R7 12th Step Within Committee and those of most of the other intergroups cover not just how to help relapsing members (the focus of DC metro's 12th step committee when active), but much of what our DC Metro IG's Inreach and Events committees do. Also getting ideas for other ways to observe the new 12th step within day (Dec. 12), preferably by stretching activities out further around the year. The website committee was able to find the new webmaster that the outgoing chair said would be needed by fall when a member of the website committee volunteered right then and there! Some new software will make us more versatile in being able to edit and put up event flyers. Convention planning is underway not only for Nov. 5-7, 2010 but also for Nov. 2011, which will use a different hotel in Ocean City for the first time in many years. (The new one will be able to offer more rooms). In the recent past DC metro IG handled registration one year and decorations another, I raised my hand to volunteer us for something different for 2010 - preparing the handout that provides the conference program.

After a break for laughing and joking, reading, writing, and eating a meal, delegates got down to business Sat. evening and returned to more business all too early on Sun. morning. Motions were passed, mostly clarifying or adding to the policy manual; workshop exercises focused on budget preparation and motions due to come before the spring 2010 World Service Business Conference; committee reports added to our accomplishments; near the end of the meeting, we cheered and congratulated the "green dots" on being able to take them off now, having become experienced delegates. And now it's time to join hands and recite the OA Promise (I put my hand in yours and together...). More hugs, goodbyes, a last quick walk on the beach.—LINDA S.

LETTER FROM YOUR TREASURER

As the Treasurer of the DC-Metro Intergroup, I am concerned about our lack of funds. We are *struggling* to make ends meet. Seventh Tradition donations are down. Apparently, not long ago, when our Intergroup was *thriving*, 7th tradition donations were pouring in at \$9,000 per year. However, in Calendar Year 2008, we brought in between \$8,000 and \$7,000 in 7th tradition donations. In Calendar Year 2009, we budgeted for \$7,000 in 7th Tradition donations, but, when all was said and done, we actually received barely \$6,000. This year, we are *hoping* for \$6,000.

Let me provide some analysis. There are 51 meetings registered through World Service into our Intergroup and listed on our "Where and When". As of March 31, 2010, though, only 27 (53%) of these meetings had submitted *any* 7th Tradition funds since I took over the Treasury the beginning of May 2009. Furthermore, during this time period, only 16 (31%) of our 51 meetings remitted money on a regular basis (aka, more than one random submission!).

Why are 7th tradition donations down? First, attendance at meetings has dropped off in recent years, which means meetings are struggling simply to make (sometimes exorbitantly high) rents and keep a prudent reserve. My bigger concern, however, is that meetings are not prioritizing making donations to our Intergroup, Region 7, and World Service, perhaps because they don't have any idea what our service offices do for them (us). There is also the issue of the "spiel" that the Meeting Treasurers announce as they pass the basket at half-time. As an Intergroup, at the urging of World Service, we *attempted* to come up with and recommend language that proposed a \$3 minimum donation and eliminated the "newcomers please be our guest" welcome many meetings toss in there. (I feel strongly that this phrase is completely inappropriate and does not belong in the statement; we clearly state that we do not solicit or accept outside donations; therefore, *if* someone feels he/she is a member of OA even at his first, second, or third meeting, then this person should feel free to donate.) *However*, for better or for worse, per our traditions, each OA meeting is autonomous. This means that, ultimately, each meeting determines for itself the wording of its 7th tradition announcement, and each meeting decides by group consensus how much should be donated to the service offices.

If 7th tradition donations don't pick up soon, though, we may not have the money we need to sponsor the programs we would like to have to enhance our recoveries and to carry the message of recovery to the compulsive overeater who still suffers. Expenses of this Intergroup are: We put on events and workshops such as Idea Day, Unity Day and we would like to have a Big Book Event. We hold the "Wellspring" retreat every June, which we *should* be able to pay for with registration fees, but if we don't get enough attendees, we will be forced to subsidize this retreat from our general funds. We produce a newsletter 6 times a year, we have a website to maintain, we operate a telephone answering service, and we update and distribute hard-copies of the "Where and When" meeting list every other month. Our Intergroup buys Newcomer Packets and OA Literature and makes these available for sale to the meetings. Our *goal* is to absorb the cost of the shipping and handling and sell these items at a reduced price. The "Newcomer Packets" we have been selling since the beginning of 2009 will continue to be sold at this discount; *however*, the literature we purchased a few months ago will be sold at a price that allows us to recover the cost of shipping and handling; we decided that we could not afford to subsidize this endeavor. On the business-end of things, our Intergroup pays for delegates from our Intergroup to attend and participate in the Region 7 Business Assembly twice a year, and the annual World Service Business Conference. For the Business Assembly that just occurred in early April, it was necessary for us to utilize a scholarship in order to send all five reps to which we were entitled. Just like our meetings, in order to be self-supporting, we make donations to the Holy Cross Foundation in exchange for the use of the room we meet in the second Saturday of each month and our Intergroup makes donations to Region 7 and World Service.

There are no easy answers. I *don't know* how we can generate more funds as an Intergroup to ensure that we can continue our programs and services. This may be symptomatic of a more serious issue that is plaguing our Intergroup: lack of commitment to/interest in abstinence/recovery. Attendance is down at our events and workshops, as well as at the monthly Intergroup Meetings. I am a bit pessimistic that we have a vicious cycle/self-fulfilling prophecy happening here: The meetings that send representatives to the Intergroup Meeting, in general, are the ones that are making donations and they keep being informed, but it is the meetings that don't get the "scoop" on a monthly basis that continue to be isolated. Our Intergroup's Inreach Committee is working on a survey to be sent to *all* meetings that will attempt to address these issues and to provide us with some understanding of what is going on and what can be done. In the *meantime*, however, let's just assume that this newsletter is reaching the folks and the meetings that need to hear this message. Therefore, here I provide the relevant info, *one more time*, in case when people read this they get inspired. Let's hope that in response to this plea, my mailbox is hit big-time with a wallop of checks from OA meetings, and at the next Intergroup Meeting you hear me complaining about the time I am spending preparing deposits to take to the bank.....—MNB

Reprinted from the Where and When:

Our 7th tradition tells us to give to our service offices. After paying rent, providing literature, and keeping a prudent reserve, it is *suggested* that each group send 60% to Intergroup, 30% to World Service Office and 10% to Region 7. Make checks payable to: *DC-Metro Area Intergroup of OA, And please send funds to:* Melissa Naomi Booth, DC-Metro Area Intergroup Treasurer, 5315 Connecticut Avenue N.W. Apt # 607, Washington, DC 20015

GOODBYE FROM YOUR VICE CHAIR

As the outgoing Vice-Chair, I would like to say a few words. I came to OA some 35 years ago. I came with a friend who wanted to lose 20 lbs, while I needed to lose 150! She lost her weight and left, I'm still here.

I've lost and gained over 100 lbs. several times while in this program. It wasn't the program that went wrong, it was me. This is such an insidious disease, it sits out in the hall doing pushups just waiting for me to become complacent or to think I've got it made! And then it zaps me. And I eat some sugar or just eat too much until it becomes a pattern again. No, it's not the Program, it's me. I need to pay attention to what is going on in my life at all times. I need to check on my emotions, my closeness to my HP, and to not buy anything not on my food plan. Once it's in my house, it's mine! Unfortunately.

No, I'm not cured. Far from it. But I have learned quite a few things about how to check myself. The most important is to surrender to my HP every day. Then, whatever happens isn't too bad. I ask for God's plan for me every day, and then for the strength, the courage and the willingness to follow that plan. Some days it's easy. Some days it's hard. But I'm still here. And if I hadn't had OA, I probably would weigh 800 lbs by now, or be dead, or be in an institution. By my age, I probably would no longer be on this earth. So, I'm profoundly grateful to OA for being here and to my HP for opening my mind and heart to this Program. I am still becoming. But that's OK. At least, I'm still here.

Thank you for listening to me.—MURIEL

Intergroup Calendar

May

8 Sa **IG Meeting**: IG Board Elections [1 yr term; 6months current abstinence; working the 12 steps one year; attendance of at least 6 IG meetings, at least 3 of which were DC IG], Region 7 representative nominations [1 yr. term, 6 months current abstinence, regular attendance at IG]

24 Mon **IG Board Meeting** – Holy Cross cafeteria – 7:30 PM

June

5 Sa Reports for June IG meeting due to Corresponding Secretary

5 Sa WSBC Delegate Expense Reports due to Treasurer

5 Sa WSBC Delegate Conference Reports due to Corresponding Secretary

12 Sa **IG Meeting** – Region 7 rep elections

18-20 Fri-Sun Wellspring Retreat

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. Submissions are accepted on a rolling basis at ee12step@gmail.com. This means you can submit articles whenever you have time, and there will be a backlog of articles in case there is a month when submissions are low. (So for those of you who are scrambling to write...take a breath and send in an article when you can.)
2. The newsletter will be "keeping it simple."
3. Submissions should be sent in a Microsoft Word document attached to an e-mail.
4. Help is welcome! That means that if you have a penchant for design or time to take a Word/PDF document to a printer before the IG meeting, that would be AWESME.

This is your newsletter. Please share your contributions, comments, and experience in the OA way of life. Publication of any contributions or editorial opinions does not imply endorsement by OA as a whole, but by the individuals who wrote them. Material submitted cannot be returned, may be edited for clarity or length, and other OA groups, without permission, may reprint all copy.